

## **Mr Bowen, let's discuss, not dismiss, a UBI**

The shadow treasurer's ill-informed dismissal of a Universal Basic Income in a speech previewed this morning demonstrates a troubling reluctance to grapple with 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges.

Green Institute Executive Director, Tim Hollo, said "The world is changing around us so rapidly, and people across the globe are searching for ways to walk into the future with more confidence and control. A Universal Basic Income can be an important part of achieving that and should be discussed not dismissed.

"Mr Bowen's rhetoric of 'dignity through work' isn't just out of date in a world of technological disruption, but it fails to acknowledge the numerous ways in which people find dignity and contribute to our society – through care, volunteering, creativity and so much more.

"The Labor movement has a long and proud history of working for weekends, the eight hour day and public holidays. Technology now gives us the opportunity to work towards a vision where, instead of working ever longer hours on jobs that are unnecessary and unproductive, we can spend more time living our lives well.

"Of course it will take care in design, but all good policy does. Dismissing the idea out of hand helps nobody.

"The idea that the punitive, humiliating approach to welfare that Labor still backs accords with Mr Bowen's stated principle of 'first do no harm' is offensive to all those who have been hurt by them.

"And dismissing a policy with equity at its heart as handouts to millionaires while backing corporate tax cuts doesn't make a lot of sense. The progressive nature of the tax system has to be judged as a whole, not by individual policies.

"A world with less work shouldn't fill us with fear, as long as we build systems of support. A Universal Basic Income has the potential to rebalance power and reshape our society, economy and politics for the better.

"We should discuss it genuinely and openly as we grapple with the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century."