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Climate activists who are convinced that we need to take on the big challenge of leading the overthrow of capitalism, and its replacement by socialism, need to organise within the climate action movement, around both immediate demands, and the goal of public democratic control of production. We need to continue and deepen the orientation of climate activism to the labour movement. Whilst climate activists have much to teach socialists, there is also a wealth of historical experience of both labour movements and socialists, which climate activists can learn from.

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Workers' Liberty: what we stand for

- Independent working-class representation in politics.
- A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement.
- A workers' charter of trade union rights — to organise, to strike, to picket effectively, and to take solidarity action.
- Public ownership of essential industries, and taxation of the rich to fund renewable energy and environmental protection, decent public services, homes, education and jobs for all. End fossil fuel extraction.
- A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression. Full equality for women, and social provision to free women from domestic labour. For reproductive justice: free abortion on demand; the right to choose when and whether to have children. Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Indigenous control of indigenous affairs.



Working class unity against racism.

- Free refugees, let them stay, right for workers to remain in Australia without insecure short term visas.
- Global solidarity against global capital — workers everywhere have more in common with each other than with their capitalist or Stalinist rulers.
- Democracy at every level of society, in trade unions, and from the smallest workplace or community to global social organisation.
- Equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small.
- Maximum left unity in action, and openness in debate.

Workers' Liberty



The emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself
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For climate action against capitalism

Change the politics to socialism

Capitalism is the major obstacle to effective climate action. The students leading the global climate strike are an inspiration for the depth of their commitment and understanding of both the science and the politics of climate change, and they will shake up the world.

Workers' Liberty proposes a broad strategic way for the climate action and labour movements to cross the gulf from capitalist waste of life, labour and nature to democratically planned, public ownership of production for need and maximum freedom, i.e. socialism.

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Change the politics to socialism

The climate strike is justifiably demanding government action, at both national and international levels. We need also to tackle emissions directly, collectively, to build our own power to take direct action to change production, work, and the way that human needs are met.

Currently capital, and its logic of profitability, holds human needs and the ecosystem hostage. The owners of the large corporations decide where to invest, what to produce, according to the logic of capitalism, which is constant growth in private wealth. Human labour is exploited, and ecosystems are plundered for this purpose.

Almost two-thirds of Australian exports are minerals and fuels. Cutting emissions will mean a complete reorganisation of imports and exports, the availability of goods and services, of work and society. We as producers and consumers, need to set the terms of work, production and consumption democratically, but instead they are imposed by a capitalist minority. We need democratic, cooperative organisation of society, to replace exploitative, competitive relations. To change social relations, those of us who will, do or did work for a living, must come together to take power away from employers, capital, and the institutions that shore up capital.

Our challenge is to cross that gulf between the system we need, of democratic control of production for the purpose of meeting needs on condition of sustainable use of nature, and on the other hand capitalism with power over livelihoods, states that work to ensure conditions for profitability, and a dominant



collective belief that there is no alternative. The student energised movement for climate action is the foundation for a bridge over the gap between capitalism and ecosocialism, it provides the building blocks for effective direct action as a basis for an alternative power to capital, and its hold on the state.

A climate action manifesto

We need a manifesto of demands on all levels of government to promote, debate and act for in workplaces, local communities, and grassroots organisations.

Demands on government and political parties focus and build the will of the movement. We support the current core demands of the climate strike, 100% renewables by 2030, no new fossil fuel extraction, no Adani.

Public ownership of energy

Some sections of the movement add that renewable energy generation should be publicly owned. Public ownership is vital. The National Energy Market serves to keep fossil-fueled electricity dominant. Even the few well-intentioned small private operators must make decisions based on profitability, which can be at the expense of the environment, or workers' needs.

China is not "Communist"

China is certainly not "Communist". It never was under Mao: the workers had no rights to control the economy or even to form trade unions or to speak their minds. But now the Chinese workers suffer exploitation not just by the state bureaucracy but also by private capital. The private sector, including many foreign-owned enterprises, produces over 60% of China's GDP.

China's combination of extreme private profiteering and intense suppression of workers' and civil rights makes it functionally little different from, and in any case not better than, a fascist regime. The regime is as imperialist as the USA's, in a way which is different but different in being cruder.

