The background of the entire page is a high-resolution, blue-tinted image of the Earth as seen from space, showing the curvature of the planet and the texture of the clouds and landmasses.

# SECURE JOBS FOR A SAFER CLIMATE

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## ABOUT THE JOBS SUMMIT SERIES

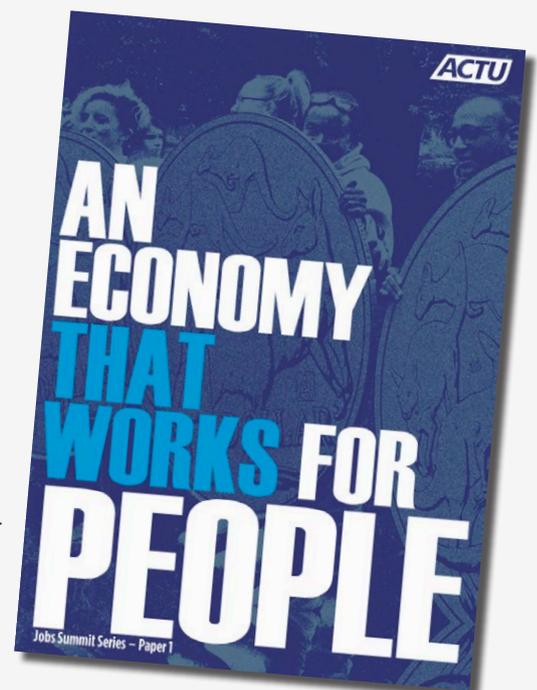
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Everyone deserves the chance to work in a secure job with decent pay. While Australia has emerged from lockdowns in better shape than most, our wages are not keeping up with the sky rocketing cost of living, and insecure work is rife. Climate change, strains in the care economy, and the automation of work, are all also profoundly impacting upon the world of work.

The Jobs Summit in early September is the chance to chart a course towards full and secure employment for all. The Jobs Summit series – a series of papers released by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) in the lead up – aims to provoke debate and build common ground on what that course could be.

Read more at [www.australianunions.org.au/job-summit](http://www.australianunions.org.au/job-summit).

Authorised by Sally McManus, ACTU, 365 Queens St, Melbourne.



JS03 - August 2022

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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**Australia is already dealing with the devastating effects of the climate crisis. Droughts, bushfires, extreme heat, and floods are already a major threat to the health and safety of Australian workers, their families and communities, the environment, and to Australia's continued economic prosperity.**

After nearly a decade of denial and inaction by the Coalition government on greenhouse gas emissions reduction, Australia now has the chance to not just catch-up, but to lead globally. The ACTU stands with business representatives, civil society groups, and public opinion, in supporting the new Government's commitment to meet net zero emissions.

But we need to take the right path to achieve this goal. One that manages the decarbonisation transition in a way that supports and benefits workers, their families, and their communities. But so far, the transition has been chaotic: with workplace restructuring and closures already happening over the past decade without adequate support for workers.

Workers know that we don't have to choose between climate action and jobs: we can create well-paid, and secure jobs while also reducing emissions and building new green industries and enterprises.

And the opportunity is tremendous. With our wind, sun and wave resources, and our skilled workforce, Australia is better placed than any country to become a renewables superpower. In just new renewables export industries alone, we could create nearly 395,000 good jobs and \$89 billion in revenue by 2040.<sup>1</sup>

It's also transition that can address the specific needs of First Nations communities, women, young people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and vulnerable groups, including those who have been excluded from the workforce.

To seize this chance worker's voices need to be central in all discussions and decisions made on the transition. This includes ensuring workers in emissions intensive industries are supported, and that all workers impacted by climate change are also supported through higher wages, better conditions and improved health and safety measures.

To meet all of these challenges governments, business, and unions need to work together to deliver a shared vision and comprehensive sectoral plans to maximise the benefits of the transition to net zero emissions. The prize is immense: rapid reductions in our emissions, a clean and resilient energy system, reinvigoration of our manufacturing industries powered by renewable energy, supporting the world to decarbonise and growing our economy through the export of Australian-made clean goods and services, a skilled and reskilled workforce, and critically, the creation of hundreds of thousands of secure and fairly paid jobs, especially for workers and communities at the centre of this transition.

