

MEDIA RELEASE

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Greens and unions threaten thousands of offshore maritime sector jobs

A MOVE by the Greens to disallow sensible visa arrangements for offshore resources work on non-Australian flagged vessels will impose major costs and disruptions in the offshore oil and gas industry and threaten thousands of Australian jobs.

In the Senate tomorrow, the Greens will try to disallow a regulation that is essential to ensuring specialist work can continue in our vital offshore oil and gas sector.

From July 1, Gillard government legislation extended Australia's migration zone to include offshore resource projects in international waters. Without accompanying visa arrangements (the outcome the Greens and maritime unions would have the Senate impose tomorrow), critical offshore infrastructure work many need to cease.

"The former Labor government made a mess of regulating work in the offshore oil and gas sector and left it to the Abbott Government to find a workable solution. Unions and the Greens now want to remove even that solution to a problem of their making," says Scott Barklamb, executive director of resource industry employer group, AMMA.

"This would put critical project timelines at risk, harming a \$200 billion industry and the contribution it makes to living standards and work opportunities for Australians.

"What started as a maritime union turf war, and an opportunistic attempt to overturn long standing international law and practice, has escalated to threaten thousands of jobs in an industry which relies on offshore construction to be completed efficiently and cost-effectively."

Maritime unions have been trying to justify overturning essential visa arrangements through a tissue of fabrications and misrepresentations.

"The basis on which the unions would have the Senate overturn this regulation is deliberately ill-informed, and simply does not stand up to scrutiny," Mr Barklamb says.

"Only a handful of these highly specialised offshore construction vessels exist globally – they aren't taxi-cabs where local operators can be easily subbed-in and out. Each vessel uses highly specialised technology not available in Australia and has significant capital invested in them.

"A small permanent crew travels with these ships to operate them safely around the world. Australian maritime workers – often upwards of 100 – are contracted to the ship through Australian labour hire companies. These ships create jobs for Australians and will continue to do so unless the MUA, the Greens and others succeed in deliberately endangering these Australian jobs.

"This is about maritime unions spitting the dummy because they don't have coverage or collect money from the 15-20% of highly specialised international crew who are in our waters for just a few weeks at a time.

"The resource industry urges the Senate to reject this cynical and short sighted proposal and to retain the existing regulation that enjoys the support of industry and is creating jobs for Australians."

[CLICK HERE](#) for a briefing document outlining the involvement of non-Australian workers in offshore resources activities, the ORA Act regulations, and AMMA's responses to misleading union media claims.

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