

# CAREERS WITH STEM™

## ECONOMICS

**RESEARCH ECONOMIST**



**ECONOMIST**



What could you do with economics? Take our quiz to find out! p4

Path to success: How to get there p8

Meet the team: Career insights from RBA economists p6

CAREERSWITHSTEM.COM

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## Problem Solving

Identify strategies to solve problems



## Critical Thinking

Evaluate information to help decision making



## Analysis

Investigate data to offer insights



# Discover skills for the future



## Collaboration

Share ideas and perspectives



## Communication

Engage audiences and influence decisions



## Global Awareness

Take a global perspective



## Adaptability

Build skills for a range of jobs and industries



# Explore economics.



To discover more about the benefits of studying economics, visit [rba.gov.au/education](http://rba.gov.au/education)



RESERVE BANK OF AUSTRALIA



# LEARN SKILLS FOR LIFE

Learning economics will not only set you on an exciting career path – it will equip you with skills you can use to explore the issues you care about.

**E**conomics is so important to understanding everyday life, media commentary and public policy discourse. The skills you learn by studying economics can be used in many fields or roles.

In essence, economics is about choices – the way people and societies choose to allocate the resources they have to satisfy their needs and wants. Economists gather and analyse information, make predictions and provide recommendations that help governments, businesses, organisations and charities make good decisions. The economic landscape is constantly changing so it always feels fresh and exciting.

Much of my job – and the job of my colleagues – as an economist, is interpreting recent data and using that to forecast the future of the Australian economy and contribute to policy decisions. So, the team and I have the chance to make a positive difference to the lives of Australians. For example, in my current role as the chief economist advising the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) Board, I make recommendations on how it should set Australia's policy interest rate (the cash rate). The policy interest rate affects the interest rates offered by banks, influencing people's decisions about saving, spending and borrowing. The Board's decisions greatly affect the economy and people's material wellbeing.

I encourage young people, and particularly girls, to consider economics as a study option. It's not just about becoming an economist; you can use the skills you develop – like critical thinking, analysis and problem-solving – to explore the issues you care about, from addressing social inequality through to finding solutions for climate change. Economics skills are also highly sought after in the workplace and will open up a wealth of career possibilities.

## Luci Ellis

Assistant Governor (Economic),  
Reserve Bank of Australia

**Luci is responsible for the Bank's Economic Analysis and Economic Research Departments and is the chief economic advisor to the Governor and the Reserve Bank Board. She is also the executive sponsor of the Bank's LGBTI+ internal network.**



LUCI ELLIS  
ECONOMIST

**THE ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING SO IT ALWAYS FEELS FRESH AND EXCITING"**

# WHERE COULD ECONOMICS TAKE YOU?

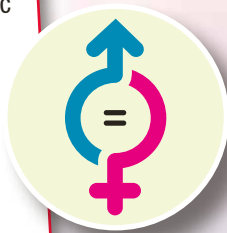
Studying economics can lead to a diverse range of careers in many different fields. Take our quiz to discover how you could use economics to pursue your passions.



## Q1

IT'S THE YEAR 2030. NEWS REPORTERS HAVE JUST INTERVIEWED YOU ABOUT AN EXCITING BREAKTHROUGH IN YOUR WORK. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

- A. Figured out the most efficient way to deal with the next pandemic
- B. Helped to reduce the cost of producing clean energy
- C. Improved gender equality in Australian workplaces
- D. Written a paper explaining how share prices respond to natural disasters
- E. Helped farmers in developing nations increase their incomes



## Q2

NOW IMAGINE YOU'RE FLYING OUT FOR A WORK TRIP TOMORROW. WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

- A. A political summit in Canberra to debate with decision-makers
- B. The Murray-Darling Basin, to see how the drought is affecting farmers
- C. California, for work experience with Google's marketing analytics team
- D. The New York Stock Exchange
- E. Samoa, to design and build cyclone-resilient homes with a non-governmental organisation

**Award-winning economics:** Economists Esther Duflo, Abhijit Banerjee and Michael Kremer received the Nobel Prize in 2019 for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty.

## Q3

BACK TO THE PRESENT. WHEN YOU'RE ON SOCIAL MEDIA, HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR TIME?

- A. Contacting your MP with ways to improve your community
- B. Clicking to attend the next climate change rally
- C. Considering why your friends have jumped on the latest craze
- D. Keeping up to date on business and share market news
- E. Promoting crowdfunding for a clean water program in India

## Q4

YOU'VE BEEN ASKED TO HELP IMPROVE ONE THING ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL. WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE?

- A. Support students who can't afford a laptop
- B. Reduce consumption of plastic
- C. Improve students' mental health
- D. Invest in new technology that saves the school money
- E. Partner with African schools to improve their learning opportunities



## Q5

GRANDMA GIVES YOU \$100 IN YOUR BIRTHDAY CARD (THANKS NAN!). WHAT DO YOU DO WITH IT?

