

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES GRADUATE

RUPERT DONEY



CURRENT ROLE: SENIOR ADVISER, AUSTRALIAN ENERGY MARKET COMMISSION (AEMC) SYDNEY

PAST ROLE: POLICY OFFICER, NSW DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INDUSTRY AND ENVIRONMENT SYDNEY

DEGREE: BACHELOR OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (HONOURS AND PHD) UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

Rupert completed his studies at the University of Newcastle with a Bachelor of Development Studies (Honours) and PhD. His studies assisted in honing his area of interest and in developing the transferrable skills that have supported him in the workplace. Rupert has now worked for more than six years in the energy policy industry.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO SINCE GRADUATING?

Rupert currently works as a Senior Adviser in the Transmission and Distributions Networks Team with the [Australian Energy Market Commission](#) (AEMC). The AEMC is the rule maker for Australian energy markets, they make and amend the regulatory framework for anyone involved in the generation, selling and transportation of energy.

Rupert's current role involves leading a team to undertake a review of the regulatory frameworks for transmission planning and investment. As Australia transitions from coal-fired energy to renewable energy generation, Rupert will be looking at how these frameworks may need to adapt or change to better support this transition. Australia's energy transition will come with many challenges. For Rupert this makes working in the energy sector very exciting.

Part of the complexity of the transition is that our current energy infrastructure was designed for a very different purpose – transporting energy from large thermal generators to consumers. Substantial investment in transmission infrastructure is required to underpin the transition to net zero and bring power from new renewable generation and storage to consumers. It is part of Rupert's role to assess whether the regulatory framework is sufficiently flexible or if reforms are needed to support the timely and efficient delivery of major transmission projects.

Prior to working for AEMC, Rupert worked in a similar role as a Policy Officer with the [NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment](#). Rupert's role focused on identifying strategic opportunities to support and benefit NSW customers and industries throughout the energy transition. Rupert worked on developing a range of policies and strategies that have been rolled out within the [Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap](#). This

roadmap outlines the NSW Governments plan to transition from coal-fired generation plants to renewable energy power stations.



Image: Rupert in the Northern Territory.

HOW RELEVANT HAS YOUR DEGREE BEEN SINCE YOU GRADUATED?

Rupert found that his degree was not just about content, but it enabled him to begin developing the transferrable skills that are now critical to his day-to-day work. These skills include, critical thinking and communication, both written and verbal that are essential within his current role. Field trips, work experience, group work and assignments based on real-life case studies were incredibly helpful in grounding the knowledge and skills he was developing.

Rupert continued his studies, and he completed his Honours and PhD. During this time, Rupert found that the dedication and quality of the academic staff was critical in supporting the development of his writing, presentation skills and ability to communicate complex ideas. He considers these skill have

been essential and invaluable in a professional setting. Exposure to other academic and postgraduate students at conferences, also meant that Rupert was able to further develop his professional networks. For any student who has an inkling of interest in pursuing further research, Rupert could not recommend Honours or PhD research enough. For Rupert, this research-based learning allowed him to pursue research projects/topics that were fulfilling both personally and professionally. Importantly, the skills gained from completing Honours or a PhD are highly valued and desired by employees.

ADVICE: IT'S IMPORTANT TO CHALLENGE YOURSELF

Rupert's inspiration to complete his Bachelor of Development Studies began during his exposure to development work whilst visiting Laos. Returning home, Rupert sought opportunities in tertiary education to assist him in his interest of working in development. Rupert's experience with Development Studies was formative with helping him determine what it was that he wanted to pursue as a career.

Rupert was proactive in seeking out opportunities. By volunteering with the Australian Red Cross, Rupert participated in setting up a school holiday programs for Indigenous communities in Arnhem Land and as part of his Bachelor had the opportunity to learn from and work with Indigenous Tourism operators in the Northern Territory. Rupert also approached academics about assisting on a range of research programs. Although it may feel daunting to put yourself into situations where you feel 'underqualified' or 'out of your depth', it's these opportunities that you take the most away from and help you understand what you're good at and where you can improve.

“Take the opportunities that are open to you, they will lead you to interesting and diverse places.”



Image: Rupert in the Northern Territory.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

At this stage in his career, Rupert is excited for Australia's energy transition. Australia's unique geography and size will present many unique challenges given Australia is at the forefront of this change. In the future there may also be

opportunities for Rupert to work overseas and share his knowledge of energy transition, as well as learn from other countries experiences.

To find out more about Rupert and our other Development Studies graduates please visit:
uonblogs.newcastle.edu.au/ges/graduate-profiles/
facebook.com/DevelopmentStudiesatUON/

For more information about the [Bachelor of Development Studies](#) you can contact:
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