



**TOMORROW  
MOVEMENT**

November 2022



# THE CLIMATE JOBS GUARANTEE.

**Creating millions of good jobs  
solving the climate crisis.**

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## **Acknowledgement of Country.**

We would like to acknowledge that we do all our work at Tomorrow Movement on the land of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and pay our respects to Elders past and present across this continent. We recognise that sovereignty was never ceded and acknowledge that for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, continuing to live under colonisation will never be safe or just. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are feeling climate and economic impacts more than anyone. We show our respect to First Nations knowledge and leadership, and know a more just and safe society can't be achieved without it.

# ABOUT TOMORROW MOVEMENT

**Tomorrow Movement is an unstoppable movement of young people fighting for a society with good jobs, great public services and a safe climate for all. We are organising young people all over the country to fight for a tomorrow that works for everyone, not just big business.**

We believe our generation deserves a transformative and ambitious plan solving the concurrent climate, economic, housing and health crises. The intersection of these crises calls for a Climate Jobs Guarantee.

The Climate Jobs Guarantee is a transformative plan to create millions of good jobs doing the work to decarbonise and prepare our society for the impacts of the climate crisis at the speed and scale required.

## **Climate destruction is a choice we can unmake.**

Our air, water, homes and entire way of life are threatened by climate change. However, climate change isn't just an existential threat- it's a choice. We have the technology, resources and time to solve this crisis and make all of our lives better in the process.

But instead our world is being driven to destruction by a handful of greedy billionaires. They are poisoning our air, water and land for their own profits. Australia is already experiencing the consequences - with First Nations peoples, regional communities, working class and communities of colour hit the hardest.

We are facing down the climate crisis amidst a backdrop of rising wealth inequality. Without significant intervention, climate impacts will continue to disproportionately impact working people, while those with immense wealth are shielded from the crisis they helped fuel.

**But it doesn't have to be this way.**

## **The solutions to this crisis are ready to go.**

The Australian sun and wind are some of the best renewable energy resources in the world. We are home to the brightest scientists, engineers, trades people, teachers and healthcare professionals, as well as the oldest living culture on the planet, the First Nations peoples of this land who have protected and cared for country for

thousands of years. If we wanted to, we could transition to 100% clean energy and transform every sector of our economy to zero emissions, while protecting our stunning natural environment and strengthening our communities. We could do it and it would make all of our lives better – all we're lacking is the political will to do it in a timeframe that averts the worst impacts of climate change.

**The next decade is critical. We can and should build a massively popular climate jobs agenda that is ambitious in tackling the climate crisis.** It's not a choice between economic security and climate action - we need both. Solving the climate crisis will create tens of thousands of jobs across the economy, not just in clean technologies, better houses and nation connecting infrastructure, but in the care economy as well. We need to invest in industries like health, education, aged-care and child-care that support our communities in a warming world, and don't produce nearly as many emissions as heavy industry. Ensuring these climate jobs are unionised, secure, well paid and meaningful will raise the standard of work for everyone.

Good climate policy should be designed to push back against systemic oppression experienced by First Nations people, migrant communities, those living with a disability and those experiencing poverty. This means guaranteeing the agency of people and communities to design policy locally and ensure that those most in need of housing, jobs and services are first in line to receive and shape support.

**Everyone deserves a good job, great public services and a safe climate. A Climate Jobs Guarantee could be the cornerstone of an ambitious response to the climate crisis that would transform our society and improve the lives of millions of people.**

**In crafting this vision, we have drawn inspiration from the social movements and policies that have transformed Australia in the past - most notably the post-war reconstruction which rebuilt the nation after World War 2.** With the aim of achieving full employment and rebuilding prosperity in Australia, the post-war reconstruction was a huge program of work that changed our society for the better. These programs built thousands of homes and created thousands of good jobs in new industries, supported by dozens of government-run, nation building infrastructure projects like the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric scheme. The Post-War Reconstruction program successfully trained thousands of people for vital roles in the workforce, and improved the standard of living for all people by building homes for working people, making improvements to the social welfare system and creating the pharmaceutical benefits scheme.

The government-run Commonwealth Employment Service matched thousands of workers to jobs and training opportunities. As a result, Australia enjoyed a prolonged period of 'full employment' with the unemployment rate typically sitting between 1% to 2% through the decades following the war. However, at the time full employment was not enjoyed by politically and economically marginalised groups, including First Nations peoples, women and non-white migrants. In visioning a new green economy, centring justice this time around will be key.

In this critical decade, as we face the next big challenge in responding to the climate crisis there are so many climate jobs waiting to be done.

**We can't miss this opportunity to work together to rebuild and reshape our society.**

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## Key principles of the Climate Jobs Guarantee.

Our vision for a Climate Jobs Guarantee is grounded in the following 5 criteria. Any proposal or policy that forms part of a Climate Jobs Guarantee must meet all these criteria.