**“THE OPPORTUNITY  
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WAVE RESOURCES,  
AND OUR SKILLED  
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IS BETTER PLACED  
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<sup>1</sup>ACF, WWF, BCA & ACTU, (October 2021), Sunshot: Australia's opportunity to create 395,000 clean export jobs: [https://www.bca.com.au/sunshot\\_australia\\_s\\_opportunity\\_to\\_create\\_395\\_000\\_clean\\_export\\_jobs](https://www.bca.com.au/sunshot_australia_s_opportunity_to_create_395_000_clean_export_jobs)

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## To achieve this, we are calling on the Government to:

1. Establish an independent and properly resourced statutory national Energy Transition Authority, governed in a tripartite way, to manage an orderly and fair transition process for workers in emissions intensive industries, including support for redeployment, skills and training, and secure job opportunities.
2. Develop a national renewables strategy to ensure Australia seizes the chance to become a renewables superpower that develops local industries, supply chains and good unionised jobs. Elements of the strategy should include:
  - » Investments in renewables and their supply chains via the Albanese Government's commitment to establish a National Reconstruction Fund and in coordination with the proposed Energy Transition Authority.
  - » Improved procurement policies, strengthened local content requirements for government funded projects, and reformed anti-dumping laws to ensure that local renewable industries and their supply chains can develop and compete on a fair and level playing field.
  - » Plans and legislation to ensure that renewable energy and low carbon industries are built on stable foundations with secure, quality jobs with fair wages and conditions, drawing on international best practice. This includes, for example, ensuring that the process for licensing offshore renewable energy projects is robust and transparent, and supporting local unionised jobs in renewables.
  - » Tripartite oversight and coordination with unions, employer organisations and governments, at national, as well as state and territory and sectoral and regional levels, especially to ensure better coordination with all plans to expand renewables and their supply chains.
3. Build a robust national disaster response capability that seeks to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from extreme weather events associated with climate change. That includes a properly resourced, secure and fairly paid workforce to deliver all four of those elements.
4. Take the leading role in developing climate mitigation and adaption policies and programs, including ensuring employers, unions and communities have access to information, research and recommendations so that they can plan and prepare for future climate events.
5. Ensure that, throughout the energy transition, industries and households have access to reliable and affordable energy – so that they can deal with the current energy crisis and seize the opportunities available from decarbonisation.
6. Ensure the commitment to achieving a net-zero emissions public service by 2030 is achieved, with the full engagement of workers and their unions.

# INTRODUCTION

**The world is facing a climate crisis. Australia is already experiencing the severe impacts of climate change, presenting a major threat to the health and safety of Australian workers, their families, and communities, and to Australia's continued economic prosperity. This also includes our chaotic energy transition: over 12 coal fired power stations have already closed without adequate supports in place for either the affected workers or their communities.**

Climate change will impact every sector of the Australian economy. It is in our best interests to take urgent action to reduce emissions and to ensure a just transition for workers and communities.

To tackle the scale and complexity of an economy-wide decarbonisation transition workers, governments, and business need to come together to develop ambitious and coherent policy and sectoral plans to equitably maximise the benefits of the shift to net zero emissions. Communities in the regions and industries most directly affected by the decarbonisation transition must be supported to develop new industries to create secure, quality jobs that will enable them to thrive in the future.

A near decade of policy failure under former successive Federal Coalition Governments has left Australia lagging in the race to secure a safe climate through rapid emissions reduction and an orderly, fast, and fair transition to renewable energy and a clean economy. We need an urgent reset of climate policy to provide stability and support for business and investors and to provide assurance and protections for workers and communities, as well as to support the ambition and coordination of State, Territory and Local governments, who largely stepped in to fill the leadership void on climate at the federal level over the last decade.

