



WHAT ABOUT PEOPLE ON LOW INCOMES?

- Low-income households produce less greenhouse gas emissions than high-income households. The Brotherhood of St Laurence reports that low-income households typically produce 22 tonnes of carbon annually – less than 40% of the 57 tonnes produced by high-income households.
- Climate change poses added threats to people on low incomes. On a low income, it's harder to find the money to improve your home to avoid the health risks of rising temperatures and extreme weather events.
- Rising energy prices could affect low-income workers unfairly. This

is because low-income households spend more than 60% of their income on basic goods such as food, electricity and petrol (people on high incomes spend 40% or less).

- As part of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, the Labor Government has promised to provide assistance to help households and businesses adjust to price rises.
- Strong regulation is needed to make sure that people on low incomes don't bear the brunt of climate change or the cost of the solutions to climate change. The money raised by selling permits to the big polluters must be

used to assist low-income families, and to create new good-quality jobs in clean-energy industries.

- Many low-income earners face job insecurity and unstable working hours. With proper training and support, these workers can take the opportunity to transition to new green jobs with increased security and fair pay. According to the ACTU and ACF, the renewable energy industry could create up to 500,000 new, secure clean energy jobs in Australia by 2030.



Kim Prescott Brown wants to see solutions to climate change that are fair for people on low incomes.

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Climate Justice Factsheet



Kim Prescott Brown is an education assistant in WA. She helps kids with special needs to learn life skills and graduate. She is also part of the LHMU campaign to improve wages for school support staff.

“I’m concerned about climate change because I want the kids I work with and my own kids to have a decent world. I’ve got two teenagers, and they may not be thinking about climate change now, but they soon will be.”

Kim is very conscious at home about the energy and water her family uses. “We’ve done all that stuff – changing light bulbs and my daughter lives in an environmentally friendly sub-division that uses rain water tanks.”

But Kim is also worried about the rising price of energy. “I’ve really noticed the cost of living going up. Our gas and electricity are already horrendously high. On my wages it’s already difficult to afford everything. We’re starting to struggle.”

Kim understands that prices will go up in order to reflect the true cost of energy. “It’s true that consumers will have to start paying to fix climate change – that’s obvious. But it has to be fair. Everyone has to contribute what they can. There are big companies out there doing damage to the environment, and they should be paying for it. They’re making big money – they can afford it. The burden of paying to fix climate change definitely shouldn’t be pushed onto low income earners.”

LHMU WA member Coleen Wild is a disability services worker. “My work is focused on helping people with disabilities to live the best lives they can,” she said. “It’s fulfilling but it can be stressful too. It’s a very emotional job, and the disability services sector needs to be better funded.”

Coleen is very concerned about climate change. “I’m worried about the future of the human race. People might not have access to fresh water in future. The focus of life shouldn’t be on survival. We need a safe climate so we can focus on the better things in life.”

Coleen wants to see the government take action on climate change, but is also concerned about the impacts on people on low incomes. “The cost of living has sky-rocketed in recent years. The cost of a couple of bags of shopping is astronomical. Let alone petrol, which is very very high. It’s always in the back of my mind that in a couple of years I might find myself struggling to make ends meet.

“I understand that the taxpayer is going to pay to solve climate change. But everyone needs to do their bit. Everyone has to be part of the solution.”

“I try to use less fuel, and pollute less – so should the big companies! The solution needs to be fair: the more you emit, the more you pay. Big industry needs to cut down on its energy use. We also need to look at placing real limitations on people and businesses. Just like it’s illegal to drive around with a car that’s billowing smoke out the back. It should be illegal to waste energy and emit more than your fair share of emissions.”

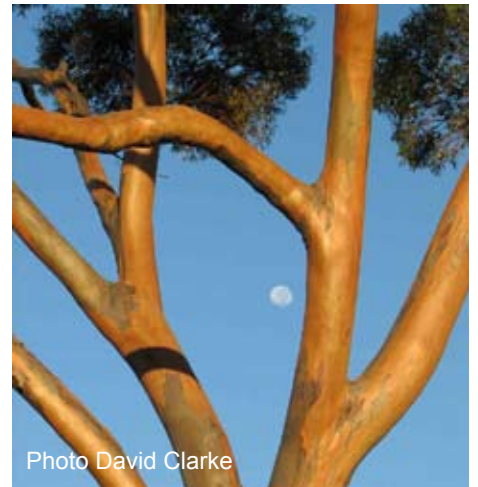
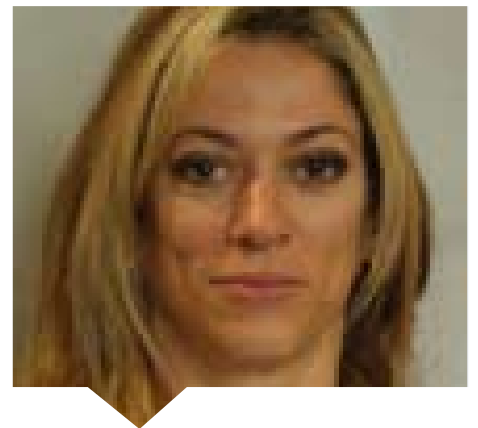


Photo David Clarke



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LHMU member Coleen Wild