- A. Spend it at a local community market instead of at big shopping centre
- B. Buy a worm farm for the family to help reduce food waste
- C. Give \$20 to each of your closest friends and observe how they spend it
- D. Invest it in stocks in a new tech company
- E. Donate it to a healthcare charity in Brazil





# RESULTS

## Mostly As

### Improve people's quality of life (Public policy economics)

Your interest in the big issues affecting people's lives – such as health, social welfare and education – could mean a career in public policy is a good option. Economists working in public policy investigate and advise on ways governments can improve people's quality of life. They consider things like: how to reduce long-term unemployment; how welfare policies can reduce income inequality; the economic 'cost' of poor health.

**Where you'll work:** government, central banks, universities, think tanks, health and welfare organisations



**Public policy economics in action:** A new government inquiry currently being run by economists working with mental health experts is investigating the impact of mental illness on the economy. One of their findings, announced late last year, was that mental illness and suicide are costing Australia up to \$180 billion a year – that's \$500 million every day.

## Mostly Bs

### Save money by saving the planet (Environmental economics)

You care about our planet's future, so environmental economics is totes for you! Economists who work in this field research the possible impacts of climate change and the ways that renewable resources could be used to help people live more sustainably. They investigate questions such as: how would homes and transport be affected if the world warms by two degrees? Could financial incentives encourage people to recycle more? What's an affordable alternative to plastic?

**Where you'll work:** government, major corporations, think tanks, environmental agencies and activist groups



## Mostly Cs

### Understand why people make decisions – and their impact (Behavioural economics)

You're more interested in how people think and act than about money and markets. Behavioural economics applies principles from psychology to analyse why individuals or institutions make decisions, such as why consumers choose to buy, or not to buy, a product. Behavioural economists analyse data sets to find the answers to: how biases might influence people's decision to buy brand X and avoid brand Y? How the display of products in a supermarket might influence what people spend money on?

**Where you'll work:** large corporates, government, banks, universities



## Mostly Ds

### Monitor money and markets (Financial economics)

They say money makes the world go around – you want to know how and why. How might a disruption to the economy affect Australia? How do we get money from savers to borrowers so they can invest and help the economy grow? Financial economists are interested in how financial markets affect the real world.

**Where you'll work:** central bank, commercial banks and other financial institutions, government, universities



## Mostly Es

### Help the world's poorest (Development economics)

You're a global thinker and passionate about human rights, social justice and reducing inequality – so you might want to consider a career in development economics. This field is about improving the living standards of people in developing countries. It considers policies to improve the health, education and working conditions of people in world's poorest nations. Development economists answer questions such as: how much financial aid should be given to poor countries and how can it best be used? How can better education help people in developing countries to prosper? How can an immunisation program reduce infant mortality in Africa? How can new technologies help farmers increase crop yields?

**Where you'll work:** government, international organisations (for example, the UN), charities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)



# MAKING AN IMPACT

WHY STUDY ECONOMICS? ONE TEAM AT THE RBA SHARE THEIR DIVERSE STORIES ON WHAT INSPIRED THEM INTO THEIR DREAM JOBS.

**What's the RBA?**  
 The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) is our central bank, which means it conducts monetary policy, works to maintain a strong financial system and prints the nation's banknotes.

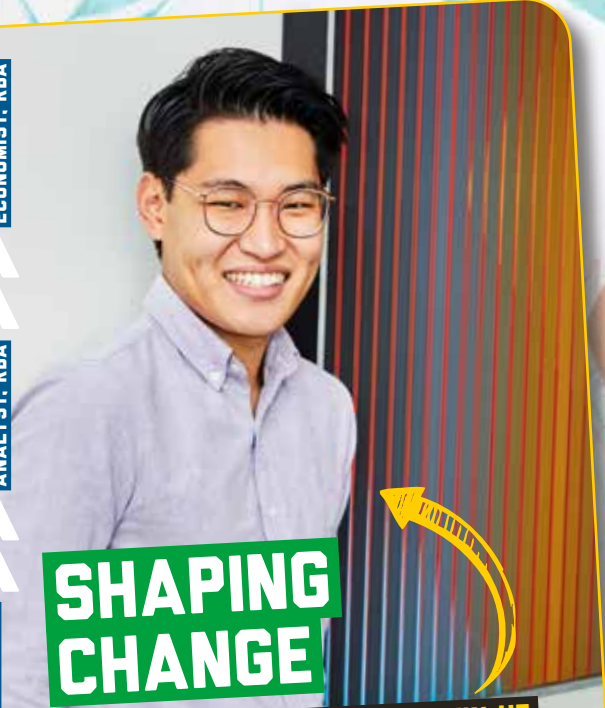
RESEARCH ECONOMIST, RBA

FIXED INCOME ANALYST, RBA

TUTOR, UNSW

POLICY RESEARCH ASSISTANT, FINISA

BACHELOR OF ECONOMICS/BACHELOR OF COMMERCE (HONOURS), UNSW



## SHAPING CHANGE

ECONOMICS RESEARCHER **CALVIN HE** WAS INSPIRED BY THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS IN HIGH SCHOOL – NOW HE HELPS THE RBA ANSWER BIG QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ECONOMY.

