



## Workshop: Just Energy Transitions 8:30 - 12:30 Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> Feb

Boola Katitjin, Room 360.4.031

**Workshop:** Challenged by the reality of climate change and the surge in energy consumption exacerbated by AI, we need to rethink our relationship with power and energy. A *'Just Energy Transition'* requires more than renewable technologies; it demands a shift in how we understand communities and their connection to justice, equity, sustainability, sovereignty, and empowerment. These factors are and will be central to both local and global energy security. Through presentations and a participatory panel discussion, this workshop will contribute to a greater shared understanding of a *just energy transition* that goes beyond decarbonisation and measuring emissions.

### Workshop Schedule

- 8:30 Welcome, introductions
- 8:40 Presentations
- 10:40 Coffee Break
- 11:00 Interactive Panel Discussion
- 12:20 Conclusion: Where to from here?

### Presentations. (90 + 30 min)

18 minute presentations, followed by 30 minutes question time

- **Tael Harper:** Communicating the energy transition – juggling FUD, FOMO and Fakeouts
- **Mia Pepper:** WA perspective on the energy transition, threats to climate, nature, and communities.
- **Desire Runganga:** Criticality and North-South implications
- **Charles Roche:** Energy, humanity and transition narratives
- **Jordan King:** The Importance of Social Science Research in Guiding WA's Renewable Energy Transition

### Interactive Panel Discussion (80 min)

**Workshop Facilitator and Provocateur, Dr Martin Brueckner, Assoc Prof. and Pro Vice Chancellor of Sustainability**

- All panel members get 3 minutes to reply to other presentations
- Questions and discussion from participants

Register now, free for WREC Attendees, Workshop registration \$220 (incl. GST) includes the whole days program, Some 50% attendance sponsorships for Academic and Community Representatives. Register [online](#) or email [charles.roche@murdoch.edu.au](mailto:charles.roche@murdoch.edu.au) to arrange your attendance. Supported by WREC, the School of Humanities Arts and Social Sciences, and the MPI-MU Partnership.



**Dr Tael Harper, A/Prof School of Media and Communications**

**Title: Communicating the energy transition – juggling FUD, FOMO and Fakeouts**

Communication about the energy transition has been confronted with a fossil-fuelled campaign to develop Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt (FUD) about the benefits of renewable energy. Previous experience of combatting FUD in areas such as information technology and cryptocurrencies suggests that the most effective strategic response is to create a ‘Fear Of Missing Out’ (FOMO). This presentation will outline how these communication strategies have been employed in the public debate about the energy transition, and point out the risks of misrepresenting what the energy transition can actually deliver.

**Mia Pepper, Campaigns Director Conservation Council of Western Australia**

**Title: WA perspective on the energy transition, threats to climate, nature, and communities.**

The state government has framed WA's role in the energy transition as the “heavy lifters” referring to the ongoing production and export of gas and increasing the mining and processing of raw materials for the global energy transition with dual applications for technology and defence. At the fore front of these industrial developments are regional communities who disproportionately feel the impact and miss out on the benefits from resource extraction. WA's natural environment is also facing compounding threats from a new wave of clearing alongside climate stress and failing efforts to remediate or offset. This presentation will look at some of the major energy and mineral developments in WA and the impacts on communities and nature in the context of the much-needed energy transition.

**Desire Runganga, PhD Candidate, and matter expert at the Western Australia GreenTech Hub**

**Title: Criticality and North-South implications**

*Mineral criticality* was developed 100 years ago during an era of world wars. Hence, from its inception, criticality was a relational concept that inherently implicated foreign nations. A mineral was “critical” precisely because it was sourced from a foreign nation, and the strategic goal was to secure *this* external capability for one’s country while denying its value to others, even the producers of the minerals thereof, and thereby limiting the prospects of equitable cooperation. Many have tried to reframe criticality, but with limited success. It matters now more than ever to producing countries like Australia if they are to secure a share of mid to downstream value chains—and even more so if we are to achieve just transitions.

**Dr Charles Roche, Just Transitions and Critical Minerals, Sustainability Lecturer**

**Title: Energy, humanity and transition narratives**

To achieve a *Just Energy Transition* we need to do more than grow our renewables sector and decarbonise our economy. While some sectoral progress has been made in Australia on the back of new policies, technologies and investments, our relationship with energy remains relatively unchanged. While dominant narratives describe a transition in progress, the social-economic realities remain undisturbed. Can an electrified version of the status quo really be a transition, and how could it be considered just?

**Dr Jordan King, Principal Project Officer, MRIWA**

**Title: The Importance of Social Science Research in Guiding WA’s Renewable Energy Transition**

Western Australia’s renewable energy transition is shaped not only by technological innovation but by the social, cultural and institutional contexts in which it unfolds. Drawing on insights from MRIWA’s program of decarbonisation and clean energy research, this presentation explores the importance of social science research in guiding an equity- and opportunity-focused transition - one that reflects the diverse needs and values of WA’s communities and industries. Social sciences offer a conduit for understanding how the energy transition can enhance collective wellbeing while also helping to navigate the barriers that constrain Net Zero ambitions. Social science insights into community engagement and participation, cultural values and worldviews, risk perception and trust, institutional change and policy dynamics, labour and workforce transitions, and the narratives that shape public understanding and support for Net Zero are critical for navigating the way forward. The presentation will also discuss opportunities for social scientists to collaborate with MRIWA through its research funding streams and activities, and how interdisciplinary partnerships can support inclusive innovation and locally grounded solutions.