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## Deal to move forward on a carbon price is a vital step towards a clean energy industry for Australia

A price on pollution is vital to open the door to investment in clean energy technologies and create jobs for future generations, and this week's announcement by the Government, Greens and independents on a way forward is an important step towards that, say unions.

The agreement sends a positive signal to industry and workers that the Gillard Government is committed to tackling carbon pollution and the major economic reform of our generation, said ACTU President Ged Kearney.

Unions will now have a clearer framework in which to work to ensure that there is a just transition to a low-carbon economy, with compensation for low-income households and support for jobs and communities in making the adjustment.

Ms Kearney said the initial outline announced by the Prime Minister suggests that the Government understands the success of reducing pollution relies heavily on setting a price on carbon alongside complimentary measures such as investment in innovative technology and industry.

"The decision to include an interim fixed price will allow for a transitional period to support industries and business adapt to a cleaner and more energy efficient approach," Ms Kearney said.

However, it is essential that Australia transition to a cap-and-trade to achieve pollution reduction commitments while supporting long-term structural changes in the Australian economy.

"It's important that Australia plays a fundamental global role on this issue while also ensuring that families and communities are not disadvantaged in the process"

"There are environmental, social and economic factors to consider and we don't believe that market measures alone will be sufficient in achieving all the changes necessary," Ms Kearney said. "Heavy polluting sources of energy will need to be priced appropriately to make room for cleaner and sustainable energy sources, and this requires government action and investment

"Money raised through the scheme must be reinvested back into the community to support low income households, skills and training development to assist affected workers to transition into new jobs as well as investment in the development of green technology

"The transition to a low carbon economy will mean a massive mobilisation in skills and training – both to equip new workers as well as to ensure that the three million workers who currently work in these affected industries are supported through the process.

"Unlike Tony Abbott's determination to be a spoiler against the national interest, unions will engage closely with the government on these issues to ensure that the scheme is implemented in a fair and equitable manner."

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