### 1. Good jobs for everyone who wants one:

Most young people can't find as much work as they need and the threat of unemployment is used to force us to accept poorly paid and insecure working conditions. A Climate Jobs Guarantee must guarantee anyone — regardless of age, education levels or location — a permanent, unionised job that pays a living wage. These jobs must have leave entitlements and should be full or part time based on the needs of the person looking for work, raising the standards of work for all workers.

### 2. Urgent, coordinated action to solve the climate crisis:

The climate crisis is the challenge of our lives and there is no shortage of work to be done for the urgent, large-scale action that's needed to solve it. The jobs created by a Climate Jobs Guarantee must be meaningful work that enriches and serves our communities, gets us to 100% clean and renewable energy by 2030 and manages the climate impacts we can no longer avoid.

### 3. Meaningful work that cares for our communities as decided by our communities:

The people who best know what kind of work their communities need are the people who live there. These programs should be

designed and administered locally so that these jobs serve real needs in communities. In particular, First Nations Communities must have control over what work happens on their Country.

### 4. Public service jobs in the hands of the public:

This is our chance to rebuild our public sector and give it the capacity to provide great public services that meet everyone's needs while revitalising our cities, towns and communities. A Climate Jobs Guarantee must create hundreds and thousands of public sector jobs that serve real community needs.

### 5. A living income for all, whether they work or not:

A Climate Jobs Guarantee must not come at the expense of income support for everyone else. Everyone, whether they work or not, is entitled to the dignity of a living income and the support they need.

## Climate justice & community-led change must be central to the Climate Jobs Guarantee

The solutions to the climate crisis cannot continue to perpetuate existing inequality in our society. Responding to the climate crisis presents a unique opportunity to restructure our economy to be more equitable, sustainable and caring. In tackling this whole-of-society challenge, it will require transformative systemic change that addresses historic injustices that face marginalised and frontline communities, who will disproportionately face the worst impacts of a changing climate.

Centring justice means that opportunities and resources provided through a Climate Jobs Guarantee, including jobs, housing and services, must go to marginalised and frontline communities first.

Genuine community leadership will be central to ensuring justice in this process. While funding for the Climate Jobs Guarantee needs to flow from the Federal and State governments, the specific policies and local projects of the Climate Jobs Guarantee must be genuinely co-created by local communities and administered on a local level. In particular, communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis, and those who have been historically excluded from resourcing and opportunities, must be given priority in the design, implementation, operation and administration of the Climate Jobs Guarantee.

Crucially, the sovereignty of First Nations peoples and Traditional Owners must be respected. These communities who have faced a history of oppression and dispossession since colonisation must have agency and control over the future of their lands and people. Migrants and poor people disproportionately feel climate impacts and have access to fewer resources and services. Worse still, they are more likely to work more insecure jobs and live in lower quality housing in areas more prone to climate disasters.<sup>1</sup> These groups need to be actively consulted on what is needed for their communities. Similarly, regional and rural communities, particularly those reliant on fossil fuel industries, will also be hard-hit in the climate transition. These communities will require significant investment and support and, crucially, must be given a voice in the design and delivery of the resources to ensure a just transition.

While the traditional mechanisms of Local, State and Federal level governments should be utilised in order to consult and co-create climate jobs solutions with local communities, it should be acknowledged that these mechanisms often leave out marginalised voices.

New and creative ways to include marginalised and frontline communities must be found to ensure genuine community agency and leadership. At every level of government planning and consultation, steps should be actively taken to genuinely involve the local community and remove barriers to participation by:

- ▶ Utilising existing networks and community groups to co-create planning processes;
- ▶ Ensuring a variety of voices are present on planning committees; and
- ▶ Reaching out to existing community groups and networks who represent a diversity of community perspectives. This could include local First Nations bodies, service providers on the ground, local union branches, minority advocacy groups.

**The Climate Jobs Guarantee should be federally funded and locally administered. Existing and new processes for consultation and co-creation should be utilised to ensure genuine participation and ownership from marginalised and frontline communities.**

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## The first steps to delivering a Climate Jobs Guarantee.

The first step towards achieving a Climate Jobs Guarantee is for the government to demonstrate their commitment to its twin aims of solving the climate crisis and ending unemployment.

### RECOMMENDATION 1:

#### **Enshrine a whole of government commitment to keeping global temperature increases below 1.5 degrees and connect this goal to the project of full employment.**

The Climate Jobs Guarantee won't work as an inclusive and transformational agenda unless we commit to solving the climate crisis in line with science and justice. The government must demonstrate its commitment to the key ideas behind the Climate Jobs Guarantee by:

1. Designing policy in line with the scientific consensus that unless climate change is restricted to below 1.5 degrees, catastrophic events will irrevocably alter our planet, ecosystems and way of life. This means we must cut emissions by at least 75% by 2030 and reach net zero by 2035.<sup>2</sup> As a first step, the government must update their commitments under the Paris Agreement and legislate more ambitious emissions reduction targets.
2. The government can demonstrate their commitment to achieving full employment by committing to a Climate Jobs Guarantee in their Employment White Paper, and by explicitly linking employment policy to the task of decarbonisation.

