

September 2026



Queensland
Decarbonisation
Hub

Queensland Decarbonisation Hub

2026 Forum Program





Queensland Decarbonisation Hub Forum Program

Tuesday 29 September 2026

UQ Centre, The University of Queensland, St Lucia

8:45-9:00am	Registration – Tea and coffee on arrival
9:00-9:05am	Welcome Remarks – Suzanne Thompson FTSE, Founder, YACHATDAC
9:05-9:15am	Welcome to Country – Tribal Experiences
9:15-9:20am	UQ Welcome – Professor Kim Wilkins, Associate Dean Research (HASS, UQ)
9:20-10:05am	Morning Keynote: A Nation Powered by Participation: How Households and Businesses Are Driving the Energy Transition Robert Potter, Head of Policy & Advocacy, Smart Energy Council
10:05-10:20am	Morning Tea
10:20-11:05am	Understanding the Transition: A Political Economy Perspective Saideh Kent, Program Director, The Next Economy Lizzie Webb, Chief Executive Officer, The Next Economy
11:05-11:50am	An Energy Transition Available to All: First Nations Voices Bec Halliday, Director, First Nations Clean Energy Network and Associate Professor, Mabo Centre, University of Melbourne
11:50am-12:30pm	Lunch
12:30pm-1:15pm	What Role Should Technology Play in the Transition? Professor Belinda Wade, Chair in Climate Action and Ethical Transitions and Co-Lead of the Net Zero Observatory, UQ Dr Liz Young, Research Director, Queensland Decarbonisation Hub Dr Liz Fellows, Executive Director - Emissions Policy and Analytics, Queensland Treasury Professor Kerrie Wilson, Queensland Chief Scientist



1:15-2:15pm	Just Transitions: International, National and Regional Perspectives
	Rachelle Cooper Kulkarni, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Sustainify
	Justine McLeod, Chief Executive Officer, CHRRUP
	Professor Jeremy Moss, Professor Political Philosophy and Lead Chief Investigator on ARC Linkage Project 'A Just Climate Transition', The University of New South Wales
	Leanne Phillips, Founder & Managing Director, The Sanctuary of Embracing Difference
	Professor Tavis Potts, Personal Chair in Sustainable Development and Environmental Governance, The University of Aberdeen (via video link)
2:15pm-2:30pm	Afternoon Tea
2:30-3:00pm	Afternoon Keynote: Navigating decarbonisation: Opportunities and challenges for Queensland
	Kylie Porter, Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Farmers' Federation
3:00-4:15pm	Future Directions: What Does the Transition Mean for Your Sector?
	Dr Philippa England, Adjunct Senior Lecturer, Griffith University
	Richard Hoolihan, Board Member, NQ Dry Tropics Board
	Dr Greg Leach, General Manager Policy and Industry Development, Timber Queensland
	Associate Professor Jason Nielsen, Director Strategic Initiatives, Climate KIC Australia
	Chris Norman, CEO, NRM Regions Queensland
4:15-4:30pm	Suzanne Thompson FTSE, Founder, YACHATDAC
4:30pm	Concluding Remarks
4:30pm	Networking – Saint Lucy Caffé e Cucina, UQ



Speakers and Panellists

More information on our speakers and panellists can be found [here](#).



Robert Potter is the Head of Policy and Advocacy at the Smart Energy Council and a national leader in energy, policy and system-level reform, bringing decades of experience shaping major economic transitions across Australia. His career spans senior executive roles in the energy sector, national policy leadership, and governance positions overseeing complex organisations. Rob is driven by the scale of Australia's clean energy opportunity and the belief that the transition is a nation-building project that will reshape industries, create new markets and define Australia's economic identity for generations.



Kylie Porter is the Chief Executive Officer of the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF), Queensland's peak body for agriculture. Through QFF, Kylie works with member organisations to support farmers, strengthen policy and contribute to the future of Queensland's regional communities. Kylie is known for bringing people, industries and ideas together to tackle complex challenges, unlock practical solutions and strengthen regional resilience. A respected regional and industry leader, she is committed to ensuring regional and rural voices are heard in the decisions that shape their future. Kylie is also a founding Director of C-Res, one of Australia's largest social enterprises, which delivers a local buying platform in remote and regional locations across Australia in partnership with BHP, and a member of Queensland Treasury's Clean Expert Economy Panel helping guide Queensland's low-emissions future.



