

Crawford Fund for Food Security Annual Conference

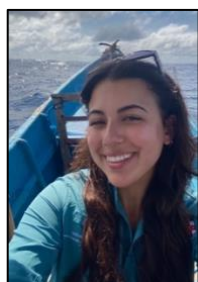
2026 Scholar Bios

Md Reaz Chaklader (WA Committee)



Dr Md Reaz Chaklader is a Research Scientist in Aquaculture Nutrition and Fish Health at DPIRD, Western Australia. He completed his PhD on testing alternative protein ingredients for sustainable aquaculture within a circular-economy framework and received the Chancellor's Commendation and Graeme Robertson Award for his research excellence. He has authored 79 scientific papers, with more than 2,271 Google Scholar citations, an h-index of 30 and an i10-index of 57. His research focuses on sustainable aquafeeds, fish health, and seafood end-product quality, integrating nutrition, microbiome analysis, molecular biology, histology, blood biochemistry, shelf-life, and product quality assessment to support global food security and aquaculture sustainability.

Tahnee Chandler (NSW Committee)



Tahnee is a PhD Candidate at the University of New South Wales focusing on the role of knowledge systems in small-scale aquaculture communities in the Asia Pacific. Her research interests are in aquaculture development and food security. She is passionate about impactful community-based research that develop sustainable aquaculture solutions for marine ecosystems and the people who depend on them. Tahnee received her Bachelor of Advanced Science (Honours) at the University of New South Wales. Her honours thesis, with the UNSW Aquaculture Research Group, explored on the adoption of better management practices in rice-shrimp farming in the Mekong Delta. She has experience in community-based research, both domestically and internationally. Tahnee is a proud Bidjigal woman.

Hannah Churton (QLD Committee)



Hannah recently completed her PhD at the Queensland University of Technology, examining the policy, governance and institutional conditions that enable the transition to more sustainable and resilient food systems. Her research explored pathways for developing high-value industries from horticultural production losses in Australia, with a particular focus on the role of policy coordination, regional capability and innovation systems. In 2025, Hannah was awarded a Crawford Fund Student Award to extend her research to the Pacific, undertaking fieldwork in Fiji to examine how horticultural systems can support new forms of value creation, industry development and climate resilience.

She has more than 15 years' experience across diplomacy, international development and public policy, including with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and is interested in supporting practical policy approaches to sustainable agricultural and regional development.

Isobel Clift (NSW Committee)



my research in a PhD.

I'm a recent graduate from a Bachelor of Science (major animal health, disease and welfare)/Bachelor of Animal Veterinary Bioscience at USYD, where I finished my degree with an Honours project in Laos that got me excited about pursuing a career in agriculture for development. This involved a lick-block supplementation trial in commercial dairy buffalo to investigate its effect on methane production and productivity. Through these experiences I've gained a particular interest in sustainability and animal health in development livestock agriculture, and am considering continuing

Elisa Dalla Rosa (NSW Committee)



experience continues to shape my research direction and motivation. I am keen to contribute to collaborative, field-based research projects that support agricultural resilience and food security. I truly look forward to connecting with others working toward similar goals!

I am a Master's researcher in plant pathology at Southern Cross University, currently working on a fungal pathogen (*Calonectria* sp.) affecting *Melaleuca alternifolia* (tea tree), focusing on disease characterisation and opportunities for improving host resistance. My long-term goal is to apply this knowledge to crop protection in developing countries, particularly across Africa, where strengthening food security is a key driver of my work. Before moving to Australia, I spent some time in East Africa, where I witnessed the impact plant diseases have on smallholders and their production systems. That

Jan de Kock (TAS Committee)



internship at the beginning of this year focused on soil science, adoptability, income and food security for Fijian and Samoan smallholder systems. This opportunity piqued my interest for International Development and smallholder systems two areas in which I am highly engaged in. I am excited about the opportunity the Crawford Fund provides for me to meet the people who work and are able to make a change in Australian and International agriculture for a food secure future.