The following recommendations outline **three critical projects** needed to take us closer to guaranteeing good jobs solving the climate crisis to all Australians.

### RECOMMENDATION 2:

#### **Rebuild the capacity of the public sector to respond to the climate crisis by creating a central government agency responsible for planning the climate transformation.**

The private market cannot solve the climate crisis. The critical tasks of decarbonising industry, mitigating the negative impacts of climate change, and building climate resilience across the community will not always be profitable, and as such, most of this vital work will fall to the public, not-for-profit and community sector. Unfortunately, forty years of neoliberal economic policy has hollowed out the public service, creating a capacity and capability gap that has had devastating results for communities. This has been most acutely felt in the health sector over the last three years of the pandemic, but has also been experienced by communities affected by floods, fires and droughts.

Now is not the time for austerity. Climate change is a global crisis on par with world war and it's time to invest in rebuilding the capacity of the public sector to enable our communities to survive and live good lives.

Crucially, the public service should play a key role in planning for the climate transition. Planning our collective response to the climate crisis will require oversight and coordination with every sector in our economy. Following World War II, the Department of Post War Reconstruction was created and tasked with the responsibility for nationwide economic development, and coordinating post-war planning across a range of government agencies.<sup>3</sup> A similar agency could be created today to ensure

coordination and planning across the economy in the climate transition.

As a minimum first step to rebuild the public service, the government must follow through on its promise to remove the cap on Australian Public Sector (APS) employees,<sup>4</sup> and work with state and local governments to do the same. Rebuilding the public sector also means ending the outsourcing crisis impacting the sector and bringing previously indirectly employed, insecure labour hire workers into secure, direct employment within the public service. As noted in the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) evidence to the 2021 Senate Inquiry into the APS, despite labour hire workers generally being paid lower wages, expensive fees to labour hire firms means it costs the Australian public more than providing these workers with direct APS employment.<sup>5</sup>

### **RECOMMENDATION 3:**

**Re-establish a publicly owned Commonwealth Employment Service to match people seeking work to jobs, training programs and projects needed to solve the climate crisis and care for communities.**

Australia's current privatised employment service system isn't helping people find work- it's simply making profits for private service providers and punishing people for being unemployed. This highly profitable, punitive system is incapable of matching unemployed workers with secure career pathways, even before we factor in the rapidly changing needs of an economy that is decarbonising and responding to climate change.

For many years the publicly owned Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) enabled Australia to achieve full employment.<sup>6</sup> Set up after John Curtin's 1945 White Paper on Full Employment, it operated as, what Jay Coonan of the Unemployed

Workers Union calls, "a real-time labour-market intelligence network spanning the entire continent, collecting information on the ground, and transmitting it to state and federal offices".<sup>7</sup> This kind of national coordination will be essential to unlocking the capacity of Australia's workforce to solve the climate crisis and care for our communities.

Matching Australian workers with suitable employment, training or education opportunities will be better done by a publicly owned service that is incentivised to help people find good quality work, especially opportunities that enable them to meaningfully contribute to their communities.

### **RECOMMENDATION 4:**

**Restore TAFE funding to pre-2013 levels and prioritise investing in technical training in key sectors needed to solve the climate crisis.**

We need to train many more workers in the skills required for industries of the future. Good quality retraining opportunities need to be created and linked to new, localised industrial opportunities before existing industries close. This requires serious investment in vocational education and training (VET) by rebuilding the public Technical And Further Education (TAFE) sector, restoring investment to peak levels above \$7 billion.<sup>8</sup>

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# GOOD JOBS FOR EVERYONE WHO WANTS ONE

## THE CHALLENGE

In May 2022, there were over 1.3 million people actively looking for work or struggling to find enough hours. Young people aged 15-29 years old make up 47% of the total number of people unemployed in Australia.<sup>9</sup> The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic have further exacerbated issues already prevalent across the labour market: casualisation, insecurity and exploitation. In 2021, young people aged 15-24 suffered 55% of job losses, despite representing only 14% of workers.<sup>10</sup> Yet our current employment and job finding services are failing to help people move into secure work.<sup>11</sup>

Rather than moving people into sustainable career paths in skilled areas that will experience growth into the future, the most recent governmental inquiry into the system found that there is a significant churn of unemployed people back and forth into precarious, insecure, short term employment.<sup>12</sup> The final report of the inquiry found in the reference year of 2017-18, almost 60% of participants in the Jobactive program did not meet the 26 week benchmark for employment, and were cycled back into unemployment before it was reached.<sup>13</sup>

Further, the threat of unemployment is used by employers to create a race to the bottom approach to workforce development, forcing people into accepting worse pay and conditions, impacting all workers, not just those without jobs.

