AUSTRALIAN COMPETITION & CONSUMER COMMISSION

AUSTRALIAN ENERGY REGULATOR

Regulatory Conference 2025

7 & 8 August, Brisbane

Acknowledgment of country

The ACCC acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to the land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures; and to their Elders past, present and future.

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
Ngunnawal
23 Marcus Clarke Street, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, 2601

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ACCC 08/25_25-15

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Program

Thursday 7 August 2025

8:55 am	**Welcome to Country** By Songwoman Maroochy Barambah
9:05 am	**Opening address** By AER Chair Clare Savage
9:25 am	**What is infrastructure?** Infrastructure is commonly defined as the *physical and organisational* structures and facilities needed for the operation of society or an economy – the building blocks underpinning people's ability to thrive. But critical economic infrastructure is now more than just roads and utilities. Digitisation has transformed the world, and infrastructure is no longer just physical. The emergence of digital platforms, data centres and artificial intelligence has broadened the scope of infrastructure and blurred the lines between sectors. Does this now mean that 'everything is infrastructure'? What are the implications for regulators and the future of infrastructure regulation? **Chaired by** ACCC CEO Sarah Proudfoot **Keynote speaker** ▪ Professor Martin Cave **Discussant** ▪ Simon Corden
10:20 am	**Morning tea**

Thursday 7 August 2025

10:45 am

Interoperability: a silver bullet for digital markets?

To open up tightly-held digital platform markets and bring greater choice to consumers, the European Union's landmark *Digital Markets Act* requires 'gatekeeper' platforms to remove restrictions on interoperability – for example, ensuring app developers can access important functionality like contactless card payments made on mobile devices. Other jurisdictions have passed similar laws, and judges and regulators the world over are eyeing interoperability remedies.

Could these interoperability mandates be a 'silver bullet' for ensuring competition in these markets? Is it appropriate for regulators to be able to require interoperability, or should this power be limited to courts? How can we balance the procompetitive benefits of interoperability with privacy and security concerns?

Chaired by

ACCC Chair Gina Cass-Gottlieb

Keynote speaker

- Margrethe Vestager

Speakers

- Jacqueline Downes
- Damian Kassabgi
- Ellis Connolly

11:45 am

Pits and pipes to bits and bytes: regulating access to non-physical infrastructure

Regulating access to essential facilities such as electricity networks, ports and rail is familiar ground for regulators and industry. However, more and more emerging markets are characterised by the need for competitors to access data, systems or other 'virtual' assets controlled by a single provider.

This panel will discuss conceptual and practical regulatory challenges posed by this 'non-physical' infrastructure, including through case studies of the Australian Stock Exchange's upgrade to its Clearing House Electronic Sub-register System (CHESS) and Air Services Australia's new OneSky air traffic control system.

Chaired by

ACCC Commissioner Anna Brakey

Speakers

- Sarah Court
- Dale Yeats
- Anna Barker

12:30 pm

Lunch

Thursday 7 August 2025

1:30 pm

Supporting innovation, reliability and affordability in the energy transition

This session will consider how innovation can progress the energy transition in a way that ensures continuity of electricity supply and affordability for consumers.

The panel will explore where we are today, where we would like to go and how we propose to get there. It will discuss innovation in energy services and in business models for retailers and other intermediaries; the role of networks to maintain continuity of supply and minimise outages in an electricity grid with increasing two-way electricity flows; and innovation in customer services to keep energy affordable.

Key questions will include how we can allow for 'safe' innovation; whether such innovation can be progressed within the existing regulatory frameworks; and how we can become comfortable regulating for what will be, rather than for what is, including the relevance of regulatory sandboxing.

Chaired by

AER Board Member Lynne Gallagher

Speakers

- Dr Philip Lewis
- Danielle Beinart
- Alison Reeve
- Dr Kari Dahlgren

2:15 pm

Short term gain, long term pain: lower bills in economic regulation

Is regulation striking the right balance over time? In a cost-of-living crisis, consumer groups have strengthened calls for lower bills. But with lower bills can come trade-offs, including reduced infrastructure investment and lower service standards. Are regulators asking the right questions when weighing up the short- and long-term interests of consumers, and are they getting the trade-offs right?

Chaired by

ACCC Deputy Chair Catriona Lowe

Speakers

- Gerard Brody
- Sandra Gamble
- Cameron Shields
- Sally McMahon

3:00 pm

Afternoon tea

Thursday 7 August 2025

3:30 pm

Data sharing, AI and privacy in 2025 regulatory markets

The sheer pace of the development of AI, data collection and data use presents many challenges for regulators, market participants and consumers. The need for agility and rapid, effective responses is clear. But how do we balance the risks and ensure consumers benefit?

This practical session will focus on how regulators can regulate for and deploy AI effectively in their work while protecting consumers' privacy and interests.

Is it preferable to move fast and implement changes, or to step back and wait for more certainty? Do regulators have the right tools to regulate for AI? And how can we ensure that regulators are forward-looking and focused on the right standards in data sharing?