Solidarity against Chinese dictatorship is not racist

Gareth Evans, for example, a former Labor minister for foreign affairs and still a big figure in the Australian foreign-policy establishment, has warned about "Sinophobia" and "hyper-anxiety" about Chinese influence in Australia".

That message has wide influence in the Labor Party, which under Hawke and Keating initiated a turn to China. And it has been taken up by some further to the left, for example Socialist Alternative, which slants its call to "Resist the new cold war" by adding "Stand against anti-Chinese racism".

China is now Australia's major trading partner, a big supplier of billionaire "high-rollers" to Australia's casino industry, and a big source of funds for Australia's universities. Education counts as Australia's



third-biggest export commodity, bringing in \$32 billion a year, and 38% of those high-fee-paying international students are Chinese.

That the Chinese state gains clout in Australia through these connections is not "racist" "hyper-anxiety" but straightforward deduction.

Some frothing-at-the-mouth right-wing politicians like Andrew Hastie hype up the "Chinese threat". But they are like the belligerently pro-US "cold warriors" in the US-USSR cold war - who were really just right-wing and very pro-US, not "anti-Russian racists".

We should indeed oppose anti-Chinese racism. But the Chinese students on Australian campuses who have been

protesting in solidarity with the people of Hong Kong in recent months face thuggish reprisals from pro-Xi-Jinping Chinese students (openly endorsed by Chinese diplomats) rather than from far-right groups who dislike all Chinese, whether pro-Xi or pro-democracy.

Support Chinese students and Chinese communities in Australia against both pro-Xi thugs!

Self-determination for Hong Kong, for the Tibetans, for the Uyghurs, and for Taiwan! Neither Washington nor Beijing, but international socialism!

"Western Civilisation" degree program funded and vetted by the "Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation".

The "Centre" is funded from a bequest by a private-health-care billionaire who died in 2014 and run by right-wing figures like former prime minister Tony Abbott who have said publicly that the aim is to have a degree program firmly anchored in right-wing politics to train future cadres.

Australia's top-ranked university, the Australian National University in Canberra, has already rejected proposals to run a "Ramsay" degree course.

Neither Washington nor Beijing, but international socialism!

by *Martin Thomas*

China is now the world's second power, economically though not yet militarily. It is striving for influence, hegemony, aggrandisement, in competition with the first power, the USA.

The longstanding US policy was to use US military and diplomatic power chiefly to sustain world-market rules assumed beneficial in the long term to US capital. Donald Trump has shifted to a cruder "American First" policy, undermining the World Trade Organisation, pursuing trade conflicts with Mexico and Canada and above all with China.

In the first cold war, between the USA and the USSR, the Trotskyists of our "third camp" tradition had the slogan "Neither Washington nor Moscow". They explained that "to support one side" in the conflict "will speed war at the same time that it buttresses the imperialist suppression of various peoples - Poles [under Stalin's rule], Greeks [with British and US intervention], etc."

"Socialism", they explained, "is the positive content of Neither Washington nor Moscow" (Labor Action, 29 March 1948).

Working-class activists should make a similar stand today: neither Washington nor Beijing, but international socialism!

For decades now left-wingers in Australia have opposed US imperialism, and the Australian alignment with the USA which sent Australian troops to support the USA in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

China is no longer a victim

But some still think of China as a victim of imperialism, which it surely was from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century.

Things have changed. The Chinese state exerts imperialist oppression over the Uyghur people of Xinjiang, in north-west China, holding maybe a million or two million of them in concentration camps. It oppresses the Tibetan people.

It seeks to crush democracy and autonomy in Hong Kong. It aspires to conquer Taiwan. It has used its military and engineering clout to grab islands in the South China Sea which it claims in dispute with Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, or Vietnam.

It invaded Vietnam in 1979 in a dispute about influence in Cambodia.

Increasingly in recent years it has used economic clout. Its "Belt and Road Initiative" launched in 2013 involves large Chinese investments and projects in many countries which are then tied to China by chains of debt.

Since Xin Jinping came to the top in China, in 2012, that shift has gone with a clampdown within China, a drive to sharpen centralised government control and reverse the slight easing of previous decades.