My name is Jan, I am a third year student at the University of Tasmania studying a Bachelor of Agricultural Science. I am originally from Sydney however came down to Tasmania for my studies because the degree offered by UTAS was ideal for my passion of food security, regenerative agriculture, indigenous practices and plant physiology. Through my time at UTAS I have found myself highly interested in systems based thinking, attempting to zoom out and understand current agricultural problems faced in Australia and abroad. I have had the opportunity to work with CSIRO during an

Sangay Dendup (NT Committee)



Sangup is currently pursuing Higher Degree by Research (Masters) in Charles Darwin University in Northern Territory. With a background in Horticulture, Mr. Sangay started his career as a Horticulture Officer in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Royal Government of Bhutan in 2010 and within a span of 12 years, he has advanced through the ranks and progressed to the position of a Principal Horticulture Officer. In 2017, he has won Joint Japan/World Bank Postgraduate Scholarship to pursue his Master of Environmental Management and Development from Australian National University, Canberra.

With professional experience in agriculture research, development and extension, he has worked closely with the farming communities supporting the transformation of agri-food system to improve rural livelihood and climate resilience for over 14 years. Having served as a Project Manager for Bhutan's national initiative of Million Fruit Tree Plantation Project, his current research focuses on Assessing the Economies-in-Society-in-Nature of Bhutan's Million Fruit Tree Plantation Project. The study examines the social, economic and ecological impact of the large scale fruit tree plantation initiatives and how the co-existence of economy, society and nature is envisioned through such projects. Sangay is looking forward to establish professional networks and partnerships for collaborative research of mutual benefits for resilient agri-food systems through initiatives like 'sustain nature first approaches'.

Jessica Deurinck (NSW Committee)



My name is Jess and I am originally from Belgium where I graduated with a Master's degree in Environmental Engineering. After my studies, I travelled to New Zealand, where I discovered the world of bees and how these little creatures fuel an entire industry. In 2024, I moved to Australia and decided to become part of this industry by working for several commercial beekeepers based in Kingaroy, QLD. After two years of intense buzzing, I am now happy to be undertaking honey bee-led research as a PhD student at the Bee Research and Extension Lab at Southern Cross University.

My thesis will evaluate queen bee breeding programs from a genetic, social, and economic perspective to better understand the facilitators and barriers to their success, and to bridge the gap between these programs' outcomes and their commercial adoption. The recent incursion of the parasite Varroa destructor into Australia, carrying resistance genes to synthetic treatments, has already led to devastating colony losses in SE Queensland. This means breeding for quality queens is now more crucial than ever to help beekeepers reduce their reliance on miticides and maintain healthy colonies, which, in turn, can support the agricultural sector through pollination services.



Arthur Doyle (NSW Committee)

Arthur holds a Bachelor of Government and International Relations and a Bachelor of Business (Honours) from Griffith University. In 2024, Arthur was awarded a New Colombo Plan Scholarship, completing honours research on the impacts of climate change on subsistence agriculture in Marovo Lagoon, Solomon Islands. His research explored residents' lived experience of climate change, impacts to food security, and the erosion of traditional knowledge, with a focus on elevating local voices to inform policy responses.

Arthur has undertaken study in Fiji, completed an internship with UNESCAP in Bangkok, and gained research experience through the Griffith Asia Institute's Pacific Hub. He is also a World Food Forum Youth Representative for Asia and the Pacific, contributing to youth-led conversations on sustainable food systems. Arthur has a deep interest in the Pacific and aims to continue research that supports resilient coastal communities and locally led development.

Laxmi Ghimire (WA Committee)

Laxmi is a third-year PhD candidate at Curtin University researching lupin proteins for next-generation gluten-free foods. Her work focuses on protein extraction and processing to enhance functionality, with the goal of achieving gluten-like cohesiveness, elasticity, and extensibility in dough systems. By developing approaches to tailor lupin protein performance, she aims to improve the texture and quality of gluten-free bread while supporting the use of locally grown, climate-resilient legumes as scalable protein ingredients.

Edward Golding (TAS Committee)

My name is Edward, I am a Bachelor of Agricultural Science student at the University of Tasmania, and have just finished my undergraduate degree. Majoring in Crop Science and Plant Health, my studies have given me a foundation in plant biology, disease management, and sustainable production systems, while sparking an interest in how climate and environmental change overlap with food security. I am particularly interested in how developing countries can adapt agricultural and other food related practices to build resilience against climate stressors such as drought, shifting growing seasons, and resource scarcity.

I am attending the Crawford Fund Conference to deepen my understanding of current research, and to learn about opportunities within the industry. I am excited to learn how scientific innovation and agricultural knowledge can be combined to support food systems in various regions.

