**MEDIA ALERT 1 February 2024**

*Please contact* *Cathy Reade* *0413 575 934 to arrange interviews.*

*All media materials will be posted* [*here*](https://www.aares.org.au/AARES2024) *or available on request.*

*Media are welcome to attend – please contact Cathy to register.*

*The short program is available*[*here*](https://www.aares.org.au/Events/AARES-2024/program/) and the detailed conference program [here](https://virtual.oxfordabstracts.com/#/event/4802/program)*.*

*The abstract book is* [*here.*](http://www.aares.org.au/files/aares_conference_2024/Abstract_book_2024_01_31.pdf)

**GRAND CHALLENGES AT THE FRONTIER OF AGRICULTURE, MINING AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

The grand challenges facing the Australasian region and beyond, such as biosecurity, climate change, environmental degradation, energy system transitions, and food security are the focus of the agenda as leading economists from around Australia and the world meet (6-9 February) for the 68th Annual Conference of the Australasian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society (AARES). AARES is the pre-eminent society promoting research and tertiary education relevant to Australasia in agricultural, environmental, food, and resource economics and agribusiness. The conference theme is *Grand Challenges at the Frontier of Applied Economics.*

Some of the distinguished international and keynote speakers at the event, and their presentation topics include:

* **Professor Jonathan Rushton** who leads the University of Liverpool Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Food Systems,will deliver the Crawford Fund Keynote, highlighting that for every dollar spent on food, there is a cost of between one and three dollars in negative impacts and is calling for Governments to withstand the tide of criticism and set policy so we have the true cost of food.
* **Professor Prabhu Pingali** from the Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University, and Chair of the Governing Board of ICRISAT will address agricultural and food system challenges in the Asia-Pacific.
* **Dr Jenny Gordon**, Honorary Professor at the Centre for Social Research and Methods, ANU will present the Keith Campbell Distinguished Lecture on the need for better responses to the biggest risks to the global trade system - security policies responding to geopolitics, and populist responses to economic inequality*.*
* **Professor Quentin Grafton,** Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU and UNESCO Chair in Water Economics and Transboundary Water Governance will explain new research showing Australian households, both urban and rural, are willing to pay in excess of $200 per year to ensure good drinking water for every Australian.
* **Professor John Quiggan** from the University of Qld will deliver a Keynote Address on energy decarbonisation, arguing that solar power will find ways around barriers to installation, producing a more rapid global transition than is currently projected.
* **Associate Professor Ariel Ortiz-Bobea** from Cornell University will focus on the need for substantial increases in agricultural R&D spending to compensate for the climate-induced slowdown of agricultural productivity.
* **Professor John Thwaites AM**, former Victorian Deputy Premier, and Chair of the McKinnon Institute for Political Leadership will deliver a Keynote Address suggesting that researchers and political decision-makers need to change their practices so there is greater collaboration between the two cultures.
* **Professor Stuart Whitten,** Research Director of Sustainability Pathways at CSIRO Environment will discuss the policy and technology roadmaps for Australia to rapid and plausible decarbonisation.
* **Dr Richard Yao,** a research economist at Scion (NZ Forest Research Institute) will discuss the valuation of ecosystem services provided by trees and forests, noting analysis in Darwin that showed an annual value of AU$24.24 per tree, accumulating to AU$713,200 annually for urban park and street trees.

*In addition to distinguished* [***invited speakers***](https://www.aares.org.au/Events/AARES-2024/invited-speakers/)***,*** *there are almost 200 presentations across a broad range of energy, agriculture, development and environment issues.*