Chaired by

AER Board Member Jarrod Ball

Speakers

- James Plunkett
- Professor Jeannie Marie Paterson
- Dr Ian Oppermann

4:15 pm

Getting to net zero – does speed trump competition?

Australia has committed to a target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, which requires the Australian energy market to transform how we generate, store and distribute energy. With 2024 being the hottest year recorded in over a century, it is clear this transformation needs to happen fast.

This session will explore the tension between the need for speed in addressing the climate crisis and the need to ensure effective competition is maintained as the market transitions. The panel will consider this tension in the context of some of the many steps required in Australia's energy transition, including the roll-out of new energy services and certain infrastructure, such as kerbside electric vehicle chargers. As the planet continues to warm and the transition grows more urgent, the key question becomes: does speed trump competition?

Chaired by

AEMC Commissioner Tim Jordan

Speakers

- Professor Andrew Pitman AO
- Dr Will Taylor
- Dominique van den Berg
- Justin Oliver

Thursday 7 August 2025

5:00 pm	**Session close**
6:00 pm	**Drinks & canapes**
7:00 pm	**Dinner welcome** ACCC CEO Sarah Proudfoot

Friday 8 August 2024

9:00 am

The future of gas in Australia

The future of gas is highly contentious and uncertain. Electrification will be a catch cry for the next 5 to 10 years at the very least, but this transition will be more achievable for some than others. And what is the longer-term role of gas in a net zero economy?

This session will explore perspectives on what this transition may look like for different participants, how the costs of the transition should be managed and the challenges that need to be tackled. Panellists will also share their views on what regulatory settings we need and how can we put them in place in time to make a difference.

Chaired by

AER Executive General Manager Stephanie Jolly

Speakers

- Steve Davies
- Mark Grenning
- Catherine Wolthuizen
- Darren Stevenson

10:00 am

Morning tea

10:30 am

Sticking the landing: regulating essential services during uncertainty

When was the last time you bought a postage stamp with a dollar coin to mail a cheque for your landline bill? Many of the essential services that Australians rely upon are in decline. Letter volumes are falling, cash is being pushed out by electronic payments, and some insurance markets face increasing volatility and the prospect of spiralling premiums.

But these services, heavily reliant on mass participation, remain vital to their remaining users. This session will explore the regulation and pricing of services facing headwinds, and what regulators can to either ensure an inclusive transition, or support a brighter future for these essential services.

Chaired by

ACCC Executive General Manager Nicole Ross

Speakers

- Vanessa Beenders
- Dr Christopher Decker
- Kate Symons
- Sam Grunhard

Friday 8 August 2024

11:30 am	**The Great Debate** Moderated by AER Deputy Chair Justin Oliver
12.15pm	**Closing address** By ACCC Chair Gina Cass-Gottlieb
12.30 pm	**Conference close and lunch**

* Session times may be subject to minor changes during the event.

Speaker biographies

Anna Barker

Assistant Secretary, National Competition Policy Branch, Treasury

Anna is a seasoned economist with around 20 years of experience across Australian, UK, and international public policy and regulatory institutions. Her expertise spans competition policy, economic regulation, consumer protection, and the digital economy. She is currently part of the senior executive team in Treasury's Competition Taskforce, leading work on National Competition Policy.

Anna has held senior roles at the ACCC, the OECD (France), and Ofgem (UK), and began her career at the Productivity Commission and Queensland Treasury. She holds a First-Class Honours degree in Economics from the University of Queensland and a Master of Competition and Consumer Law from the University of Melbourne.

Vanessa Beenders

Executive General Manager, Public Policy and Professionalism, Actuaries Institute

Vanessa leads the Actuaries Institute's thought leadership program, working closely with actuaries across a range of industries to deliver insights across key societal issues. She also oversights support to its Practice Committees, its professionalism function and the Institute's events program to ensure its members receive high quality technical and professional support.

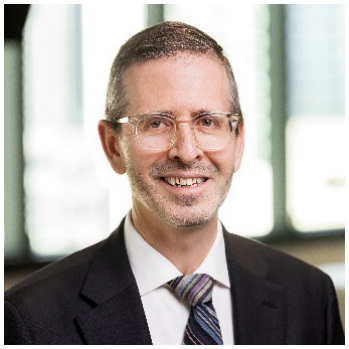
Before joining the Institute, Vanessa worked across government, financial services and education, in both public and private sectors. This included in the Commonwealth Department of Treasury, the Federal Treasurer's office, Commonwealth Bank of Australia Group and NSW Department of Education.

Danielle Beinart

Executive General Manager, Australian Energy Market Commission

Danielle is an experienced executive with more than 20 years working in the energy sector. During this time Danielle has worked in a broad range of functions and leadership roles, with experience in policy, regulation, commercial, strategy and consulting roles.

Danielle joined the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) in 2021 and is the Executive General Manager who leads the Networks & Technical function. This function includes the policy team responsible for rule changes and reviews relating to transmission and distribution network regulation reform for the transition to net zero by 2050.



Gerard Brody

Chairperson, Essential Services Commission

Gerard was appointed commissioner and chairperson in August 2024. A leading consumer rights lawyer, Gerard has deep consumer policy, regulatory and legal experience, and a longstanding passion for improving the consumer experience. Gerard is a former CEO of the Consumer Action Law Centre, an independent, not-for-profit consumer organisation.