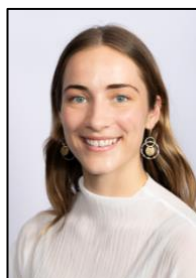


Amalya Harding (QLD Committee)



I am a multidisciplinary scientist and PhD candidate working in Pacific Islands food security and public health research. In addition to my research, I am an active writer in Australia's international strategic policy space and an advocate for youth engagement in climate action and women in STEM. My background in climate science and ecology has supported my systems-based approach to my work, which considers drivers of change for food security and health in the Pacific, from climate change, environmental degradation, water security, education and culture, through to trade, development, and geopolitics. I am an alumnus of the Women in Strategic Policy Program (WISP), was an FAO World Food Forum Youth delegate in 2024 and a co-chair of the inaugural New Colombo Plan Alumni Consultative Group.

Mary Higgins (ACT Committee)



Mary Higgins grew up in a rural town in Queensland, where she developed an appreciation for the role of agriculture, community resilience, and regional development in shaping livelihoods. She currently works in international development with the Australian Himalayan Foundation, supporting programs across South Asia that focus on health, education, gender equality, and community development. Mary is undertaking a Master of National Security Policy and is particularly interested in the connections between food security, development, and regional stability.

As an Australian Government New Colombo Plan Scholar, she lived and worked across Cambodia, India, and Bhutan, gaining firsthand experience of development challenges and opportunities throughout the Indo-Pacific. Drawing on her background in international development and her studies in national security, Mary is keen to explore how food systems, agricultural development, and international cooperation contribute to both human security and broader national security outcomes. She looks forward to engaging with experts and practitioners at the Crawford Fund Conference.

Cassandra Howell (WA Committee)



Cassandra is a researcher and agricultural extension practitioner based in Western Australia. She has a background in sustainable agriculture, ecological restoration and sustainable resource management, with a particular focus on saline and degraded landscapes. Cassie is interested in how natural and agricultural ecosystems interact and can be managed to ensure security and prosperity for both people and nature. She has knowledge across topics including landcare, food & resource security, drought resilience, the circular economy and science diplomacy.

Having experience in both Australia and the wider Indo-Pacific region, she is passionate about building strong local and regional connections, collaborations and knowledge sharing networks.



Madison Isemonger (NSW Committee)



Madison studies a Bachelor of Agricultural Science (Honours) at the University of Sydney, majoring in Environmental, Agricultural and Resource Economics. She works specialises in AgTech marketing at BioScout, and serves as an advisor on the NSW DPIRD Farm Business Resilience Program, representing Young Farmers on the Advisory Committee. As Secretary of the University of Sydney Agricultural Society and a 2026 AgriFutures Horizon Scholar sponsored by the Marine Bioproducts CRC, Madison is interested in the intersection of agricultural science, economics, and global food security across the sector. Looking ahead, she is eager to step into corporate development and strategic advisory, leveraging financial modelling and market analysis to help agribusinesses evaluate growth opportunities and create long-term value.

Benedetta Longoni (QLD Committee)



Benedetta is a marine biologist from Italy and a PhD candidate at James Cook University, Australia. She completed her Master's degree in Marine Biology at JCU, where her research focused on small-scale invertebrate fisheries in Timor-Leste. Working within the SHELLFISH project (a collaboration between the French National Museum of Natural History, WorldFish Timor-Leste, and international partners) and with the support of the Crawford Fund 2025, she integrated ecological, fisheries, and social data to better understand the role of coastal gleaning in supporting livelihoods and food security across the dry and wet season.

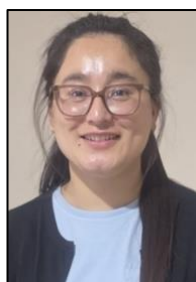
Her research interests lie in applying interdisciplinary approaches that combine marine ecology, fisheries science, ethnobiology, and anthropology to improve understanding of small-scale fisheries. Through her future PhD, Benedetta will investigate small pelagic fisheries in Melanesia by integrating remote sensing, ecological fieldwork, and community-based research to understand how environmental variability influences fisheries productivity, food security, and the resilience of coastal communities.