Waste

We also propose that waste operators should be publicly owned, so that the whole of energy provision and recycling can be planned for emissions reduction and environmental safety, without being constrained by profitability.

Transport

Expand public transport and make it free.

More rail, not roads for private cars and trucks. No new airports, no airport expansion, renationalise the airports.

Finance

The major banks should be nationalised, and their priority should be support for emissions reduction, rather than profiting from lending to environmental vandals.

These are the immediate, even if ambitious demands, that the movement needs to get behind, to take power away from capital and climate deniers in time to avert impending tipping points.

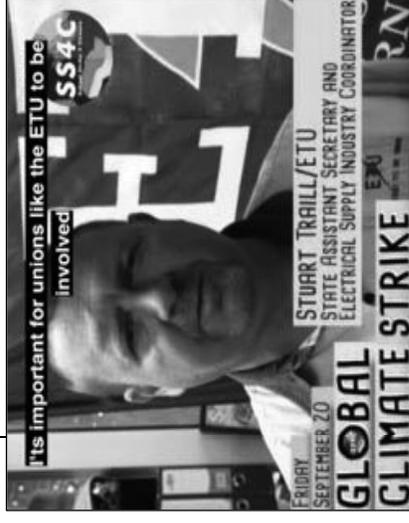
A just transition vs jobs blackmail

Some employment is much more deeply implicated in carbon emissions, than others, particularly some of the more unionised and higher paid manual jobs, such as coal mining. The CFMMEU mining divisions, especially in Queensland, are hostile to climate action. Employment in the renewable electricity sector is barely unionised, and badly paid, according to the ETU.

The alternative employment to carbon-emitting industries, needs to be secure, local, and with union rights and good pay and conditions, developed in consultation with affected communities. This needs union mobilisation for government funding to

retrain and employ people in work that protects and repairs the environment, instead of emitting carbon.

The wider global climate strike movement needs to keep pressure on union leaders to agree to and demand a rapid just transition, to help organise workers who already agree with us, and to seek links into coal communities, such as those being built by Hunter Lock the Gate.



International solidarity

In times of crisis, many respond by narrowing their horizons. There is a nationalist narrowing going on in the world today. From Australia's treatment of asylum seekers, to Trump's America, Modi's India and across Europe, there are right-wing forces calling for walls to go up, blaming foreigners and foreign governments for people's problems. If these forces are allowed to win, we face a dark future.

Foreign workers are not the cause of social problems: to say so lets the real culprits, the super-rich (of all nationalities) off the hook. Anti-migrant sentiment is extremely dangerous. As climate change continues, extreme weather events will force millions of people from their homes. If these climate refugees are met with the kind of callous

violence we see in Australia, the Mediterranean or on the US-Mexico border today, horrible atrocities and even wars will result. We say: free movement for all. Migrants don't drive down wages; bosses do. Organise across borders to level up pay and conditions. The international labour movement must demand co-operation, aid and assistance between nations in the fight against climate change: not competition and passing the blame.

Workers and trade unions

The SS4C organisers are appealing to the trade union movement and workers to join them.

Their website includes a Worker Participation Guide. Workers, and especially trade unionists can offer a lot more than their numbers to street protests. They are in strategic positions to take industrial action, to change the nature and organisation of work, and to reorient production to environmental sustainability.

Collectively, workers have at times defied management and owners, to take industrial action, most commonly to demand better pay and conditions. The strongest unions, most able to defend their own working conditions, have been the most likely to take action in solidarity with others, for social justice, or the environment.

School students who have learnt about organising and fighting for climate action will become a larger share of the workforce. At work they could be a formidable force, young, energetic workers who will educate and organise their older fellow workers, and shake up complacent union officials. Already the school students are inspiring unionists who had become ground down. They have addressed union meetings around the country, and won endorsements for their strike.

Union leaders fail to challenge the rules by striking for the climate

By Janet Burstall

Australian unions have not organised strike action for 20 September. The Australian Council of Trade Unions and its leaders, Sally McManus and Michele O'Neil have been deafeningly silent on climate action and the 20 September climate strike, up to at least the week before.

