



Supporting a Just Transition

E tū supports a “Just Transition” plan to deal with rapid changes to industries and sectors as the economy restructures in response to Government and international commitments to combat climate change.

This includes the Paris Climate Change Accord of which New Zealand is a signatory. The agreement has resulted 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.

Economies, including our own, are in transition, as they move from carbon-based to non-carbon-based energy sources. This coincides with sweeping technological change, including digital technologies.

Just Transition is a concept developed by the labour movement and involves planning for this new future. A “Just Transition Plan” needs to be adopted and implemented for the workforce, local communities, cities and regions affected by these changes.

Some changes will happen slowly; others will happen very quickly.

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

Change is already happening in the oil and gas industry in response to climate change. Like the economy, the industry is in transition and the recent Government announcement about the future of exploration recognises this and signals the change that lies ahead.

A Just Transition is 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.”

A Just Transition is intended to ensure that workers don’t bear the brunt of the structural adjustment to the world’s economy. We do not want to repeat the tremendous social and economic upheaval in New Zealand society that occurred during the economic restructuring of the 1980s/90s.

This cannot be left to the market alone. We must plan for an orderly response - that is what a Just Transition is about.

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 the 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 re-purpose 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 and also to help companies to make the transition.

A Just Transition: key principles

- An equal sharing of responsibilities and fair distribution of the costs across society.
- Institutionalised, formal consultations with relevant stakeholders, including trade unions, employers and communities, at national, regional and sectoral levels.
- The promotion of clean job opportunities and the greening of existing jobs and industries through public and private investment in low carbon development strategies and technologies in all nations.
- Formal education, training, retraining and life-long learning for working people, their families and their communities.
- Organised economic and employment diversification policies within sectors and communities at risk.
- Social protection measures (active labour market policies, access to health services, social insurances among others).
- Respect for, and protection of, human and labour rights.
- Respect for and partnership with tangata whenua.
- Recognition of obligations to Pacific peoples affected by rising sea levels.
- Governmental agencies will be required to develop specific plans to support the economic diversification of regions, where oil and gas industry exists, and the communities where they are based.
- Developing and implementing specific industry and environmental policies to attract new investment, encourage the growth of new industries, and the creation of quality, secure jobs in affected regions. Such policies could include additional renewable energy investment incentives, investment tax incentives and the prioritised construction of new infrastructure.