



Not Kean On Climate Plan

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The only excuse energy minister Matt Kean could have for recklessly forging ahead with the hard-line policy of net-zero emissions in NSW by 2050 is that he missed the latest jobs report showing 320,000 jobs in NSW had been destroyed since the coronavirus lockdown measures started in March.

The extent of the job losses are the worst in the nation.

At the same time as businesses are shutting and Australians are losing their jobs in numbers never seen before, a senior minister in Australia's largest state apparently has nothing more to offer than mandating that 30 per cent of all new government vehicles be electric or hybrid in three years' time.

And many would be wondering why at a time when getting into and out of the city on public transport is almost impossible due to social distancing, the energy minister would suggest making 8000 of Sydney's buses electric.



At least Treasurer Dominic Perrottet appears alive to the issue, with his proposal to freeze the pay of public servants for a year and for the \$3 billion in savings to be reinvested into job creating projects to help get NSW back to work.

The plan to mandate the electrification of NSW government fleet vehicles is being undertaken to help NSW reach its goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050, which includes the interim aim of a 35 per cent cut to emissions by 2030 on 2005 levels.

This goal is reckless and goes beyond even what the federal government committed to in 2015 when it signed Australia up to the Paris Climate Agreement.

Under that agreement, Australia must cut its emissions by 28 per cent by 2030 – which are already the deepest cuts to emissions per capita in the developed world.

At the same time, China, which is the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases, is completely uncontained by the Paris Climate Agreement and is expected to increase its emission by some 1454 per cent.

As the Senator for Queensland and former resources minister, Matt Canavan argued in The Australian on May 27: "We should end our participation in the Paris Agreement, given the more immediate need to secure our manufacturing jobs."

But even Mr Keane's own climate strategy document Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030 shows that electric vehicle technology and more renewable energy generation are dud policies.

According to the document, the plan will create just 240 jobs each year for a decade at a cost of \$2 billion. That is more than \$830,000 per job.

In any event, the number of jobs created is peanuts compared to the number of jobs that are likely to be destroyed through higher electricity prices which inevitably result when more wind and solar are brought onto the electricity grid at the expense of coal.

About 42,000 jobs have been lost in the energy intensive manufacturing sector in NSW since the year 2000 when the commonwealth government first introduced the Renewable Energy Target, which drove more wind and solar onto the energy grid.

Over the time electricity prices have risen by a staggering 237 per cent, or 12 per cent per year, which is four times the rate of economy-wide inflation in NSW.

A report prepared by consulting firm Frontier Economics for the government agency NSW Coal Innovation estimated that electricity prices could jump by 15 per cent if there was to be greater emphasis on renewable energy, such as that outlined by the energy minister.

What this means for the future of manufacturing in NSW, or the 75,000 jobs dependent on the coal sector, Mr Kean does not say.



All of this at a time when the unnecessarily prolonged and exaggerated COVID-19 lockdown measures, which continue to force Australians out of business and out of work, remain in place.

In terms of electric vehicles, the mainstream of NSW has already had their say, and they said they don't want them. Again, according to Mr Keane's own analysis just 47,000 motorists in NSW have "opted for an electric or hybrid vehicle" out of a total of 5.2 million vehicles. This is even though electric vehicle battery prices have also fallen by more than 85 per cent since 2010.

The fact remains that none of the policies will make any noticeable difference to the global climate or the global temperature – much less weather and climatic conditions in NSW.

Humans account for 1.3 per cent of human emissions around the world. And NSW accounts for a quarter of Australia's total emissions.

This means that NSW contributes just 0.000075 per cent of global human greenhouse gas emissions.

Many Australians have largely accepted the need for extraordinary government measures to stop the spread of coronavirus which have resulted in job losses and business closures.

But mainstream Australians living in the suburbs, outer suburbs, and regions want to get back to work and to see small businesses up and running again. Not just because of the financial independence that work and business formation bring, but because of the dignity and self-sufficiency that they enable.

Not only does this mean freezing – and ideally reducing – public sector pay and reinvesting the savings in job-creating private sector projects, but it means reducing red and green tape, cutting taxes, and, most importantly, getting electricity prices down to support job creation and small businesses.

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