It is into this economic context that climate change is entering, rapidly changing the workforce composition and character. As governments eventually embrace stronger climate action and increasing investment in renewable energy, the economy will be shaped and changed in ways that have material impacts on the lives of working people across the country.

Despite a generation of scientific consensus on climate change, the fossil fuel industry and the billionaires who run it have been using their wealth and influence to hold action back for decades. In order to keep maximising shareholder profit from fossil fuels, they have waged successful campaigns to bury evidence,<sup>14</sup> delay climate action, and to use the jobs and workers in these industries as bargaining chips.<sup>15</sup> Their fear mongering campaigns have been successful in Australia because we have a history of painful and unsuccessful structural adjustment, where governments and industries have failed to bring new employment opportunities to regions when large industries have packed up.<sup>16</sup>

Change brought by the climate crisis will affect all workers, not just those in the energy sector. Our food, manufacturing, logistics and transportation systems will all need to decarbonise. The care economy will need to grow to keep pace with increased need as we experience more climatic and economic shocks. In short, there is an abundance of work to do, we just need to empower people to do it.

## THE SOLUTIONS

### A jobs guarantee

A Climate Jobs Guarantee would guarantee a good job to anyone who needs one, engaging them in the essential work of decarbonising our economy and caring for our communities.

Job Guarantee programs have been implemented in many other jurisdictions, including Argentina, India, Sweden and the United States, in most cases for a short period of time in response to a crisis.<sup>17</sup> In Australia we had something very close to a jobs guarantee operating from 1945 to 1974 when the federal government maintained a commitment to full employment and the public service acted as the employer of last resort.<sup>18</sup>

## **CASE STUDY: European Union Youth Jobs Guarantee**

Since 2013 the European Union (EU) has deployed a Youth Guarantee and Youth Employment Initiative as an ambitious strategy to reduce youth unemployment. The program has seen all Member States commit to giving every young person (under 30) a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.<sup>19</sup>

A report conducted 3 years after the program launched found that there are 1.4 million fewer young people experiencing unemployment in the EU.<sup>20</sup> Over 24 million young people who have been registered in Youth Guarantee schemes started an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeships and traineeships.<sup>21</sup>

In 2021 Tomorrow Movement surveyed 750+ young people and found that 60% thought that a jobs guarantee, similar to the Youth Jobs Guarantee in Europe, would solve the employment issues they personally experienced.<sup>22</sup> Of the survey respondents, 94% supported a Climate Jobs Guarantee to create stable jobs in areas that serve the community's needs, from renewable energy to housing and health services.<sup>23</sup>

Crucially, jobs provided through the Climate Jobs Guarantee must provide for a number of key criteria to live up to the values embedded within the guarantee: they must pay a living wage; be offered as ongoing and direct employment; provide adequate and appropriate leave and super entitlements; and be offered exclusively as full or part-time employment, based on the needs of the person seeking work.

Jobs offered through the Climate Jobs Guarantee shouldn't be dead end jobs, but the kind of secure, safe and sustainable work

that provides access to concurrent education and training opportunities with clear career progression pathways. By ensuring good working conditions, the Climate Jobs Guarantee offers economic benefits not only for program participants, but has the potential to raise standards for all workers, by creating decent work as the default and treating unemployment as a policy failure rather than a personal one.

## **Economic change that is led by communities and workers**

In order to ensure there are good jobs for people to do, the government will need to plan for structural change in all sectors and regions, ensuring that workers and communities have a say. There are four things the government can do to achieve this:

- 1.** Build capacity in the public sector to respond to the climate crisis by creating a central government agency responsible for planning the climate transformation across the economy [[see public jobs, page 15](#)] and developing sectoral and regional based transition plans [[see climate action, page 12](#)].
- 2.** Ensure workers and communities have a voice in these plans by adopting and expanding on the ACTU's demand for an Energy Transition Authority [[see community led work, page 13](#)].
- 3.** Re-establish a publicly owned Commonwealth Employment Service capable of matching people seeking work to jobs, training programs and projects needed to solve the climate crisis and care for communities.
- 4.** Restore TAFE funding to pre-2013 levels and prioritise investing in technical training in key sectors needed to solve the climate crisis.