Zhaohan Luo (SA Committee)



Zhaohan joined Minnipa Agricultural Centre, SARDI in 2023 to focus on applied research in broadacre grains production in dryland farming systems on the Upper Eyre Peninsula (UEP). He previously worked at private research organisations such as Kalyx Australia and AgXtra to manage and provide general research support for field trials located across various rainfall zones in the southeast and lower/mid North of South Australia. Since obtaining his Honours degree in statistics in plant breeding trials, Mr. Luo had also worked alongside plant breeders at Australian Grain Technologies (AGT) on seeds production trials, and biometricians at the University of Adelaide and Analytics for the Australian Grains Industry (AGI) on GRDC and SAGIT Funded projects.

Saru Maharjan (SA Committee)



My name is Saru Maharjan, a postgraduate student from Adelaide University in Master of Science (Global Food and Nutrition Science), with a Bachelor's degree in Medical Biochemistry. I have practical experience in clinical laboratory work and a strong interest in the link between food, nutrition and public health. My capstone project focused on flavor analysis of faba bean dairy alternatives, including milk and yoghurt, and how different processing methods affect their sensory profiles, conducted in collaboration with Metabolomic SA. My goal is to become a Food Technologist, using science and innovation to develop safe, nutritious, and sustainable food solutions that support healthier and more resilient communities.

Adam Moloney (NT Committee)



Adam is an industry PhD candidate at Charles Darwin University, within the Research Institute for Northern Agriculture (RINA) in Darwin, Northern Territory. His research, undertaken in partnership with Lallemand and CSIRO, focuses on the role of silage in filling feed gaps during drought across Northern and Central Australia. The project aims to understand the economic value of silage and evaluate its effectiveness as a drought management strategy, as well as identify the conditions under which it can be used most effectively.

Through the analysis of historical climate, production, and economic data, Adam's research seeks to provide evidence based recommendations that support informed decision-making by producers. By working closely with industry partners, his goal is to develop practical tools and knowledge that help northern beef producers better manage drought when it occurs, and understand the economics of beef production during drought.

Sofiya Muniyasamy (VIC Committee)



I am Sofiya, currently pursuing my PhD at La Trobe University, Australia, under a GRDC-funded lentil research project. My research focuses on understanding the role of carbon and nitrogen metabolism in improving lentil grain yield and protein quality for functional food applications. I am particularly interested in studying how carbon–nitrogen interaction during grain filling affects nitrogen fixation, nutrient remobilisation, yield, and grain protein concentration in lentil.

I completed my BSc in Agriculture and MSc in Genetics and Plant Breeding in India, where I gained good knowledge in crop improvement, plant breeding, and stress resistance. I also completed my Master of Genome Analytics at Monash University, Australia, which helped me develop skills in genomics, bioinformatics, and plant molecular research. My research interests include pulse crop improvement, sustainable agriculture, grain quality, plant physiology, and molecular breeding. I am passionate about contributing to food security through improved lentil productivity and nutritional quality.

James O'Connor (WA Committee)



James O'Connor is a Research Associate at The University of Western Australia whose work focuses on sustainable agriculture, soil fertility, nutrient cycling, and organic amendments. His research spans laboratory incubation studies, glasshouse and field experiments, meta-analyses, and the development of innovative fertiliser technologies. He has presented his work internationally, including at the World Congress of Soil Science, and collaborates with researchers and industry partners to develop practical solutions that improve agricultural productivity while reducing environmental impacts. His current interests include biochar, waste-derived fertilisers and nutrient use efficiency.

Ellen O'Brien (TAS Committee)



I started a Bachelor of Agricultural Science driven by an interest in climate adaptation and sustainable farming. I'm passionate about helping create a future with equitable access to food and nutritional security. I also enjoy learning about agricultural extension, biosecurity, and the fascinating world of entomology. I love adventure and travel, having spent several months backpacking through regions of Southeast Asia. Upon graduation, I'd love a career that combines my interests in food security, community development, and seeing more of the world. I'm attending this conference to meet people, learn from their experiences, and explore opportunities that could help make that happen.

Lawrence Outridge (VIC Committee)



I am a passionate student, grower and ecologist completing my Master of Environment at Melbourne University. My study interests are agroecology, agroforestry and forest management. My undergraduate study was in ancient languages and history, where I fell in love with monastic communities and their multifaceted roles in medieval agrarian societies. During this time, I developed a keen interest in exploring peasant food systems, place-based lifestyles and regenerative agricultural practices, leading me eventually into the ecological sciences.