Many unions and peak bodies have voted to endorse the climate strike but have not authorised strike action by their members. These include the Australian Services Union, Electrical Trades Union Queensland, NSW Nurses and Midwives Association, NSW Public Service Association, NSW Teachers Federation, National Union of Workers NSW, Retail and Fast Food Workers Union, MUA Sydney Branch, Victoria Trades Hall Council, Queensland Council of Unions.

The National Tertiary Education Union is exemplary, for actively encouraging university staff to join the climate strike. Union branches at some campuses have worked with students to close down classes and win management announcements that there will be no penalties for staff or student absences during the climate strike.

The climate strike could be a golden opportunity for unionists who support the right to strike, to combine support for climate action with breaking the rules to change the rules, and despatching the anti-union so-called "Ensuring Integrity Bill". The SS4C website declares "There is nothing "fair" about the Morrison Government's Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) Bill. School strikers

I talked with were not aware of any active support from academics.

They had not yet considered reaching out to trade unions. Australia has long had a sizeable Chinese population - now 5.6% of the country's total - and many Australian trade unions have a good few members of Chinese origin.

At the University of Queensland (UQ), maybe a third of the university's 54,000 students are Chinese - Hong Kong Chinese, Taiwan Chinese, Malaysian Chinese, Singapore Chinese, Australian Chinese, or mainland Chinese. The proportion has increased fast in recent years.

The students I talked with said they get good support from all those groups except the mainland Chinese. They are often sympathetic in private but worried about public commitment for fear of the

consequences when they return to China. Some suspect that some mainland-Chinese students are "planted" at the university by the Chinese government to monitor the behaviour of others.

One student said they were hesitant about going on the streets to express solidarity with Hong Kong in Brisbane's densest Chinese suburb, Sunnybank, because now (she reckons) the majority there are mainland-Chinese rather than, as formerly, Taiwan-Chinese.

The Lennon Wall does not mention the other big "Chinese" issue at UQ, the university's Chinese-government-funded "Confucius Institute". UQ's agreement with the Chinese government requires it to allow the Chinese government to vet the "Confucius Institute" academically.

That remains an issue even if it is now overshadowed by another UQ money-with-strings scandal, its proposal to run a

Chinese students organise solidarity with Hong Kong

by Colin Foster

Chinese students at the University of Queensland, in Brisbane, Australia, have set up a "Lennon Wall" in the student union precinct at the main campus.

The wall, expressing solidarity with the protests in Hong Kong, has been ripped down twice by pro-Chinese-government students, but restored each time.

Like the Lennon Walls in Hong Kong, it is named after a wall in Prague, in the Czech Republic, which has been a site for oppositional graffiti since the 1980s. In fact, UQ now has two Lennon Walls, the fixed one being supplemented by a mobile one moved around the campus.



Students I talked with at the wall say that they are coordinating by Facebook as well as by gathering at the wall. After two protests on the campus, one of which was assaulted by pro-Chinese-government students, they are considering their next steps.

The student union has granted them the wall space, but done no more. The UQ branch committee of the NTEU (National Tertiary Education Union) UQ branch committee has declared: "We express our solidarity with Hong Kong pro-democracy students and call upon the university to uphold their rights to freedom of speech and assembly on UQ campuses"; but the students

The right to choose: the struggle continues

by Kate Buckell



In August the NSW lower house passed legislation to remove abortion from the criminal code, making it the last State to do so in Australia. This is a victory for women's reproductive rights and it is especially cheering given it comes at a time when we are facing renewed and pernicious attacks elsewhere, most notably the US. In late September the bill goes before the upper house. If it passes it will become law.

The amendments pushed by the upper house, following those in the lower house, are nothing more than attempts to derail the legislation, whatever the movers of these amendments claim. Straw doll after straw doll is held up in an attempt to whittle away as much as possible that is meaningful.

Notable is the attempt to lower the threshold for abortions to 20 weeks. This is based on the spurious argument that without a limit women will be terminating pregnancies right up to the due date. The idea that women have late abortions just because they were too lazy to do it earlier, or simple change their minds late in the day is both highly insulting and plain wrong. Less than 3% of abortions happen after 24 weeks and they are almost all due to severe foetal abnormality.

Equal access

The fact is women have always had abortions. It was just that if you were well connected and rich they'd be relatively easy to procure and safe; and if you were working class then you dined with death, arrest and permanent damage. With every additional limit placed on

abortion it is the most vulnerable who pay the price: women in rural areas with limited access to services, who have to wait longer and travel further, and may need to save money or take time off work to do so; those who are victims of abuse, who may take longer to come forward; those who have limited English, who will struggle to access services and may not know their rights; and those who lack education and find it harder to fight for the services they are entitled to and need.

The right to free and safe abortion has long been central to the fight for Women's liberation. It is a feminist issue, but it is a class one too. If the Upper house passes the legislation, this will be a victory but the road ahead is long.

Health care

The law is one thing, reality on the ground another. Without sufficient, accessible Medicare funded abortion services, the right to end an unwanted pregnancy will still not be a reality for most women.

And it is this that we must fight for, alongside free and accessible obstetric care, improved maternity and paternity rights, and quality funded childcare. Without these too, choice for many women will remain an illusion.

wholeheartedly condemn this bill and everything it stands for."

Although most unions are rusty at organising strikes, leaders could declare backing for workplaces voting to strike on 20 September.

If tens, even hundreds of thousands climate strikers, with organisers who support union rights, are not enough to embolden our current union leaders, then it's time to organise an alternative political current in the union movement. Such a current would demand industrial action for both union rights and climate action, and to challenge officials who won't build it.

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Climate activism for workers' control

by Paul Hampton

Business and government rely on workers' passivity to do what they want to do – which is to make profit, while polluting freely. Workplaces are an important site of struggle to reduce carbon emissions.

Individuals have little influence; but workers at the point of production have tremendous collective power.

One of the results of concerted trade union campaigning over a number of years around issues of workplace health and safety was the winning of "health and safety reps".

Many unions have fought for the election of "green reps" to play a similar role, and

sometimes won management recognition for such positions.

Of course, it is entirely possible for green reps to be management toadies, allowing themselves to be used to publicise and promote management's environmental policies which often seek to shift the blame for environmentally-damaging waste in the workplace onto workers.

But green representations can be used in a radical way. Green reps should be fighters, rather than a management stooge who just goes round telling workers to turn their lights off.

A low-level start is to organise a green day, show a DVD or awareness film, or run a Q&A or informal discussion and meet people.

Green reps can demand the employer to carry out a feasibility study to install wind turbines and solar panels in the workplace. (This has already happened in many workplaces in Britain, such as Tilbury docks, the BBC, BT, numerous universities and other big sites.)

Insulation makes the workplace more comfortable to work in, as it balances out the seasonal impact on internal temperature, and saves money while reducing emissions. Old buildings should be upgraded – new buildings should adopt the best available technologies.

Automatic sensor lighting and energy-saving bulbs make a big difference.

Similarly, new IT equipment will make workers jobs easier while using less energy, if power-saving devices are included.

Get the boss to commit to a green travel plan! This means the employer subsidising public transport use e.g. by paying for annual travel passes. A loan is a start, but better if it is free for workers.

Bosses should also be paying for bikes, as well as the safety equipment, storage and showers to freshen up. Where driving is essential, employers should buy dual fuel and electric vehicles, especially for urban areas. Drivers should get training for fuel efficient driving.

Employers should organise recycling schemes for metal, plastic and other materials, not just paper. It should include food waste, water use (e.g. rainwater for toilets).

The basic strategy of a radical green rep is to reduce carbon emissions in the workplace by imposing workers' control. This means workers taking decisions usually left to management's prerogative. It is imposed because management will probably not allow it without a fight.

We fight for the right to know about real scale of workplace, industrial and employer greenhouse gas emissions, energy use, transport arrangements, waste etc. Demand your employer account for all their emissions – and not fob them off by carbon credits, outsourcing or cuts.

Energy efficiency reduces carbon emissions. It also saves bosses a lot of money. These funds should be used to benefit workers, not swallowed up by shareholders as profits, or given to managers has fat-cat bonuses. Serious energy saving could be used to stop job cuts.

