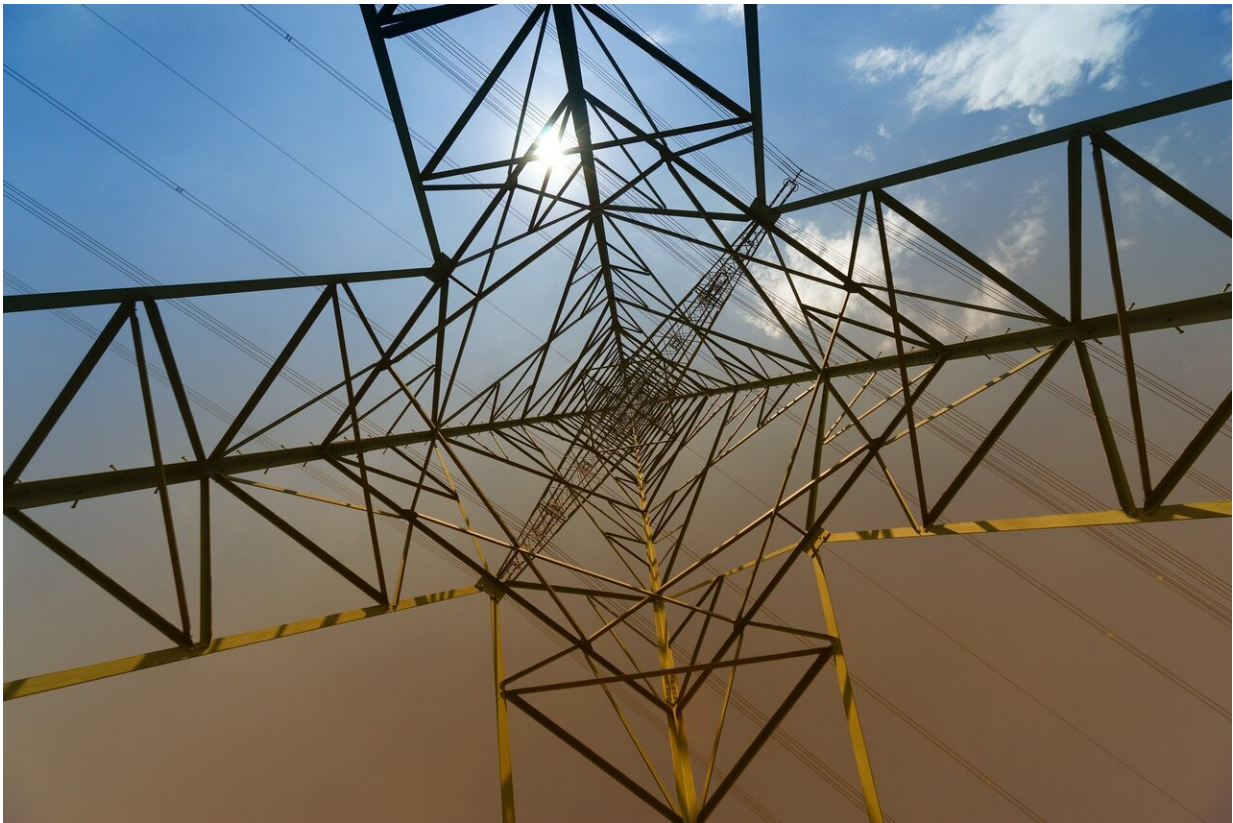


# Australia's path to net zero emissions needs greater human focus

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Australia's transition to a net-zero energy system is a massive and complex task; requiring interdisciplinary solutions addressing Australia's specific needs, to achieve this goal. This is why today, the Australian

Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) is releasing its Australian Energy Transition Research Plan, calling on researchers, research funders and government to shift the dial on Australian energy transition research.

"While there are substantial efforts already underway by Australian governments, NGOs, researchers and industry, Australia needs a scalable and cohesive research agenda to focus our efforts," remarked Drew Clarke, Chair of ACOLA's Steering Committee for the Research Plan. "A successful [energy](#) transition must both address the energy trilemma (reliable, affordable, net-zero emissions) and be fair, engaging people in the context of their lives, jobs and communities. Australia performs well in science and technology energy research, and this must continue; but more research in the human and social dimensions is needed to better understand and support Australian communities through the energy transition."

ACOLA's Australian Energy Transition Research Plan, the first of its kind, highlights the urgent and strategic research priorities needed for Australia to successfully achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 (or earlier). To realize the Research Plan, ACOLA calls on the research sector, including funders, to strategically direct and fund critical research gaps, complement existing strengths and reduce unnecessary duplication, and activate innovative research to enable a more sustainable, affordable, reliable, and fair energy system.

Australia's energy transition is not a simple one-step process, and will require continuous innovation and improvement to fully shift to a net-zero energy system. Focused, [interdisciplinary research](#) will help Australia stay ahead of the curve, minimize risks to our economy and community, and harness opportunities to grow our energy export market.

The Research Plan will be updated periodically, as new capabilities,

research needs and knowledge emerge. ACOLA will monitor national research progress against the Research Plan, and consult with stakeholders to identify emerging national research priorities.

ACOLA's Research Plan complements, and encourages further outcomes from activities already underway by Australian governments, including the Low Emissions Technology Roadmap.

ACOLA notes the strong support and input from experts across academia, industry and governments into the development of the Research Plan, and in particular, the financial support provided by ARENA, CSIRO and NERA.

ACOLA's Chief Executive Officer, Ryan Winn, said: "ACOLA calls on policy-makers and energy researchers, funders and users to build a better Australian energy research system. Our energy research needs more focus, interdisciplinarity, and scale to support a successful energy transition. It also requires local research dedicated to Australian issues. Our Research Plan provides this framework."

ACOLA Chair of the Board, Professor John Shine said, "We do not have time to wait; Australia needs to transform our energy sector to net-zero emissions rapidly. ACOLA's Research Plan seeks to shift the focus towards the breadth of interdisciplinary challenges, so that we can transition with minimum disruption to our society and economy as possible."

**More information:** Australia's Energy Transition Research Plan: [acola.org/energy-transition-research-plan/](https://acola.org/energy-transition-research-plan/)

Provided by ACOLA

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