Governments, business, and unions need to work together to achieve Australia's 2030 targets and our national goal of net zero by 2050. Through collaboration, not only can we overcome the substantial challenges that we face, but we can also make the most of the many opportunities that do exist to grow our national economy through investment in green industries. By working together, we can achieve a rapid reduction in emissions, secure a clean and resilient energy system, reinvigorate our manufacturing industries with renewable energy, support the world to decarbonise, and grow our economy through the export of Australian-made clean goods and services, and create hundreds of thousands of good, unionised jobs.

# BECOMING A RENEWABLE ENERGY SUPERPOWER

**With our wind, sun, and wave resources and a skilled workforce, Australia is better placed than any other country to become a renewable energy superpower.**

In exports alone, we could create nearly 395,000 good jobs and \$89 billion in revenue by 2040, according to research commissioned by the ACTU, the Business Council of Australia, the Australian Conservation Foundation, and the World Wildlife Fund. This research, captured in the Sunshot Report, demonstrated that Australia's largest clean export opportunities are in renewable hydrogen and ammonia, green metals, critical minerals, battery manufacturing, education and training, and engineering, ICT and consulting services. Unlocking these opportunities requires:

- » Coordinated investment in 7 clean export precincts – to link Australia's low-cost renewable energy resources and regional workforces to clean exports at precincts around the country.
- » \$10 billion co-investment in new industries – to directly support flagship projects and accelerate the scale-up of Australia's clean export industries.
- » \$5 billion fund for workers and regions delivered by a new energy transition authority.
- » Support for locally made low-carbon materials in major infrastructure projects.
- » An interim target of 6 GW of hydrogen and 3 green metals plants by 2027 – an ambitious target to galvanise collaboration between governments, industry, unions and the research and education sector to grow Australia's clean export industry.

**FLOODS  
DROUGHTS  
BUSHFIRES  
EXTREME HEAT  
LOW AIR QUALITY**

*Climate catastrophe*

# WHY THIS MATTERS

**Globally, fossil fuel emissions have already led to a temperature rise of 1.2°C since the pre-industrial era and warming continues to increase by 0.2°C per decade.**

This level of warming is already unsafe and is leading to significant increases in the frequency and intensity of climate-related disasters such as drought, flooding, bushfires, and the loss of critical ecosystems like coral reefs. This is already upending the world of work, along with the jobs lost from a chaotic energy transition.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the authoritative international body on climate science, finds that Australia is suffering greater impacts of climate change than any other advanced economy, and that climate disasters will continue to be more severe and frequent in Australia<sup>3</sup>. The 2022 East coast flood crisis was one of the most extreme disasters in Australian history, with the speed and severity of the emergency catching many by surprise, and a record number of rescues by emergency services.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, the effects of climate change mean this is unlikely to be a unique crisis, demonstrating the urgent need for substantive action.

Nations are stepping up their responses to the compounding impacts of climate change on human health and safety, livelihoods, food and water, and national security.<sup>5</sup> In 2016 the Paris Agreement came into force.<sup>6</sup> The Paris Agreement's central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping global temperature rise well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C.

Signatory nations are expected to develop short- and long-term targets consistent with the Paris Agreement's temperature targets. The global focus has shifted significantly from net zero emissions by 2050 as the floor on ambition, to the need for ambitious 2030 targets to accelerate action this decade to avoid the worst consequences of climate change.<sup>7</sup>

Alongside the severe impacts of climate change, Australia is undertaking a rapid energy transition that lacked appropriate national planning or oversight from the former Coalition Government. Due to this lack of planning, workers and affected communities have not received adequate support, and are often left in the dark as to the future of their industries, livelihoods, and community life. They deserve better.

