

A new Energy Research Institutes Council for Australia (ERICA)

The directors of Australia's major energy research institutes have announced the formation of a new Energy Research Institutes Council for Australia (ERICA) to provide research-led advice on the nation's energy future.

The Council combines research expertise from the Universities of Queensland, Sydney, New South Wales, Monash, Melbourne, Adelaide and The Australian National University, as well as CSIRO.

The announcement was made alongside a Parliamentary hearing into Modernising Australia's Electricity Grid, attended by a number of the research institutes.

The aim of the Council is to provide:

1. Collective national capacity across a broad spectrum of cutting-edge energy research, in both specialised and inter-disciplinary fields
2. High-level advice to government based on energy policy research
3. An over-the-horizon perspective on future energy opportunities and challenges that can only be informed by cutting-edge research
4. A research touch point for industry and government on energy issues of national and international significance.

"To move Australia's energy future forward, we need a plan - and the Council broadly supports the plan provided by the Finkel Review of the National Electricity Market," Professor Ken Baldwin, Director of the ANU Energy Change Institute, told the Parliamentary hearing.

"The modernisation of our power grid is crucial if Australia is to transition to a low emissions future – and to take advantage of the new innovation it will generate", said Prof Vassallo, Director of the Centre for Sustainable Energy Development at the University of Sydney.

Prof Michael Brear, Director of the Melbourne Energy Institute, said "By pooling our universities' expertise and resources, ERICA can make sure the best possible evidence-based research is available to industry and policy-makers when they are considering the future of Australia's energy sector".

Assoc Prof Jacek Jasieniak, Director of the Monash Energy Materials and Systems Institute (MEMSI), said: "ERICA will be an independent expert Council that will balance the viewpoints of industry and government around Australia's energy related issues."

Justine Jarvinen, Chief Operating Officer of the UNSW Future Energy Institute, said “ERICA will provide well-researched ideas for how to implement the recommendations of various energy market reviews, and will help to inform future energy sector developments generally”.

Professor Gus Nathan, Director of The University of Adelaide’s Centre for Energy Technology, said “ERICA will make a valuable contribution to the national debate on energy by bringing together a collective view from leading independent experts throughout Australia.”

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