

MEDIA RELEASE

26 June 2017

Skilled migration changes will hold Australia back

Resources and energy employer group AMMA has voiced industry concern that impulsive changes to skilled migration occupation changes that come into effect 1 July 2017 will inevitably cost Australian jobs and drive up energy prices.

In addition to the comprehensive business case prepared and presented to government by AMMA outlining concerns, industry has identified 23 high-priority occupations that it is urging to be reconsidered.

"These changes to skilled migration have been painted as a saviour for Australian jobs, however, in reality these changes are likely to do the opposite; it will hold Australians back," AMMA chief executive Steve Knott said.

"The reality is that some specific technologies crucial to projects have not been used in Australia before or for long enough for Australians to have developed the skills and experience to do the job.

"It puts the whole operation and associated Australian jobs in jeopardy when broad classifications do not capture very specific experience that is required to do a job, or operate a particular piece of equipment, that is being brought to Australia from elsewhere in the world.

"It's like saying that a specialist surgeon cannot be brought into Australia to operate because they are not Australian, and that there should be an Australian who can already do this work."

"Following this analogy, a specialist driller or petroleum engineer who has 20 years' industry experience in a technology that has only just started being used in Australia, cannot come here for a short period of time, to not only do the work, but give Australians access, training and experience."

Mr Knott said the recent changes to the skilled migration policy stops the development of Australians jobs.

"It stops the ability of Australians to get access to experience that will further their careers," he said. "It also stops the development of industry, inevitably holding Australia back as a country.

"In this case it stops the development of the energy and resource industry in Australia at a time when energy security is vital given the forecasted gas shortage.

"The removal of broad occupations without a mechanism for Australia to respond when specific skill sets and technology is required in our country quite simply holds Australia back."

"AMMA is calling on Minister Dutton and the Coalition government to reclassify 23 occupations to ensure Australia does not implement a policy that holds Australia back in jobs and energy security."

The 23 identified high-priority occupations that the resource and energy industry is urging Government to reconsider classification are listed on the following page.

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Occupations	Current List (as at April 2017)	Required List
Air Transport Professionals NEC	Removed	MLTSSL
Aircraft Maintenance Engineer (Avionics)	Removed	MLTSSL
Aircraft Maintenance Engineer (Mechanical)	STSOL	MLTSSL
Aircraft Pilot	Removed	MLTSSL
Chief Executive or Managing Director	STSOL	MLTSSL
Civil Engineer Technician	Restrictive Classification ¹	MLTSSL
Driller	Removed	STSOL
Flying Instructor	Removed	MLTSSL
Gas or Petroleum Operator	Removed	MLTSSL
Geophysicist	Removed	MLTSSL
Helicopter Pilot	Removed	MLTSSL
Marine Surveyor	Removed	MLTSSL
Marine Transport Professionals NEC	Restrictive Classification	STSOL
Mechanical Engineer Technician	STSOL	MLTSSL
Metallurgist	Removed	MLTSSL
Petroleum Engineer	Removed	MLTSSL
Production Manager (Mining)	Restrictive Classification	MLTSSL
Production or Plant Engineer	Restrictive Classification	MLTSSL
Quality Assurance Manager	STSOL	MLTSSL
Ship's Engineer	Restrictive Classification	STSOL
Ship's Master	Restrictive Classification	STSOL
Ship's Officer	Restrictive Classification	STSOL
Technicians and Trades Workers NEC	Removed	STSOL

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¹ Restrictive Classification describes where the occupations listed are subject to restrictions that negate the usability of the visas for the roles required by resources sector employers (i.e. Temporary Graduate Visa).