



#PRESIDENTS REPORT

This year the AAEA conference was held in Atlanta, Georgia in late July. The weather was humid and warm; very pleasant for delegates escaping the winter down under. There were a sprinkling of AAARES members at the conference, although they were often hard to spot given the size of the conference with 1,400 attendees.

The AAARES North American branch made it easier by hosting a social evening at the nearby Mellow Mushroom that involved sampling some of the local produce. Many thanks to Mike McCullough and Kate Fuller for organising. The North American branch also held their annual meeting at the conference. Kate's term as President of the branch has come to an end, with Tom Wahl from North Dakota taking on the role for the next year.

As well, Phil Pardey has stepped down as the branch councillor, with Mariah Ehmke now taking on this position. Thanks to Kate and Phil for their work, and to Tom and Mariah for stepping up.

This year I convened the AAARES symposium at Atlanta, which was titled 'The economics of managing water in Australia'. Unfortunately our winner of the Travelling North award, Saeideh Khosroshahi, was not able to attend, so one of her co-authors, Bethany Cooper, came in her place. As well, Mal Wegener was not able to give his paper so ultimately it was Bethany and myself who held the floor for the session.

David Pannell convened a symposium on adoption and behaviour change at the conference, helping to represent some of the leading work in the field.

The standout sessions for me at the conference were the four keynote speakers. Pamela Rowan gave an insightful talk about plant genetics and the challenges of supplying food. Keith Coble (the incoming AAEA President) discussed the challenges of making applied economics both relevant and elegant. Alan Olmstead demonstrated how technology advances have changed agriculture in the US, and David Card discussed empirical microeconomic analysis.

One observation is that over time there is more focus on agriculture and food, and less on environmental and resource issues. I suspect that this may be explained in part by the growth in the annual conference of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists. It may also be because topics such as agricultural trade, food policies, risk insurance and agricultural productivity are pressing policy areas that are generating more focus than environmental and resource issues at present.

A closing comment is that this is a great conference to attend – there is a huge diversity of sessions, papers and posters that are at a very high standard.

*Cheers,
John Rolfe*



Fruit Break with best first time presenter Caleb Connolly



Caleb Connolly is an agricultural economist at the Queensland Government Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) and recipient of the AARES 2019 'best first-time presenter' award. He shares his highlights of AARES 2019.

What was a stand-out of AARES 2019 for you?

It was a really valuable opportunity to connect with people from many branches of economics and from all around the world. After having connected with other applied economists at AARES, I came back to work feeling encouraged in the work we do helping land managers make informed decisions about changes to their farming systems.

What did you think of the early career aspects of AARES?

It was great to have the chance to attend the early career economist event and there was a real sense of collegiality. Senior economists with private, academic and government backgrounds were willing to share the professional and personal learnings from their years' of experience.

A few sentiments that encouraged me include:

- o 'How' you do your work is just as important as 'what' you do. Positive relationships and culture matter (Prof. Ross Kingwell)
- o It's beneficial to learn at least one other discipline so that you can understand those around you and collaborate better (Prof. Wendy Umburger).
- o Find 'your' economics. Help people to understand your work by explaining concepts from a practical angle and using illustrations and examples (Gavan Dwyer).
- o Value feedback and comments – taking on rigorous feedback now will prepare you for future work (Dr. Deborah Peterson).
- o A number one motivator at work is appreciation for a job well done, so remember to thank the people that you work with (A/Prof. Bill Malcolm).

Can you tell us a bit about your experience presenting at AARES?

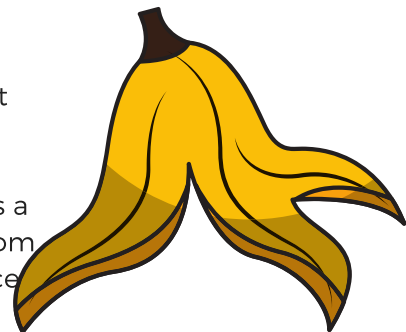
The AARES experience was very encouraging for me. Presenting at AARES alongside my colleagues exposed me to different presentation approaches and was a great opportunity for feedback from a technical audience of experienced economists.

Anything else you would like to add?

AARES provided an opportunity to promote the work completed by the DAF Agricultural Economics team on the economic assessment of best management practices for banana growing.* The success of this project was due to the contributions of our industry stakeholders, the project research team and the input of participating growers.

I might also add that AARES was a good opportunity to give people a taste test of our fantastic Far North Queensland bananas!!!

* The economic assessment of Best Management Practices for banana growing project was funded through the Queensland Government Reef Water Quality program.



