

Foresighting Forum 2026



Flick the switch!

Forum Program

Shangri-La, Sydney
4-5 March 2026

Foresighting Forum 2026: Flick the Switch!

The Foresighting Forum is the only national energy forum centred on the people whose decisions matter most to Australia's energy future: households and small businesses. The everyday choices they make about how they use, save, generate and pay for energy will shape the success of the energy transition.

At the Foresighting Forum in March 2026, participants will focus on accelerating the shift to an energy system that is affordable, clean and reliable, and aligned with the values and expectations of all Australians. Grounded in consumer experience, the Forum brings together policymakers, regulators, industry leaders, researchers and consumer advocates to drive practical, outcome focused discussion.

The 2026 program focuses on three critical dimensions of the energy transition:

- How can consumer trust and confidence be maintained during the energy transition, particularly amid ongoing cost of living pressures?
- Are we asking the right questions as artificial intelligence and rapid growth in data centre demand add complexity to the energy market?
- How can the sector work together to ensure the experiences of all households and small businesses are visible to decision makers and adequately reflected in policy, regulation and support?

Together these discussions will examine how the energy system can better protect consumers and support a fair, inclusive energy transition.

The Foresighting Forum is a space for focused debate and collaboration, with consumer perspectives at the centre of shaping Australia's energy future.

Keynote Speakers



Luis Gonzalez

Chief Data & AI Officer | AboitizPower
Chief Operating Officer - Power & Research |
Aboitiz Data Innovation

Luis has more than 25 years' experience working at the intersection of artificial intelligence, digital systems and energy infrastructure. He has advised on energy market contestability and smart metering programs across North America, Asia and the Middle East, and worked with more than 50 utilities and industrial organisations globally. His work focuses on building trustworthy, resilient and scalable AI for the power sector, with expertise spanning grid forecasting, energy markets, sustainability, data governance and consumer-centred energy transitions.



Professor Robert Gross

Director | UK Energy Research Centre

Robert has extensive experience advising government, regulators and industry on energy policy, markets and system reform. His roles include advising DESNZ, Ofgem and National Grid, and contributing to major national reviews of electricity market arrangements and network regulation. He has acted as a specialist advisor to parliamentary inquiries and served on national infrastructure advisory panels. His work spans policy development, market design and international engagement with organisations such as the IEA, World Bank and UNDP.

Keynote Speakers (continued)



Professor Harriet Thomson

**Professor | Energy, Sustainability and Inequality,
University of Glasgow**
**Associate Director | Glasgow Centre for Sustainable
Energy**

Harriet's work focuses on how public policy shapes energy systems and the unequal distribution of housing, clean energy, and energy affordability. Her research examines the links between energy poverty, health and wellbeing, and the indicators used to measure lived experience. She has supported national and European policy initiatives, including co-founding the EU Energy Poverty Observatory and helping design the Social Climate Fund. She currently leads a major European research project exploring structural drivers of energy inequality.

Forum Program

The following program is provisional in nature and subject to change, without notice, at the discretion of Energy Consumers Australia.

DAY ONE: Wednesday, 4 March 2026

8:00am

Registration Open

9:00am

Welcome to Country

Forum Open

Craig Reucassel | Forum MC, Australian writer, comedian and broadcaster

Chair Address

Dr Michael Schaper | Chair, Energy Consumers Australia

Chief Executive Welcome

Dr Brendan French | Chief Executive Officer, Energy Consumers Australia

9:30am

KEYNOTE: Risks and Opportunities to Consumers from AI and Data Centres

Luis Gonzalez | Chief Data & AI Officer, AboitizPower & Chief Operating Officer Power & Research, Aboitiz Data Innovation