Workers need to see that action on climate change leads to direct, tangible benefits for

them and their workmates. Radical green reps can ask questions, and demand answers about who pays and who benefits from climate-related measures.

Demands on employers

by *Martin Thomas*

Is it just green-wash to aim to reduce your employer's carbon emissions?

Stanford University in the USA has reduced its emissions drastically. Even if the reduction was driven by the university management wanting to look good, the university's plan has led to students agitating for further reductions in the carbon emissions from travel connected to Stanford. They urge the university to deal with "Scope 3" - "all other indirect emissions that occur in a company's value chain".

The initial "decarbonisation" activity at Stanford has led to more attention to wider carbon emissions than on campuses which belch out carbon emissions without comment. Not to tunnel vision, but to wider vision.

The Stanford action is also significant because it has acted as a test-bed for low-emission energy techniques which could then be spread to other large institutions.

University campuses are a good focus for workplace decarbonisation because they are some of the largest workplaces around these days. A big university could have over 30,000 students, academics, and other workers. Some universities also have on-site expertise for emissions audits and emissions-reduction technology.

Campus emissions-reduction efforts can be used as test-beds for new technologies, and can be used to stimulate further research of wider application.

Union officials and members who want more effective campaigns and policies need to speak out to all workers, and be willing to organise politically for those policies, cop the flak from conservative officials, and unite with both grassroots members and other officials who agree.

Without a grouping of union leaders and activists who are committed to taking on employers industrially, and challenging anti-union legislation, official positions in the ACTU are bureaucratic rather than offering mobilising leadership.

Breaking the Rules

The most effective action to claim union rights is defiance of anti-union laws, breaking the rules to change the rules.

Breaking the rules is most likely to happen when the membership of one or more unions, in the pursuit of demands on their employers or government, is sufficiently committed to their claims, to defy anti-union laws in their fight to win. A continuing campaign for union rights can play a role in building confidence of some workers to defy the law, if it has already produced commitments from a range of unionists to provide solidarity where any other union is prosecuted for breaking the law.



This is precisely where Sally McManus failed to lead when the issue arose – the RTBU in NSW was ordered to suspend a legally called strike. The ACTU complained but only lamented, without any hint of encouraging defiance, that the laws needed changing.

Where the ACTU fails to lead on this, then other unionists should unite and campaign around a platform for union rights.

A draft platform needs to address the following points. The right to organise and strike means it should be legal to strike:

- on any issue, no limited list of "permitted matters"
- without restricted bargaining periods
- in solidarity, with other unions and other demands, including for climate action
- based on democratic decision of members as decided by members. No state supervised strike ballots.

Right of association allows meeting on work premises, and of entry to workplaces for union reps, officials and invited guests. Education and mobilisation to prepare for solidarity with unionists who defy anti-strike laws or orders.

John Setka and making unions fit for women

John Setka's position should be put up for re-election in the CFMMEU, so that members can have a say and settle the issue of his fitness for office in light of his abuse of women.

The CFMMEU Executive should call a proper member vote for his position. Setka should resign because of his sexual harassment and abuse.

We utterly oppose government interference in the right of union members to choose their leaders, or to judge John Setka. Neither should socialists, nor the labour movement be pressured into defending sexist abuse, because the government is using the case for its own purposes, to push through more anti-union legislation.

Maybe Setka would be reelected. The CFMMEU members would nonetheless get to consider the unacceptability of sexual abuse and harassment.

Changing the Rules under the Coalition government

A confidential ACTU review of the Change the Rules campaign was obtained by The Australian newspaper. The ACTU should release the report so that trade unionists, especially the activists who put so much effort into the campaign, can have a say in how unions can campaign for union rights, pay and conditions.

Change the Rules like previous Australian Union campaigns, Rights@Work and to a lesser extent Build a Better Future, organised thousands of trade union activists into local campaigning groups, leafleting, door-knocking in the suburbs to talk about union issues, with an immediate aim of preventing the Coalition from winning an election and attacking union rights.

