**Embargoed: 4am, 6 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)

**A DIFFERENT 10 COMMANDMENTS TO INFLUENCE POLITICIANS’ DECISIONS**

Best evidence is not always given the attention it deserves by politicians. It is vital for researchers to better understand what is important to politicians and adapt their approaches to influence the policy setting process. Reforms to political processes that make it more likely robust evidence is used in policy setting should receive more attention.

These are the insights to be presented by Professor John Thwaites AM, former Victorian Deputy Premier, and Chair of the McKinnon Institute for Political Leadership, in his Keynote Address to the Australasian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society (AARES) Conference, being held from 6-9 February. AARES is the pre-eminent society promoting research relevant to Australasia in agricultural, environmental, food, and resource economics and agribusiness. The conference theme is *Grand Challenges at the Frontier of Applied Economics.*

“Researchers and expert economists have knowledge and insights that are vital if we are to meet some of the grand challenges facing Australia and our region such as biosecurity, climate change, environmental degradation and climate change,” said Professor Thwaites, who is also Professorial Fellow at Monash University, and Chair of the Monash Sustainable Development Institute and Climateworks Centre.

“But are politicians and decision-makers listening to the experts?”

“Research evidence is often not used in the political process because of the different drivers of science and politics and the nature of modern government. Politics and research have different timescales and focus.”

“If researchers are to influence politicians, they need to better understand politics and politicians.”

Professor Thwaites will explain the ‘ten commandments’ of influencing government to help guide the way in which researchers present their work to have the most influence.

“Researchers and political decision-makers need to change their practices so there is greater collaboration between the two cultures. Some institutional reforms which bring together expert researchers, robust evidence and decision-makers should also be considered,” Professor Thwaites concluded.