Living, studying and working on unceded Djaara country in Central Victoria, I remain deeply passionate about seeing agriculturalists, ecologists and Traditional Owners work together to restore 'upside down' country through multidisciplinary, hyper-local practices while building community food resiliency. In my free time, I volunteer with YIMBY, a community-based circular composting project and with Bush Heritage Australia.



Anshul Phaugat (VIC Committee)



I am Anshul, a PhD researcher exploring how we can grow better food in places where conventional agriculture is difficult, from space environments to regions with low-fertility soils and limited resources. My work focuses on controlled environment agriculture, crop physiology, fertigation, light, nutrients, and fruit quality, with the aim of improving crop growth, resource-use efficiency, and nutritional value in protected cropping systems. With a background in agriculture, horticulture, and plant protection, I am passionate about translating plant science into practical solutions for both Earth-based growers and future space food systems. My current research is connected with ARC Plants for Space and industry-focused protected cropping projects involving mini cucumbers and other high-value horticultural crops. Through my work, I aim to support food production in harsh environments, strengthen food security, and contribute to more resilient, sustainable agricultural systems for a changing planet and future exploration.

Aiyana Poe (SA Committee)



Aiyana Poe is a Master's by Research candidate at the University of Adelaide's School of Agriculture, Food and Wine, where her research investigates barriers to food access in rural South Australia, examining the social and logistical determinants of food insecurity and the applicability of the food desert concept beyond its traditional urban framing. Originally from Washington, DC, Aiyana brings over 4 years of experience in urban agriculture and community food systems through her work at Cultivate the City, where she managed community-shared agriculture programs and built partnerships with schools and nonprofits. This experience grounded her understanding of how food insecurity is shaped by structural conditions rather than individual circumstances. It sparked her interest in how those conditions differ across geographic and regional contexts.

Anggun Dwi Puspitoasih (ACT Committee)



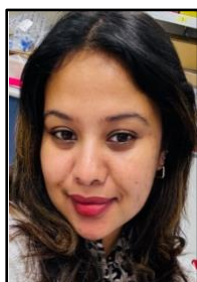
I am currently pursuing a Master of Public Policy at the ANU, with an undergraduate background in Food Technology. My interdisciplinary background has positioned me at the intersection of food systems, rural development, and public policy, particularly in relation to community resilience and inclusive development. Previously, I worked at Indonesia's Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration, where I was involved in food assistance programs and rural development initiatives. This experience gave me practical insight into the policy and implementation challenges surrounding food security and rural livelihoods. Currently, I serve as a Policy Officer at the World Food Forum Australia, contributing to food security strategy and advocating for youth participation in governance. I am particularly interested in agricultural and development policy challenges amid climate change, geopolitical tensions, and food system disruptions, with a strong interest in equitable policy and program interventions, including for youth, Indigenous, and rural communities.

Madina Rassulova (VIC Committee)



Madina Rassulova is a food systems practitioner, climate advocate, and science communicator whose work connects grassroots communities with global policy across Central Asia and the Asia-Pacific. As a Food Systems Officer at the City of Greater Bendigo, she led the regional Food System Strategy implementation while completing a MSc in Environment at the University of Melbourne. She authored two plant-forward cookbooks and a book on the intersections of food, health, ethics, and environment. When selected into the prestigious Wattle Fellowship program, she founded Seed to Serve - a Naarm-based sustainable catering platform weaving multicultural food traditions into climate-conscious dining experiences. Through her bilingual science communication platform, Madina reaches over two million monthly viewers, translating complex sustainability topics into viral posts. Her influence has been recognised internationally, including by the Asian Development Bank's Women Empowerment Platform, WFF Australia, and at UN's COP29, where she was named a Green Innovation Pioneer.

Gayathri Rathnayake (WA Committee)



I am a PhD candidate at Murdoch University, Western Australia, specialising in crop genetics, molecular biology, and crop improvement. My research focuses on understanding the genetic and molecular mechanisms underlying aluminium tolerance in chickpea, with the aim of supporting the development of stress-resilient crop varieties. I hold a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from Wayamba University of Sri Lanka and a Master's degree in Food Science and Technology from the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. Before commencing my PhD, I worked as a university lecturer in Sri Lanka for three years, gaining experience in teaching, student mentoring, and academic research. Prior to my academic career, I worked in the food industry for three years as a New Food Product Development Executive, Microbiologist, and Chemical Laboratory Analyst.

