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Australian Energy Social Science Workshop - Policy Panel discussion, 17th of September 2026

Day 1 Thursday, 17 September 2026 2:00–5:15pm

Cinema Theatre, Lowitja O'Donoghue Cultural Centre, ANU, Acton ACT. [Map](#)

The 17th of September afternoon session includes two panels and interactive dialogue on policy and implementation challenges for social energy research.

TIME	TOPIC	SPEAKER
2:00– 2:10	Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country from ANU	Phillipa Watson and Ivan Cole ANU
2:10– 3:30	Social research in energy research planning, what is needed - This session will reflect on social energy research in Australia, its current and aimed for roles, what is planned and where opportunities remain to strengthen its contribution.	Kim Blackmore ANU (facilitator) Ken Baldwin ANU Lynne Gallagher AER Jacquie Crawshaw DCCEEW
3:30 – 3:45 afternoon tea		
3:45 -5:15	Social research and its place in the energy systems transition – scenarios of where it has helped, where it's been missing, what possibilities it offers and where it has fallen short.	Wendy Conway-Lamb UC (facilitator) Jana Farook ACT Council of Social Service Kimberley Crofts ECA Katie Hepworth Electrical Trades Union
5:15 -7:00 Networking drinks and dinner Badger & Co ANU (self funded)		



Panellists and facilitator biographies



Dr Phillipa Watson is a Senior Research Fellow in the ANU Centre for Energy Systems. She investigates socio-technical aspects of energy systems and energy transitions to identify optimum ways to integrate renewable energy into built environments and society. She has worked in commercial and research roles to facilitate smart, sustainable change for people via the buildings, technologies and energy systems they use, for over 25 years. She has extensive experience with applied research and integrates understanding of people, communities, housing, and energy contexts with transitions, design and decision making. She is convening the AESS workshop this year.



Professor Ivan Cole is Director of the School of Engineering at the Australian National University (ANU). Prior to this, he was Director of the Enabling Capability Platform at RMIT University and over a period of 25 years. Professor Ivan Cole is an internationally recognised materials scientist and engineer with more than 30 years of experience spanning academia, industry, and CSIRO. He is a leader in rapid discovery of materials applied to corrosion protection, nanostructures, and additive manufacturing, and combining computational materials discovery & analysis with high-throughput experimentation.



Associate Professor Kim Blackmore is a Senior Fellow in the School of Engineering at the Australian National University. Her research focuses on workforce development, engineering education, systems thinking, and the human dimensions of complex technology transitions. She leads applied research examining how education, training and capability-building can support emerging industries and critical infrastructure sectors. Kim has held senior leadership roles at ANU and the University of Canberra, including Director of the ANU Centre for Learning and Teaching. She currently leads a national project developing consumer advisory training for battery installers and works with industry, government and education partners on workforce capability for the energy transition.



Emeritus Professor Ken Baldwin was the inaugural Director of the ANU Energy Change Institute and founding Director of the ANU Grand Challenge: Zero-Carbon Energy for the Asia-Pacific. His main focus is to help drive the energy transition, particularly for Australia's future export industries based on renewable energy. His current appointments include: vice-president and non-executive director of the Australian Academy of Science, Technology and Engineering (ATSE); non-executive director of the Australian Hydrogen Research Network; and Chair of the Australian Council of Learned Academies Steering Committee for the Australian Energy Transition Research Plan.



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Lynne Gallagher is an Australian Energy Regulator (AER) Board member. She was appointed to the Board in June 2023. For more than 16 years, Lynne has championed major reforms and systems design change in Australia's energy sector, to achieve better outcomes for people and communities. Prior to joining the AER, Lynne was the Chief Executive Officer of Energy Consumers Australia (ECA), the national voice for households and small businesses. During this time, she led the development of the most extensive set of ongoing energy consumer research in Australia and was a leading contributor to the internationally path-breaking Digital Energy Futures research program. Lynne holds a Bachelor of Economics from the Australian National University and has completed Harvard University's Applied Behavioural Insights for Public Policy program and the Executive Leadership Program at Mt Eliza Business School.



Jacqueline Crawshaw Jacqueline Crawshaw is Director, Consumer Information at the Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW). With over 20 years' experience in energy and consumer policy, she has contributed to a range of initiatives aimed at improving outcomes for consumers. She currently leads the National Consumer Energy Resources (CER) Roadmap work, helping to improve the information and support available to Australians navigating an increasingly complex energy environment.



Dr Wendy Conway-Lamb is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow working across both the Centre for Deliberative Democracy (CDD) and the Centre for Environmental Governance (CEG) at the University of Canberra. Wendy's research focuses on just and democratic approaches to climate and energy governance. She has a background working on climate policy and international development with governments and civil society in the Asia-Pacific region. Wendy is a Research Fellow on the ARC-funded Discovery Project Just Transmission: Advancing Coherence in Australia's Electricity Policy (2025-28).



Jana Farook is a Senior Policy Adviser at the ACT Council of Social Services (ACTCOSS). Jana is an experienced policy advocate with a background in law. Her previous experience includes managing partnerships at the United Nations Development Program and providing legal advice to the Government of Maldives on its human rights obligations. She also has experience influencing Australian and international negotiations on climate and trade. ACTCOSS is the peak body for the community sector in the ACT - advocating for social justice in our territory and representing not-for-profit community organizations.



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Dr Kimberley Crofts works for Energy Consumers Australia (ECA) where she advocates for energy justice and improved outcomes for vulnerable energy consumers. Her PhD, completed in 2024, examined the role of public participation in energy transitions in the Hunter Valley. Prior to moving into energy policy and advocacy Kimberley worked in strategic, service, and communication design.



Dr Katie Hepworth Dr Katie Hepworth is the National Policy Director for the Electrical Trades Union (ETU). The union represents electrical workers across the energy transition, from transmission, distribution, large and small scale generation and storage. The ETU are currently campaigning to establish Sovereign Power - a new publicly owned power company that will provide cost competitive renewable energy to power green industry. She also works on skills and training, social licence and procurement policy. She is actively involved in campaigns and policy development for the Net Zero Economy Agency, green industrial policy, and the current data centre standards. Her work has spanned research, campaigns and organising roles and she's been widely published. With a background in ethnography and qualitative research, she has developed member-informed policy and research processes that recognise the expertise held by workers about their trades and industries.