



Transport Workers' Union of NSW

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Legislative Assembly
Committee on Transport and Infrastructure

To whom it may concern

Emission Free Modes of Public Transport – Supplementary Question

I write in to provide to the supplementary question arising from the Hearing on 19 August 2022, pertaining to the Emission Free Modes of Public Transport.

Supplementary Question:

Is the transition to new low-emission transport technologies likely to reduce employment, such as maintenance or operations work with diesel vehicles?

Answer:

It is the belief of the TWU the transition towards low-emission transport will lead to an overall increase in energy sector jobs ultimately resulting in lower employment in maintenance and operations work with diesel vehicles, who remain dependant on the skills they have cultivated in their career.

As per the submission of the TWU, there are a variety of differences relating to the operation of the zero-emission vehicles and the maintenance of the vehicles. Current maintenance and operations workers who have spent their career developing their skills with diesel vehicles would be required to redevelop and relearn their current skills in order to continue their work with low-emission vehicles. It is not feasible to assume all current workers engaging in maintenance or operations work with diesel vehicles have the capabilities of relearning their profession to work with low-emission transport or should be put in a position where there are compelled to in order to remain employed.

It is the belief of the TWU lower employment in maintenance and operations work with diesel vehicles could contribute to employment and wage polarisation. Specifically, according to a German study from 2017, employment polarisation would occur in the event that middle-skilled employment is the subject of significant job losses, while both the employment levels of low- and high-skilled jobs simultaneously increase. This eventual outcome is a genuine possibility if there are widespread job losses among maintenance or operations workers, or any relating positions. Subsequently, this shift in balance between each level of skill present could ultimately result in the polarisation of wages. To call the impacts that employment and wage polarisation would have on NSW 'significant' would be an understatement. The

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negative consequences of employment and wage polarisation include, but are not necessarily limited to, a shrinking middle class and rising inequality.

Supplementary Question:

What training or upskilling can be provided to workers engaged in the manufacture or maintenance of emission free modes of public transport, to enable them to work with new technologies?

Answer:

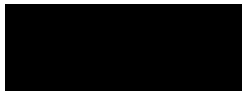
The TWU is of the belief workers engaged in the manufacture or maintenance of emission free modes of public transport would be required to be *reskilled* rather than upskilled in order to continue with their employment. Reskilling involves training current workers on a completely new set of skills, usually occurring when the workers' current skills become obsolete. With the technological shift from diesel vehicles to electric vehicles, workers would be required to be reskilled to manage the new technology.

Workers can be reskilled to remain in the industry by completing industry-related courses and qualifications with the inclusion of on-the-job training. It would vital to ensure workers are not subjected to eLearning modules when being reskilled on the new technological changes. Maintenance and operations work is manual, blue-collar style work and would require in-depth firsthand training, making eLearning modules inadequate reskilling training.

Furthermore, there would need to be consideration towards workers who have learning disabilities, poor literacy skills and other forms of difficulties that may impair learning.

Workers should be given the opportunity to engage in consultation regarding their reskilling training.

Yours faithfully



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