Austin Redden (SA Committee)



My name is Austin Redden, I am an Agricultural Science graduate with a keen interest in international agricultural development. With practical and research experience in international agriculture, particularly within smallholder agriculture in Africa (worked on a small holder farm in northern Tanzania and completed a research traineeship at CSIRO focusing on Africa and SE Asia). I am eager to continue on this trajectory, to learn more and find ways to work within this field. I am passionate about forming genuine connections through communication and relationship-building. I currently manage 'Breathe Easy' where I collaborate with local governments, businesses, artists and musicians to engage young people in community volunteering and environmental work. I enjoy exploring creative ways to strengthen community engagement and would love to explore opportunities within agricultural development. That is what I love about this area of agriculture is that at its core it is benefiting people and communities from within.

Growing up in rural South Australia I love drawing on similarities between farming communities at home and overseas even when the environment, culture, production constraints and systems can be wildly different. My initial interest within this area is in extension and working with people.

Adelaide Robertson (TAS Committee)



Through her work in rural communities, Adelaide has developed a strong interest in food security and the impact of the broader food environment on individual food choices, particularly in lesser connected areas. She also has a keen interest in diabetes management, disordered eating and eating disorders, and sports dietetics. In her current role, she focuses on developing practical, individualised nutrition strategies that are realistic, accessible, and evidence based. She is passionate about supporting sustainable dietary change and improving long-term health outcomes. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time outdoors hiking and running, or enjoying a good book.

Seyyed Hamid Sadati (NSW Committee)



I'm Hamid, an Iranian environmental scientist and first-year PhD candidate at Southern Cross University in Lismore, NSW. My research investigates how triazine herbicides move through and persist in Australian agricultural soils, work funded through a GRDC program aimed at giving farmers and agronomists better tools to predict residual herbicide risks to crop establishment. I'm also broadly interested in sustainable weed management, herbicide resistance, and the environmental fate of agrochemicals in relation to food and water security. My broader interests sit at the intersection of weed management, herbicide use and effectiveness, soil-agrochemical interactions, and the environmental fate of agricultural chemicals, particularly in relation to food and water security across the Indo-Pacific. I'm keen to connect with mentors and researchers working in these areas, or anyone thinking about how to translate soil and crop science into practical tools for farmers and policymakers.

Abu Bakkar Siddique (TAS Committee)



I am a PhD candidate at the University of Tasmania, where my research focuses on understanding the genetic basis of heat stress adaptation in wheat. My work integrates phenotyping, genome-wide association studies (GWAS), and candidate gene identification to investigate traits such as pollen viability, stay-green phenotype, and seed set under heat stress. I am interested in plant breeding, quantitative genetics, genomics-assisted crop improvement, and developing climate-resilient cereal crops. In addition to my PhD research, I have experience in plant phenotyping, genotyping, bioinformatics, and training students in plant sciences. I am keen to connect with academics, researchers and industry professionals working in crop improvement, plant genetics, and sustainable agriculture.

I am attending this event to expand my professional network, gain insights from leading experts, and explore opportunities for collaboration and career development in agricultural research particularly plant breeding aspect .

Amara Steven (TAS Committee)



Amara is a transdisciplinary marine economist and PhD scholar at the Tasmanian School of Business and Economics at the University of Tasmania, where her research is supported by the Blue Economy CRC. Her work examines risk through a behavioural economics lens, with a particular focus on marine industries and gender, and is informed by experience across both academic research and policy settings. She has contributed to economic analysis, policy research, stakeholder engagement, teaching, and supervision in Australia and Internationally, including through roles with the Australian Government and the OECD in Paris.

Her work has spanned fisheries and aquaculture policy, Antarctic research, economic forecasting, and government support. It includes experience across academic and policy settings, with a focus on applying economic analysis to marine industries and related policy questions. She has also contributed to work on offsets and broader resource management issues, adding to her experience in evidence-based policy analysis. Amara is also Co-Chair of the Women in Economics Network Tasmania, where she supports events and initiatives that encourage women's participation in economics and strengthen the visibility of women in the profession.

Rohan Kumar Suresh Kumar (Gardiner Foundation)



I am an early career veterinarian looking to expand my contributions to society beyond clinical practise. I have been involved in a few outreach programs (mostly related to sustainable marine fisheries management education, marine survey work and land management practise integration between indigenous land owners and national parks). I am looking to grow my connections in the agriculture sector and value opportunities to learn from new perspectives committed to strengthening global food security.