Prior to taking up this role, Gerard served as Chair of both Community Legal Centres Australia and the Consumers' Federation of Australia and has also served as a director for the Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria, the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman and the Australian Financial Complaints Authority. Gerard holds degrees in Arts, Law and Public Policy from the University of Melbourne and is a Graduate of the AICD Company Directors Course.

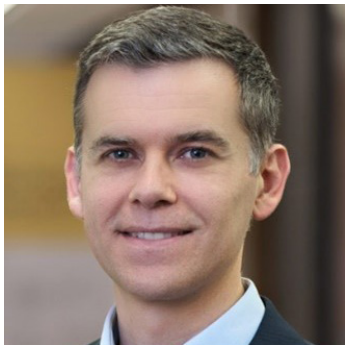
Professor Martin Cave

London School of Economics

Martin Cave is an economist specialising in competition law and the regulation of networks, particularly communications. He has held professorial positions at Brunel University, Warwick Business School and the London school of Economics.

He was chair of the GB energy regulator, Ofgem, from 2018 to 2023, and an inquiry chair at the UK Competition and Markets Authority from 2012 to 2018.

He is the co-author of several books in the regulation field, including Taming the Corporation – How to Regulate for Success, Oxford University Press, 2021, Spectrum Management, 2015, and Understanding Regulation, 2025. He has advised regulators and other public bodies in several countries throughout the world.



Ellis Connolly

Head of Payments Policy Department, Reserve Bank of Australia

Ellis Connolly is the Head of Payments Policy Department at the Reserve Bank of Australia. He is responsible for advising the Payments System Board on the safety, competitiveness and efficiency of the payments system.

He is also responsible for the supervision of systemically important clearing and settlement facilities and payment systems operating in Australia.

Simon Corden

Chair, Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria

Simon has worked in the area of regulatory policy and practice for more than 20 years across a diverse range of subject areas.

He currently undertaking a Ph.D at the Australian National University's School of Regulation and Governance (RegNet). He is also the independent chair of the board of the Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria.

Simon's previous government roles include commissioner at Victoria's Essential Services Commission, and senior executive positions in the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet, and Department of Treasury and Finance, the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission, Worksafe Victoria and the Productivity Commission.

He has been a consultant to the OECD in Mexico and drafted the OECD's guidance on the governance of regulators. From 2011 to 2019 he was a Director in KPMG's public policy practice, working on nearly 60 regulatory projects. He was also previously Chair of the ANZSOG-auspiced National Regulators' Community of Practice.

Sarah Court

Deputy Chair, Australian Securities and Investments Commission

Sarah commenced as an ASIC Deputy Chair on 1 June 2021.

Prior to joining ASIC, Sarah was a Commissioner at the ACCC for three terms from May 2008 to May 2021. At the ACCC Sarah led the Commission's enforcement and investigation work, and contributed extensively to strategic priority setting, statutory decision-making and leadership across the agency on a range of complex economy-wide legal and economic issues.

Prior to her time at the ACCC Sarah was a Senior Executive Lawyer and Director at the Australian Government Solicitor where she led national teams in government litigation including restrictive trade practices, competition and consumer law, administrative law, employment law and law enforcement litigation.

Sarah has held board positions with the Law School and Centre for Regulation and Market Analysis at the University of South Australia.

Sarah holds a Bachelor of Arts (Jurisprudence) and a Bachelor of Laws (Honours) from the University of Adelaide, as well as a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice from the Australian National University. She is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Dr Kari Dahlgren

Lecturer, Monash University

Dr Kari Dahlgren is a social anthropologist and ethnographer who studies the social and ethical aspects of energy production and consumption in Australia. She has worked on the Digital Energy Futures ARC Linkage project, the Future Home Demand research project, and is now working on the Scenarios for Future Living research project as part of the RACE for 2030 CRC. This body of research aims to understand and forecast changing digital lifestyle trends and their impact on future household electricity demand to inform energy planning, as well as supporting diverse households to have a role in shaping Australia's energy future. This research has involved working closely with households across the country as well as partners in the energy sector, including with Energy Consumers Australia, Ausgrid, AusNet Services, Red Energy, CitiPower, Powercor, and United Energy.

Kari holds a BA with honours from the University of North Carolina, MSc with distinction from Oxford University, and PhD from the London School of Economics.

Steve Davies

CEO, Australian Pipelines and Gas Association

Steve Davies is the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Pipelines and Gas Association (APGA), a position he has held since 2017. With over 20 years of experience in policy development, stakeholder engagement, and leadership, Steve plays a pivotal role in advocating for Australia's energy infrastructure sector. His leadership focuses on delivering practical, evidence-based solutions to complex policy challenges, particularly in the context of Australia's energy transition.

Steve's career at APGA spans more than 16 years, during which he has also served as National Policy Manager and Policy Advisor. Prior to joining APGA, he was Assistant Director of Resources and Energy at the Australian Government, where he helped shape national policy in the energy sector. He has also held leadership roles with the Australasian Railway Association, contributing to key projects in infrastructure development.

