

**Yes, we're greenies**, we reckon doing everything possible to prevent climate change is the moral challenge of our generation and that we need to move beyond coal. **BUT we're workers too, and we don't think that 'nature' is more important than jobs.** Just like the distinction between 'workers' and 'greenies', we think choosing one or the other is a false choice. There are no jobs on a dead planet. We all rely on workers' rights, clean air, water, and healthy agricultural land.

#### **What do we have in common?**

We all have at least one thing in common, one thing we all need to protect. We all have to live on this planet. We all want safe and comfortable communities, a chance to do rewarding work, clean water, air, and food - and a stable climate.

**Common enemies:** It is privately owned companies that keep the profits from the coal industry, and it remains in their interest to continue it without regard for the health & wellbeing of their employees or the local environment. They pack up their operations and leave whenever it ceases to be sufficiently profitable, without concern for the social or environmental situation they leave behind - like the effects on waterways and farmland, or the workers and their families suddenly without an income.

#### **What can we bring to the table?**

The environmental movement has a long history of building social change. We have the ear of many people across the country. We have skills and experience in community organising and in direct action.

We promoted and attended the Yallourn 75 Rally in Melbourne, have attended the Yallourn Workers Camp and recently convened 'community roundtable discussions' in Morwell to try and build greater understanding between the environment movement, power workers and the Latrobe Valley community.

Together we can help bring the issues of coal workers' rights, and a just transition, to a wide audience – and make them listen!

**United, we are stronger.**

#### **There is power in a union.**

The Australian union movement has a proud history of defending and advancing workers' rights. Struggles around urban environmental and working conditions, like those of the New South Wales Builders Labourers Federation under Jack Mumdey (the 'Green Bans' movement) set a precedent for today.

#### **Where to from here?**

We're keen to take these conversations further. We think dialogue between the environment movement and Latrobe Valley workers and communities are vital.

**We'll continue to support the Yallourn 75**, and will respond to call-outs for assistance and solidarity – let us know what help you need.

We are setting up a Working Group to do this, and to work on getting us 'working together'. For more information, to tell us what you think, or to get involved contact:

**greenworkersolidarity@gmail.com** or call Dan on 0432 485 869

# **Environmentalists, power workers, & a 'just transition' for the Latrobe Valley?**



**Words & thoughts from some  
environmentalists supporting the  
Yallourn 75**

This pamphlet has been put together by a group of environmentalists from Melbourne who want to reach out to workers in the coal industry and let you know: **We stand with locked-out Yallourn Workers.**

We believe all workers deserve fair treatment, safe and secure conditions, a good wage and a say in how their workplace operates. The current situation of worker lock-outs only benefits the corporate owners - the same owners that pollute the air and the water for profit are the ones that will drop workers and their families in the dirt any time it's convenient.

**We want to talk to coal workers and communities about the future of the coal industry, because:**

we want to live in a world with a healthy environment, clean air and water, in a safe climate with strong communities and fair workplaces.

To achieve this, **we believe that to achieve this we need to transition away from coal.** But we want to ensure that if this happens, communities whose economies are largely dependent on the coal industry are not decimated, like what happened with privatisation.

We want to discuss with workers and members of the community what you think would make this possible, hear your views, and share ideas about how to achieve such a major transition of your local economy and employment base.

**We think listening to each other is important, and that fighting or ignoring each other won't get us anywhere.**



**We understand that brown coal has been, and continues to be, fundamental for producing the electricity that we all use, and provides jobs and livelihoods to many Latrobe Valley families.**

We understand that if the industry was to be rapidly shut down without a planned transition, this could have a hugely damaging effect on the Latrobe Valley community & our power supply.

**We aren't advocating an immediate shut down of brown coal.** We understand that a transition will take time to make it just and fair for workers and communities.

However, we do believe that the imperatives of climate change demand that we **start this transition as soon as is humanly possible.**

We don't blame coal workers for climate change or river and air pollution. We know it is power companies who strive to drive down environmental regulation as well as worker's rights.



**We know that there are a mix of baseload renewable energy alternatives that can provide the electricity we need in a clean and safe way,** such as solar thermal with brine heat storage. According to research by the Melbourne Energy Institute, commercially proven renewable energy can provide 100% of Australia's electricity whilst providing more jobs than our current system. If the profits made from coal power stations (including government compensation) were invested in renewable energy jobs instead of flowing to overseas investors, we'd be well on the way.

**We believe the challenge of phasing out coal needs to go hand in hand with the challenge of building alternative energy and alternative jobs - a just transition to a sustainable economy.** Projects like the Eureka's Future factory in Morwell, which would put workers at the helm of manufacturing renewable energy technologies, are one of many exciting answers to this challenge.

**We believe it can be done.**



**What do we mean by a 'just transition'?**

Either when Energy Australia decides it's no longer in their interest to keep Yallourn running, or if the community decides to replace Yallourn with cleaner alternatives, we want towns in the La Trobe Valley to be supported throughout the process. We think that Yallourn workers and the Latrobe Valley community should have a real say in any transition that takes place.

We don't want to see young workers left without an income, families struggling, and communities decimated. We want younger workers reskilled and supported into alternative power stations renewable industries, and older workers supported to retire on their own terms.

**Let's act for the change we do want, rather than being force-fed the change we don't.**

With rumours that the owners of Yallourn have been asking the Liberal Party for a bail-out, it seems clear that they don't have long term plans for the power station. A fire-sale of Yallourn to another profit-hungry company would not be good for the environment, and a sudden closure would not be good for workers and communities.

We have the chance to work together for a planned and timed transition for Yallourn that will look after workers and set us on the way to a cleaner energy future.