## **Publicly Owned, Worker Oriented: Commonwealth Employment Service**

The 1945 White Paper on Full Employment promised workers “steady employment, the opportunity to change his employment if he wishes, and a secure prospect unmarred by the fear of idleness and the dole”. The policy aimed to achieve objectives of “improved nutrition, rural amenities and social services, more houses, factories and other capital equipment and higher standards of living generally”.<sup>24</sup>

For 30 years, these objectives were achieved through the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES), established to locate labour shortages and help people find work. It operated as what Jay Coonan of the Unemployed Workers Union calls “a real-time labour-market intelligence network spanning the entire continent, collecting information on the ground, and transmitting it to state and federal offices”.<sup>25</sup> It was incentivised to deliver good outcomes for people seeking work and the public good, not to maximise turnover and profits for the private shareholders who operate the current system.

We need this kind of national coordination, that centres workers’ experience and advancement, to unlock the capacity of Australia’s workforce to solve the climate crisis and care for our communities.

It’s important to note the CES was not perfect, it maintained coercive work tests, and the prosperity enjoyed through the golden years of full employment was not enjoyed by marginalised groups, including First Nations peoples, women and non-white migrants. This is a common story across western countries, in the US, where black communities had not experienced the benefits of the New Deal, a jobs guarantee became a core civil rights demand of the 1963 March on Washington.<sup>26</sup> Because economic justice is a fundamental component in the fight for racial justice, Coretta Scott King went on to lead a grassroots movement for a job guarantee<sup>27</sup>

after her husband, Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.’s death.<sup>28</sup>

The objective of advancing economic, racial and environmental justice must be a central focus of employment service programs.

## **Restoring TAFE funding**

There will be a need for many more people to be trained in the skills required for industries of the future. In order to ensure workers in carbon intensive industries are able to find secure work at comparable pay that respects their skills and experience, good quality retraining opportunities need to be ready before industry closures. This requires serious investment in vocational education and training (VET) by rebuilding the public Technical And Further Education (TAFE) sector, restoring investment to peak levels above \$7 billion. Priority investments should be made in the sectors most critical to solving the climate crisis, including the electrical industry and the care economy.<sup>29</sup>

## **We will know that this has been achieved when:**

- Anyone, regardless of age, gender, ability, racial & cultural background, prior education, and where they live, is guaranteed a permanent, unionised job that has good conditions and pays a living wage;
- A “Department of Climate Transformation” has been established and tasked with creating jobs across the economy;
- An Energy Transition Authority has been established and is supporting workers and communities around the country to be involved in planning their future;
- Unemployment and job matching services have been brought back into public hands and are focused on helping people find meaningful work, and advance their skills and education to solve the climate crisis;
- TAFE funding has been restored to pre-2013 levels.

# URGENT, COORDINATED ACTION TO SOLVE THE CLIMATE CRISIS

## THE CHALLENGE

The world's top scientists have delivered a "code red warning" to humanity. We must do everything we can to keep global temperature increases below 1.5 degrees to prevent the worst impacts of climate change.<sup>30</sup>

Australia is already living through the climate crisis. As inequality deepens and the pace of climate change quickens these problems will only be exacerbated. If the worst impacts of climate change are not avoided, many of our regions will become unlivable, our workplaces will become increasingly unsafe, and adequate care will become harder to find. Every fraction of a degree above 1.5 has the potential to irrevocably damage our communities, destroy the stability of our food production and ultimately cost an untold number of lives. The faster we act to reduce emissions, the better.

Analysis by the Climate Council found that Australia must reduce emissions by 75% from 2005 levels by 2030 and reach net zero emissions by 2035 to contribute to emissions reduction that will keep climate change below 1.5 degrees.<sup>31</sup>

## THE SOLUTIONS

### Commitment to 1.5 degrees

The Australian government must make clear that we are genuinely committed to limiting global temperature increases below 1.5 degrees and make concrete plans to act accordingly.

Heeding the warning of the IPCC means we must cut emissions by at least 75% by 2030 and reach net zero by 2035.<sup>32</sup> As a first step, the government must update their commitments under the Paris Agreement and legislated emissions reduction targets.

### No new fossil fuels

No new coal, oil and gas project is compatible with a 2 degree target, much less a 1.5 degree target. Analysis of developed coal, oil and gas reserves by Oil Change International found that the carbon emissions of already

developed reserves will exceed 2 degrees of warming.<sup>33</sup> If Australia is at all serious about tackling climate change we must commit to no more expansion of fossil fuels.

### Sector & region transition plans

We need to strategically take actions that provide broad-scale and enduring solutions to both the climate crisis, and economic crises we face. There is much work to be done in transitioning carbon intensive sectors such as energy, transportation, manufacturing and farming. Addressing the climate crisis is an opportunity to reshape our systems so that they are resilient, diverse and fair. It will take millions of people to create a renewable energy grid, build energy efficient houses, provide adequate care for the elderly, teach our children and create vibrant cultural lives for our communities. A Climate Jobs Guarantee will create the jobs needed to make this happen.

