



AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURAL AND RESOURCE ECONOMICS SOCIETY INC  
Crawford School of Public Policy T + 61 (0)409 032 338 Lennox Crossing, ANU  
E [office@aares.org.au](mailto:office@aares.org.au) Canberra ACT 0200 W [www.aares.org.au](http://www.aares.org.au)

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## **Strategic Plan 2017-2021**

*Promoting research relevant to Australasia in  
agricultural-, environmental-, food-, and resource-  
economics and agribusiness (AEFREA).*

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**AARES Five Year Strategic Plan 2017-2021**

	<b>Strategic Priorities</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Road Map</b>
<p align="center"><b>AARES Vision</b></p> <p>AARES is the pre-eminent society promoting research relevant to Australasia in agricultural-, environmental-, food-, and resource-economics and agribusiness (AEFREA).</p> <p align="center"><b>AARES Core Purpose</b></p> <p>To foster and promote Australasia-relevant research in the 5 key areas of AEFREA; and to support public dialogue and better decision making in the AEFREA areas of interest.</p> <p align="center"><b>AARES Activities</b></p> <p>1. Fostering and promoting AEFREA knowledge, skill development and exchange.                  2. Facilitating AEFREA professional networks.                  3. Fostering AEFREA policy-related discussion and analysis.                  4. Supporting AEFREA professions.                  5. Facilitating AEFREA career development.</p>	1. AARES governance.	Sharpen AARES strategic focus. Increase AARES transparency in decision-making and inclusiveness. Increase interaction between AARES Branches and Federal Council.	Create AARES Australasian focus, vision, core purpose and actions. Council regularly focuses on strategic issues. Review policies & procedures to ensure currency, clarity, inclusiveness & transparency. Increase communication between members, Federal Council and Branches to improve information flow, participation in and understanding of decisions. Open calls for membership nominations for all AARES office bearers. Introduce electronic as well as postal voting for key positions at AARES Federal Council.
	2. Knowledge generation, sharing and transfer in the AEFREA areas of interest.	Support, publish and publicise research on AEFREA topics. Exchange and develop knowledge, information, experience and networking via conferences, symposia, Branch meetings and webinars.	Maintain and develop AJARE as a flagship of the Society. Maintain and develop AARES annual conference as a key forum for knowledge sharing and exchange. Communicate research via online or magazine format publications. Develop strategy to increase frequency of AARES symposia. Develop a strategy to maintain and increase use of webinar.
	3. Management, operation and administration.	Increase capacity to support Federal and Branch executives, obtain sponsorship, engage with members and promote AARES.	Establish Federal Council sub-committee on AARES Central Office functions associated with development & promotions, as approved by AGM 9.02 2017. (budget ≤ \$60,000) Develop and implement an AARES promotion, marketing and communication plan, to increase membership and raise sponsorship. Increase AARES capacity to use iMIS database software.
	4. Professional learning of AARES members.	Enhance professional learning opportunities for members to enhance their capabilities in economic skills.	Trial a career fair and Three-Minute Thesis at 2017 AARES conference. Develop and resource an early-career mentoring program (ECP) for academic and non-academic members. Introduce open, competitive travel grants particularly for ECP members. Ask universities and non-academic agencies to provide internships, employment, and sabbatical opportunities for AARES members.
	5. AJARE and other publications.	Lift AJARE impact factor and policy contributions. Develop new AARES publication outlets.	Maintain the title - <i>Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics</i> (AJARE). Work with Wiley and editors to increase readability, visibility and citations of AJARE papers. Pursue topical applied publications via special issues of Choices and EuroChoices, and media such as PolicyForum.net, <i>The Conversation</i> and <i>The Mandarin</i> .
	6. Australasian and international links.	Maintain and strengthen domestic and international relationships.	Strengthen links with ACIAR, AAEA, AERE, ASAE, CAERE, EAAE, EAAERE, IAAE, WEAL, Crawford Fund, ESA to gain synergies, and increase AARES members' opportunities.
	7. AARES conference, symposia and debates.	Increase conference value to attendees. Increase symposia frequency. Introduce annual President's debate.	Conference timing to avoid school start week, child-minding options provided, registration costs controlled, day-long streaming, paper quality lifted, increased focus on quality posters with publication in AgEcon Search. President will chair annual public debate.
	8. AARES profile.	Lift AARES profile.	Create a Development and Promotion position to help develop and promote AARES. Consult with Branches to grow membership and lift participation at AARES events. President meet government, education, research & industry leaders to promote AARES.

