



AARES

AUSTRALASIAN AGRICULTURAL &
RESOURCE ECONOMICS SOCIETY

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**REVISED AND UPDATED FOLLOWING 8 FEBRUARY 2024
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Strategic Plan 2024-2028

Introduction

AARES developed our first strategic plan in 2016. It was endorsed at the 2017 AGM and has been the guiding strategy document for AARES during 2017-2021. Since then, the global environment has evolved significantly due to factors such as COVID, shifting workforce dynamics, technological disruption, economic uncertainties impacting funding models, and changing expectations of younger members. The 2024-2028 AARES Strategy has been updated to help AARES navigate these challenges and to create opportunities, while remaining adaptable in this dynamic environment, in order to continue to provide benefits to our members.

The 2024-2028 AARES Strategy outlines AARES' 5-year strategy and the actions needed to achieve these goals, following five strategic themes, namely: AARES Annual Conference, Journal, Early Career Development, Knowledge & Networking Opportunities, and AARES Operations.

About AARES

Who is AARES?

We are an active community of applied economists with a well-known and highly valued conference and journal. Our members include academics, researchers, students, government officials, consultants, and private sector and industry body professionals from all over the world. AARES hosts an annual conference in February each year and publishes the *Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics* (AJARE). Ten regional branches across Australia, New Zealand, East Asia, and North America host local networking and professional development opportunities and seminars. Our high level of activity and currency can assist with an offering to those outside the academic/research community both within Australia and internationally. AARES members foster a desire for advanced learning and development in existing and emerging fields.

Our Value Proposition

AARES offers its members vibrant professional networks of like-minded people and a platform to showcase quality research and best practice for the purpose of encouraging dialogue and improving decision-making in the agri-environmental system.

AARES history

The Australian Agricultural Economics Society was founded at a conference convened in Sydney in February 1957. In 1995 the Society determined to change our name to Australian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society and in 2017 we adopted our current name, the *Australasian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society*. Each of these name changes have reflected changes and growth in the topics of interest, focus and locations of our membership through time.

AARES Vision

AARES is the pre-eminent society promoting research relevant to Australasia in agricultural, environmental, food, resource-economics and agribusiness (AEFREA).

Core Purpose

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.

Our Values

The AARES Code of Conduct is based on five Values statements, which are:

- The pursuit of excellence in all that we do;
- Fairness, integrity and responsibility in dealing with members of the Society and the wider community;
- The rights and responsibilities associated with the freedom of inquiry and expression;
- Engagement with the local, national, and international communities; and
- Innovation, creativity, and breadth of vision.

We are committed to creating an environment that values and respects people's different characteristics, experiences, perspectives, and background. We foster a culture of mutual respect, support, and cooperative and collaborative relationships among our members.

Our Partners

We have partners from all around the world and from various types of organisations including Universities, Research institutions, Federal & State governments, peak and industry bodies, independent agencies, Research and Development Corporations, and charities and international associations with similar or overlapping interests. Noting that there is significant overlap, and the two categories are not mutually exclusive, our partners could be delivery partners (those that can be leveraged for sponsorship and promotion), and participatory partners (those that can add value and engage with the broader community).

Organization structure and Board members

The AARES Board, each of whom are the Directors of AARES, is comprised of

1. the President
2. the President-Elect
3. the Immediate Past President
4. the Secretary
5. the Treasurer
6. the Investment Management Committee Chair
7. up to two early career professionals
8. one AJARE Editor
9. the Manager of Promotion and Development
10. one Director from each Branch of the Company

There are 10 Branches, which are

1. Australian Capital Territory Branch
2. East Asia Branch
3. New England Branch
4. New South Wales Branch
5. New Zealand Branch
6. North America Branch
7. Queensland Branch
8. South Australia Branch
9. Victoria Branch, and
10. Western Australia Branch

AARES activities

In pursuit of the AARES Vision and Objects, the following activities are listed in the AARES Constitution:

- Fostering AEFREA knowledge, skill development and exchange
- Facilitating AEFREA professional networks
- Undertaking AEFREA policy-related discussion and analysis
- Supporting AEFREA professions; and
- Contributing to AEFREA career development.