The Paris Agreement recognises the need for a just transition for workers and communities, and 46 nations have committed to developing a national plan for a just transition with decent jobs.<sup>8</sup> Just transition principles mean that the decarbonisation transition should be fair and inclusive, creating decent work opportunities and ensuring no one is left behind. This requires active collaboration and cooperation through effective social dialogue between all affected groups, with respect for fundamental labour principles and rights.<sup>9</sup>

Under the former Coalition Government, however, Australia had no formalised policy or approach to a just transition. At the most recent COP26 held in Glasgow, the former Morrison Government declined to sign the *Declaration Supporting the Conditions for a Just Transition Internationally*<sup>10</sup> which was signed by the UK, US, Canada, the European Union, and New Zealand, among others.

In the absence of appropriate national targets, consistent policy settings and regulations, Australia has experienced an increasingly unstable electricity supply and disorderly exit from emissions intensive industries. This has led to competition between regions which has exacerbated economic inequality and extended existing labour and skills shortages. The result has been the deterioration of working standards and conditions, rising energy costs, and a failure to attract the right investment to develop new industries to support workers and communities into the future.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://climate.nasa.gov/evidence>

<sup>3</sup> IPCC report 2022: Australia threatened with more flood, fire and drought under UN climate change scenarios: <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/supercharged-climate-rain-bombs-flash-flooding-destruction/>

<sup>4</sup> A Supercharged Climate: Rain Bombs, Flash Flooding and Destruction | Report | Climate Council: <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/more-drought-fire-and-flood-less-snow-and-coral-un-report-says-20220228-p5a0cw.html>

<sup>5</sup> Breaking Down the Latest IPCC Report | Climate Council: <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/breaking-down-latest-ipcc-report/>

<sup>6</sup> The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

<sup>7</sup> Aim High, Go Fast: Why Emissions Need to Plummet this Decade | Climate Council: <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/net-zero-emissions-plummet-decade/>

<sup>8</sup> ILO (2019) | UN Climate Action Summit: Just transition commitments made by many countries at UN Climate Action Summit: [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_721144/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_721144/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>9</sup> Frequently Asked Questions on just transition (ilo.org): [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/WCMS\\_824102/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/WCMS_824102/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>10</sup> UNFCCC COP26 (2021) | Supporting the Conditions for a Just Transition Internationally: <https://ukcop26.org/supporting-the-conditions-for-a-just-transition-internationally/>

<sup>11</sup> The Next Economy (2022) | What Regions Need on the Path to Net Zero Emissions: <https://nexteconomy.com.au/wp-content/uploads/What-Regions-Need-Report-Full-May22.pdf>

# HOW DOES THIS AFFECT WORKERS?

**Australian unions know that climate change is an issue for all workers, and we are committed to playing our part to solve the climate crisis by reducing emissions, creating jobs in new clean energy and low carbon industries, and by supporting workers on the frontlines in climate-related disasters.**

For too long workers have been left out of Australia's climate policy debate due to the Coalition Government's partisan and short-sighted hostility to the union movement. Voices representing workers in diverse industries affected by climate change and climate policy responses need to be heard.

Workers in emissions-intensive industries, and the broader communities who rely on these industries, are already the most directly affected by the decarbonisation transition. We need to ensure a fair, orderly, and comprehensive planning process that centres the voice of workers in regional economic diversification planning to create new secure, quality jobs, and to support the worker transition process, including through job transfer schemes and training and skills programs.

**Climate change is also threatening the health and safety and job security of all workers including through:**

- » Increased risk from extreme heat, affecting both outdoor workers and workers in non-airconditioned workplaces.
- » Degraded air quality, including from pollution and from climate-related disaster events such as smoke from the 2019-2020 mega bushfires, when parts of Australia had the lowest air quality in the world.<sup>12</sup> Risks from climate-related disaster events, including risks during the clean-up process that follows these events.
- » Psychological stresses to mental health and wellbeing, particularly for emergency services and health workers facing increased pressure, and workers in agencies such as Services Australia and the NDIA who provide support to vulnerable community members in any post-crisis recovery period.
- » Disruptions to transport or inability to commute to and from work during extreme weather events.
- » Workplace closures or stand-downs during extreme weather events and climate-related disasters, which occurred on a large scale during the 2019-2020 mega bushfires, and also occur as a result of prolonged droughts putting pressure on regional economies.
- » Job losses due to climate-related damage or costs, particularly for vulnerable tourism industries and energy intensive industries.
- » Rising costs of living where climate-related disasters damage agriculture and other goods and services.
- » The restructuring of workplace and work practices in response to these issues and to the chaotic energy transition to date.

