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Report confirms fast action on climate is needed to create jobs, drive economy

The Climate Change Commission's new report into the effects of global warming quells any doubt about the urgent need to set a price on pollution, say unions.

ACTU President Ged Kearney said the new report, which confirmed that climate change was already impacting on the Australian environment and would soon impact the economy, was further evidence of the need to act now.

The new report, which has been independently reviewed by scientists, confirms that carbon emissions must start to decline as soon as possible, so that we can move to clean energy sources by 2050, Ms Kearney said.

"Unions understand that a switch to clean energy sources will minimise the risk to our environment, as well as unlock jobs and protect the economy," Ms Kearney said.

"In the transition, it is essential that we have protection of existing jobs, support for workers in industries that will be affected and a mobilisation in skills for the jobs of the future."

"We agree with the report's findings that to do nothing will make the impacts of climate change far worse, and that delaying action will make reducing emissions more difficult and costly.

"We must put a price on pollution to drive investment in clean energy sources. And the longer the debate rages on, the longer we sitting by and doing nothing, with the greater the damage to the environment and the economy.

"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 way that both protects existing jobs and creates new ones.

"We know that the majority of Australians want action on climate change.

"In the week beginning 30 May, workers, families and community groups will come out in force across the country to show their support for action to cut pollution and tackle climate change.

"Unions are participating in National YES week because we know there is a broad majority of Australians who want action on climate change and a price on pollution – but their voices are being drowned out by a reckless scare campaign.

"Our involvement with Say Yes Australia complements the ongoing policy work and negotiations with government that unions are doing to ensure that the final design of a price on pollution includes support for emission-intensive and trade-exposed industries, measures to protect existing jobs, programs to attract investment in clean energy and production, and assistance to households."

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