The activities listed in the Constitution can be translated into the following practical activities:

- Organizing and hosting the AARES Annual Conference
- Running the Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics
- Offering Awards (Academic, Conference, Honorary, Travel)
- Communicating to current and potential members (News & Views, emails, social media)
- Maintaining the AARES website
- Supporting an Annual Symposium hosted by an Australian-based branch
- Managing Society finances and actively managing investments
- Organizing Branch activities e.g. networking events, seminars, symposia
- Organizing training programs e.g. benefit cost analysis
- Supporting early-career researchers and professionals.

AARES 2024–2028 Five Strategic Themes

Strategic themes	Theme 1: AARES Annual Conference	Theme 2: Journal	Theme 3: Early Career Development	Theme 4: Networking Opportunities	Theme 5: AARES Operations
5-year Outcomes for each theme	The AARES Conference is the foremost platform for research innovation and insightful policy discussions relevant to applied economics in Australasia.	Increased interest and recognition of AJARE with improved rankings and impact factor and communication of results to academic and non-academic audiences.	AARES supports the development of Early Career Professionals (ECPs) by facilitating group-specific activities and fostering broader connections.	AARES supports the discovery and sharing of knowledge and experiences between members and affiliated organisations.	AARES is a sustainable society that prioritises volunteers, international relationships, financial stability, and sustainable governance.
KPIs for each theme	Growth in conference registrations, sponsorship, and attendees engaged in policy; Improved attendee satisfaction.	Ongoing increase in Impact Factor; Number of different types of articles published; Citation rates; Royalty income maintained; Journal research communicated to non-academic audiences.	ECP training sessions are hosted; Mentorship program is revised and reinstated; Internship opportunities are promoted.	Webinars are held every two months; New web hosting options are investigated, and changes implemented; Branches have a calendar of events.	The Strategic Plan is implemented; Service providers reviewed; Increase in willing volunteers; AARES is financially stable; New relationships built.
Actions for each theme	Design and offer engaging conference sessions; build partnerships with sponsoring or other organisations; Publish policy or perspective pieces from the conference.	Promote journal publications with focus on high-impact content <i>and</i> accessibility; Explore financial impacts of open-access and perspective pieces and special issues.	Appoint ECP representative(s); Reinstatement and restructure mentorship program; Create a system for connecting interested interns to providers.	Advertise and host webinars; Investigate web hosting platforms and change platform; Branches advertise and host events; Branches and board have two-way meeting agendas.	Produce a 5-year outcome report; Conduct a review of professional services and governance documents; Volunteer roles clearly described; Create annual operating budgets; Map relationships with international societies.

Strategic Theme 1 – AARES Annual Conference

	Conference Registrations	Conference Sponsorship	Growth in Collaboration	Policy Influence	Attendee Satisfaction
Outcomes	Increased conference registrations. Attract a diverse audience. Successful partnerships with corporations, foundations, and government entities.	Increased conference sponsorship. Enhanced engagement opportunities for sponsors. Attraction of new sponsors. Increased sponsor satisfaction level.	Increased collaboration among attendees. Successful interactive sessions, workshops, and forums.	Increased practical/applied policy maker involvement. Policy briefs and white papers summarising key insights. Successful implementation of policy recommendations.	Increased satisfaction among attendees. Positive post-conference survey results. Memorable and positive conference experience.
KPIs	Registration above 300 delegates. Increasing proportion of ECPs, ECRs, women and overseas delegates with especial attention to the Asia-Pacific. Number of successful partnerships increased.	Amount of sponsorship received in dollars and in-kind increased. Number of new sponsors increased. Sponsor satisfaction increased.	Number of reported collaborations between delegates and stakeholders increased. Number of post-conference branch seminars increased.	More practical/applied policy makers attending the conference. More policy briefs and white papers published.	Post-conference survey results with at least 90% satisfaction. More positive feedback regarding session formats and speakers.
Delegation	AARES LOC Manager of Promotion and Development	AARES LOC Manager of Promotion and Development	AARES LOC AARES Board	AARES LOC AARES Board	AARES LOC
Resources	Time of LOC member. Time of Manager of Promotion and Development. Funds for promotion campaign materials and platforms.	Time of LOC members. Time of Manager of Promotion and Development. Sponsorship package materials.	Time of LOC members. Time of AARES Board members. Materials for collaborative initiatives.	Time of LOC members. Time of AARES Board members. Materials for policy discussions and publications.	Time of LOC members. Online survey platform.
Actions	Targeted promotions. Offer group registration incentives. Constant contact with industry organisations. Investigate and decide on the conference platform.	Actively seek partnerships. Create attractive sponsorship packages. Develop customised sponsorship proposals. Promote sponsorship opportunities.	Foster collaboration and policy influence. Develop post-conference branch seminars.	Invite policymakers and industry leaders. Publish policy briefs and white papers.	Offer engaging sessions. Assess conference satisfaction via a post-conference survey. Invite relevant and engaging speakers.