Steve is deeply committed to sourcing insights directly from industry professionals to drive informed, effective policy outcomes for Australia's evolving energy landscape.

Dr Christopher Decker

Research Fellow, University of Oxford

Dr Christopher Decker is an expert in economic regulation and competition economics with over 25 years' experience. He has advised leading private companies, law firms, international organizations (UN, World Bank, OECD, APEC, European Commission, European Central Bank) and served on the advisory panels of competition authorities and regulators in several countries.

He has authored over 100 reports and technical studies, and has published in leading competition law, regulation and economics journals. He is also the author of a book on competition law and economics and a textbook on economic regulation (Modern Economic Regulation, Cambridge University Press, 2nd edition 2023).

He has acted as an expert or advisor in over 40 international arbitrations, competition cases and commercial and regulatory disputes. His testimony has been presented before senior courts (European Court of Justice, General Court of the European Union, UK Supreme Court, Scottish Court of Session, Irish High Court, Competition Appeal Tribunal), international tribunals (ICSID, ICC), and in judicial, administrative and regulatory proceedings in Europe, Asia, Latin America, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

He holds degrees in economics from the University of Melbourne and a D.Phil (Ph.D) from the University of Oxford, where he remains affiliated as a Research Fellow.

Jacqueline Downes

Partner, Allens

Jacqueline Downes heads Allens' national Competition, Consumer & Regulatory group. She is ranked as a leading competition and antitrust expert in Chambers, Best Lawyers, The Asia-Pacific Legal 500 and Global Competition Review.

Jacqueline has particular expertise in mergers and is well known for achieving clearance of high profile and complex mergers, domestic and international. She also has extensive experience in competition and consumer law investigations. Jacqueline advises businesses across a wide range of industries including media and technology.

Jacqueline is a past chair of the Competition and Consumer Committee of the Law Council of Australia. She has assisted in preparing submissions, meeting with government and attending parliamentary inquiries on matters of competition policy.

Sandra Gamble

Chair, Marinus Link

Sandra Gamble is the Independent Chair of Marinus Link, which will build, own and operate a new high-voltage direct current transmission line between Tasmania and Victoria.

She is also a current Board Member of EnergyCo, a NSW Division Councillor at the AICD, and the Chair of the Best Practice and Ethics Advisory Board for the Advisory Board Centre. Sandra is a former Chair of the Independent Energy Appointments Selection Panel at the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, and former Tribunal Member and Committee Chair at the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal.

Sandra's interests include decarbonising the energy sector system wide and at home where she is testing what's possible with 26 kW of solar, 32 kWh of storage and 2 EVs.

Mark Grenning

Director Policy and Regulation, Energy Users Association of Australia

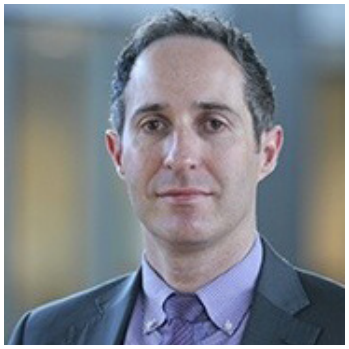
Mark has been the Director Policy and Regulation for the Energy Users Association of Australia since 2016. He has been involved in all the major electricity and gas issues advocating for large energy users though committee memberships and submissions to Federal and State Governments, AEMC, AEMO and the AER.

He has been a member of the AER's Consumer Challenge Panel from 2016–2021, the AEMO ISP Consumer Panel for the 2022 and 2024 ISPs and the Grattan Institute Energy Reference Group since 2014.

He is currently a member of BAU customer panels for Ausgrid, Powerlink, Energy Queensland and Endeavour Energy and has been a part of revenue reset panels for most NEM electricity and gas networks at various times. He is currently a member of gas network reset panels for AGIG SA and APA (VTS, Roma-Brisbane).

In 2015 Mark completed a 30 year career in Rio Tinto covering a wide range of roles. For his last eight years he was Rio Tinto's global subject matter expert on energy supply to its operations.

Mark has Economics degrees from the University of Queensland and Monash.



Sam Grunhard

First Assistant Secretary, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sports and the Arts

Sam Grunhard is currently First Assistant Secretary, Communications Services and Consumer Division, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (DITRDCSA).

In this role he is responsible for Government investment in regional telecommunications and blackspots; consumer safeguards, Triple Zero and accessible communications; postal policy; and international telecommunications standards and internet governance.

Prior to this role he has worked in the Australian Government on critical infrastructure, aviation security and telecommunications security, countering violent extremism, and university funding and evaluation.

Damian Kassabgi

CEO, Tech Council of Australia

Damian Kassabgi is Chief Executive Officer of the Tech Council of Australia (TCA), where he champions the growth and development of the nation's technology sector. He has a strong background in both the private and public sectors.

As a senior policy adviser to two former prime ministers, Damian provided strategic direction on Australia's digital economy, critical tech infrastructure and the country's emerging tech ecosystem. Damian has held senior leadership roles with global tech companies Afterpay, Uber and Google working in Australia, Asia and the United States.

