# A Just Transition

Dear Members,

We meet today to discuss one of the most important issues facing this country, particularly people who work in the oil and gas sector. Economies including our own are in transition, as they move from carbon-based to non-carbon-based energy sources to manage climate change.

This will mean change for many jobs in the local oil and gas industry. Some will disappear while other new jobs will emerge requiring new skills. We need a plan to prepare for this.

During the 1980s, many people experienced a major restructuring of their industries, with job losses and the destruction of whole communities. There was no plan or thought for the people involved.

Your union is determined that doesn’t happen in the transition to a clean energy economy.

Just Transition is a concept developed by the labour movement and involves planning for this new future. This will not happen overnight. But some things could change very quickly. A plan is needed so workers will not bear the brunt of the structural adjustment to the world’s economy.

## **Supporting a Just Transition**

Your union supports a Just Transition – a plan for people, their communities, and jobs in a non-carbon future.

This is needed after New Zealand signed the Paris Climate Change Accord, resulting in government targets requiring all energy be from renewable sources by 2035, with the goal of a non-carbon economy by 2050. This is what is often called the green economy.

Over the coming years, investment and planning will go into creating and implementing new technologies which support non-carbon industries. This will include innovation in wind and solar energy as well as other forms of renewable energy.

This change must be managed through a Just Transition – a concept recognised and endorsed in the Paris Agreement which requires signatory nations to:

*… “(take) into account the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities.”*

## **Just Transition roadmap to the future**

* A plan is needed which includes a roadmap to developing new, clean energy technologies which are a source of good jobs.
* The roadmap will include the steps and investment needed to define and develop these jobs and to train and reskill people, so they can move into these new jobs and industries.
* Local investment will be needed in technology and innovation, so New Zealand becomes a leader in these sectors; that means not just producing the end product, but the technology behind the production process.
* Government investment will be needed, to provide the training for people to repurpose old skills and to acquire new ones. New qualifications will also need to be developed for these new industries.
* E tū supports training centres in communities like Taranaki, to retrain workers, but also to help companies to also make the transition.

## **A couple of examples**

* The energy industry relies on engineering, electrical and electronic specialists and they will still be needed in a non-carbon energy industry. But they will work with new forms of energy and are very likely to need computer skills related to the growing use of robotics, 3D technology, automation and artificial intelligence.
* MITO - the industry training body for the motor trades, mining, gas and transport industries - is working on qualifications and training for people working with electric vehicles.

There will be plenty of work for people with technical skills. The above examples show how key skills in engineering and electronics can be repurposed to provide a pathway into good jobs.

## **Just Transition in action**

Planning has already begun in many countries for the carbon-free economy and a Just Transition.

* This is most advanced in Germany, where coal-fired energy and nuclear power plants are being phased out, alongside the development of clean energy technologies. This kind of planning is what New Zealand also needs.
* The Nordic countries – Norway, Finland, Sweden - are planning now for Just Transition economies. Work is underway there and in the EU on what sustainable industries will look like and what the jobs will be.
* In Australia, E tū is working with the CFMEU – the key union in the energy sector – around the closure of coal-fired power plants, as well as its campaign for a Just Transition for their members.
* In the US there are major programmes around the refitting of houses, offices and other commercial buildings to reduce energy use.
* Here and in Australia, E tū is working with the Council of Trade Unions, the Australian Council of Trade Unions and with the International Trade Union Council which has opened a Just Transition centre, to work on defining the industries of the future and to provide case studies.

Work continues with international specialists to come up with a concrete plan of action – this is an absolute priority for E tū over the next few years.