

## **Maritime Union of Australia Division**

### **Climate change and renewable energy policy**

February 2019

Science tells us that further global warming due to carbon emissions must be kept to 1.5°C in order to avoid catastrophic climate change. Average temperatures have already increased by 1°C in the past century and the world is presently on track for a further 3.7 to 5°C increase. The world needs to move to zero net carbon emissions by about 2050, and halve carbon emissions each decade. Yet emissions in Australia and globally continue to increase, and will increase even if all countries meet their COP21 Paris Agreement targets. Australia and 2/3 of other countries are not meeting even these insufficient targets.

The capitalist ruling class have created this climate crisis and they appear to have no capacity or intention of fixing it. The crisis is already causing immense human suffering, sea level rise, extreme storms, heatwaves, changes in rainfall, soil salination, deforestation, desertification, mass extinction, and decline of vulnerable ecosystems such as coral reefs. States of emergency have been declared throughout the Pacific region. Poor and working class people are bearing the brunt of these changes.

It is necessary for the working class to lead the way to fundamentally change our economy and restructure society to recognise the extent to which the survival of human society relies on the earth's systems. Moving to net zero carbon emissions requires a total reorganisation of our energy, transportation, manufacturing and food systems. It also runs counter to the entrenched interests of the Australian and international ruling class.

Trade unions must play a role in campaigning for a real and just transition of our economy and society to one with much lower carbon emissions. Jobs must be created in onshore and offshore renewable energy and manufacturing, improving public and freight transport infrastructure, and construction and renovation of buildings. We must fight for these to be union jobs with decent wages and conditions.

The transition to a zero net emissions economy cannot be left to the market – public ownership, control, planning and investment is essential to ensure that workers are not disadvantaged and the transition happens effectively and quickly. Piecemeal privatised development of renewable energy will not give us the transition we need, and will result in reductions in wages and conditions. The Australian electricity network is in a fragile and disjointed state due to the history of privatisation and needs proper planning and investment to facilitate new renewable energy systems. The union notes with alarm that despite a significant offshore wind project having been in development since 2012, there is still no regulatory framework for offshore renewable energy developments.

The Maritime Union of Australia will:

- Support campaigns to create the new jobs and new energy, transport, manufacturing and food systems necessary to move to zero net emissions, such as the One Million Climate Jobs campaigns in a number of countries. Jobs must be unionised, secure and well-paid.

- Support a joint union assessment of what is needed in Australia to move to zero net emissions, the jobs that will be created, and the workers who will need support through this process.
- Support the work of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy and their insight that investment in renewable energy must be publically planned, supported, and controlled, or workers will be negatively and unfairly impacted. Essential electricity generation and distribution systems should be nationalised.
- Support the ACTU's effort to establish an Energy Transition Authority for workers in the coal-fired electricity sector, and investigate the extent to which it could be expanded to include other workers in the coal supply chain and in the oil and gas sector. Lessons must be learnt from the closure of the Port Augusta power station Liddel Power station.
- Industry and supply chain bargaining processes being developed through the Change the Rules campaign should be designed to facilitate the support of workers in industries affected by the need to reduce carbon emissions. The right to strike, particularly secondary boycotts, is also necessary to support these workers.
- Recognise that renewable energy is likely to offer workers a more stable employment alternative to the boom and bust of oil price cycles. The union supports the urgent development of a regulatory framework to support offshore renewable energy development. This regulatory framework must be developed separately from the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) and the OPGGS Act due to vested petroleum industry interests. Workers in offshore wind energy must have the same WHS rights as other seafarers and shoreside workers, and not be subject to the poorer provisions of the OPGGS Act.
- Map potential job opportunities in renewable energy for seafarers and maritime workers (wind, wave, and anything else) and initiate discussions with relevant employers with a view to developing an offshore renewable energy agreement appropriate to the industry, with better rosters and lower hours of work in order to create more jobs. Explore the opportunities for unemployed seafarers to be trained in other renewable energy sectors. Encourage the investment of workers' capital in renewable energy projects.
- Develop a campaign to support the development of low-carbon jobs in the maritime industry as part of a broader discussion with MUA members and workers about climate change. Examples include supporting offshore renewable energy projects and the diversification of coal ports. Reductions of port emissions by requiring ships to plug into shore power linked to renewable energy sources can create a healthier work environment and more jobs onshore.
- Supports increasing wages and conditions across all low-carbon jobs, particularly those involved in health, education and care that have historically been devalued.
- Supports the inclusion of the Earthworker Cooperative and their products in Enterprise Agreements.

