



# INDUSTRY

1. Congress acknowledges that to create more and better jobs, we need to promote, support and encourage local industry. Government must encourage the growth and development of local industries that provide good secure jobs through good industry policy, and unions and the community are a critical part of any such policy. To create good jobs and support local industry we must:
  - a) Demand that government support economic growth and job creation across the economy, with a focus on key areas of growth due to technological, environmental and demographic changes within Australia and across the globe.
  - b) Understand the areas in which Australia can add value and improve the complexity of our economic system that still remains too dependent on primary production, in part by improving the connections between research and development, innovation, and production in Australia.
  - c) Demand the development of industry plans which ensure that industry is productive, effective, sustainable and that the benefits of industry support can be enjoyed by workers, communities and across the broader economy.
  - d) Demand a sound and strategic national energy policy that supports local industry, including a national interest test to ensure domestic producers have access to the energy they need at an affordable price.
  - e) Demand local investment in the technology, digital and automation economy and the skills needed to operate within it so that local industry is supported and those who lose out by the developments have opportunities for new good jobs that are arising.
  - f) Recognise the economic importance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and support them in their efforts to provide good jobs, improve their productivity and to assist them to grow into large employers.
  - g) Ensure Australia maintains a critical mass of local skills in all critical industries and their supply chains and ensure that there are a sufficient number of new workers being trained and given experience in these positions.
  - h) Make full use of Australia's relatively strong ethical, environmental and sustainability standards in domestic and export markets.
  - i) Congress supports a suite of measures, involving programmatic support to companies and workers to develop and adapt existing and new technologies and industries. Congress demands that our tax system nurture innovation and development, and where necessary provide grants which will engender new technologies. Congress supports a system of enhanced R&D tax credits.
2. Congress demands that we have Government policy which is reoriented towards a nation-building agenda.

## Innovation

3. Congress notes that governments can and should seek to create high quality, secure jobs for their citizens. We believe that government should look past the failed neoliberal approaches which seek to organise society in the name of capital, and seize the democratic mandate and embrace government's role in solving the problems faced by its citizens and their communities. This approach has successfully led to the development of the internet, created a green technology revolution and landed man on the moon. This success can be replicated in Australia through policies that:
  - a) Incorporate models of innovation which include mission-oriented, strategic public investment that drives innovation and investment to solve public problems as well as using the benefits of Australia's existing research, development and innovation processes, as exemplified by CSIRO. In some instances the approach does not need to focus on specific industries, as traditional industry policy does, but on cross-sectoral solutions to complex public policy problems. Innovation needs to be able to develop collaboration between different sectors in new and beneficial ways to define, understand and ultimately solve the problems facing society
  - b) Recognise government as having the capacity to directly produce new public goods in its own right, rather than simply attempting to intervene in markets created by the private sector. Australia needs a framework which can reframe our approach to public investment, yet still rewards innovation and success, while engaging with the private and non-government organisation (NGO) sectors to deliver results that matter to their communities. To this end tripartite Innovation Councils should be created, and given legislative backing and funding. Govt will be required to repurpose the roles of the Departments of Finance and Treasury to step up and facilitate instead of block.
  - c) Reframe the role of the public sector to enable its dynamic participation in the economy, and where necessary encourage public sector agencies to engage in risk-taking and market setting, to allow it to become an involved participant that advocates for the public benefit throughout the (multi-decade) life of strategic public investment projects.
  - d) Deliver good quality jobs, with a focus on developing workers' capacity, skills and job security, as a fundamental part of the way that markets operate.
  - e) Ensure that all research and development is undertaken utilising a collaborative approach. Where possible the ACTU supports worker-centred innovation, based on persistent science. This requires a long-term, commitment from governments and capital, and a new attitude to cooperation between govt, capital and labour. The ACTU stands ready to cooperate with govt and employers who wish to engage in a cooperative approach to innovation and industry.

## Support local jobs and industry through government procurement

4. Congress recognises that Australia produces some of the best quality goods and services in the world. Government procurement must be reconfigured to support local industry and create local jobs. Congress is concerned that governments' narrow focus on cheapest price rather than the broader economic benefits of procurement, and the current Government's agenda to attack procurement policies that support local business, is disadvantaging local industry and costing jobs.
5. Further detail can be found in the ACTU's *Procurement* congress policy.

## Foster demand by improving wages, government investment and supporting exports

6. Congress acknowledges that good job creation requires fostering demand for the locally produced goods and services that Australian workers produce and to boost the spending power of working people. Action to encourage increased consumer, government and export demand must include:
  - a) Policies to boost wages and empower workers, including lifting the minimum wages and recalibrating our industrial system to ensure a fair distribution of national income for working people. Congress acknowledges that the transition is presenting opportunities and risks in a range of industries, including opportunities for growth in jobs in renewable and environmental industries, growth in jobs in transitioning industries, and specialist skills in changing the way industries operate.
  - b) Increased Government investment in infrastructure, industry assistance, public sector jobs and social services.
  - c) Detailed identification and assessment of high-potential export sectors. Fostering networks, industry clusters and industrial “ecosystems” and broadening the mandate of the Export Finance and Insurance Corporation (EFIC) to enhance financial support for exporters.