Sally Harvey, Caleb Connolly, and Meg Star at Melbourne AARES 2019

Measuring the Returns to Investment in Research, Development and Extension in the Australian Grains Industry

vic Branch Webinar: September 4th at 12.00Pm EST



The Australian grains industry is fundamental to the overall agricultural sector, comprising one of Australia's largest category of food exports. Over recent decades, the grains industry has faced challenges. A slowing in the total factor productivity of the industry has been brought about by factors such as climate change, extreme weather events, declining research, development and extension, and slower adoption of new technologies. This has been coupled with a surge in competition from emerging markets due to price advantages. In order to increase productivity and maintain international competitiveness, greater and better-targeted investments in research, development and extension is required.

Equilibrium Displacement Models (EDMs) are useful for estimating the net benefits of agricultural R&D and the distribution of these benefits along the value chain, providing a way of evaluating the merits of different research investments. This research project develops three EDMs, one for each main agroecological region in Australia—Western, Southern and Northern. Combined together, they provide a stylised representation of the Australian grains industry aiming to assist in the investment decision making process by Research Development and Extension (RD&E) funders.

Our speaker:

Kuo Li is a final year PhD student at the School of Agriculture and Food, University of Melbourne. His PhD project is sponsored by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) and supervised by AARES Distinguished Fellows Professors Garry Griffith, Ross Kingwell and Bill Malcolm. He previously worked in urban development economics in the private sector with SGS Economics and Planning. He commenced his professional career as a Victorian Government Graduate Trainee.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Register Now - [Click here](#)

Any queries please contact Rod McInnes rod.mcinnnes@optusnet.com.au

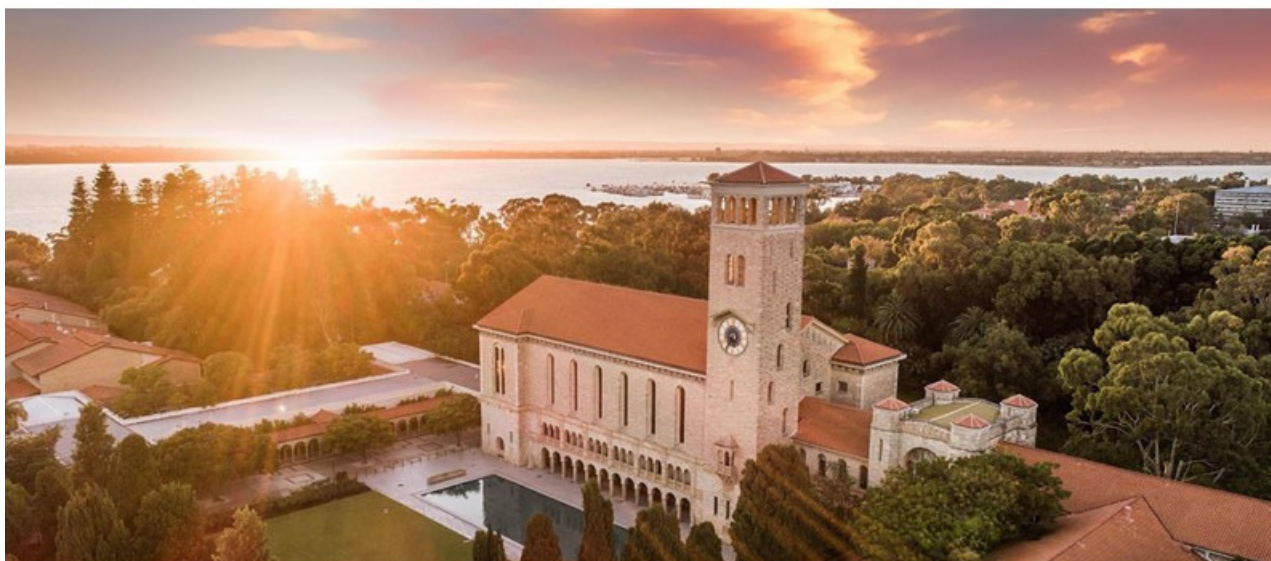
AARES 2020 PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS AND MINI-SYMPOSIA CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The Local Organising Committee for the 2020 AARES Conference welcomes submissions for full day pre-conference workshops or 90 minute Mini-Symposiums at the conference.

Workshops

The full day pre-conference workshops will be at the conference venue on Tuesday the 11th of February 2020. All topics are welcome for submission.

[CLICK HERE TO APPLY](#)



Join us at the University Club on the beautiful University of Western Australia campus to share and discuss research on important issues of agricultural and resource economics. More information: www.aares.org.au  [@AARES_Inc](https://twitter.com/AARES_Inc)  [YouTube youtu.be/kDb1RZaGWRy](https://youtu.be/kDb1RZaGWRy)

