

A special message from The Hon Kate Thwaites

Special Envoy for Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience



I begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which this conference takes place – the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples – and I pay my respects to Elders past and present. It's a delight to be here and welcome you to Parliament House this morning. I am sorry I can't be with you today in person.

Thank you to the Crawford Fund for Food Security Chair, The Hon John Anderson for the introduction. I wish to acknowledge all Crawford Fund for Food Security board members, including The Hon Joel Fitzgibbon, former Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Fund's patrons in the audience, The Hon Margaret Reid and The Hon Neil Andrew. And I also acknowledge Professor Kadambot Siddique, recipient of the Crawford Fund Medal.

Congratulations to the Crawford Fund for Food Security for its annual conference – Australia's key food security event - which has been bringing national attention to key food and nutrition security issues since 1992.

Identifying and bringing together experts and practitioners from around Australia and the globe is a testament to your network. My respect goes to the passionate people involved in your efforts, through collaboration, partnership and training, to achieve more productive and sustainable agriculture, less poverty and hunger, and a more secure world despite so many challenges including climate change, conflict and economic shocks.

A special thank you to those speakers who have travelled from afar, Prof Glenn Denning from the USA, Dr Aditi Mukherji from Kenya, Prof Graham Sem from PNG, Selane Tairea from the Cook Islands, Dr Ando Radanielson from the Philippines, Dr Purnima Menon from India and Acacio Sarmiento da Silva from Timor Leste.

And I am delighted to know there is such a large group of young people here with the Crawford Fund's NextGen program, including the conference scholars and members of its RAID Network.

As Australia's Special Envoy on Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience, it's my pleasure to welcome you all on behalf of the Australian Government to an event on a topic that resonates so strongly with me.

We cannot talk about food security without talking about climate change. Re-designing the food system to be healthy, sustainable, and more resilient to climate change no doubt consumes many in the audience.

Locals in the audience will be acutely aware that here in Australia, we are witnessing the impacts of climate change on food security. Extreme weather events have, at times, caused fruit and vegetable shortages, increased prices, and severely strained supply chains. When we apply what

we've experienced here to an international context, we know that the threats of not acting and adapting only amplify.

I note that this year's conference aims to identify the issues and solutions for transforming agrifood systems in response to climate change, addressing the trade-offs between food production and net-zero targets, pursuing sustainable intensification, and promoting inclusivity and equity.

This is so important as we move towards COP30 this year and onto COP31.

I am impressed by the number of case studies being presented by our overseas partners and leading Australians and particularly want to note the work of ACIAR – the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research – as our specialised agency that brings together Australian and partner country expertise to address and build capacity for the similar challenges we all face to mitigate and adapt to climate change and implement more resilient agricultural practices – improving food security and livelihoods.

All the very best for fruitful discussions today. From the case studies on show, it would seem that there are many proven, scalable technologies and practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help Australian and partner country farmers adapt to climate change to build resilience for food security and I look forward to hearing from the Crawford Fund for Food Security on the 'actionable recommendations for policymakers and practitioners' that may well be the real challenge of your deliberations.

Kate has served as the Federal Member for Jagajaga in Melbourne's north-eastern suburbs since 2019.

Kate is currently the Special Envoy for Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience. Previous roles she's held in Government include Assistant Minister for Social Security, Ageing and Women, and Chair, Joint Standing Committee for Electoral Matters.

She is the author of 'Enough Is Enough', about making the Australian Parliament and community a safer place for women, written with former MP Jenny Macklin.

She holds a BA (Journalism) and a Master of International Development. Prior to entering Parliament Kate worked as a journalist, as well as in international development, and the public service.

Kate lives in Jagajaga with her husband and two children.