And despite high hopes of Sally McManus's more energetic and forthright leadership of the ACTU during the Change the Rules campaign, it also seems that the local networks that lent energy to Change the Rules, are to wither. Not only that, the Morrison government is trying to get a fresh round of anti-union legislation through the Senate, and measures to further cut earnings for low-paid workers are back on the agenda.

Limited

The Change the Rules campaign was inherently limited, even if its central goal of a Labor government had been won. Putting all its hopes in that was folly.

Unions cannot win industrial claims by relying on parliaments, or tribunals. Ultimately the decisions in those forums reflect a calculation of the balance of power in workplaces between capital and labour, the concessions that employers accept that they must make, and the demands that workers will withdraw labour to win.

Not only was the Change the Rules campaign reliant on electing a Labor government, its demands were unfocussed, and more about the operation of government tribunals and regulations, rather than about concrete demands that would clearly and directly benefit workers.

Union bureaucracy vs clear politics

Even though Sally McManus spoke boldly, the actual campaign was hamstrung by nature of ACTU as bureaucratic coalition of union officials chained to a lowest common denominator.

The ACTU cannot mobilise industrial action without commitment from at least some constituent unions.



ETU members at OI Glass in Brisbane on strike since the end of June.

Organising in schools to control carbon emissions

by Martin Thomas

Corinda State High School, a secondary school with over 1800 students in a middling-income inner-west suburb of Brisbane, has declared itself the first "carbon-neutral" school in Queensland.

It was certified as "carbon-neutral" by the Queensland government Department of Energy in April 2019.

Corinda was not as much a flagship in Australia's student climate strikes, a few months ago, as Kenmore State High School, on the other side of the Brisbane River. But it has done the work to audit its carbon emissions, including from staff journeys to work.

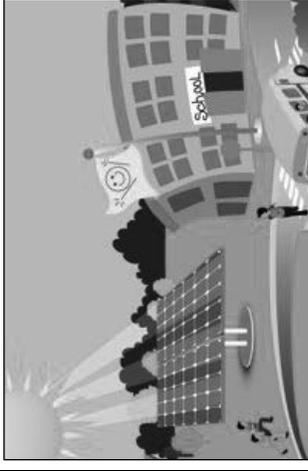
Disappointing is that the audit (bit.ly/cshs-0) shows that the school's emissions actually went up between 2017 and 2018, from 995 tCO₂-e to 1,029.2 tCO₂-e.

The carbon-neutral rating was gained by the school buying offsets from an Indian company, Hero Future Energies.

So far as I can make out from the public information supplied by Hero, it builds wind farms. The offset is not actual carbon absorption, such as forests and oceans do. It is the difference between the carbon emissions from the wind farms and those which would have come from generating the same amount of electricity from fossil fuels.

The big components of Corinda SHS's emissions are electricity consumption, 524 tCO₂-e, waste sent to landfill, 139, staff commuting, 110, school buses, 87. Printing accounted for 33 tCO₂-e. The school, unusually for one as close to the city centre, has a school farm, and cattle on the farm accounted for 32.

The audit did not include emissions from students' commuting. These *may* not be



high, since the school is in a densely-populated catchment, but many schools in Brisbane are making a effort to encourage more students to walk or bike to school, declaring "Active Travel days".

The school has installed LED lights to reduce electricity use in lighting.

(Queensland state schools generally have no heating and little air-conditioning, but air-conditioning is increasing). Corinda has not planted more trees in its extensive grounds, but then it would require 170,000 young trees to absorb all its carbon emissions.

(Young trees absorb about 6 kg CO₂ per year, older trees maybe four times as much).

Corinda is progressively putting more solar panels on its roofs.

The Queensland state government has set up a "solar schools" website, bit.ly/sol-sc. It monitors schools' electricity generation from solar panels. That is everywhere small compared to usage: Corinda would need about 6,500 m² of solar panels to cover its usage.

The website also provides materials for teachers to use with students in discussing emissions-reduction.

There's a lot to learn here on how to do good audits of carbon emissions, on what is effective and what is token for reducing emissions, and how to develop discussion in schools.

Extinction Rebellion Lismore

by Boyd Kellner



Around 300 people attended a meeting in Lismore organised by Extinction Rebellion in May this year. This by Lismore standards was a large meeting, seeing a cross section of people, professionals, trades people, retirees, alternate lifestyles.

