

Monday 9 November 2020

Climate Change Bill presents opportunity for Morrison to catch up with the rest of the world

The bill to be introduced today by Zali Steggall offers the Morrison Government a chance to join with the rest of the world in addressing the existential threat posed by climate change.

China, Japan, South Korea and now the US have all announced net zero emissions targets and the EU has increased their climate targets. With a change of direction in US climate policy likely Australia now stands alone among our trading partners and allies in not taking meaningful action to limit climate change. The result of the US election is likely to leave Australia even more isolated on the global stage.

The ACTU supports the goal enshrined in this bill of net zero emissions by 2050, and also supports the creation of a Climate Change Commission to set shorter term targets and report on Australia's emissions and preparedness for climate change.

There is widespread consensus, except in the Liberal Party room, that Australia needs a new zero emissions target and policies to ensure we get there. Unions, Business and civil society have all been urging adoption of net zero by 2050.

We urge all parties and MPs to engage with this bill and put in place a legislative framework which will support workers and industry through the transition to a low carbon economy.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

“Under successive coalition governments we have fallen behind the rest of the world. We are out of step with key allies and trading partners. This bill represents an opportunity to get back on track.

“The end of the Trump administration will likely lead to renewed global action to avoid the worst effects of climate change. Australia cannot afford a Government which continues to lag behind.

“The ACTU’s policy is to call for net zero emissions by 2050 and a just transition for all workers who will be effected by the changes that are necessary to meet those targets.

“We know that the human cost of unchecked climate change will be appalling, but we have also seen this year the economic cost of wide-spread disruption to our society. This will be the reality of climate change and we must act now to avoid it.

“Workers are already on the frontline dealing with the effects of climate change – they need support from a Government which refuses to take action.

“Businesses and working people need policy certainty on climate change.

“All parties and MPs should support this bill which would finally bring us into line with the rest of the world on this critical issue.”

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