

Friday 10 March, 2017

Government, Unions and Power Station Operators reach agreement on historic Latrobe Valley Worker Transfer Scheme

The Latrobe Valley Worker Transfer Scheme announced today by the Andrews Labor Government represents a great step forward for the people of the Valley, the 150 workers and their families. For the last 5 months, the ACTU has been advocating for a multiemployer worker transfer scheme in order to deliver a Just Transition for Hazelwood workers and for power sector workers and their communities across Australia.

Today's announcement represents an important precedent and demonstrates that we can achieve a Just Transition if all stakeholders work together. We call on the Turnbull Government to follow this lead and develop a national plan to transition to a clean energy economy that puts workers and communities first. The Turnbull Government should take up the recommendations of the Senate Inquiry on retirement of coal fired power stations interim report, which recommended that the Federal Government develop:

- an energy transition plan;
- a mechanism for the orderly retirement of coal fired power stations; and
- establish an energy transition authority with sufficient powers and resources to plan and coordinate the transition in the energy sector, including a Just Transition for workers and communities.

Quotes attributable to Ged Kearney, President, ACTU:

"People's futures must be the priority for any massive change like this and this scheme stands as an example of what is possible when government, employers and unions work together to find innovative solutions to complex problems."

"We congratulate the Andrews Labor Government on its leadership in listening to the Latrobe Valley community, understanding their needs and then brokering this partnership agreement with AGL which enables Hazelwood workers to redeploy to Loy Yang A and secures in principle support from Engie to allow workers to move to Loy Yang B."

"We encourage Energy Australia to continue to work with all parties so that Hazelwood workers affected by the closure can take up opportunities at Yallourn Power Station."

"This deal has brought together a huge coalition of support -more than 50 community and environment leaders - and demonstrates that we can put people first and have an approach to the downsizing of a sector that does not leave any worker or their community in the lurch."

"Overseas, we have seen countries like Germany show leadership to deliver a Just Transition for workers in downsizing sectors. The German coalmining sector that once employed hundreds of thousands of workers, has been effectively closed without a single forced redundancy. The just transition plan provided workers with opportunities to access early retirement, industry re-deployment and retraining."

"As Australia moves to a clean energy economy, we must ensure that the futures of the affected workers and their communities are made an absolute priority during this transition. This announcement today by Victorian Government represents an important step in that direction and is one the Turnbull Government should follow."

ENDS

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