<sup>12</sup> Melbourne's air quality 'worst in the world' as bushfires continue to burn across Victoria | Bushfires | The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/jan/14/melbourne-choked-by-hazardous-smoke-as-bushfires-continue-to-burn-across-victoria>

# A DECADE OF COALITION GOVERNMENT FAILURE ON CLIMATE

**The Federal Coalition Government failed to develop and implement coherent climate and energy policy, creating an uncertain and unstable policy environment that has been detrimental to both business and workers.**

Under the former Coalition Government, Australia was a global pariah on climate action, shamed by the United Nations secretary general António Guterres as a “holdout” and a “dangerous radical”<sup>13</sup> and winning the Climate Action Network’s disgraceful “colossal fossil” award for having the most “appalling performance” and “breathtaking climate ineptitude” at COP26 in Glasgow.<sup>14</sup>

With the former Coalition Government’s woefully inadequate 2030 emissions reduction target of 26-28%, Australia fell far behind our key allies and trading partners, damaging international diplomacy, and risking the future of Australian industry and workers as global markets increasingly demand low emissions goods and services.

And critically, this target did less than nothing to reduce emissions. The only reason for Australia’s emissions reductions since 2005 was the end of massive land-clearing in Queensland, and a temporary drop during the COVID19 pandemic.<sup>15</sup> In fact, Australia’s emissions rose in 2021, with increases from transport, manufacturing, fossil fuel developments and agriculture.<sup>16</sup>

Worse still, the former Coalition Government stood ineffectively by during the most severe climate-related disasters our nation has faced, including the 2019-2020 mega bushfires and the 2022 east coast floods, failing to implement appropriate adaptation strategies and urgent disaster response measures.

While deliberately neglecting emissions reductions, the Coalition Government attempted to abolish and then weaken the Renewable Energy Target, persistently attacked and undermined the role of the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) and the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA), killed off the National Energy Guarantee, and developed the bogus Underwriting New Generation Investments program to prop up fossil fuel projects. It also made significant staffing and budget cuts for Government departments carrying out critical work in preparing for and responding to the climate crisis. And it completely neglected to invest in the electricity infrastructure needed to make the transition required.

Former Coalition Governments did not simply ‘miss’ opportunities to act on climate: they wilfully ignored them. Of the \$180 billion spent on COVID19 recovery in Australia, 2% contributed to emissions reduction, a far cry from Germany and France’s allocation of 50% of their COVID19 recovery expenditure to climate solutions.<sup>17</sup> And the Coalition Government shamelessly concealed its poor performance with dodgy emissions accounting tricks, political spin, and censorship of critical scientific assessments, not to mention their “wide ranging and debilitating” attacks on science (including crippling cuts to CSIRO’s climate science capacity).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> “Stupid investment”: UN chief slams coal and Australia in extraordinary climate speech | RenewEconomy: <https://reneweconomy.com.au/stupid-investment-un-chief-slams-coal-and-australia-in-extraordinary-climate-speech/>

<sup>14</sup> Colossal Fossil for Australia’s New Government - Climate Action Network (climatenetwork.org): <https://climatenetwork.org/resource/colossal-fossil-for-australias-new-government/>

<sup>15</sup> Don’t believe the Coalition’s ‘emissions are down’ spin. Australia has not delivered on climate policy | Greg Jericho | The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/grogonomics/2021/dec/14/dont-believe-the-coalitions-emissions-are-down-spin-australia-has-not-delivered-on-climate-policy>

<sup>16</sup> Australia’s emissions climbed in Coalition’s final year as transport and fossil fuels wiped out gains during Covid | Greenhouse gas emissions | The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jun/27/australias-emissions-climbed-in-coalitions-final-year-as-transport-and-fossil-fuels-wiped-out-gains-during-covid>