Damian is passionate about advancing the nation's dynamic tech industry and creating opportunities for Australians from all backgrounds to pursue meaningful careers in tech.

Dr Philip Lewis

CEO, VaasaETT

Dr Philip Lewis is founder and Chief Executive Officer of Finland's VaasaETT, an energy consultancy providing complex energy market analytics across six continents, based on advanced data science.

Philip has 24 years of experience supporting consumer focused competition, new business models and energy transition across over 100 energy markets. High-level public projects have included director of the European Commission's project identifying barriers to entry in all European markets (2021); lead consultant in the Nordic regulators' review of market barriers; consultant in the ACCC review of prices and competition (2018); the world's largest global stocktake of renewable integration projects for the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA); leader of two national competition reviews for the Finnish Government; and participating in over two dozen other projects for State and National Governments, the European Commission and national and European authorities.

He is also a member of the E.DSO (European Distribution System Operators) Stakeholder and Innovation Council, founder and director of Traxis Group and co-founder of Smart Energy Europe (smartEn). He is a former member of the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on the Future of Electricity and the source of Europe's first official definition of energy customer switching.

Sally McMahon

Commissioner, Australian Energy Market Commission

Sally is an economist with more than 25 years' experience in energy and industry reform programs. Commencing her career investigating third-party gas access regimes, she has been an adviser and executive with economic regulators, governments, electricity and gas businesses, and investment funds in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia and Canada.

She has held key roles in the evolution of jurisdictional energy markets, including the design and application of economic regulation and facilitating competitive markets, and the establishment and ongoing development of the law and rules for the National and Western Australian Electricity and Gas Market.

In addition to her role as Commissioner at the AEMC, Sally is the Independent Chair of the Market Advisory Committee, the Gas Advisory Board and the Pilbara Advisory Committee in Western Australia and is a part-time Councillor at the National Competition Council.

Sally holds an Honours degree in Economics from the Flinders University of South Australia and is a GAICD. Sally is also a member of the Economic Society of Australia and a former Chair of Women in Economics Network of Western Australia.

Justin Oliver

Deputy Chair, Australian Energy Regulator

Justin Oliver has been involved with the AER since February 2020 and was appointed Deputy Chair in June 2024.

Justin was formerly a partner of MinterEllison, specialising in competition law and energy regulation.

Prior to joining MinterEllison, Justin was the head of the ACCC's regulatory law practice, advising on all aspects of energy, communications and transport regulation, and became the head of legal for the Australian Energy Regulator upon its creation in 2005. Justin has also worked as a senior lawyer in the Victorian Premier's Department. For two decades, Justin has acted for governments, regulators and industry participants involved in all parts of Australia's energy sector.

Justin holds a Bachelor of Economics and Bachelor of Laws (Hons) from Monash University.

Ian Oppermann

Chair, Data Standards Body

Dr Ian Oppermann is co-founder of ServiceGen, an Industry Professor at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) and member of the board for multiple deep technology start-ups. Ian is also the Chair of the Commonwealth's Data Standards Committee and an Advisor to the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change. From 2015 to 2023, Ian was the NSW Government's inaugural Chief Data Scientist (CDS) and was the founding CEO of the NSW Data Analytics Centre (DAC).

Professor Jeannie Marie Paterson

Professor and Director of the Centre for AI and Digital Ethics

Jeannie Marie Paterson is a Professor of Law and Director of the Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Digital Ethics at the University of Melbourne.

Jeannie's research and teaching focuses on consumer law and regulatory design. Her current projects cover responses to misleading AI (including deep fakes and misinformation), and the design of fairness obligations in consumer protection, financial services and essential services.

Jeannie is a member of the Consumer Committee of the Victorian Legal Services Board, the AI Committee of Beyond Blue and the Research Committee of the Consumer Policy Research Centre. She is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law.

Professor Andrew Pitman

Professor, University of New South Wales

Andy Pitman, AO, FAA is a Professor in climate science at the University of New South Wales. He is the Director of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Climate Extremes. He has 35 years' experience, and broad interests extending across climate modelling, climate change and climate extremes. He has recently been examining the use of climate projections in financial and economic risk assessments, and advising on the use and misuse of these projections in business.

Andy has been a lead author on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007. He was a review editor of the 2013 report. He has had multiple senior advisory roles in climate science for the Federal Government, the NSW State Government, as well as senior national roles in e-research infrastructure strategy. He is a Commissioner on the NSW Net Zero Commission and a non-executive director of Risk Frontiers.

He won the Priestley Medal in 2004, the AMOS Medal in 2009, the NSW Climate Scientist of the Year in 2010, the Royal Society of Victoria medal in 2020 and was elected Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science in 2021. He is also a Fellow of the American Meteorological Society and the Australian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society.

James Plunkett

Founder, Kinship Works

James has worked for nearly 20 years in UK policy-making, including roles across the private, public, and third sectors, from Downing Street and the Cabinet Office to leadership roles in an economics think tank, NGO, and innovation agency. He is now a writer and consultant, specialising in contemporary governance and regulation.

