

## Worker-owned Construction Co-op Builds Alternative to Coal



Earthworker Construction Co-operative are crowdfunding to create alternative employment in coal-reliant regions and build a network of worker-owned co-ops committed to sustainable enterprise throughout Australia.

The Melbourne-based co-operative will initially offer 100 percent union plumbing, carpentry, and labour services. They aim to eventually also offer worker-owned construction labour-hire in the commercial sector as well as scale up to provide eco-friendly home construction and renovation.

Earthworkers pilot project was the establishment of the Earthworker Energy Manufacturing Cooperative, formerly Eureka's Future, located in the LaTrobe Valley. It is Australia's first worker-owned factory, making renewable energy appliances and components.

The Earthworker Energy Manufacturing Cooperative is "part of ensuring a just transition for communities affected by the move from fossil fuels to renewable sources of energy".

On their website, the Earthworker Construction Co-operative states: "We believe...the problems of climate change, job insecurity and growing inequality must be tackled simultaneously through greater grassroots economic ownership."



With a plan to crowdfund, they have joined forces with sister co-ops Redgum Cleaning, Earthworker Energy, Co-power, Hope Co-op, and Earthworker Smart Energy with a mycause fundraising page. Page creator, Zane Alcorn, put the page live in June. With just 22 donations, the group has already fundraised almost \$4,000 and are targeting \$10,000.

Funds raised will go towards accounting processes and equipment to begin the Earthworker Construction Co-operative.

The groups also aim to create alternative employment pathways for “communities facing structural disadvantage and discrimination”. The Earthworker Cooperative vision is for “dignified jobs, local community empowerment, and a healthy environment.”

## **ENDS**

<https://mycau.se/earthworker-construction-co-op>

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