

Morrison must act on climate change

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) has called on Prime Minister Scott Morrison to immediately increase Australia's ambition on climate change and support a just transition for Australian workers following the UN International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) science report, which has found that the last decade was hotter than any period in the past 125,000 years.

As covered on page 16 of this Western Teacher, the IPCC report is the culmination of five years of assessment, writing, review and approval processes from 234 leading scientists from more than 60 countries.

The report found that Australia has already experienced warming and faces a future of more extreme bushfire weather, flooding, marine heatwaves that will bleach coral reefs and lower winter rainfall in our major cities and agricultural regions.

Without ambitious global action to reduce emissions warming is projected to spiral out of control and make parts of Australia intolerable by people, agriculture and wildlife.

ACTU President Michele O'Neil said workers were already on the frontline dealing with the impacts of climate change, be it through protecting and rebuilding communities affected by natural disasters, caring for those affected by heatwaves and bushfire smoke, or working in increasingly extreme weather.

"With the departure of Trump, Australia now stands alone and isolated in its climate inaction among OECD nations, with most of our trading partners aiming to halve emissions this decade," she said.

"The Prime Minister's hollow rhetoric about technology, not taxes, does not disguise the Coalition's failure to act on global warming and failure to plan for a low carbon economy. The Coalition's emissions targets are unscientific and if replicated by others would doom us to runaway global warming.

"Australian workers know that it's in our best interests to move quickly to net zero emissions and that we can develop renewable energy powered export industries to help the world limit global warming.

"The argument that we must choose between jobs and climate action is another Coalition delay tactic. We can and must have good union jobs and a safe climate.

"We must heed the scientists' warnings and act urgently to restore a safe climate. The human cost of inaction on climate change is growing daily – our food production, ability to live and work, and personal safety will be completely disrupted if warming continues. The IPCC report shows us that we are running out of time."