



Resolution Number Five

Submitted by National Secretary, Paul Howes.

Climate Change – The importance of sustainable energy supplies

Background

Geothermal Energy

In our response to the Federal Government's green paper on the Emissions Trading Scheme, the AWU indicated that our strong support of the geothermal energy industry.

Developments in this field are already taking shape. For example, the first Australian geothermal power station has been completed, and the Cooper Basin town of Innamincka will be powered by geothermal energy by early this year, saving \$15,000 in diesel costs per month.

However, a major impediment to the widespread use of sustainable energy is the distance of our best geothermal resources from electricity users. Australia has large volumes of identified high heat producing granites within 3 - 5kms from the surface that can potentially be tapped by hot fractured rock (HFR) geothermal technology.

What is missing is the transmission network to bring the available power to the electricity grid. We need the development of a strategic and nationally coordinated transmission network. But it is not just planning and regulating which is required – governments at all levels need to get directly involved.

Industry super funds have provided important long term capital in renewable energy. The AWU has called for government to match this industry commitment with a commitment to build underground high voltage transmission lines to the Cooper Basin. In this regard, the AWU support the position of the geothermal industry for a transmission project of national significance to be undertaken, which will provide renewable energy with equal access as defined by existing power generators.

Carbon Capture and Storage

The AWU is also a strong supporter of the Government's recently announced Global Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) Institute and the Clean Coal Fund.

CCS is one of the most significant abatement technologies to which the world must turn in order to be able to restrain the escalation in emissions from fossil fuel based energy production. The AWU supports the deployment of this technology as soon as possible.

Results of recent trials suggest that widespread deployment of this technology by 2020 is increasingly feasible. With this technology, the prospects for cleaner and sustainable production throughout a range of energy-intensive trade-exposed industries (EITE) becomes much more of a reality, which in turn will be particularly important for countries with a high and growing coal dependency, including China.



There should be appropriate infrastructure provision in order to facilitate CCS deployment, which is of particular importance for EITE's located in regional centres. There is an urgent need for the Government to support investment in CCS technologies through complementary policies that reinforce the Global CCS Institute and Clean Coal Fund.

Natural gas

An integrated national gas network is also required, which would harness the enormous reserves around Australia and which would reduce dependence on coal for baseload power generation through combined cycle applications. The AWU is a keen supporter of the oil and gas sector and has identified natural gas as a key transition fuel to which Australia must turn in order to reduce its emissions, whilst CCS technologies and other renewable sources are developed sufficiently and reach commercial viability. Gas will power our industries if there is the capacity to get it to our factories. What is lacking is a national pipeline network which will see gas flow from the NW Shelf to Moomba and on to the east.

The AWU has made a submission to Infrastructure Australia calling for urgent action on upgrading the transmission network and getting behind CCS.

Resolution

This National Conference call on the Federal Government to undertake the following with regard to sustainable energy supplies -

- to assign through Infrastructure Australia's *Building Australia Fund* significant investment in the existing electricity transmission network and gas pipeline network in order to bring cleaner, cheaper and sustainable energy supplies to our industries;
- to encourage private sector industry to invest in the transmission network in cooperation with Government in order to facilitate the implementation of an expanded transmission network. Super funds are also in a position to match Government and industry contributions in this nation-building effort;
- Expand CCS investment as quickly as possible in cooperation with industry;
- Apply appropriate incentives and infrastructure investment to facilitate a greater reliance on our own vast reserves of natural gas and to ensure that the benefits of this valuable transition fuel are enjoyed by domestic industries and communities in addition to offshore export destinations.

Moved:

Seconded:

Outcome: