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**FEDERAL AND STATE LABOR AT ODDS OVER COAL**

Federal Labor and Victorian Labor now have diametrically opposed policies on coal - the former to shut them down, the latter to extend them - leaving workers confused and in the dark.

In extending the mine licences of Latrobe Valley power plants Yallourn and Loy Yang to 2051 and 2065 respectively and requiring a minimum of five years' notice of closure, the Andrews Labor Government said on Friday:

“These extensions support our energy security and provide certainty for workers and communities across Victoria.”

*Minister for Resources Tim Pallas, Statement, 1 June 2018*

That begs the question for Bill Shorten and Federal Labor about their own policy:

“Labor will introduce a framework to kickstart the closure” of coal-fired power stations.

*Labor Climate Action Plan Election Platform, April 2016*

If Victorian Labor's decision to extend coal licences will support energy security and workers, then what does Federal Labor's policy to kickstart closures mean for them?

The answer is that Bill Shorten wants to put up energy prices, sacrifice our energy security and sell out blue-collar workers. Recent data provides evidence.

- The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) has confirmed that when Hazelwood power station closed wholesale power prices in Victoria increased 85 per cent from 2016 to 2017, with significant knock-on effects in other states.
- The Clean Energy Regulator's latest data has confirmed that, in the 2016-17 year, 4 out of the top 10 electricity producing generators were brown coal from Victoria and 17 out of the top 20 were coal, with the three other three including two gas plants and Snowy.
- The Australian Energy Market Operator latest review has confirmed that over summer the current coal fleet generated at its highest level in 10 years (since Q3 2008) and the number of unplanned outages was 12 per cent lower than last year.

These facts may be inconvenient for Bill Shorten and Federal Labor, who have backed a Greens motion in the Senate that coal has “no long-term future in Australia”.

To coin a phrase, it's time Bill Shorten stopped demonising coal and recognised the need for an all of the above strategy which sees coal remain a critical part of Australia's energy mix for decades to come. Affordable and reliable power depends on it.