



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry**



# **Straight from a‘BARES mouth**

The essential guide to life and work  
at ABARES



# What does ABARES do?

**We are a professionally independent research organisation that provides robust and objective data, analysis, and advice. We inform government policy and private decisions affecting Australia's agriculture, fisheries, and forestry sectors.**

**At ABARES you work in multidisciplinary teams with other economists and scientists and get the chance to apply the skills you learnt at university and learn new ones.**

*"We tell the story of the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors – what is driving performance, their sustainability and market outcomes."*

Dr Jared Greenville, ABARES  
Executive Director



## Data and analysis

ABARES has access to data not available to most researchers. We conduct our own surveys and have access to data from other national and state organisations and industry bodies.

## Research

We have a reputation for undertaking independent, rigorous and objective research which people trust. However, unlike academia, our research is focussed on directly addressing public policy issues. ABARES also provides the opportunity to author and publish high-profile reports. Our staff take great pride in placing their name on a report and stand behind the quality of their work.

## Subject matter expertise

Many of our staff are subject matter experts with a licence to operate in the public eye, as well as shape policy within the department. Other parts of the department rely on ABARES expertise to understand historical policy settings and help them develop new policy.

## Policy advice

We provide the evidence-base for good policy. We shape the future of the agriculture, fisheries, and forestry sectors by leveraging our engagement with policy areas, our understanding of the key drivers and trends in the industry, and our awareness of the priorities of the government of the day.



# What skills does ABARES look for?

**A good foundation in economics, science and data science is invaluable – as is the ability to network, communicate and present technical research.**

*“Our research is only useful if we can explain it to the right people and influence policy development.”*

Peter Gooday,  
Assistant Secretary



## **Effective communication**

This is how we make an impact with our work. The ability to distil and explain complex technical ideas in an easy-to-understand manner, while also being able to engage and defend the research academically.

## **Technical skills and the desire to learn**

ABARES looks for a range of technical skills and the desire to develop these skills further. Staff take on many roles at ABARES; from applying economic and scientific frameworks to policy problems, to modelling and data analysis, database management, and data visualisation.

## **An inquisitive nature**

We value an innate curiosity and desire to really dig into a problem to get to the bottom of it. Our people have an interest in the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors as well as a creative mindset and the ability to think outside the box when approaching policy problems.

## **Open-mindedness**

We always keep an open-mind and explore the issues in full. We recognise the importance of having the self-awareness to know your own limitations and when to draw on the expertise of your team, or to identify gaps in your team’s knowledge.



# What is it like to work at ABARES?

**Our work is diverse. It ranges from producing forecasts on a quarterly cycle to complex projects that take years to complete.**

**You get the opportunity to examine an issue in detail and develop robust and insightful solutions.**

*“Working for ABARES allows you to dig into problems. You get a chance to sit down and think about the many complexities while also developing technical skills.”*

Charley Xia, Agricultural Forecasting and Policy



## **Diverse interests**

Our staff engage in a healthy work/life balance and have a wide range of interests. From mountain biking to astronomy, gardening to white water rafting, and from lengthy exhaustive discussions about Star Wars to lengthy exhaustive discussions about Star Trek.

## **Inclusive**

ABARES values staff diversity and the unique perspectives this facilitates for our work. As an organisation, we strive to foster a culture where all ideas are assessed on their merit.

## **Collaborative**

Much of the work undertaken at ABARES is multidisciplinary in nature and requires staff to engage with other teams and organisations. It is a unique environment where your colleagues are not competing with you and are always willing to collaborate on research projects.

## **Professional development**

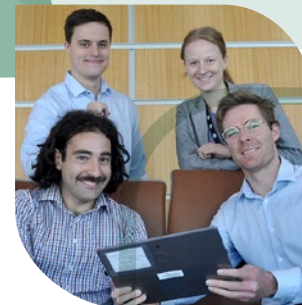
ABARES actively encourages the development of subject matter expertise and supports the professional development goals of staff. A significant number have pursued advanced degrees or other qualifications, supported by the organisation.

## **A high degree of autonomy**

As many projects have a long-term research focus, staff typically have a lot of autonomy for their day-to-day tasks, working towards their team's longer-term objectives.

## **Flexibility**

At ABARES, staff can take advantage of flexible work hours and remote working arrangements to suit their needs.





# What brings people to ABARES?

**ABARES is an attractive workplace for those seeking to apply what they've learnt through their university degrees. When you apply for a job at ABARES, you'll find that our interview process is different to the typical public service interview.**

**We want to know how you would apply the economic and scientific frameworks you've learnt about through your degrees to the policy problems we deal with. Our interview panels are usually filled with other ABARES staff – who have the same educational background as you and really enjoy what they do.**

*"I have worked with people with a variety of skillsets and in a range of multi-disciplinary teams."*

Jane Stewart,  
Program Lead



## Developing technical skills

At ABARES, you'll find a high concentration of subject matter experts with degrees and a background in economics, science, mathematics, statistics, data science and social science, providing you with the opportunity to connect with other researchers and continue your learning and development past your degree. Since ABARES is a multi-disciplinary organisation, you also learn new skills from your colleagues – skills that were not the original focus of your degree.

## Diversity of work

ABARES looks at a wide range of policy issues and drivers affecting the agriculture, fish, and forest sectors, including climate policy and its impact on agriculture and the rural economy; the need for a balance between sustainable and productive uses of limited natural resources such as water, fish, and forests; economic farming of the impacts of pest and weed incursions; and measuring the changes in farmers production efficiency and technological capability.

## Solving problems

We like to really dig into problems and make sense of the issues, so that we can improve the understanding of the problem, the drivers affecting outcomes, and potential solutions.





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