James has also held non-Executive roles on the board of the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation and the Consumer Panel of the Financial Conduct Authority. He sits on the Board of the think tank, Demos. He lives in London and is currently working on his next book, which focuses on more human approaches to governance.

Alison Reeve

Program Director, Grattan Institute

Alison Reeve is the Energy and Climate Change Program Director at Grattan Institute. She has two decades of experience in climate change, clean energy policy, and technology, in the private, public, academic, and not-for-profit sectors.

Alison was previously the Deputy Program Director and before then the General Manager of Project Delivery at the Australian Renewable Energy Agency and a Visiting Fellow at the Australian National University. She led development of Australia's National Hydrogen Strategy in 2019, as well as Commonwealth policy for offshore wind, energy innovation, energy efficiency, and structural adjustment.

Alison has a Bachelor of Engineering from the University of Queensland and a Masters of Public Policy with distinction from the Australian National University.

Cameron Shields

Head of Regulation, Sydney Desalination Plant

Cameron is the Head of Regulation at Sydney Desalination Plant (SDP). SDP is a privately owned water utility that is price regulated by the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART).

Cameron has 15-years' experience working as an economist across the public and private sectors. Prior to joining SDP, Cameron was Group Manager Regulatory Finance and Strategy at ActewAGL and held senior roles at IPART and in state governments. Cameron has worked in roles providing economic regulatory advice across the Water, Electricity Retail and Distribution, Gas Distribution and Local Government sectors. In prior roles he worked as a government economist focused on market design and deregulation.

Cameron holds a Bachelor of Economics and Bachelor of Finance from the University of Adelaide.

Darren Stevenson

CEO, Senex Energy

Darren has held leadership positions with Senex Energy since 2012, building the company from a small Cooper Basin oil business to a material east coast natural gas producer committed to delivering essential energy for life.

He is a veteran of Queensland's natural gas industry, having delivered major capital expansion projects over the past 30 years, and was responsible for commissioning some of the very first connections between Surat Basin gas fields and the South East Queensland market.

Darren is recognised for his proactive leadership in landholder and community engagement. His dedication to regional support, creating youth employment opportunities, and fostering win-win solutions has led to lasting connections and partnerships.

He is passionate about the role that reliable energy plays in supporting Australia's continued prosperity, including the essential role of natural gas to support the energy transformation.

Kate Symons

Board Member, Australian Energy Regulator

Kate Symons was appointed to the Board in September 2024. She is a lawyer with qualifications in public administration and corporate governance. Kate has experience across a number of sectors and particular expertise in risk, governance and compliance and enforcement.

Kate served as a Commissioner for eight years at the Essential Services Commission (Victoria) including a five year term as Chair from 2019 to 30 June 2024 regulating a number of sectors in Victoria including energy, water, local government and transport and Victoria's energy efficiency program. Her leadership as Chair was key to the ESC becoming a stronger consumer-focused regulator with broader and more complex functions including a strong compliance and enforcement focus, particularly in the Victorian energy sector.

Prior to this, Kate held roles including as solicitor-assisting for the HIH Insurance Royal Commission, within the university sector and the Federal Court of Australia, and has worked in private legal practice both in Australia and overseas.

Dr Will Taylor

Managing Director, NERA Economic Consulting

Will Taylor is an economist and Partner at NERA Economic Consulting.

He has 17 years of experience providing advice on competition and regulatory economics in Australia and New Zealand. His blend of competition economics and energy sector experience makes him a highly sought-after expert on market design and policy questions in the energy sector. He also appeared as an expert in a judicial review challenging the level of ambition in the New Zealand's emissions budgets.

Will holds a PhD in Economics and first class honours degree in economics and finance, both from Victoria University of Wellington.

Dominique van den Berg

Chief Executive, Energy Networks Australia

Dominique van den Berg is the Chief Executive of Energy Networks Australia (ENA), having been appointed in 2023. She brings over two decades of global energy experience, including leading BG Group's operations in South and East Asia, contributing to Shell's energy transition initiatives in Australia, and leading AGL's distributed energy business.

Dominique holds a Bachelor of Commerce and an MBA. She is also a Non-Executive Director at The Pinnacle Foundation, supporting LGBTQIA+ youth, and an advocate for gender equality in the energy sector through the Champions of Change Energy Group.

Margrethe Vestager

World Leaders Fellow, Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford

Margrethe Vestager is a former Executive Vice President of the European Commission for A Europe Fit for the Digital Age (2019–2024) and European Commissioner for Competition (2014–2024).

Globally renowned for her decisive leadership at the heart of Europe's regulatory landscape, she claimed significant legal victories against tech giants and reshaped the digital regulatory framework in Europe through the passage of the Digital Markets Act.

She previously served as Minister for Economic Affairs and the Interior (2011–2014) and Minister for Education (1998–2001) of Denmark, and as President of the ECOFIN Council (2012). She was political leader of the Danish Social Liberal Party (2007–2014) and has worked for the Danish Ministry of Finance (1993–95). Ms. Vestager holds an MSc in Economics (University of Copenhagen).

Catherine Wolthuizen

Ombudsman and CEO, Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria

Catherine has experience in leadership positions across utilities, financial services and professional services.

