

## Incoming President's statement

Dear members and supporters of AARES,

I am honoured to have been elected as your President for 2023.

2023 will be a big year for our society as we continue to rebound from the impact of Covid-19 and the difficult economic circumstances around the world. Economists do well during crises, and it is our opportunity to help shape agendas and empower decision makers with evidence to support their judgements, many involving sensitive trade-offs.

A major focus of my time in this office will be the development of a new Strategic Plan. This is important because recent previous Presidents and outgoing councils have laid the foundation for a new strategic plan, by completing tasks and reviewing progress against the previous plan that has now expired. And the world in which we work and AARES operates has profoundly changed as a result of COVID.

A review of the last strategic plan found that while much had been achieved, there is still more to be done, and that some of these needs and priorities have shifted somewhat. While we maintain a strong focus on encouraging and developing academic life in the Society, it appears that its attendant virtues of a community of practice of intellectual inquiry and excellence are not filtering through. Maintaining and nurturing of our members, who are tackling professional life outside of the academy, in government and the private sector, with all their practical and wicked economic and policy issues, is becoming a high priority.

Therefore, drawing on my public policy background, I will work with the council to:

- **Strengthen our links with institutions outside the academy:** with policy makers in central and state governments, and the agricultural and resource industries we serve in Australia, New Zealand and beyond.
- **Work more closely with our international branches and affiliated associations such as AAEA.** Our membership in East Asia, New Zealand and North America enhances our global influence. And opportunities and interest in South Asia is also growing.
- **Strengthen early career support** - Now is also the time to double down on our commitment to early career researchers and young economists, and to level the playing field so that **all** youth thrive, and help our profession and communities we serve achieve their goals. We work together in creating opportunities for improved well-being.
- **Strengthen communication to all members** will be a priority, and I am pleased to have Claire Doll joining us in helping to revive *News and Views* and find a tone more conducive to our diverse membership in our messaging.

- **Explore creating an executive officer function.** All volunteer-led organisations are facing challenges in finding people for leadership roles, simply because time is becoming scarcer as we juggle between meeting our employers' or business demands and those of our families. I am therefore keen on exploring the possibility of creating a role of Executive Officer, as a part-time paid position, to facilitate our roles and help better meet our members' and supporters' needs. Association Executive Services will continue to manage the AARES Office and offer secretariat services. We will look for opportunities to make our partnership even more effective.
- **Develop and strengthen strategic partnerships** - As sponsorship income is becoming harder to achieve, I believe developing strategic partnerships with agencies such as the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, ACIAR, and organisations with overlapping interests to AARES in our region, would help promote our mission more effectively.
- **These directions and others that we identify will be refined with member feedback.**
  - We will consult branches on strategic directions – assisted with branch visits by the AARES Executive where practical
  - Seek individual member feedback
  - Consult key supporter groups
- **We seek to develop a new strategic plan by June 2023 and begin implementing the new strategies over the second half of 2023.**

We look forward to building on the foundation that Frank, Gavan and the past presidents have established, and seek new ways to promote our role in our region, where trained agricultural and resource economists are becoming scarce, and the scope of influence is growing.

We have an excellent team on the Council, and all the office bearers and directors on Council are dedicated to do their best, to make AARES as productive as we can be. We assure you that all of us in the council commit to do our best, to earn your support and encouragement.

Please join in with me in expressing our gratitude to outgoing President Frank Scrimgeour, immediate-past president Gavan Dwyer, and former Past President Sarah Wheeler. They kept the Society strong and functioning, during the difficult pandemic period. I am glad John Rolfe is staying in the Council, to help us steer through these directions and nurture those new hands joining us in the Council.

Thank you for your support. Please enjoy the interaction with colleagues around you and do your utmost to nurture the many aspiring young economists who have become new members of our society.