Rachelle Cooper Kulkarni is a climate and energy strategist, futurist, and just transition practitioner working at the intersection of renewable energy, strategic foresight, and Indigenous-led solutions. As Founder and CEO of Sustainify, she works with governments, communities, and industry to navigate the energy transition with integrity — using long-range thinking to ensure the benefits of the transition are shared equitably and that communities are active participants. In particular, Rachelle works closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations on energy sovereignty and climate resilience.



Dr Philippa England is an Adjunct Senior lecturer at Griffith University, Brisbane, where she has taught planning and environmental law for many years. She is a member of the Hub's Advisory Committee and the author of *Planning in Queensland: Law, Policy and Practice*.



Dr Liz Fellows has spent over a decade in climate, energy and industry policy in the Commonwealth and State Governments covering climate change, energy, agriculture, natural resources, industry, and infrastructure; across policy, legislation and regulation. She is currently the Executive Director – Emissions Policy and Analytics at Queensland Treasury, where she leads whole-of-government emissions reduction policy; research partnerships to support industry and communities to take climate action; and emissions modelling to drive evidence-based decision making.



Rebecca (Bec) Halliday is a senior Aboriginal leader and strategic adviser with more than two decades of experience across government, industry and the First Nations sector. She is nationally recognised for her leadership in First Nations governance, cultural heritage and environmental protection, economic participation and the clean energy transition. Her work focuses on strengthening First Nations rights, interests and knowledge in decision-making across Australia's environment, energy and infrastructure sectors. Bec is Director of Engagement and Programs at the First Nations Clean Energy Network, Associate Professor with the Mabo Centre at the University of Melbourne, Co-Chair of the Indigenous Advisory Committee under the EPBC Act, and Founder and CEO of GIRA Group.



Richard Hoolihan is a Gugu Badhun man from North Queensland who resides in Greenvale on his Traditional Country and a member of the Hub's Advisory Committee. Richard has previously served as Chairperson of the North Queensland Land Council. He is a Board Member at North Queensland Dry Tropics and chairs the Traditional Owner Management Group, ensuring effective engagement with the seventeen Traditional Owner groups across the Burdekin Dry Tropics region in Natural Resources Projects.



Saideh Kent leads The Next Economy's Energy sector work, supporting communities to manage Australia's transition to renewable energy. Saideh has 20 years of experience delivering major infrastructure projects across the energy, water and agriculture sectors. She specialises in remote and regional community engagement and bringing diverse stakeholders together to navigate complex problems.



Greg Leach is a member of the Hub's Advisory Committee, and the current General Manager for Policy and Industry Development at Timber Queensland. Prior to this role, he oversaw the regional engagement and natural capital portfolio in AgForce Queensland with longer policy development experience in vegetation - landscape management and land use competition. Prior to AgForce he spent over 25 years consulting with 3,000+ landholders and assisting with property management planning concerns, with emphasis on enabling profitability while restoring natural assets and preserving property rights.



Justine McLeod is the CEO of CHRRUP Ltd, a community-driven, not-for-profit regional development organisation. In this role, Justine leads the Regional Futures Round Table, fostering cooperation between industry, government and local community priorities across Central Queensland. Justine is a dynamic, results-driven executive leader with over 18 years of experience spanning mining, heavy minerals processing, supply chain logistics, and agriculture. Justine is passionate about changing the narrative around regional Australia—repositioning regional communities from passive "transition recipients" to the primary wealth-generating engine of the national economy.



Jeremy Moss is a Professor of Political Philosophy at the University of New South Wales. He is the author of several books on climate change including: *Carbon Justice: the Scandal of Australia's Biggest Contribution to Climate Change*; *Climate Justice Beyond the State* (with Lachlan Umbers), *Climate Change and Justice* (Cambridge University Press). His current projects include: 'A Just Climate Transition' and 'Dealing with Climate Disasters'. He is the recipient of the Eureka Prize for Ethics and the Australasia Association of Philosophy Media Prize.



Associate Professor Jason Nielsen is a Director of Strategic Initiatives at Climate KIC Australia, working within UTS' Institute for Sustainable Futures. Jason designs and leads large multi-stakeholder projects. Prior to Climate KIC, Jason spent almost a decade in leadership positions at RISE Research Institutes of Sweden. Jason's current focus is the Industrial Regionals Network which brings together business, industry groups, government, not-for-profits and research organisations to help accelerate the transition to net zero through shared learning and collaboration.



