New energy has the potential to turn energy sector on its head, say experts

A panel of experts will convene to discuss the impact of new energy on the Australian energy sector and consumers at the Next Generation Energy Forum in Melbourne on 9 December.

The forum, hosted by the University of Wollongong’s SMART Infrastructure Facility and Accenture, brings together observers and participants of the energy sector’s current transformation with unrivalled insight into the environment consumers will experience in the not too distant future.

Mr Les Hosking, an Honorary Professorial Fellow, SMART Infrastructure Facility, said new technologies and newcomers to the energy services sector are enabling customers to take control over their energy needs.

“Regulators and existing energy market participants are now actively assessing the likely direction of the new technology drivers and the likely consumer responses in expectation of changes to regulation and competition dynamics that will inevitably co-incide with change,” Mr Hosking, who is also a non-executive Director of AGL Energy Ltd and Chairman of Adelaide Brighton Ltd, said.

Mr Tony Wood, Energy Program Director at the Grattan Institute, said the policy and regulatory framework for energy supply established over a century ago has survived largely intact until now but whether it will survive the next 10 years, let alone another century, is being called into question.

“A perfect storm of climate change policies, falling gas prices and a broken regulatory model will confront energy businesses and governments over the next decade, with few clear images of how they might emerge on the other side. The new world of “prosumers” (consumers who also produce their own electricity) has the capacity to turn the old business model of a supply-led electricity market on its head,” Mr Wood said.

Mike Cleary, Chief Operating Officer at Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO), said the key challenge for suppliers was to find the right balance between cost, energy reliability, and emissions levels.

“Consumers want low-cost reliable energy, and increasingly they want clean energy. But, at the same time, investors must make a return on their investments, and community views must be considered. This is particularly important as the sector adjusts to a step change in the liquefied natural gas industry, declining consumption and increased network costs in the electricity sector, and emerging technologies such as battery storage,” Mr Cleary said.

The forum will be chaired by Greg Guthridge from Accenture.

EVENT DETAILS
When: Tuesday 9 December. Arrivals from 5 p.m. for a 5.30 p.m. start
Where: Westin Room IV, Westin Melbourne, 205 Collins Street
Note to media: Media are welcome to attend this event.
Media contact: Victoria Black, Strategic Marketing Manager via vblack@uow.edu.au
Speaker profiles

MR GREG GUTHRIDGE, MANAGING DIRECTOR - ASIA PACIFIC UTILITIES, ACCENTURE
With almost 25 years of energy industry experience, Greg currently leads Accenture’s Asia Pacific Utilities practice, which encompasses a vast array of emerging and mature energy markets.

Leveraging his deep utilities knowledge and diverse consumer, operations and technology background, Greg helps clients define their strategic direction and navigate actionable operational roadmaps that deliver measurable and cost-effective outcomes. Greg is also the executive sponsor for Accenture’s New Energy Consumer research program, a five-year global study of energy consumer preferences and practices. He is frequently called upon to present his energy consumer perspectives to senior executives, management teams, governments and educational forums. He has also been recognised as one of Consulting Magazine’s Top 25 Consultants for Excellence in Energy.

MR LES HOSKING, NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AGL ENERGY LTD
Les has over 30 years of experience in trading, broking and management in metals, soft commodities, energy and financial instrument derivatives in the global futures industry.

Currently, he is an Honorary Professorial Fellow at SMART Infrastructure Facility and non-executive Director of AGL Energy Ltd.

Les was previously a Director of Innovation Australia Pty Limited, Australian Energy Market Operator (Transition) Limited (AEMO), Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of NEMMCo and a non-executive Director of NEMMCo.

MR GARRY BOWDITCH, CEO SMART INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITY, UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG
Garry Bowditch is the inaugural CEO of the SMART Infrastructure Facility, University of Wollongong. He is an infrastructure practitioner with a unique balance of commercial and government experience spanning Australia, Asia and the OECD.

Garry holds a number of other appointments including Expert Panel Member of the ITRC (Infrastructure Transitions Research Consortia) at Oxford University; Board Member of AURIN (Australian Urban Research Infrastructure Network) at Melbourne University and member of the Advisory Board for Liveable Cities at University College London. He recently accepted an invitation as Strategic Adviser to the Committee for Sydney.

MR TONY WOOD, ENERGY PROGRAM DIRECTOR, GRATTAN INSTITUTE
Tony has led the Grattan Institute’s Energy Program since mid-2011. Since then he and his team have delivered seven major reports on energy and climate change and he has developed a strong profile with governments and industry, and is a regular contributor in major media on key energy issues. From 2009 until mid-2014, he also had a role as Program Director of Clean Energy Projects at the Clinton Foundation, advising governments in the Asia-Pacific region on effective deployment of large-scale, low-emission energy technologies such as solar and CCS.

Prior to these roles, he spent 14 years working at Origin Energy in senior executive roles covering retail and LPG line management and corporate affairs. In 2008, he was seconded to provide an industry perspective to the first Garnaut review. He has built widespread relationships within the energy sector and is an adviser to government.
MR MIKE CLEARY, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER (COO), AUSTRALIAN ENERGY MARKET OPERATOR (AEMO)

As COO, Mike plays a key role in AEMO’s continuing development as a leader in market and system operations, providing leadership and direction by fostering strategic partnerships to facilitate AEMO’s key functions. Originally from Ireland, Mike worked for Ireland’s integrated utility for 15 years. He has also worked in senior management roles for global firms including Deloitte Consulting and Accenture.

Over the past decade Mike has worked with both market participants and operators for organisations including the US-based PJM Interconnection and Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), focusing in energy market restructure and reform.

Before joining AEMO, Mike was based in Texas where he was the Senior Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer of ERCOT. He directed an extensive new market implementation and corporate turnaround program, managing over 350 staff across multiple sites.

MR ALISTAIR PARKER, GENERAL MANAGER ASSET MANAGEMENT, AUSNET SERVICES

Alistair has over 25 years of experience in the energy industry with a focus on network strategy, asset management and network regulation.

Prior to his role as General Manager Asset Management at AusNet Services, Alistair was Director, Regulation and Network Strategy, from 2009. Before moving to Australia, Alistair spent 15 years with National Grid, UK, initially as an engineer, then moving into commercial roles.

In 2000, he became a consultant with Ernst & Young in New Zealand before moving to PricewaterhouseCoopers in Australia as Melbourne Energy Economics Practice Leader.

About the University of Wollongong:

The University of Wollongong (UOW) is globally ranked as one of Australia’s best modern universities and currently sits among the top two per cent of universities in the world.

UOW has built an international reputation for world-class research and exceptional teaching quality. It has a five-star status for its ‘educational experience’ and ‘graduate outcomes’.