**AARES Five Year Strategic Plan 2017-2021**

<b>Road Map</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Indicative Timeline</b>
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## AARES Five Year Strategic Plan 2017-2021

<p>Create AARES Australasian focus, vision, core purpose and actions. Council regularly focuses on strategic issues. Review policies and procedures to ensure their currency, clarity, inclusiveness &amp; transparency. Increase communication between members, Federal Council and Branches to improve information flow, participation in and understanding of decisions. Open calls for membership nominations for all AARES office bearers. Introduce electronic as well as postal voting for key positions at AARES Federal Council.</p>	<p>All constitutional amendments sent to members were approved at AGM 9 February 2017. Council Agenda item at each Council meeting. Council Agenda item at least once per year.</p> <p>Develop and introduce AARES Communication Plan.</p>	<p>AGM February 2017 At Council meetings Annually 2017</p> <p>AGM February 2017</p>
<p>Maintain and develop <i>AJARE</i> as a flagship of the Society. Maintain and develop AARES annual conference as a key forum for knowledge sharing, exchange. Communicate research via online or magazine format publications. Develop strategy to increase frequency of AARES symposia. Develop a strategy to maintain and increase use of webinar.</p>	<p>Consult and develop plan with Wiley. Review and update AARES Conference Handbook. Select channel for additional communication. Appoint Development &amp; Promotion Officer to assist. Appoint Development &amp; Promotion Officer to assist.</p>	<p>2017 and ongoing 2017 and ongoing 2017 and ongoing 2017 and ongoing 2017 and ongoing</p>
<p>Establish Federal Council sub-committee on AARES Central Office functions associated with development &amp; promotions, as approved by AGM 9.02 2017. (budget ≤ \$60,000) Develop and implement plan, to increase membership and raise sponsorship. Increase AARES capacity to use iMIS database software.</p>	<p>Federal Council to decide on preferred course of action for AARES Central Office and development &amp; promotions activities.</p> <p>Council and Development &amp; Promotion Officer develop plan. Upskill selected staff and AARES members.</p>	<p>2017</p> <p>2017 and ongoing</p> <p>2017 and ongoing</p>
<p>Trial a career fair and Three-Minute Thesis at 2017 AARES conference. Develop and resource an early-career mentoring program (ECP) for academic and non-academic members. Introduce open, competitive travel grants particularly for ECP members. Ask universities and non-academic agencies to provide internships, employment, and sabbatical opportunities for AARES members.</p>	<p>AARES 2017 conference programme. Council and Development &amp; Promotion Officer develop and introduce ECP. Draft and approve open, competitive grants policy. Council and Development &amp; Promotion Officer develop plan.</p>	<p>2017</p> <p>2017 and ongoing</p> <p>2017 and ongoing</p> <p>2017 and ongoing</p>
<p>Maintain Title - <i>Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics</i> (AJARE). Work with Wiley and editors to increase readability, visibility and citations of AJARE papers. Pursue topical applied publications via special issues of <i>Choices</i> and <i>EuroChoices</i>, and media such as <i>PolicyForum.net</i>, <i>The Conversation</i> and <i>The Mandarin</i>.</p>	<p>Editors work with Wiley to develop strategy. Council consult, select media channel, appoint special issue editors.</p>	<p>2017</p> <p>2017 and ongoing</p> <p>2017 and ongoing</p>
<p>Strengthen links with ACIAR, AAEA, AERE, ASAE, CAERE, EAAE, EAAERE, IAAE, WEAI, Crawford Fund, and ESA to gain synergies, and increase AARES members' opportunities.</p>	<p>Task relevant Liaison officers with strengthening relationships with allied organisations.</p>	<p>2017 and ongoing</p>
<p>Conference timing to avoid school start week, child-minding options provided, registration costs controlled, day-long streaming, paper quality lifted, increased focus on quality posters with publication in AgEcon Search. President will chair annual public debate.</p>	<p>LOC 2018 conference and Council agree on timing, format, pricing, streaming, quality control.</p> <p>Introduce annual AARES President' debate.</p>	<p>2017 and ongoing</p> <p>2017 and ongoing</p>
<p>Support development and promotion activities (up to \$60,000 for 2017-2018) to promote AARES. Consult with Branches to grow membership and lift participation at AARES events. President meet government, education, research &amp; industry leaders to promote AARES.</p>	<p>Federal Council decide on course re D &amp; P activities. Branches, Council, D &amp; P Officer determine strategy. President meets gov't, education, research &amp; industry leaders.</p>	<p>2017 and ongoing</p> <p>2017 and ongoing</p>

