



Australian Council of Trade Unions

MEDIA RELEASE

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Unions welcome plan to skill up apprentices for the clean energy revolution

The ACTU has welcomed the Rudd Government's draft National Green Skills Agreement announced today which will equip thousands of apprentices in emerging and existing industries with the skills to help tackle climate change.

Mandatory green skills will be included in all apprentice training from the end of 2010.

"The skills of our plumbers, construction workers, electricians and other specialist trades workers will be fundamental in ensuring that Australia is able to move quickly and flexibly in creating a sustainable, low carbon economy," said ACTU President Sharan Burrow at today's Green Skills Forum in Melbourne.

"It is estimated that we are going to need to re-train and upskill about 3 million workers in the next 20 years to meet the challenge.

"Unions are already working hard in this area.

"The Plumbers' Union (CEPU) in Victoria has already set up a "Plumbing Industry Climate Change Action Centre" which aims to up-skill the state's 21,000 plumbers and set up similar centres nationally.

"Water management is one area where we are creating new jobs and expertise and an area in which Australia can lead the world.

"However, the creation of hundreds of thousands more jobs and apprenticeships in other clean energy and clean tech industries are on hold because Australia's climate change laws are being blocked in the Parliament.

"We urgently need national policies in place to drive investment and a fast but fair transition to a low carbon economy.

"Australia is already being left behind, with the rest of the world moving quickly to take advantage of a \$6 trillion global market in clean tech products, services, expertise and technology," the ACTU President told the forum.

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