

### ENERGY GOVERNANCE

#### Talking across scales

*Energy Res. Soc. Sci.* **44**, 260–267 (2018)

To be effective, the global energy transition towards low-carbon systems has to happen at all levels of governance from the city to the nation state, as well as internationally. While there is extensive research on governance at various levels, the study of interactions between governance scales continues to be limited. Robyn Dowling and colleagues at the University of Sydney and the University of Wollongong examine how these scales of governance might interact for such a transition to happen in Australia, a developed, high carbon intensity economy and society.

The researchers first survey the literature on how different scales of governance interact with each other in the nascent energy transition. To study the Australian case in greater detail, they look at Sydney and Melbourne, two cities that have shown leadership in the country in terms of initiating low-carbon development policies and projects. They identify institutional obduracies retarding the pace of transition at the national, state and city level in Australia and find that the interplay of action across scales is not hierarchical as typically imagined. Local institutions may be just as likely to initiate energy conservation or renewable energy projects as national or state governments, and cities often draw on expertise and authority from international networks. The role of the National Energy Market in Australia is found to be nuanced and depending on the circumstances it can act either as a barrier or a catalyst to the process of energy transition. The researchers stress that the role of urban governance in the energy transition is increasingly important, especially in the context of developed, high carbon intensity societies and economies.

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Fouad Khan

Published online: 10 July 2018

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41560-018-0211-3>