Strategic Theme 2 – Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics (AJARE)

	Journal Rankings and Performance	Editorial Team and Management	Financial Aspects and Royalties	Special Issues and Communication
Outcomes	Increased Impact Factor. Improved rankings in Applied Economics. Enhanced policy relevance and accessibility.	Effective editorial management. Long-term strategic planning established to support other actions.	Increase in royalties. Profitable partnerships with Wiley. Mitigation of potential revenue loss from open access.	Increased international interest and recognition of AJARE. Improved communication and reach to a broader audience.
KPIs	Increase in –Impact Factor. –Number of articles, especially high-quality ones. –Citation rates.	Editorial team composition. Time allocated/required for editors to do their work. Journal management.	Royalties received per year. Profit share arrangements with Wiley. Royalties revenue from open access.	Number and quality of special issues. Impact factor influenced by special issues. Number of people subscribing to receive TOC and followers on X.
Delegation	Editors to identify high impact content for the journal. Associate Editors to manage workflow. Editorial Board to set Strategic direction	Editors provide overall guidance. Workflow managed by Associate Editors. Long-term strategic arrangements managed by Editors and AARES Board.	Editorial team, in consultation with AARES Board on financial management.	Guest Editors and Editorial Board identify new topics for special issues. Overall strategic direction set by the Editorial Board.
Resources	Time provided in-kind by the Editorial team. Operating budget for AJARE Editors.	In-kind contribution of time by the editorial team. Operating budget for AJARE Editors.	In-kind contribution of time. Royalties as a major income for AARES.	In-kind contribution of time. Potential funding for special issue editors.
Actions	Focus on high-impact content. Maintain a balance between impact factor goals and policy relevance. Consider journal content with broader reach to government and industry bodies.	Optimize the composition and roles of the editorial team. Manage long-term strategic arrangements effectively. Ensure efficient workflow management by Associate Editors.	Strategically manage profit-sharing arrangements with Wiley. Address potential challenges related to open access and royalties. Explore alternative revenue streams to offset potential losses.	Make use of special sections or virtual issues when special issues are not possible. Consider financial incentives for special issue editors. Consider special issues on Asia and Indo-pacific region. Employ mailing lists and social media for enhance communication.

Strategic Theme 3 – AARES Early Career Researcher (ECR) and Early Career Professional (ECP) development

	ECR/ ECP training sessions are hosted	Mentorship program is revised and reinstated	Internship opportunities are promoted
Outcomes	AARES helps facilitate training sessions to support the development of ECRs and ECPs.	AARES helps foster broader connections between ECRs/ ECPs and other researchers/ industry professionals.	AARES connects ECRs/ ECPs interested in undertaking an internship to groups that offer internships.
KPIs	A total of 2 ECR/ ECP training sessions are hosted each year.	Mentorship program is reinstated and achieves 10 matches in year 1, growing to 20 in years 2–5.	An inventory of internship opportunities is created and shared with ECRs/ ECPs.
Delegation	ECR/ ECP representatives (2). ECR/ ECP representative selection committee.	Mentorship program coordinator.	News & Views editor and AARES office manager.
Resources	An annual budget will be made available to the ECR/ ECP team. Financial support to be made available per representative towards conference attendance.	A volunteer AARES member responsible for managing program. An annual budget will be allocated to support a conference lunch. Volunteer mentors from the AARES community.	Mailchimp account for News & Views. Internship section on the AARES website (with careers & jobs).
Actions	Annual recruitment of representatives. Potential benefits of being a representative is highlighted at conference ECR/ ECP events. Resources put in to conveying prestige of ECR/ ECP representatives to encourage more interest. ECR/ ECP representatives plan, and host online training sessions.	Revise mentorship program to include more structure. Specific actions include clarifying commitments/expectations, hosting a group mentor/mentee session at the conference, providing resources to potential mentors/ mentees on the website, running a survey to better match mentors/ mentees.	Create an ECR/ ECP mailing list (tick a box at registration). List ongoing call to all members for information about internships/ work experience/ research stay opportunities. Option to establish a list of interns with a database of CVs available to share with groups offering internships.

