

## ***Stop the Sell-off! Keep power in OUR hands***

<http://www.stoptheselloff.org.au/>

*The NSW Government is planning to hand over the state's electricity to big business - taking power out of our hands.*

*The experience in other states and overseas shows us private ownership leads to:*

**higher prices**  
**less reliable supply**  
**key service jobs sent offshore**

*In NSW our electricity would be taken over by multinational companies who will be more interested in profits than making the best decisions for our energy future.*

*Don't hand over our electricity to big business.*

*The industry currently delivers billions of dollars in profits to the government to fund hospitals, schools and other public services and employs tens of thousands of workers across the state.*

*Steps must be taken now to secure NSW's energy future but privatising our power industry is not the way to go.*

*The State Government should instead upgrade its existing power stations to meet our short-term needs while taking urgent action to promote renewable energy.*

## ***NSW: 64% oppose Power Sell-Off***

As thousands of community and union demonstrators protested outside NSW State Parliament against the electricity sell-off the latest AC Nielsen poll shows that two-thirds of the state are opposed Premier Iemma's plans to privatise the power industry.

### **"Arrogant out of touch Government"**

Unions NSW Secretary John Robertson slammed Premier Morris Iemma for "ignoring working families" and said the campaign against the sell-off had only just begun.

Referring to the Your Rights At Work campaign last year, he said it was "disturbing that we are here once again protesting against a government that refuses to listen to the people".

"This government has lost touch and become arrogant," he said.

He called on Labor MPs in the caucus meeting taking place

at the same time as the protest to stand up to their leaders and oppose the sale.

"It's not too late. It's not too late to stand up and say 'We got it wrong'".

"There are many Labor MPs aside from those who stood up here today who are very nervous about what this government is doing and so they should be."

The protesters were joined by fifteen State Labor MPs, including union stalwart and Blacktown MP Paul Gibson. Ninety ALP branches have passed motions in opposition to the sell-off.

### **Iemma losing support**

According to the latest Nielson Poll Mr Iemma's approval rating has plummeted 18 per cent down to 34 per cent since the 2007 election.

## ***Bad time to sell warns economist***

Melbourne economist Dr. Nicholas Gruen says he does not agree with some of the arguments being proffered in support of privatisation.

"What we're hearing is that we should sell these assets because we need to keep our debt low to maintain a triple-A rating," he said.

"Our view would be - and people, for instance the former auditor-general of NSW, have the view that you do not need to sell the assets to keep the triple-A rating."

He says it is a bad time to be selling the Government's electricity assets.

"That's for at least two reasons," he said.

"One of them is the state of the capital markets at the moment. They've got no appetite for risk, so that will drive down the price.

"The second is the very high level of uncertainty since the release of the Garnaut report. That's not going to settle down any time soon."

**your rights at work**  
worth fighting for

## Unions and Climate change challenge

Dr Carla Lipsig-Mummi  
The Age February 25, 2008

Governments and unions must work together to meet the global warming challenge...

In the European Union, 11 countries are studying the impact of climate change on future employment and training needs. Their strategies for new climate policy focus on "employment transitions", government investment and social partnership – with the unions as essential partners.

They believe that jobs growth will take place principally in the clean energy industries, but will only occur if there is significant government investment in training and employment transition programs for displaced workers.

Unions in Argentina, Belgium, Britain and Spain are incorporating environmental responsibility into collective bargaining and legislation to train workers as environment representatives, revising employment protection laws to recognise these responsibilities.

As Tony Maher of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union said in his address to the United Nations Climate Change Convention in Bali last year: "We are here to help. You need our help."

In Canada, two very different unions are embarking on changing the energy culture in their sectors. The railway workers of the United Transportation Union obtained government funding to train environmental stewards to spread environmental know-how throughout their membership, but the funding was put on hold when the Conservatives came to power. And in 2007 the Canadian Union of Public Employees endorsed a national policy of workplace energy auditing by its members: a bottom-up engagement.

In contrast to the EU, Canadian unions do not make social partnership a centrepiece of their strategy. But like the European and Latin American unions, Canadian re-examination of the workplace energy culture involves ordinary workers in large numbers...

**And it makes sense to turn to the trade unions. As the largest membership-based, public interest organisations, they are already examining the impact of warming on work, both in terms of the jobs of their members and in the public interest.**

**If we begin now to ask these questions as a society, and involve the public actively in finding answers, we have a fighting chance of constructing a fairer work world in the near future.**



## Privatisation: "We will pay, don't doubt it"

Letter to Sydney Morning Herald 19 Feb 2008

In supporting electricity privatisation, your editorial ("More heat than light", February 18) ignores the terms of reference of the Owen inquiry. It had no alternative but to opt for privatisation because the last term was: "Determine the conditions needed to ensure investment in any emerging generation, consistent with maintaining the NSW AAA Credit Rating."

We know the ratings agencies don't like governments borrowing money, even though it is cheaper than private companies doing so.

**Your leader writer believes that privatisation will transfer risk from consumers to the shareholders**

**of private companies. However, if the Government has to bale out a failing electricity company, it is the consumers who will have to pay, through reduced services and/or higher taxes.**

### Join Blue Mountains Unions Council

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