## Introduction to AARES

The Australian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society (AARES), was originally founded as the Australian Agricultural Economics Society in 1957. It has a federal structure with Branches located in all mainland Australian States, the ACT, New England, New Zealand and North America.

AARES has around 475 members from Branches in Australia, New Zealand, North America and internationally. Our membership is largely comprised of economists and other social science professionals in universities, government and non-government agencies and the private sector.

The major activities of the Society include:

1. Publishing the highly regarded *Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics (AJARE)*, a leading international scientific journal which is a forum for innovative and scholarly research in agricultural and resource economics, with four issues a year;
2. Awarding prizes to encourage excellence in publications, post-graduate theses, undergraduate studies, and travel support toward conference presentations in Australia, New Zealand and the United States;
3. Publishing an electronic newsletter, *News & Views*, three times a year which contains information about future events, calls for awards, topical articles about developments in AARES, etc.
4. Convening an annual conference with associated workshops in February of each year. The program typically consists of keynote addresses by distinguished speakers, paper sessions, research reviews of current trends and issues, and alternative format sessions. The conference represents an outstanding opportunity for delegates to network, share ideas and hear from some of the foremost experts in the field.

The Council is the governing body of the Society and comprises the President, President Elect, Immediate Past President, Secretary, Treasurer, AJARE Editor(s) and Manager Promotion and Development, and such additional councilors as are elected following procedures in the Constitution. Each year, the Local Organising Committee Chair plays an important role working with the host Branch and reporting to Council. The Secretary is the Public Officer of AARES. Each branch has its own President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Councilor.

The Federal Executive meets four times each year – twice at the annual conference in February, in May and again around October. The Annual General Meeting takes place during the annual conference.

AARES Branches organise seminars and social events to meet the aims of the Society and to provide a meeting place for those with interests in agricultural-, environmental-, food-, and resource-economics and agribusiness (AEFRE). The Branches host the annual conference on a rotating basis, hold workshops and symposia on topics of current regional interest, and sponsor diverse and stimulating seminar programs. Branches serve a valuable role in

bringing together academics, public servants, professionals from the agribusiness and resource sectors, and students across various disciplinary and institutional boundaries.

## Background to the Five Year Strategy

The Five Year Strategy is the result of over twelve months of consulting and planning during 2015-2016. The Strategy responds to a number of challenges faced by AARES and seeks to create opportunities and additional value for its members.

AARES membership declined by 23% in the 10-year period of 2006 to 2015. During this period, there were also changes to the AARES operating environment. In response, concerns have been raised by the membership about the need to create additional opportunities for members.

In October 2015, the Terms of Reference for Strategic Planning were approved by the AARES Council, and a Strategic Planning committee was established with 13 members (Ross Cullen, Quentin Grafton, Wendy Umberger, Emilio Morales, Liz Pedersen, Adam Loch, David Adamson, Todd Sanderson, Kerry Stott, Joanna MacEwan, Rod McInnes, Deborah Peterson and Frank Scrimgeour) drawn from all AARES Branches. A facilitator was appointed in 2015 (Deborah Peterson) and she conducted: 1) an initial scan of competing organisations and 2) semi-structured interviews with key individuals and AARES stakeholders. This information was then reported on, and the facilitator provided advice on how to proceed with the next phase of strategic planning.