Chris Norman is a member of the Hub's Advisory Committee and CEO of NRM Regions Queensland (NRMQR), the peak body for the 12 regional NRM organisations across the State (and part of the 54 NRM organisations nationally). Chris has also been the CEO of the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (CMA) in northern Victoria since December 2009. During that time, Chris oversaw one of the largest on-farm irrigation upgrade projects in Australia's history, as well as delivering the biggest environmental flows seen down the Goulburn and Murray Rivers. In 2014, he was also acknowledged as 1 of 10 Luminaries selected to recognise 20 years of Integrated Catchment Management in Victoria.



Leanne Phillips is a visionary healer, teacher, mentor, guide, and connector who has dedicated her life to empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well as migrant Australians. A passionate advocate for holistic approaches to humanity, she is a creator and serial entrepreneur whose work is grounded in collective healing, cultural safety, and social transformation. As Founder and Managing Director of The Sanctuary of Embracing Difference, her leadership consistently focuses on creating spaces of acceptance, resilience, and growth. Leanne's career spans government and community agencies, where she has developed programs supporting education, employment, and life skills for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Professor Tavis Potts is a Personal Chair in Sustainable Development and Environmental Governance at the University of Aberdeen. His interests include understanding just transitions and the social dimensions of climate and energy; marine resource governance and planning; participatory and community-based approaches to managing natural capital; and the political economy of environmental policy and decision-making.



Suzanne Thompson FTSE is a proud Iningai woman from Central West Queensland, an advocate for respectful cultural knowledge-sharing, and a highly respected Elder rooted in her land and community. She founded and established Yambangku Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Tourism Development Aboriginal Corporation. By drawing links between Aboriginal knowledges and research agendas, Thompson creates social impact and creates space for caring for country. She is the chair of Australian Native Foods and Botanicals, a national peak body developing a national strategy for this emerging sector. She also serves as an advisor to Indigenous Tourism Queensland, a member of the Indigenous Carbon Network, chair of the Advisory Committee for the Hub, and member of the Federal Emissions Reduction Assurance Committee.



Professor Belinda Wade holds the Chair in Climate Action and Ethical Transitions at the University of Queensland Business School. Belinda's research promotes organisational progress on climate and sustainability issues with a focus on decarbonisation and organisational climate transitions. Her recent research has highlighted decarbonising actions taken within Australian companies and best practices in climate reporting and management. She has worked with the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB), the Future Fuels CRC (hydrogen adoption and biomethane), the Queensland Decarbonisation Hub (net zero roadmap planning); and Princeton University under the Rapid Switch initiative (decarbonisation).



Lizzie Webb is the CEO of The Next Economy. Lizzie has 20 years of experience leading for-purpose organisations across Australia and South-East Asia. With a background in humanitarian engineering and work with First Nations entrepreneurs. Lizzie's core skills include organisational leadership and governance, enterprise design and business model development, partnership brokering, strategic planning, and fundraising.



Professor Kim Wilkins is a humanities researcher and acclaimed creative writer who specialises in the intersection of creativity, technology, and cultural industries. Currently Associate Dean (Research) in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at UQ, she leads innovative research into the socio-material dimensions of creative industries and the application of creative thinking to complex technological challenges.



Professor Kerrie Wilson commenced in the role of the Queensland Chief Scientist on 1 November 2023. She is responsible for supporting the generation and translation of globally significant science to ensure sustainable economic growth in Queensland. With a distinguished career in academia and conservation, Kerrie has held prominent positions at Queensland University of Technology (QUT), including Pro Vice-Chancellor (Sustainability and Research Integrity) and Executive Director of the QUT Institute for Future Environments.



Thom Woodroffe is the author of [Power, Prosperity & Planet: Climate & Energy Policy for All](#) (Monash University Publishing 2026). He played a key role in securing the Paris Agreement on climate change in 2015, including helping establish the High Ambition Coalition of progressive nations. He has since worked as chief of staff to former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, for the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade in Washington DC and forged a backchannel for US–China climate talks during his time at the Asia Society in New York. Thom studied diplomacy as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University and – thanks to solar power – grew up off-the-grid in regional Victoria.



Dr Liz Young is the Research Director of the Queensland Decarbonisation Hub and an applied researcher focused on climate transitions, sectoral decarbonisation, and policy innovation. She brings over 20 years of experience in the Queensland Government, including more than a decade in senior leadership roles shaping environmental and climate policy.



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