Strategic Theme 4 – AARES Knowledge and networking activities			
	Webinars	Interactive web presence	Vibrant branches
Outcomes	Provide a platform to share members’ and guests’ experiences and ideas with an emphasis on both ‘what’ and ‘how’ research, policy impact, methodological or teaching advancements.	Up to date, easy to navigate website that enables the identification of individuals with shared interests or events that align with member interests and addresses interests of all visitors to the website.	AARES Branches facilitate connections between professionals with interests in applied economics and convene inclusive events to support networking, knowledge exchange and capacity building.
KPIs	A webinar is hosted every two months (excluding conference month). A schedule of upcoming webinars is advertised on website and in emails in advance.	A new website hosting platform is identified, and transition made. Processes to keep the website updated are implemented.	Branches identify their flagship event(s) or activities held on a regular basis and advertise these on their branch webpage. Branches have up to date member and past member lists from AARES office manager.
Delegation	AARES office manager Webinar coordinator Branch committees	Software committee AARES office manager	Branch committees
Resources	Time and subscription-based software that the AARES office, webinar coordinator and speakers are familiar with and with capacity to record and upload the recording to AARES website.	A budget will be allocated for the Software committee and AARES board to investigate flexible web platforms during 2024.	Branch volunteer time Branch budgets
Actions	A webinar to be held every two months with branches nominating a speaker/topic on rotation. The schedule of upcoming webinars to be advertised well in advance.	AARES Board to explore website options that are easy and low cost to edit, update and keep fresh, including direct editing by Board and Branch members.	Branch committees and AARES Board maintain a strong and transparent relationship with two-way meeting agenda items. Branches to support new members to meet branch representatives at the annual conference. Branches host regular locally relevant events that are advertised in advance.

Strategic Theme 5 – AARES Operations

	Strategy Implementation Accountability	Service Provider Review	Volunteering Drive	Governance and Financial Stability	Regional Expansion and Relationship Building
Outcomes	Effective implementation of the Strategic Plan. Improved reporting and oversight of KPIs. Set annual operational plan with priority actions, KPIs, and time frames.	Improved value for money from professional services, including online/digital provider. Addressed concerns about service continuity.	Improved volunteer retention and contribution. Adequate filling of volunteer positions.	Positive net annual income. Diversified AARES revenue streams. Sustainable governance of AARES.	Reciprocating agreements with other societies. Strengthened relationships with international societies.
KPIs	Progress discussed at each Board Meeting. 5-year outcome report produced.	Positive assessment of current service providers. Recommendations for maintaining or changing providers.	90% of volunteer positions filled over the strategic plan period. Reduction in volunteers filling more than one position to 0%.	AARES net annual income positive at the end of each year. New income areas pursued. An up-to-date Constitution, Policy, and associated documents.	Special sessions organized at other professional society conferences. Travel award system for other society conferences.
Delegation	Establishment of a Strategic Plan committee.	Involvement of all Board members in the assessment	Branch Presidents identifying and advertising positions	Federal Treasurer Immediate past President President-elect	AARES President and Past-President responsible for agreements.
Resources	Allocation of time during Board Meetings Resources for producing the 5-year outcome report.	List of current service providers, their cost, and outputs.	Time and effort to execute tasks.	Volunteer time for tasks A budget to review AARES finance and governance by an external provider.	Operating budget for travel award system.
Actions	Discuss progress at each Board Meeting. Report KPIs and milestones. Establish a Strategic Plan committee. Produce a 5-year outcome report.	Conduct a review of professional services. Review services, contract terms, and payment arrangements Explore service provider packages.	Adjust expectations of volunteers. Set goals based on volunteer numbers. Clearly label tasks for each volunteer	Identify new areas for diversity in AARES revenue. Identify areas where spending is ineffective. Identify AARES annual operating budget and therefore income required to remain in the net positive. Deliver an up-to-date Constitution, Policy, and associated documents.	Build relationships with international societies. Prioritize outreach efforts to specific societies. Exercise caution in managing relationships. Map current and prospective relationships with international societies.

Supplementary material

Development of the 2024-2028 AARES Strategy

The AARES 2024-2028 Strategic Plan is intended to be a short document that describes the outcomes and actions with resources allocated and progress tracked based on KPIs. The structure of the Strategic Plan is a one-page summary and a one-page implementation plan for each strategic theme. The summary is used to communicate the strategy and track implementation over the 5-year period. The Strategic Plan adopts a modular approach which allows us to focus on different strategic areas each year. The action plans, allocated resources, and KPIs are intended to be updated regularly and reflected in an annual operational plan as part of each annual planning cycle.