She has been Ombudsman and CEO at EWOV since October 2022.

She has a track record of leadership in Australia and the UK, with a particular focus on dispute resolution and fair outcomes in regulated markets. Prior to joining EWOV in 2022, Catherine was the Customer Advocate at National Australia Bank, advising to the Board and Executive on customer outcomes. She held the position of Ombudsman at the UK Financial Ombudsman Service for seven years and led that organisation's systemic issues and external engagement function. She has also held positions as Board Director of the Australian Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman, Panel Member at the Australian Financial Services Ombudsman, Chair of the Consumer Policy Research Centre, Chair of the Economic Abuse Reference Group and is a current Board Director of the Victorian Legal Services Board and member of the ASIC Consultative Panel.

Dale Yeats

Senior Economist, HoustonKemp Economists

Dale Yeats is a senior economist at HoustonKemp Economists. He has 15 years' experience applying economics to shed light on a significantly diverse range of issues.

He is an expert in the economics of infrastructure and has assisted clients in the context of regulatory proceedings, major commercial transactions, declaration reviews, major commercial arbitrations and negotiations, class actions, native title compensation claims, industrial relations disputes and anti-dumping proceedings.

He has advised clients across the aeronautical, electricity, port, water, resources, cemetery, gas, taxi, retirement village, education, steel, stevedoring, heavy vehicle, construction and telecommunications sectors.

Dale holds Masters and Honours degrees in economics with first class honours from the University of Auckland.

Session chair, interviewer and moderator biographies

Gina Cass-Gottlieb

Chair, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission

Gina Cass-Gottlieb commenced her 5-year appointment as Chair of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) on 21 March 2022.

Before she joined the ACCC Gina was a senior and founding partner of Gilbert and Tobin's competition and regulation team. Gina has over 25 years' experience advising on a large number of merger, competition and regulatory matters in Australia and New Zealand. She is widely recognised as one of Australia's leading competition and regulatory experts.

Gina was appointed by the Commonwealth Treasurer to the Reserve Bank of Australia's Payments System Board in 2013. She was re-appointed in 2018 and again in 2023 for a further 5 year term. The Payments System Board is the regulator of access to payment systems. Gina was appointed to the Financial Regulator Assessment Authority in September 2021. For 10 years Gina was a director on the board of the Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation.

Gina has received numerous accolades from Chambers Asia Pacific, Legal 500 Asia Pacific, Who's Who Legal, Lawyers Weekly Awards, Beaton Client Choice Awards and Best Lawyers Australia, for her competition and legal expertise.

Gina holds Bachelor of Economics and Laws degrees from the University of Sydney. Gina was a Fulbright Scholar at UC Berkeley from 1986 to 1987, majoring in US competition law, constitutional law, financial institutions regulation and securities regulation.

Gina is the first female Chair of the ACCC since it was established as an independent statutory authority in 1995.

Clare Savage

Chair, Australian Energy Regulator

Clare Savage was appointed Chair of the Australian Energy Regulator in October 2019 and is Chair of the Energy Advisory Panel (formerly the Energy Security Board). In September 2024 Clare was also appointed as Chair of the Regulator Leadership Cohort.

Over more than 21 years, Clare has acquired significant leadership experience in the Australian energy industry. She has a passion for the energy sector and a commitment to its development, particularly through this current transition.

Prior to joining the AER, Clare was Deputy Chair of the Energy Security Board. Prior to joining the ESB, Clare held a variety of roles including senior executive positions within EnergyAustralia spanning corporate strategy; business development; policy & government affairs; and public affairs.

Prior to this Clare held a range of positions at the Energy Supply Association of Australia including Chief Executive Officer. Clare commenced her career in the public service – initially in the UK and then at the Federal Department of the Treasury.

Clare has a Bachelor of Commerce (Economics) and a Bachelor of Arts (Politics and History) from The University of Melbourne and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Jarrod Ball

Board Member, Australian Energy Regulator

Jarrod Ball was appointed to the Board in May 2023. Prior to this, Jarrod was Chief Economist at the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) leading their economic research and advocacy.

He has more than 21 years of experience in public policy, government relations and economics, working across state and federal governments and major Australian companies such as EY and BHP. Jarrod has provided economic and policy advice to governments across the energy, transport and telecommunications sectors, including as a lead adviser on microeconomic reform in the Victorian Government. Jarrod has also held several board and committee positions across government and business and until recently was an Adjunct Associate Professor at Deakin Business School.

Jarrod holds a Masters in Economics from Monash University, and a Bachelor of Business and Bachelor of Arts from the University of Southern Queensland.

Anna Brakey

Commissioner, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission

Anna Brakey was appointed a Commissioner of the ACCC in December 2020. She is also an Associate Member of the Australian Communications and Media Authority. On 1 March 2022 Anna commenced as an Associate Member of the New Zealand Commerce Commission.

Anna has extensive experience in regulatory economics and public policy with over 25 years of experience working with regulators, government and within the private sector. She has had broad exposure to a wide range of infrastructure industries, including energy, water and transport. Additionally, she has worked on economic reform to social policy.