Sectoral and local, place-based plans for decarbonisation in line with 1.5 degrees are needed to both solve the climate crisis and bolster the resiliency of national and local economies. These plans should necessarily focus on job creation, as directed by workers and communities through participatory design and genuine consultation. Long-term strategic planning must involve coordination between all levels of government, and be supported by adequate funding.

### We will know that this has been achieved when:

- The Government updates their Paris Agreement commitments and legislated emissions reduction target to be consistent with limiting temperature increases to 1.5 degrees;
- There is a clear policy commitment to no new fossil fuels, and all proposed coal, oil and gas projects are rejected; and
- Transition plans are consistent with 1.5 degrees and guaranteed good quality jobs are created in sectors and regions across our economy.

# MEANINGFUL WORK THAT CARES FOR OUR COMMUNITIES, AS DECIDED BY OUR COMMUNITIES

## THE CHALLENGE

From floods to fires, extreme heat and rising sea levels, the impacts of the climate crisis are already here and being felt by our communities. It will take strong, publicly funded services in a caring economy in order to ensure our communities survive, and even thrive in our changing climate. As noted previously, far too often the communities who contributed the least to climate change are amongst the first to be affected. These same marginalised groups will also often find it hardest to engage with existing consultation processes, facing structural barriers to participation.<sup>34</sup>

Crucially, First Nations communities autonomy and sovereignty must be recognised, and reversing decades of deliberate exclusion and exploitation is fundamental to ensuring that a Climate Jobs Guarantee is inclusive and grounded in justice. Autonomy and self-determination is known to improve overall well being for First Nations peoples and this must be central to the work that is undertaken.<sup>35</sup>

The Community Development Program (CDP), set to be abolished in 2023, is a cautionary tale that shows the dangers and damages of top down approaches which exclude affected communities. The CDP was set up as a remote employment service primarily for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people, with the aim of addressing barriers to employment. However, this program was designed by non-First Nations policy makers with little meaningful consultation, and proved to be punitive and discriminatory, exploiting CDP workers. Indeed, the unwilling participants of this program were paid below minimum wage and not covered by workplace protections through the Fair Work Act.<sup>36</sup> Instead of a top-down approach, programs need to be designed, implemented, operated and administered by the communities themselves if they are to ensure justice and dignity.

We need meaningful, community-led work as part of the climate transition. Almost half of all workers currently employed in Australia are

unsatisfied with the jobs that they are doing.<sup>37</sup> This is unacceptable. We need to create an economy where work is meaningful, satisfying and secure, and that creates significant benefits within community.

## THE SOLUTIONS

### Better jobs doing the essential work caring for our communities

A Climate Jobs Guarantee must guarantee that sufficient resources are provided to ensure that the vital work of caring for our communities in times of crisis and rebuilding resilience in our society is able to be adequately performed. Key services like healthcare, disaster preparedness, emergency support, public housing, teaching and transportation are chronically under-funded.<sup>38</sup> There is so much work to be done rebuilding these public services, ensuring these sectors are well staffed, and that essential workers are provided decent conditions and pay.

### CASE STUDY: Victorian Jobs Guarantee for community services

There is a need for more decent, well-paid jobs in the care economy, and training opportunities to ensure we have the skills to provide these essential services. Responding to this in August 2022, the Victorian government announced a Jobs Guarantee for community services.<sup>39</sup> Recognising the need for skilled workers in key sectors including disability and domestic violence, the program guarantees a job to all students who graduate with a community services diploma in the next two years. This program represents a step towards guaranteeing people work in the areas of need felt most acutely by our communities. There is huge scope for the expansion of this program, following needs in communities.

## Community-led decision-making & projects

We know that communities know their own needs best; they know which parts of their community are most vulnerable and which solutions are most needed on the ground. This is why Climate Jobs Guarantee projects need to be decided by our communities. These solutions need to be designed, implemented, operated and administered by the communities that they impact, rather than simply consulted by overarching bodies.

Existing local government structures should be utilised in order to ensure community voices are key in co-creating solutions. However, it must be acknowledged these structures are not perfect and may leave out those who face structural barriers to participation like First Nations people, communities of colour, those who live below the poverty line, or those without secure housing. Work should be done at the local level to ensure better representation through these decision-making bodies.

Certain parts of our communities, such as First Nations people and those without adequate housing, will feel the effects of the climate crisis first and worst and it is important that these groups are involved in leading discussions about solutions. There are already many examples of communities leading the change that we need for the climate transition

### CASE STUDY: First Nations Clean Energy Network<sup>40</sup>

The First Nations Clean Energy Network is made up of First Nations people, communities and organisations, and collaborates with industry, investors, unions, academics, and technical experts. This network aims to support community owned renewable energy projects, secure good job opportunities on Country, and form strong industry partnerships where the benefits of renewables are genuinely shared. Through this network, First Nations people are active participants in the new renewable energy economy, and genuinely enact self-determination on what happens on Country.