This section provides a timeline of progress and actions to review the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan and create a Strategic Plan for the coming 5-year-period, 2024-2028.

AARES developed our first strategic plan in 2016. This document was endorsed at the 2017 AGM. Oversight of progress towards the objectives included in the Strategic Plan became a responsibility of the past president on the AARES Board. The Association Executive Services (the organisation with the contract to run our central office) was asked to conduct a review of the Strategic Plan and delivered a report and presentation to the AARES Board in November 2022. AARES Branch committees were invited to provide feedback on this review in November 2022. Feedback was received from two branch committees.

In February 2023, a new Strategic Plan Sub-committee was created and tasked with reviewing and updating the AARES Strategic Plan. The Sub-committee consisted of Claire Doll, Emilio Morales, John Rolfe, Mikayla Bruce, Nikki Dumbrell, and Sorada Tapsuwan (chair). Upon reviewing the 2017-2021 Strategy, the Strategic Plan Sub-committee provided the following initial recommendations:

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- 1. That AARES considered fewer Priority areas in the revised Strategic Plan**
 - *The revised Strategic Plan should focus on fewer Priority areas and adopt the use of KPIs. These KPIs need to be achievable in the next 5 years, measurable and most importantly, in line with what AARES members want.*
 - *AARES would need a Committee to ensure that these Actions are implemented, KPIs are measured and tracked, and Milestones are met.*
 - *Some of the Priority areas in the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan could be carried over to the revised Strategic Plan. However, it would be important to establish KPIs and milestones for these Priorities and their relevant Action points.*
 - *A new member survey would help inform the key Priority Areas that AARES could use to revise the Strategic Plan.*
 - 2. That the AARES Board reviews and approves the draft survey for launch in June 2023**
 - *The aim of the survey is to ascertain what types of activities are important to our members (past and present), and design our Strategic Plan around those preferred activities.*
 - 3. That AARES consider employing external consultants to**
 - *Assist with drafting the Strategic Plan, and*
 - *Develop a Communication Plan.*

In May 2023, the AARES Board approved the budget of \$10,000 to engage Acil Allen to assist with the development of the Strategy document. Jan Paul van Moort and Alexandra Lobb from Acil Allen were engaged to assist with drafting the revised Strategic Plan. Both consultants have been members of AARES and therefore were familiar with the Society.

In June 2023, a Branch Engagement Meeting was organized with AARES branch representatives. The objective was to 1) inform Branch Committee members of the roadmap for the revised Strategic Plan and 2) to find out what Branch Committee members would like to see changed/included/improved in the new Strategic Plan. The roadmap was well received by the Branch Committee members, and the next steps included 1) a workshop with Branch Committee members in July/August 2023 to review the Vision, Mission, Core Objectives, and Strategies, and 2) a member survey to gather information on what AARES members want from AARES.

In August 2023, a 2.5 hour workshop was run by Acil Allen with a selected group of Branch Committee members (10 members in total). The objective of the workshop was to clarify AARES' vision and mission, identify key drivers (challenges and opportunities), and establish values/unique propositions, partners and strategic themes. Findings from this workshop were used to refine content for the member survey.

In September 2023, we launched an online survey of AARES members and past members. The aim of the survey was to understand what members looked for and valued from AARES. A total of 77 members completed the survey. The key findings were:

- Vision:
 - 73 % of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the vision, with only 6.35% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.
- Core Purpose:
 - 73 % of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the Core purpose, with only 6.35% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.
- 5-year priorities:
 - Building relationships with other international organisations was the highest priority for AARES members, followed by organising more online professional development, negotiating with potential employers, publishing members' work in online resources, and organising more symposia throughout the year.

In October 2023, a 2-hour workshop with the Board members and interested/selected stakeholders was held by Acil Allen and the Strategic Plan Sub-Committee. The objective was to compile and synthesise information from the online survey and from previous workshops so as to develop and build ownership of the strategy and resulting implementation action plans.

In December 2023, the draft 2024-2028 Strategy was circulated to all AARES members for feedback. We received feedback from past members, current members, members from overseas branches, and from branches themselves. All the feedback was compiled and used to revised the Strategy document.

In February 2024, the 2024-2028 AARES Strategy was adopted by the Board and presented to members at the AGM.