The Strategic Planning committee next completed a series of semi-structured interviews, scanned 21 organisations and conducted a SWOT analysis. Further, it prepared a 21 question survey, which was sent to all AARES members and recently lapsed members (715 people in total).

The survey received 149 responses (30% response rate of current members and a few from lapsed members). Key points from the survey and a report on progress of the Strategic Planning committee were discussed at a special session at the 2016 AARES conference, held in Canberra.

Following the 2016 AARES Conference, an additional set of semi-structured interviews were completed with 55 people in 51 organisations located in Australia, New Zealand, and the USA.

The Strategic Planning committee prepared an “Issues and Options Paper”, which was sent to all AARES members in May 2016. The paper focused on seven issues, and included many specific proposals for members to respond to and members were asked to provide comments directly back to the Strategic Planning committee. Many of the member responses were supportive of the proposed changes in the paper. To summarise, the paper highlighted seven key issues:

1. Vision, Core Purpose, Objectives and Society Name
2. Governance
3. Administration and Support services
4. Training and Career development support
5. Events (conference, symposia)
6. Journal and Outreach
7. Increasing the Society's profile

As part of the Strategic Planning exercise, the Strategic Planning committee, with helpful input from Terence Farrell, also initiated a review of AARES office and support services to determine how best to support AARES Executive and members, and to strengthen AARES's capacity to achieve its aims to deliver quality products and services for its members.

The extensive Strategic Planning engagement process has found that:

1. AARES operates in a dynamic environment and faces competition for members;
2. AARES needs to be able to adapt and evolve in order to ensure that it serves its members well and continues to perform valuable roles in the research and policy worlds;
3. to thrive and to make the most of the opportunities that arise or that it creates, AARES has to
  - a. understand the 'markets' its operates in;
  - b. have a vision of what AARES strives to be;
  - c. have a clearly stated core purpose that is well understood and supported by the membership; and
4. AARES needs to set objectives that are regularly monitored and reported upon to members.

The Strategic Planning committee held a facilitated meeting in Nelson, New Zealand on 24 August 2016 to review progress, consider feedback received on proposals in the Issues and Options paper, and debate the outline and key components of AARES Strategic Plan. On the basis of a long discussion, all members of the Strategic Planning Committee agreed to a set of proposals for discussion and approval at the next Federal Council meeting planned for 14 October 2016.

The Five Year Strategic Plan states AARES Core Purpose, Vision, Mission and Objectives to guide it in its decision making and day-to-day activities. The development and implementation of the Five Year Strategic Plan is directed at enhancing the contribution and value AARES provides its members as evidenced by:

- growth in AARES membership and a demographic that supports a sustainable future for the society;
- more active engagement of members in society activities;
- increased recognition of AARES to decision makers in the AEFREA sectors of Australasia and beyond; and
- stronger alliances with external bodies in Australia and New Zealand, and allied organisations.

## AARES Five Year Vision

AARES is the pre-eminent society promoting research relevant to Australasia in AEFREA.

## AARES Core Purpose

To foster and promote Australasia-relevant research in the five key areas of AEFREA, and to support public dialogue and better decision making in the AEFREA areas of interest.

## AARES Activities

1. Fostering and promoting AEFREA knowledge, skill development and exchange.
2. Facilitating AEFREA professional networks.
3. Fostering AEFREA policy-related discussion and analysis.
4. Supporting AEFREA professions.
5. Facilitating AEFREA career development.

## AARES Strategic Priorities

### 1. AARES governance

#### Objectives

- Sharpen AARES strategic focus.
- Increase AARES transparency in decision making and inclusiveness.
- Increase interaction between AARES Branches and Federal Council.

#### Roadmap

- Engage a contractor to audit and assess AARES governing documents to ensure compliance and appropriate governance arrangements.
- Develop and oversee implementation of AARES's Australasian focus, vision, core purpose and actions.
- Council will set Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely (SMART) strategic goals and ensure that Council Meetings focus on overseeing resourcing and implementation of these goals.
- Council will regularly review progress toward its SMART goals, and review policies and procedures to ensure their currency, clarity, inclusiveness and transparency.
- Increase communication between members, Federal Council and Branches to improve information flow, participation in and transparency of decision-making processes.
- Open annual calls for nominations for all AARES office bearers. Introduce electronic as well as postal voting for positions at AARES Federal Council, and councillors foster nominations from Branches. Introduce option to write-in the names of nominees for the following year's election who have accepted to be nominated for key offices.