While Calvin studied commerce and economics in high school, living through and learning about the Global Financial Crisis helped influence his career choice. "This is when I realised the wide-ranging implications of economics and its power as a tool for shaping change," he says. Calvin studied a combined Bachelor of Economics and Commerce at UNSW before landing a job at the RBA, where he now works as a research economist.

"I analyse longer-term questions about the economy and monetary policy, for example 'How do interest rates affect housing prices?'" he explains. "I then do analysis, which often involves a fair bit of programming and coding, before writing up my results," he says. "As an economist, you will learn, and develop an informed view, while being able to contribute to important debate – what you do matters."

Calvin loves economics because "it provides a framework of thinking about a wide range of problems, like if I should buy the next iPhone! The skills you develop by studying economics will serve you well in almost any job, and in life."



## STEPHANIE PARSONS ECONOMIST

### Career advice for a future economist?

Economics is a way of thinking that can be applied to many of society's most important problems. Keep up with what's happening in Australia and across the world; read or listen to the news regularly, especially business news; and follow economists on social media. Discuss issues with your peers, parents or teachers. Whether or not you become an economist, the skills you develop by studying economics will help make you a better employee and a more rounded citizen.



## TAYLOR NUGENT

### ECONOMIST

#### What does your job involve?

I'm interested in how the world works and how people's choices and actions can be shaped by their circumstances. My job allows me to apply a set of tools to answer these questions and the big-picture implications. In my current role, I monitor and analyse development in labour markets, with a specific focus on wage pressures and wage outcomes in the economy.

## BLAIR CHAPMAN

### ECONOMIST

#### Best thing about a career in economics?

Economics is not only interesting, it gives you a set of skills you can apply widely and use to answer an endless number of questions. I enjoy applying my economic toolkit to help provide answers to important and interesting questions. Knowing my work can be used to benefit our society is also rewarding.



## NATASHA CASSIDY

### HEAD OF PRICES, WAGES AND LABOUR MARKET TEAM

#### What does your team do?

We assess what is going on in the Australian labour market, as well as inflation in the economy. We provide briefings of these trends and our best estimate of the outlook to the Reserve Bank Board to help them make monetary policy decisions.

#### Why did you study economics?

Unemployment rates were particularly high for younger people, and I wanted to understand why, and what could be done about it. Studying economics lets you tap into different skill sets – analytical or technical interests, interest in human behaviour, or communication skills.



# How to get a career in economics... starting now!



From elective choices to YouTube channels, here's what you can do now to set you on a career path to economics.

## GET SOCIAL

Fill your feeds with everything #economics

@TheEconomist

If you're not already one of the nearly 25 million people following this famous US economics mag, get on it.

#ausecon

Follow this hashtag for all the latest Twitter chatter on Aussie economics.

@JustinWolfers

Formerly an RBA economist, Justin is now a professor of economics at the University of Michigan. Join his 174K+ followers!

Take a crash course in economics

CrashCourse is a YouTube channel packed with educational videos – watch their economics playlist for easy-to-understand five-to-15-minute videos explaining a bunch of different economics concepts. Visit [bit.ly/economics-crash-course](http://bit.ly/economics-crash-course)



## MOVIE MARATHON

Looking for your next screen session? These documentaries and movies all have economics themes.

**Inside Job (2010)**

Narrated by Matt Damon, this doco looks at the causes and effects of the 2008 Global Financial Crises (GFC).

**The Big Short (2015)**

Feature films your thing? This movie uses an all-star cast (we're talking Ryan Gosling, Christian Bale and Brad Pitt) to tell the story of the GFC.

**The Economics of Happiness (2011)**

This doco is made a list of 100 "documentaries we can use to change the world" compiled by activist site, Films for Action.

**Moneyball (2011)**

This Hollywood blockbuster based on a true story and starring Brad Pitt and Jonah Hill, is about the economics behind pro sports. Must-watch for sports lovers and economists alike.



**Follow the RBA**  
The Reserve Bank of Australia is the country's biggest employer of economists, so add them to your follow lists, stat. Search RBAinfo on Twitter and YouTube and ReserveBankAu on Facebook and Instagram



## ELECTIVES CHECKLIST

Choosing electives? Consider these subjects to give you a solid foundation for a career in economics

- ✓ Maths
- ✓ Economics
- ✓ Business studies
- ✓ Modern history
- ✓ Accounting
- ✓ Commerce

## LISTEN UP

Plug into these economics-themed podcasts

**Freakonomics Radio**

This award-winning podcast was inspired by the bestselling book of the same name.

**Planet Money**

Produced by America's National Public Radio, this podcast claims to offer "the economy, explained".

**The Economists**

This ABC Radio National show airs every Thursday afternoon using "the tools of economics to shine a light on life".