## National Energy Transition Authority

A National Energy Transition Authority should be established to support communities affected by the transition away from emissions-intensive industries, and manage the transition of workers with jobs, skills and training opportunities.<sup>41</sup> Any transition authority must be properly resourced to genuinely consult with communities impacted by this transition.

### We will know that this has been achieved when:

- We see an increase in funding and good jobs for the care economy and housing sectors;
- Local government and other decision-making bodies are actively creating new pathways for all people to co-create new programs and have a direct say in their design, implementation and operation;
- First Nations people and Traditional Owners are consulted on and supported to lead programs in communities and on country; and
- A National Transition Authority has been created, which actively consults communities through local transition authorities and gives communities agency over their future.

# PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS IN THE HANDS OF THE PUBLIC

## THE CHALLENGE

The work of decarbonising our society cannot be left to the private sector alone. For too long, the needs of big business have been put ahead of the needs of our society. Mitigating climate change at the scale and speed necessary to ensure a safe and secure future for all will require a proactive approach from government. Government must adequately resource necessary interventions into the economy and actively create new jobs to do the vital work required for a just transition.

Decades of privatisation and outsourcing of the Australian public service have stripped the government of its ability to enact meaningful change in the economy. Since the public service was capped by the previous Liberal government, jobs have been increasingly outsourced, casualised and made more insecure. According to the Community and Public Sector Union, years of budget cuts, staffing caps, efficiency dividends and the failure to invest in the public sector have fractured its foundations.<sup>42</sup> This now impedes the ability of the public service to deliver what the community needs. In key areas like healthcare, aged care, disability support, housing, education and training, funding cuts, casualisation and outsourcing have resulted in negative impacts for the community.

One example of the impact of privatisation can be found in Australia's lagging energy sector. Over twenty years ago, Australia was one of the most promising solar producers in the world, showing potential to develop into the leading solar panel producer globally.<sup>43</sup> Lagging investment in the solar industry from both the private and public funds led to a collapse in Australia's ability to manufacture solar panels, with over 20 solar panel producing companies folding, leaving us with only 1 solar panel producer in Adelaide, which can only assemble international parts.<sup>44</sup>

A decarbonised economy is going to look radically different, with new industries and new workforces. As previously noted, following World War II, massive government-led action transformed the economy through the post-war

reconstruction, laying the foundations for decades of full employment and shared prosperity. There is no precedent for the private market making the kind of economic transformations that are necessary to tackle the climate crisis. Government-led action is essential to set the broad economic direction in these coming decades as we deal with climate change.

## THE SOLUTIONS

A Climate Jobs Guarantee would create thousands of public sector jobs that serve real community needs. The urgency of the climate crisis necessitates a renewed investment in our public sector, which will ensure that the sector is capable of providing great public services that meet everyone's needs and revitalise our cities, towns, and communities.

### Funding essential public service jobs

The government should revitalise the public service by rebuilding essential services and funding more secure, quality, meaningful jobs in key areas to serve the community. Substantial investments should be made to improve services across multiple sectors of the public service, building capacity and capability across the sector. This should include increases to TAFE and university funding, critical investment in public housing, renationalisation of employment services and administration of income support payments, and an increase in funding for public jobs in healthcare, including aged care and disability support.

The government can also take the opportunity of the clean energy transition to start rebuilding a new state-directed economy without impinging on the private sector. Alongside private market investments in the clean energy transition, the government could jump in on this effort to crowd-in investment, creating new community infrastructure and public service jobs in regional areas.

## **CASE STUDY: Potential for public investment in renewables**

The government could invest in publicly directed enterprises in the new energy industry, training workers and guaranteeing secure jobs in local communities. Solar Victoria,<sup>45</sup> a Morwell-based government agency, was set up by the Victorian government in 2018, to roll out the Solar Homes program- installing solar panels for households. The program created high-skilled jobs in a region undergoing transition away from the fossil fuel industry after the closure of the Hazelwood power plant.

In the Northern Territory, megaprojects like the massive Sun Cable Australia-Asia Power Link<sup>46</sup> have the potential to bring new industry and job prospects to the region. However, as a private investment, there is a lack of accountability, and no guarantee that the full benefits of the project will return to the Australian public.

As a start, the government should remove caps on public service employees and create more pathways for workers into the public service. Rather than using inefficient and insecure labour hire workers, the public service should create more jobs directly in the public service - jobs which are secure, good quality and meaningful, with clear opportunities for career development and upskilling.

One option for creating new public service roles is through an immediate increase in the number of graduate employment positions available in the public sector.<sup>47</sup> By expanding public service graduate employment programs, the government could build capacity in the key departments needed in the climate transition: notably the Departments of Health; Agriculture; Industry, Innovation and Science; Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development; and Environment and Energy.

