

Friday 5 May 2023

New National Net Zero Authority a win for workers and climate

The ACTU welcomes the Federal Government's announcement today of a new National Net Zero Authority to support workers and their communities and to deliver a just transition to a net zero emissions economy.

The new Authority will help maximise the benefits and minimise the risks of Australia's energy transition, driving the creation of good jobs in new industries and ensuring no worker or community is left behind.

The major announcement from Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Treasurer Jim Chalmers, and Minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen was outlined by Minister Bowen today outside the Liddell Power Station in Muswellbrook, NSW – the latest coal-fired power station to shut its doors.

The new Authority will ensure workers in emissions-intensive industries impacted on the road to net zero will be fully supported with individualised worker transition plans to ensure they experience a fair transition with access to quality, secure and safe jobs in new industries.

The Authority will also spur new opportunities – particularly in Australia's energy regions – by creating new jobs, facilitating investment, developing new industries, and supporting place-based economic diversification.

This will ensure the communities that have been keeping the lights on in Australia for generations can build on that proud legacy by helping power the nation's transition to a net zero future.

The Government announced it would legislate the Authority, but with work beginning almost immediately through the establishment of an Executive Agency to be set up on 1 July 2023.

This victory marks the culmination of more than a decade of campaigning from the union movement, with unions representing coal-fired power workers leading the charge and building support across community, business, investors and climate organisations.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"This is an important victory for Australia's energy workers, their families and communities, and for the climate. The National Net Zero Authority creates a sturdy bridge for workers, their families and communities to a clean energy future.

"Supporting creation of new quality jobs and skills and providing the resources workers and communities need are essential elements of this plan.

"Reaching net zero emissions is a nation-building, history-making, generation-defining project. The creation of this Authority will allow Australia to advance that project with confidence, knowing no one will be left behind.

"The union movement is proud of the workers and communities who have powered Australia and are central to Australia's transition to a decarbonised economy.

"We congratulate the Government and urge it to move quickly in passing this historic legislation. After a decade of denial and delay under the previous Government, we have no time to waste in securing a just transition."

ENDS

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