Prior to starting at ACCC, Anna worked as an economist at Frontier Economics and held a number of roles at the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), including being a deputy Tribunal Member, the Executive Director of Strategy and Economic Analysis and the Chief Operating Officer. Anna's expertise includes the Parliamentary Committee process, the New South Wales Department of Transport, the Australian Productivity Commission, the Bureau of Industry Economics and the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Additionally, Anna has worked for the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) on reforms to economic regulation and with the New South Wales Treasury on the sale of assets.

Anna chairs the Infrastructure and Communications Committee and the Energy Markets Board, and is the Deputy Chair of the Water and Agriculture Committee.

Anna holds a Bachelor of Economics from Australian National University and a Graduate Diploma of Applied Finance and Investment from Securities Institute of Australia. She is also a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Lynne Gallagher

Board Member, Australian Energy Regulator

Lynne Gallagher 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, 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.

Before working in the energy sector, Lynne held senior executive leadership roles in business, including in the finance, infrastructure and superannuation sectors, and in the public sector, including Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Treasury.

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.

Stephanie Jolly

Executive General Manager, Australian Energy Regulator

Stephanie Jolly joined the AER in 2021 after 13 years working on energy issues in the Qld Government. Over that time, Stephanie worked on issues across the energy system from consumer protections and price setting to gas markets, liquid fuels, the emergence of the renewables industry in Qld and national energy policy. Prior to joining the Qld Government Stephanie worked on aviation safety and broadcasting policy in a number of Commonwealth departments.

Stephanie holds a Bachelor of Arts degree (Honours) in Political Science and Government and an Executive Masters in Public Administration.

Tim Jordan

Commissioner, Australian Energy Market Commission

Tim Jordan is an economist who has worked in public policy, investment and corporate strategy to drive the energy transition.

As a consultant, Tim advised leading organisations on energy transition strategies.

He led investment research and strategy at the Clean Energy Finance Corporation, Australia's green investment bank, laying the groundwork for its expansion into new technologies and asset classes.

At Deutsche Bank he advised institutional investors on energy transition risks and opportunities.

In government, Tim was a senior adviser to Australia's first federal minister for climate change, where he worked on designing a national emissions trading scheme and expanding Australia's renewable energy target.

Tim has a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Queensland, an MPhil from University College London, where he was a Commonwealth Scholar, and a Master of Economics from the University of Sydney.

Catriona Lowe

Deputy Chair, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission

Catriona Lowe was appointed by the Governor General to the position of ACCC Deputy Chair for a 5-year term on 27 January 2023. On 19 June 2023 Catriona commenced as an Associate Member of the Australian Communications and Media Authority.

Catriona chairs the Compliance and Product Safety Committee, is the Deputy Chair of the Digital ID and Consumer Data Right Committee, Scams and Digital Markets Committee and Energy Markets Board, and is a member of the Enforcement Committee.

For over 20 years Catriona has had a strong commitment to consumer issues and protection of consumer rights in her varied roles as a regulator, litigator and consumer advocate.

Before joining the ACCC, Catriona was a Board Member of the Australian Energy Regulator from February 2020. She has also held a non-Executive director role on a range of boards, including the Australian Financial Complaints Authority, the Financial Adviser Standards and Ethics Authority and the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman. Catriona was also principal of a consumer-focused consulting practice.

From 2006 to 2013, Catriona was Co-CEO of the Consumer Action Law Centre. She has also held senior roles with the Consumers' Federation of Australia and the ACCC.

Over the years Catriona has worked extensively on matters involving consumer focused regulation, behavioural economics and effective enforcement and compliance. She has advocated for consumers across a range of markets including financial services, telecommunications and energy.

Catriona has a Bachelor of Laws from Northern Territory University (now Charles Darwin University).

Sarah Proudfoot

CEO, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission

Sarah Proudfoot was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the ACCC in May 2025. Ms Proudfoot started with the ACCC/AER in 2005 when she joined the agency's Infocentre. She has since held a range of senior roles in the agency, including executive general manager of the ACCC Infrastructure Division between 2020 and 2024 with oversight of the ACCC's work across telecommunications, rail, ports, airports, electricity and gas as well as the 2023 Childcare Inquiry. Ms Proudfoot was appointed executive general manager of the ACCC's National Anti-Scam Centre in August 2024 and has been acting chief executive since February 2025. Ms Proudfoot holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws.

Nicole Ross

Executive General Manager, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission

Nicole Ross is the Executive General Manager of the ACCC's Infrastructure Division and is responsible for overseeing the ACCC's economic regulation of nationally significant infrastructure, and for monitoring and reporting on markets of significant concern, including telecommunications, petrol, rail, ports, airlines and airports, electricity, gas, water and insurance. Nicole has worked as an economist, lawyer, policy officer and regulator in a range of government departments and agencies, including over 15 years in economic regulation with the ACCC. Prior to heading up the ACCC's Infrastructure Division, Nicole led ACCC market inquiries into gas and childcare markets. Nicole has qualifications in economics, law, writing and literature and is a legal practitioner of the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory.

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