<sup>17</sup> The Lost Years: Counting the costs of climate inaction in Australia | Climate Council: <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/lost-years-counting-costs-climate-inaction-in-australia/>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

This dysfunction and dangerous neglect of climate solutions has exacerbated the energy crisis Australia is now grappling with, which is largely a product of failing to move swiftly to a modern energy system powered by renewables and storage with investments in energy efficiency.<sup>19</sup> This approach has seen twelve coal-fired power stations close in the past decade with no plan for workers or their communities, leaving entire regional towns reeling from the impacts. It has also further sidelined the workers and communities who will be most affected by the decarbonisation transition.

The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) has concluded that coal plants are expected to close three times faster than expected over the next 20 years. This includes the closure date of Australia's largest coal-fired power station, Eraring, being brought forward by seven years to 2025, and the closure of New South Wales' largest coal mine, Mount Arthur, being brought forward by fifteen years to 2030. So we urgently need a comprehensive worker-led plan for transition.

Although Australia has lacked national leadership, policy and action on climate and energy for a decade, the Government has the levers it needs to seize the huge opportunities presented by the decarbonisation transition, and to ensure that benefits are shared equitably with workers and communities.

<sup>19</sup> From fossil fools to clean energy champions: charting a way out of Australia's energy crisis | Climate Council: <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/charting-way-out-of-australias-energy-crisis/>

<sup>20</sup> Rita Clifton, Malkie Wall, Sam Ricketts, Kevin Lee, Jessica Eckdish, and Karla Walter, The Clean Economy Revolution Will Be Unionized A Road Map From States on Creating Good, Union Jobs To Build the Clean Energy Economy: <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/clean-economy-revolution-will-unionized/>, July 2021, p.7-10 and p.19, Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition, ICJC Applauds House Passage of Comprehensive Climate Legislation, Most Equitable Clean Energy Jobs Bill in the Nation: <https://ilcleanjobs.org/2021/09/09/icjc-applauds-house-passage-of-comprehensive-climate-legislation-most-equitable-clean-energy-jobs-bill-in-the-nation/>, 9 September 2021; General Assembly of Illinois, SB2408, September 2021.

<sup>21</sup> The White House, FACT SHEET: Biden Administration Launches New Federal-State Offshore Wind Partnership to Grow American-Made Clean Energy: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/06/23/fact-sheet-biden-administration-launches-new-federal-state-offshore-wind-partnership-to-grow-american-made-clean-energy/>, 23 June 2022; ; NABTU, North America's Building Trades Unions and Orsted agree to build an American offshore wind energy industry with American labor: [https://nabtu.org/press\\_releases/nowa-agreement-orsted](https://nabtu.org/press_releases/nowa-agreement-orsted), May 5 2022; US Department of the Interior, Biden-Harris Administration Approves First Major Offshore Wind Project in U.S. Waters: <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/biden-harris-administration-approves-first-major-offshore-wind-project-us-waters>, 5 November 2021

## THE CHALLENGE OF MAKING WIND TOWERS LOCALLY

Australia has huge potential to produce power from wind, but currently only has two companies that make wind towers: Keppel Price Engineering in Victoria, and Crisp Bros. & Hayward in Tasmania.<sup>22</sup>

They are comparatively small and suffer from an irregular pipeline of work. Their direct competitors in Vietnam, China, and Indonesia have huge capacity, supported by long term supply contracts, but the quality of their wind towers is poor.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately when governments or business make purchasing decisions too often they are only considering the cheapest price on offer and not other key issues such as quality, local content and job quality. Unless procurement and investment policies take these issues into account local manufacturers just won't be able to compete.

Keppel Prince recently complained to the Anti-Dumping Commission that some Chinese Manufacturing Companies are "dumping" wind towers in the Australian market. While the EU and US have found dumping to have taken place and imposed measures as a result, the Australian Government has declined to. We urgently need to reform Australia's Anti-Dumping laws to allow our local renewable manufacturers, and all industry, to compete on a fair and level playing field.

# WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

**The journey to net zero emissions can be one that creates good, well-paid, secure jobs, ensuring workers and communities undergoing transition are supported, and producing clean energy that is cheap and reliable, giving our economy a tremendous boost.**

To rise to this challenge we need comprehensive sectoral plans developed collaboratively by workers, government, and business to equitably maximise the benefits of the transition to net zero emissions.

Workers must be at the centre of this transition. In a practical sense, this means:

- » Ensuring workers in emissions-intensive industries are supported by employers.
- » Guaranteeing that there will be no forced redundancies in these areas.
- » The delivery of retraining and reskilling programs to workers on the frontlines of the climate transition.
- » Supporting those workers most affected by the immediate response to drastic weather and environmental changes (including in the service and caring industries) through higher wages, better conditions, secure employment, and improved health and safety measures.

We want to see an equitable approach to the decarbonisation transition, including through ensuring justice and equity for First Nations communities, better valuing women-dominated industries and women's inclusion in traditionally male-dominated industries, providing opportunities and support for young people to enter quality, secure jobs with lifelong training and development opportunities, and including vulnerable groups who have been excluded from the workforce in the job opportunities created by new industries.

The Government can set the standard for best practice as an employer by achieving its commitment to net zero emissions in Commonwealth public sector workplaces by 2030, as well as assisting in the transition by prioritising secure public sector jobs with good wages and conditions in those regions directly affected.

The Australian union movement welcomes the Albanese Government's substantial progress in these areas, such as its Climate Change Bill, which will legislate emissions reduction targets to provide much needed policy certainty and its \$20 billion commitment to "rewiring the nation": upgrading our electricity grid to better handle the transition to renewables. We now need to meet and beat those targets in a way that best supports those workers and communities affected by the transition and realise our chance to become a renewables superpower.

Two key commitments made by the Albanese Government will be crucial for this: the National Reconstruction Fund which includes a \$3 billion component for renewable energy and manufacturing, and the establishment of an Energy Transition Authority, to support workers and communities affected by the transition to an economy powered by renewables.

These commitments need to be implemented with a clear voice for workers in the development and governance of them. Further, Government must take full advantage of all its policy levers to encourage vibrant renewables industries providing good jobs, including by strengthening procurement practices and local content requirements and using its investment leverage.

The Government can also show leadership by rebuilding institutional infrastructure and ensuring Commonwealth agencies at the forefront of research, planning and climate policy are properly resourced and staffed.

<sup>22</sup> By contrast, in the US they have over 500 companies. See Geoff Crittenden, 3 August 2022, "Sovereign manufacturing capability is essential for Australia's renewable energy future", *Manufacturer's Monthly*. <https://www.manmonthly.com.au/features/sovereign-manufacturing-capability-essential-australias-renewable-energy-future/>

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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1. Establish an independent and properly resourced statutory national Energy Transition Authority, governed in a tripartite way, to manage an orderly and fair transition process for workers in emissions intensive industries, including support for redeployment, skills and training, and secure job opportunities.
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  - » Tripartite oversight and coordination with unions, employer organisations and governments, at national, as well as state and territory and sectoral and regional levels, especially to ensure better coordination with all plans to expand renewables and their supply chains.
3. Build a robust national disaster response capability that seeks to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from extreme weather events associated with climate change. That includes a properly resourced, secure and fairly paid workforce to deliver all four of those elements.
4. Take the leading role in developing climate mitigation and adaptation policies and programs, including ensuring employers, unions and communities have access to information, research and recommendations so that they can plan and prepare for future climate events.
5. Ensure that, throughout the energy transition, industries and households have access to reliable and affordable energy – to ensure that they can deal with the current energy crisis and seize the opportunities available from decarbonisation.
6. Ensure the commitment to achieving a net-zero emissions public service by 2030 is achieved, with the full engagement of workers and their unions.



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