

Meet the *Economists* ...

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Why did you decide to become an economist?

As a teenager, I was interested in current affairs and politics. When choosing HSC subjects, I thought economics would help me understand the financial aspect of current events. I soon realised that finance was only a small part of what economics was about. Economics was really the study of human behaviour and could help explain and solve problems in most areas of society, such as firms' behaviour, household decisions, the labour market and the environment. When I took my first econometrics course and realised I could use maths to quantify economic phenomena and evaluate government policies, I was hooked.

How did you become an economist?

My inspiring high school teacher made economics feel relevant by vividly connecting the textbook to the real world. I chose economics at university and also majored in mathematics. I worked as an economic research assistant while completing a double commerce/science degree at the University of NSW, then joined the RBA. I worked in various roles in the RBA's economic analysis and financial stability areas, as well as a short stint at New York's financial regulator while pursuing a master's degree in public policy and economics from Princeton University.

What do you do from day to day?

I currently manage a team that runs a large statistical model of the economy. We develop statistical equations that describe various aspects of the economy, such as what drives consumption or unemployment. We use the model to run scenario analysis – say, what happens to the economy if interest rates rise – and produce forecasts that can inform our outlook of the economy. This involves data analysis, coding and problem-solving skills. Communication skills are also important as we translate the numbers from the model into plausible narratives about how the economy will evolve or respond to events.

What's the best thing about your job?

I enjoy being an economic detective and solving puzzles – from figuring out why a piece of code doesn't work to trying to understand why wage growth remains low despite theory and history suggesting otherwise. It's the ability to use data within an economic framework to answer questions, and know that my work contributes to the welfare of the Australian people, that is most satisfying.

And when you're not at work?

When I'm not at work I enjoy spending time with my two young children.

Explore economics.



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