# Australian projected carbon emissions in comparison to Paris Agreement emissions reduction targets

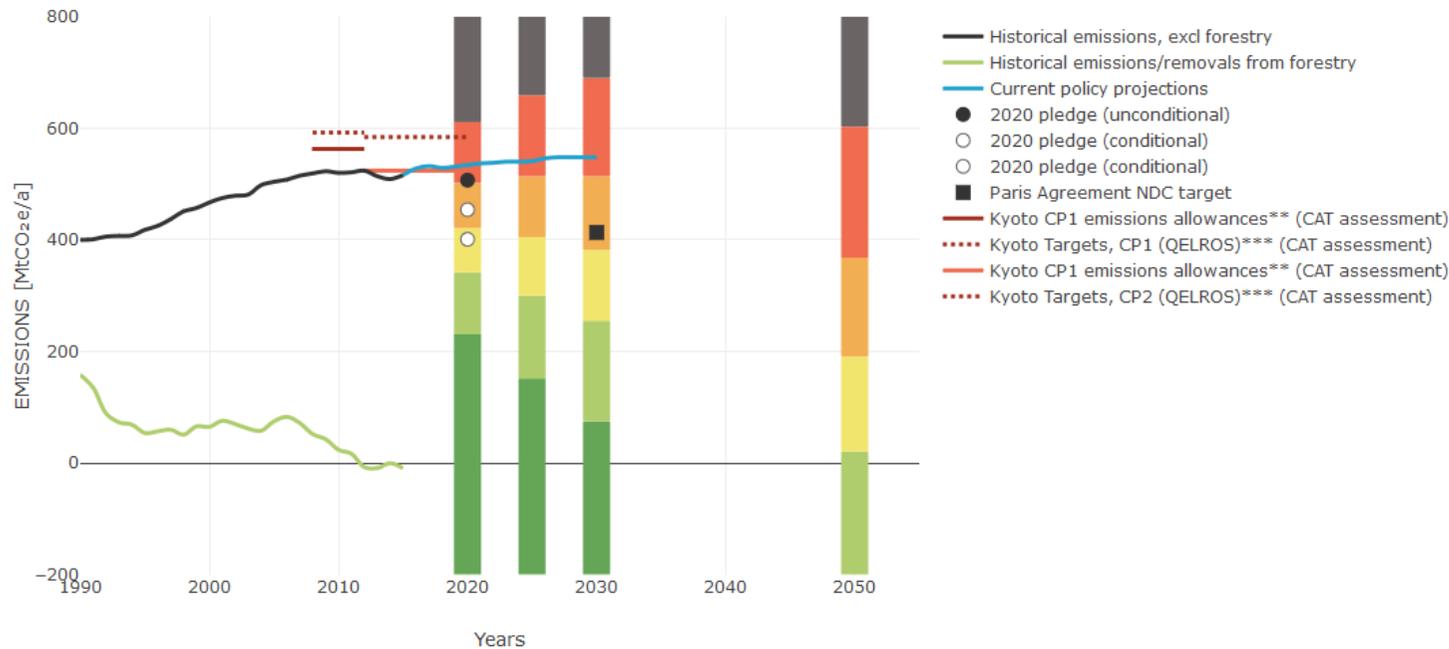


Figure 1. The Climate Action Tracker's rating system

## **Passed at 2016 MUA National Conference (For reference)**

### **Climate Change and Shipping**

While shipping is the lowest-carbon form of freight transport, a lack of frequent and integrated coastal services is a barrier to shippers using ships to transport goods. These barriers and the necessary capital investments and organisational changes to overcome them should be identified as part of our ongoing campaign for Shipping Reform, support for Australian shipping, and our input into the National Ports Strategy.

The Maritime Union Of Australia supports the ITUC and the Seafarers' section of the ITF in proposals to introduce a global flag-blind levy on ship's bunkers, provided it is introduced through the IMO. Bunkers are at present hardly taxed and a levy could provide funds for the Green Climate Fund to support developing countries in adapting to climate change and mitigating its effects. The Maritime Union Of Australia also supports the ITUC's campaign to introduce a Financial Transaction Tax to support the Green Climate Fund.

The Maritime Union Of Australia supports regulations to move the global shipping industry to use cleaner forms of bunker fuel due to its effects on the health on seafarers, wharfies, port communities and the environment. Australia should require the International Energy Efficiency Certificate for new buildings commissioned from 2015 for international and domestic shipping (instead of waiving the introduction to 2019 as the IMO allows).

The Maritime Union Of Australia will lobby government to increase shipping investment to reduce transport-based carbon emissions, including the creation of a clean shipbuilding industry.