This was indicative of the interest and concern by those attending.

Like many, disillusionment and cynicism of the mainstream institutions of politics and capitalism has brought out people looking at new ways to make positive change to combating climate change. Extinction Rebellion is the latest development on the NSW North Coast, reflecting the long and colourful history of environmental activism.

This has potential for building a movement, and political engagement for democratic, strategic action on many levels. Extinction Rebellion's primary focus is non-violent civil disobedience and disruption. To date a few "die ins" have taken place at Lismore Shopping Centres, with some notable publicity.

These are encouraging first steps, even though it has not translated into any

particular demands, other than for politicians to "tell the truth" about climate change. Extinction Rebellion to date has not engaged more deeply into debating these critical issues.

For analysis of Extinction Rebellion

- Environment: "moral issue", or politics and class? Interview with Extinction Rebellion volunteer.

<https://www.workersliberty.org/xr>

- Rebellion and politics.

<https://www.workersliberty.org/story/2019-04-17/rebellion-and-politics>

Tracking emissions with blockchain: a review

By Janet Burstall

Could we audit carbon emissions all the way through the supply chain? Vinay Gupta argues that we could. He opens his Rebellion banner saying "We can't eat money." The idea that blockchain could be a tool of accounting for carbon emissions is exciting. The idea that capitalist firms could be organised to make this system work is less convincing. It's a technical solution without political understanding, but nonetheless one that could be put to good use in the hands of a movement for workers' and consumers' control.

Merging the Physical and the Digital using blockchains. Vinay Gupta - Oslo Blockchain Day. On YouTube <https://youtu.be/L1xCEyn2a8s>

Cool air, hotter climate? Design out waste.

by Pete Boggs

Air conditioning was a landmark invention of twentieth-century capitalism, and has shaped the world we live in.

It gave rise to the summer blockbuster as movie theatres with air conditioning units were the main place people could go in the heat. It allowed capitalist modernisation to transform post-colonial Singapore. It even inspired H P Lovecraft's short story *Cool Air*.

One of the most attractive features of air conditioning units for American capital in the early twentieth century was that it consumed a lot of electricity. Utility companies had a strategy of selling electricity cheaply whilst relying on high demand, and air conditioning being marketed as essential for homes was a key part of that.

1957 was the first year that peak electricity usage began to be recorded in the summer rather than winter, as air conditioning was consuming more power than winter heating. This remains the case today.

This technology has enabled buildings which would have otherwise been untenable. Skyscrapers and shopping malls are ridiculously energy-inefficient, with wide open indoor spaces and plate-glass walls, so require extensive air conditioning to keep them habitable. It has also become "easier" to build homes which have reduced air flows, are architecturally simpler, and cheaper in the initial construction stage. Queensland, with its hot sticky summers, provides a case study.

From the mid-nineteenth century the typical Queenlander (wooden) house was built on stumps raising the ground floor off the earth, which cooled the house from

under the floor. It had large verandas, and (small) windows and doors aligned to allow ventilation throughout the entire house.

Over the decades there has been a push towards more standard "American-style" brick-box homes, with air conditioning to make them habitable. As late as the 1990s air conditioning was rare in Queensland houses, but nowadays it is ubiquitous in new-builds.

Geneva, in Switzerland, which is not much cooler in the summer than southern Queensland, has a law requiring anyone installing air conditioning to prove the need for it. So buildings there are still designed to stay cool without air conditioning. But the more common trend is like Queensland's — designing buildings on the assumption of air conditioning.

Industries which might otherwise go obsolete or shrink under any rational system of planning are given under capitalism the opportunity and drive to justify their existence.

In many places it is very hard to manage without some air conditioning. As the planet continues to warm people will likely use it more, contributing to a vicious circle.

However, building houses with creative architectural solutions to keeping down temperatures would break that vicious circle and go a long way as an alternative to the constant and indiscriminate use of this incredibly energy-intensive technology.

The primary cause of climate change is the production of energy and materials from pollutive and world-altering resources: fossil fuels. However, building a new society requires other steps besides replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources.

Combating needless waste and unsustainable practices will be essential.