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*Please contact* *Cathy Reade* *0413 575 934 to arrange interviews.*

*All media materials will be posted* [*here*](https://www.aares.org.au/AARES2024) *or available on request.*

*Media are welcome to attend – please contact Cathy to register.*

*The short program is available*[*here*](https://www.aares.org.au/Events/AARES-2024/program/) *and the detailed conference program*[*here*](https://virtual.oxfordabstracts.com/#/event/4802/program)*.*

*The abstract book is* [*here.*](http://www.aares.org.au/files/aares_conference_2024/Abstract_book_2024_01_31.pdf)

**THE ECONOMIC AND POLICY ROADS TO RAPID DECARBONISATION**

Australia has the potential to decarbonise rapidly, but there are many challenges to achieving net zero. Pathways to net zero vary by region and by sector. Government, industries, and financial institutions require a strong evidence base of research to support their decision making around investments, lending, and policy making.

This is the message of key economists and modellers who will consider the economic, sectoral, and regional challenges of achieving net zero for Australia at the Australasian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society (AARES) Conference, being held from 6-9 February in Canberra. AARES is the pre-eminent society promoting research relevant to Australasia in agricultural, environmental, food, and resource economics and agribusiness. The conference theme is *Grand Challenges at the Frontier of Applied Economics.*

“Limiting global average warming to 1.5-degrees Celsius (1.5°C) by 2100 necessitates a rapid transformation of economic and social systems globally and in Australia. Achieving net zero will require substantial technology and lifestyle changes across our economy and society. Achieving these changes at least cost and risk will take effective research and good will in implementing the required policy and actions,” said Dr Stuart Whitten, Research Director of Sustainability Pathways at CSIRO Environment.

“There are two critical aspects of a net zero economy – decarbonisation on one hand, and a negative emissions economy on the other. The structure of Australia’s economy and especially our electricity sector, our geographic context, and the legacies of decisions all influence the pathways Australia has available,” he said.

“Australia needs to move more quickly on the hard decisions. It's not yet agreed what mix of low emissions energy sources are best for Australia. Between promising transition fuels like hydrogen, novel combustibles such as biofuels, and the shift toward renewable energy, robust research is needed to underpin rapid, significant emissions reduction across all sectors of the Australian economy,” said Stuart, who is convening a pre-conference workshop on the practical, economic and policy challenges of achieving net zero emissions in Australia.

“Using leading-edge modelling, CSIRO is working to enhance the evidence base available to government, industries and financial institutions, all making critical decisions around investments, lending, and policy-making.”

“Transport, energy security, opportunities to deliver offsets, and disaster vulnerability all contribute to how our regions will experience this transition,” he concluded.