My main interests lie in:

- what work is currently underway/planned when engaging international partners on food security
- understanding the challenges that faces domestic and international agricultural partnerships
- what inhibits implementation of novel agricultural research (disconnect between research and industry best practise)
- where government interfaces with industry, R&D, regulation and trade, and how government supports/could support food security



Ramhari Timalisina (AARES)



I am currently pursuing a Master of International and Development Economics at the Australian National University (ANU) as an Australia Awards Scholar. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Science and previously worked as an Agricultural Economist at Nepal's Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development.

My academic and professional interests lie at the intersection of research and policy, particularly in areas that promote the sustainability and resilience of the agricultural sector while enhancing productivity and ensuring food security. I am especially interested in understanding the dynamics of agricultural development in developed countries and exploring the extent to which their experiences, policies, and innovations can be adapted and applied to the contexts of developing and least-developed countries.

Thi Mai Huong Tran (QLD Committee)



I'm a PhD candidate in Genetics and Aquaculture at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia. My research focuses on genetic improvement of the giant freshwater prawn (*Macrobrachium rosenbergii*), with particular interests in quantitative genetics, genomic selection, resilience, and sustainable aquaculture breeding programs. I received a Crawford Fund Student Award in 2025 which allowed me to travel to Vietnam as part of my studies.

Zoe Witkowski (TAS Committee)



I am a Marine Science graduate and current Policy Officer with Tasmania's Department for Education, Children and Young People. My background spans marine and environmental science as well as governance, giving me both scientific and policy perspectives. My understanding of ecological systems enables me to approach challenges analytically, while my governance experience allows me to assess how decisions are shaped, and their cross-sector implications.

After graduating, I moved to Nepal as a New Colombo Plan Scholar, studying environmental science at Kathmandu University and completing a Climate Governance internship. In 2025, I undertook a Marine Ecology internship in Sri Lanka as a Crawford Fund Student Awardee, researching shark and ray fisheries. I value diverse experiences and embrace non-linear pathways, as I recognise the unique learnings in different environments. I look forward to engaging with new networks at the conference and building on skills that are valuable for tackling global challenges.

Alex Wood (Gardiner Foundation)



Alex works at the intersection of science, policy, and communications to support more sustainable, resilient, and equitable agrifood systems. As Director of the Youth Food Lab at the World Food Forum Australia Youth Chapter, he leads the design and delivery of a capacity-building program for agrifood changemakers aged 18-35 across the Pacific and Australia, connecting emerging leaders with mentorship, skills development, funding, and global networks.

Bayan Yazdani (WA Committee)



Bayan is a Perth-based Senior Policy Officer (International Climate) with the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's (DAFF's) Trade and International Division, currently on secondment from his ordinary role in sustainable agriculture policy. He is supporting Australia's Presidency of Negotiations for UNFCCC COP31 and, previously, worked closely with NFF and other delivery partners on DAFF's administration and governance of the Australian Agricultural Sustainability Framework.

On the side, Bayan volunteers with the Global Shapers Community and as the New Colombo Plan Alumni Network Lead for Western Australia. His Iranian cultural background equips him with unique perspectives regarding the impacts of the Middle East crisis on agricultural supply chains and food security. Bayan holds a BA in international relations and geography along with an MBA specialised in international trade and development from Adelaide University, where he was the top student for his 'Agriculture and Food in International Trade' class.

Chenxiang Zhang (NSW Committee)



I am Chenxiang Zhang, a PhD Candidate at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). My research aims to integrate black soldier flies (BSF) into aquaculture feed systems to reduce dependence on imported aquafeed and improve the sustainability and resilience of aquaculture systems in Papua New Guinea. Through a multidisciplinary framework, I investigate the feasibility and adoption of BSF-based aquaculture systems from political, environmental, technological, social, and economic perspectives. My research interests include fish nutrition, sustainable aquaculture development, circular bioeconomy, food and nutrition security and rural livelihoods.

Attending the Crawford Fund Annual Conference provides a valuable opportunity to engage with leading researchers and practitioners dedicated to global food and nutrition security. I look forward to exchanging ideas, building meaningful collaborations, and exploring practical pathways to increase the impact of my research and support sustainable aquaculture development and resilient livelihoods in developing countries.