## Ensure a fair transition, creating industry plans for innovation and technological change

7. Congress sees the opportunity presented by the technology, digital and automation economy. The introduction of cyberphysical systems holds great possibilities for workers and society as it further integrates into a wide variety of industries. However, as further change reaches into primary, secondary and service industries, the benefit must be shared with those implementing and affected by the changes, workers and their communities.
8. Congress will support technologies which are human-centred and dedicated to increasing the productive potential of workers and industry and argue for the sharing of benefit with those workers who contribute to that productivity. Congress will oppose those technologies and systems which are simply dedicated to replacing humans and increasing corporate profit. Technology which serves humans will be supported; technology which makes humans serve machines will be opposed.
9. Congress notes that the current Government and business has worked together to develop new educational and industry arrangements around Industry 4.0. Such developments have, with some exceptions, not included representatives of workers. This in complete contrast to leading industrial economies such as Germany where unions are key partners in the process. Given the complex nature of the changes which are in prospect, and the speed with which they are likely to occur, the quality of the debate and decision making will be poor unless the voice of workers is included. Congress rejects any suggestion that government and business can develop cogent policy and practices with the voice of workers excluded. Congress calls upon Governments and business to work with unions on these complex matters, thereby enriching the decision making as well as including workers in the fundamental changes likely to be implemented.
10. Congress notes that future technological innovation will shape the composition of industries and jobs. The type of work that is undertaken in Australia has evolved significantly over time and will continue to change as technology, investment, consumer preference, global trade and many other factors continue to exert their influences on the domestic market. If Australia wants to create its fair share of the high quality, high wage jobs in the future, we must:
  - a) Develop methods of industrial democracy, such as worker representatives on company boards and worker-management consultative committees.

- b) Use tripartite industry bodies to develop 'strategic industry' plans.
- c) Stabilise funding and independence for research organisations including CSIRO, and better targeting for Research & Development tax incentives. CSIRO, AIMS, GeoScience Australia and related entities need to be able to focus on applied research, with advice sought from tripartite industry councils, and receive funding to facilitate this.
- d) Establish job protection agreements and targeted transition, retraining and support programs for affected sectors and workers, including targeted resources for training and labour force development in emerging key sectors.
- e) Implement a national Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) skills strategy, including skills assessments and skills recognition pathways to assist with structural adjustments.
- f) Undertake a comprehensive review of social security and tax systems to ensure technological change provides benefits to everyone.

## Ensure strong public and private infrastructure investment

11. Congress acknowledges that strong capital investment in both the private and public sectors of the economy is crucial to job-creation and economic performance. To boost investment:
  - a) We must expand Commonwealth capital available for investment through a new development finance corporation. The corporation would increase investment in infrastructure projects, expanding and stabilising the Commonwealth commitment to long term infrastructure investments in key areas – such as public transit, renewable energy and utility upgrades.
  - b) Workers capital must be used to invest in key strategic physical and social infrastructure that delivers good jobs, economic growth and improved economic productivity in our cities and regions.

## Create good jobs in public services

12. Protect and create good, secure jobs in public services. Trying to reduce fiscal deficits through privatisation and large cuts in social programs and services does not support the economy or improve services for the public. Congress asserts that the austerity agenda that has been imposed on the public sector by the Government has been irrational and self-defeating. Policy measures which will maximise the potential of our public sector to create and sustain good jobs include:
  - a) Restoring government funding for key public services and the good, secure jobs they support. Reversing the cuts to public sector jobs, ceasing recruitment freezes and ending the privatisation and contracting out of public services.
  - b) Improving support for social and community services, including increased funding security.
  - c) Ensuring that employers which provide Commonwealth-funded services adhere to best-practice employment standards. The priority must be permanent, direct employment and an impactful reduction of contract for services arrangements.
  - d) Expansion in the size of the public sector through direct Government employment, particularly in regional areas. New jobs in education, health care, and other caring and human services have played a crucial role in supporting overall employment and incomes.

## Create good jobs in new and emerging industries

13. Congress acknowledges that a transition toward a sustainable, carbon constrained economy is essential, but that that this transition poses many challenges and uncertainties.
14. Congress acknowledges that the transition is presenting opportunities and risks in a range of industries, including opportunities for growth in jobs in renewable and environmental industries, growth in jobs in transitioning industries, and specialist skills in changing the way industries operate.
15. Policies to help maximise the job-creating potential during this transition include:
  - a) Setting greenhouse gas reduction targets that are consistent with our obligations under the Paris Climate Agreement and scientific advice, supported by an effective carbon reduction policy.
  - b) Providing support for cooperative and non- profit community renewable energy ventures.
  - c) Increasing Commonwealth support for sustainable infrastructure investments at state and local levels.
  - d) Enhancing the capacity of Australian suppliers of energy storage, solar, wind (onshore and offshore), Hydrogen, ammonia, biomass and other renewable energy equipment and services, including support export opportunities.
  - e) Creating an Energy Transition Authority responsible for navigating Australia's transition to a clean-energy economy.
  - f) Providing support for local manufacturers and suppliers of renewable energy products and for reducing the dependency on foreign shipping in Australia's manufacturing and renewable energy supply chains.
  - g) Assisting emissions intensive, trade exposed industries to transition to lower emissions technologies and invest with confidence in new capital upgrades.
  - h) Providing tax incentives for energy conservation retrofitting of lighting, insulation and other energy saving initiatives in commercial and large-scale residential buildings.