## 2. Knowledge generation, sharing and transfer in the AEFREA areas of interest.

### Objectives

- Support, publish and publicise research on AEFREA topics.
- Exchange and develop knowledge, information, experience and networking via conferences, symposia, Branch meetings and webinars.
- Improve mentoring of early career professionals.

### Roadmap

- Maintain and develop AJARE as a flagship output of the Society.
- Maintain and develop the AARES annual conference as a key forum for knowledge sharing and exchange.
- Develop multiple mentoring opportunities for early career researchers.
- Provide a career fair at AARES conferences for companies to share employment opportunities for both entry-level and more senior positions, and also provide an opportunity for them to share opportunities in AEFREA areas of interest.
- Communicate research via online or magazine format publications (e.g. Choices, PolicyForum.net, *The Conversation* and *The Mandarin*).
- Develop a strategy to increase frequency of AARES symposia.
- Develop a strategy to maintain and increase use of webinars.

## 3. Management, operation and administration.

### Objectives

- Increase capacity to support Federal and Branch executives, obtain sponsorship, engage with members and promote AARES.

### Roadmap

- Determine appropriate development and promotions activities, including the possibility of recruiting a part-time individual to undertake these duties (up to \$60,000 for 2017-18).
- Develop and implement an AARES promotion, marketing and communication plan, to increase membership and raise sponsorship.
- Consider membership pricing strategies.
- Increase AARES's capacity to use iMIS database software.
- Report on relevant SMART goals.

## 4. Professional learning of AARES members.

### Objectives

- Enhance professional learning opportunities for members to enhance their capabilities in decision making.

### Roadmap

- Introduce and promote open, competitive travel grants for members.
- Trial a career fair and Three-Minute Thesis at 2017 AARES conference.

- Develop and resource an early-career mentoring program for academic and non-academic members.
- Ask universities and non-academic agencies to sponsor internships, employment, and sabbatical opportunities for AARES members.

## 5. AJARE and other publications.

### Objectives

- Lift AJARE impact factor and policy contributions.
- Develop new publication outlets to increase impact and visibility of AARES's members work.

### Roadmap

- Maintain the title - *Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics (AJARE)*.
- Work with Wiley and editors to increase readability, visibility and citations of AJARE papers.
- Pursue topical applied publications via special issues of Choices and EuroChoices, and publications such as PolicyForum.net, *The Conversation* and *The Mandarin*.
- Partner with other disciplines (e.g. life sciences) or regions (e.g. India) on special issues that are inter-, trans- and multi-disciplinary, but focused on a certain issue.

## 6. Australasian and international links.

### Objectives

- Maintain and strengthen domestic and international relationships.

### Roadmap

- Strengthen relationships with ACIAR, AAEA, AERE, ASAE, CAERE, EAAE, EAAERE, IAAE, WEAI, Crawford Fund, ESA and other societies to use synergies, increase opportunities for AARES members.

## 7. AARES conference, symposia and debates.

### Objectives

- Increase conference value to attendees.
- Increase symposia frequency.
- Introduce annual President's debate.

### Roadmap

- Conference timing to avoid school start week, child-minding options provided, registration costs controlled, day-long streaming, paper quality lifted, increased focus on quality posters with publication in AgEcon Search.
- Replace some paper sessions with "discussion" sessions to give authors of new ideas or work in "early stages" opportunities to gain feedback.
- President will chair annual public debate.

## 8. AARES profile.

### Objectives

- Increase AARES profile.

### Roadmap

- Determine appropriate development and promotions activities, including the possibility of recruiting a part-time individual, to undertake these duties (up to \$60,000 for 2017-18).
- Consult with Branches to grow membership and lift participation at AARES events.
- President to meet government and industry leaders to promote AARES.
- Promotion of the Society across close regional emerging economies where existing competitive associations do not exist.