## **Embracing the central planning function of the public service**

The public sector of the Australian economy needs to take its place as the champion of economic development. The government must play a key role planning the climate transition and coordinating across every industry to decarbonise and plan for climate impacts. A federal government department or division could be established, similar to the Department of Post-War Reconstruction established in 1942.<sup>48</sup> A 'Department of Climate Transformation' could be created to play a central coordinating role across a range of industries and government departments responsible for jobs, environment, climate, new industry and more.

Similarly, the re-establishment of the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) could also help the public service play a leading role in planning and capacity building across the Australian workforce amidst the climate transition. This publicly owned and administered employment service would help with labour market coordination, through essential functions such as data collation and analysis, which would ensure that workers are presented with employment and training opportunities that are more likely to lead to good quality work in sustainable careers across the key industries needed to secure our future.

## **We will know that this has been achieved when:**

- Increases are made to funding and jobs in essential public services including healthcare, public housing, education & training;
- There is government-led public investment in new and emerging clean industries;
- The employment cap on the public service is lifted;
- More graduate employment opportunities are created in the public sector;
- A "Department of Climate Transformation" has been established and tasked with creating clean jobs across the economy;
- A national employment service, like the Commonwealth Employment Service is publicly funded.

# A LIVING INCOME FOR ALL, WHETHER YOU WORK OR NOT

## THE CHALLENGE

Millions of people in Australia are living on or below the poverty line.<sup>49</sup> Income support payments at current rates are not enough to live a healthy, rewarding and secure life. Survey after survey has shown that people who rely on income support are having to skip meals, are unable to afford medication and are at an increasingly high risk of becoming homeless.<sup>50</sup>

The cost-of-living crisis is putting increasing pressure on people and families living in poverty.<sup>51</sup> With the exception of the temporary Coronavirus Supplement, and despite a recent indexation increase to the base rate of Jobseeker of \$1.78, the rate of income support hasn't increased in real terms in 25 years.

While welfare payments are inadequate, far too many people fall through the cracks of the system and are left without any support at all. Many people with a disability are forced to navigate complex and punitive systems, while people on working or temporary visas are routinely denied support—creating many complications, and which had devastating consequences for many vulnerable people during the pandemic.<sup>52</sup>

## THE SOLUTIONS

### Increase income support payments above the poverty line

Everyone, regardless of whether they work or not, deserves a good quality of life. A living income should mean you can pay for secure housing, good food, medication and other necessary goods that support a decent life.

All income support payments should be increased to be above the Henderson poverty line, giving our most vulnerable a life saving minimum income of at least \$88 a day (at time of writing).

### Make sure a living income is accessible to all, including abolishing punitive programs

All current support payments should be reviewed to make sure they are genuinely accessible to the people who most need support and have been historically excluded. This means abolishing punitive administrative requirements for jobseekers that have come about through privatised employment services like Workforce Australia.<sup>53</sup> In particular, reforms should be considered which remove administrative burden, and make interactions with the welfare system more streamlined and accessible.

### Take a holistic approach to improving the social safety net

The Climate Jobs Guarantee should result in tens of thousands more people moving into gainful employment. These jobs should be focused on solving the climate crisis and improving the quality of life for everyone. This means building more public and affordable housing while increasing access to vital public services that can give everyone access to a healthy and dignified life. These goals of delivering justice and equity must be embedded in regional, sector-based transition plans. People who have historically been excluded from the workforce must be actively engaged in the design and planning of the climate work transformation.

### We will know that this has been achieved when:

- All income support payments are above the poverty line;
- People who have previously been unable to access income support can gain access to a living wage (specifically people with disabilities, people on temporary visas, people facing language and other barriers); and
- Thousands of jobs are created that improve the social safety net and quality of life for everyone.



## CONCLUSION

With climate impacts already here, and set to get worse, the intersection of the economic and climate crisis is top of mind for this generation of young people. Young people have consistently experienced high levels of unemployment and job insecurity, with successive governments failing to provide adequate solutions.

**Young people want the government to invest in jobs that serve the needs of their community, and they are ready to get to work for the future.**

In our 2021 ‘Youth jobs- crisis and solutions’ report,<sup>54</sup> 94% of young people surveyed agreed that the government should create new jobs and solve climate change with a Climate Jobs Guarantee, and were strongly supportive of government interventions that create public jobs and employment pathways.

A Climate Jobs Guarantee would benefit everyone in our society. The solutions to climate change could create hundreds and thousands jobs across the economy and tackle historical injustices and inequalities, making everyone’s lives better immediately. Ambitious climate solutions are an investment for our future that can be massively popular today.

The cultural climate war is over, and there is overwhelming public consensus demanding strong climate action from the government. Tackling the climate crisis is a once in a generation opportunity to reshape society to ensure dignity, fairness and a safe and secure life for all.

**We can make sure we don’t miss this chance by acting now to deliver a Climate Jobs Guarantee.**

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