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| 9:50am | PANEL: Keynote Presentation Discussion A panel discussion responding to the keynote, interrogating the consumer risks and opportunities emerging from the rapid rise of data centres and artificial intelligence, and what this shift means for Australia's energy market. |
| 10:20am | REFLECTIONS FROM THE FRONT: How Advocates are Driving Change |
| 10:30am | PANEL: In a Net Zero Energy Market, What is Industry's Role? A panel examining the evolving roles and responsibilities of networks and retailers in a net zero energy market, and how emerging technologies and business models are reshaping consumer outcomes, costs and regulation. |
| 11:00am | Morning Tea and Networking Break |
| 11:30am | INTERACTIVE SESSION: Postcards from 2050 |
| 11:45am | DEBATE In an entertaining and thought provoking debate, energy and AI experts will ask whether we truly understand the implications of the transition, and challenge us to consider whether we're doing enough to consider consumers' interests. |
| 12:30pm | REFLECTIONS FROM THE FRONT: How Advocates are Driving Change |
| 12:45pm | Gill Owen Scholarship Presentation The Gill Owen Scholarship supports an individual to travel internationally to research innovative ideas and initiatives that can support better outcomes for Australian consumers. |
| 1:00pm | Lunch and Networking Break |

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| 2:00pm | <p>KEYNOTE: Maintaining the Momentum of the Energy Transition in a Cost-of-Living Crisis</p> <p>Professor Robert Gross Executive Director, UK Energy Research Centre</p> |
| 2:20pm | <p>PANEL: Keynote Presentation Discussion</p> <p>Following the keynote, the panel will explore lessons from the UK and Australia on maintaining momentum in the energy transition during a cost of living crisis, and what this means for regulators, industry and consumers.</p> |
| 2:50pm | <p>PANEL: Is the Energy System Reconciling Private and Public Benefits?</p> <p>The public role of privately owned Consumer Energy Resources is escalating. This panel will examine CER's role in delivering system reliability and security, whether consumers are being properly rewarded, and how effectively the energy system is balancing these benefits.</p> |
| 3:30pm | <p>REFLECTIONS FROM THE FRONT: How Advocates are Driving Change</p> |
| 3:40pm | <p>Afternoon Tea and Networking Break</p> |
| 4:10pm | <p>PANEL: Consumer Duty - Experiences From Other Sectors</p> <p>Energy is not the first sector to consider implementing a consumer duty - shifting responsibility for action from consumers to providers. This panel will learn from the experiences of other industries to understand how it has successfully changed behaviours, strengthened protections, and delivered better consumer outcomes.</p> |

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| 4:40pm | Hypothetical |
| 5:20pm | Day 1 Wrap Up |
| 5:30pm | Networking Function |

DAY TWO: Thursday, 5 March 2026

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| 9:00am | Day 2 Open Craig Reucassel Forum MC, Australian writer, comedian and broadcaster |
| 9:05am | KEYNOTE: Lessons from the EU on Addressing Energy Hardship Professor Harriet Thomson Professor, Energy, Sustainability & Inequality, University of Glasgow and Associate Director, Glasgow Centre for Sustainable Energy |
| 9:25am | PANEL: Keynote Presentation Discussion A discussion highlighting the need to ensure that we understand the experience of all Australians in the energy market, to make sure that no-one is left behind. Is Australia's institutional architecture effective to give us confidence that we know which consumers need help? |
| 9:50am | PANEL: All Australians Should Enjoy Critical Consumer Protections; Why Don't They? A panel examining why critical consumer protections are not reaching all Australians, highlighting the experiences of those locked out of safeguards and the reforms needed to deliver fair and consistent protections across the energy system. |

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| 10:30am | REFLECTIONS FROM THE FRONT: How Advocates are Driving Change |
| 10:40am | PANEL: The Role of Retailers in Assisting Consumers |
| 11:00am | Morning Tea and Networking Break |
| 11:30am | Kelvin Trimper Scholarship Presentation The Kelvin Trimper Scholarship is a consumer advocacy scholarship which supports an individual to build their knowledge, or to research innovative ideas that will improve outcomes for consumers. |
| 11:40am | Strengthening the Consumer Voice Presenting Energy Consumers Australia's research on how to better consult with consumers. |
| 11:55am | REFLECTIONS FROM THE FRONT: How Advocates are Driving Change? |
| 12:05pm | INTERACTIVE SESSION: Postcards from 2050 |
| 12:50pm | Closing Remarks Dr Brendan French Chief Executive Officer, Energy Consumers Australia |
| 1:00pm | Lunch and Networking Break |

