

## Media Release

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# VISA REFORMS TO HELP REALISE OIL & GAS POTENTIAL

Proposed reforms of temporary skilled migration arrangements are an important step in helping the nation to harness the potential of the oil and gas industry to generate greater prosperity for all Australians, APPEA Chief Executive Belinda Robinson said today.

"Skills shortages are one of the key impediments to realising the enormous growth potential of Australia's oil and gas production industry. The Rudd Government is to be commended for moving quickly to improve the temporary skilled migration program," Ms Robinson said.

"There are an estimated \$100 billion worth of oil and gas projects in the pipeline and even though demand for clean natural gas is soaring because of its relatively low emissions and relatively low cost, none of those projects is immune from problems associated with skills shortages.

"The establishment of centres of excellence with specialised teams in Perth, Sydney and Melbourne to process 457 visas is particularly welcome and recognises the vital role energy projects are playing in Western Australia in particular.

"The goal of working toward a one-stop shop for major infrastructure projects is particularly useful given the capital-intensive nature of oil and gas projects.

"The shortage of skilled labour, while not unique to the industry, is becoming a real constraint to growth and is particularly challenging for companies planning to develop natural gas reserves for export where they will reduce global greenhouse gas emissions.

"APPEA is working closely with the Commonwealth Government to better identify long-term industry skill requirements and qualifications and has recently secured funding under the Australian Government's National Skills Shortage Strategy for a project designed to increase workforce participation, particularly for those groups currently underrepresented in the oil and gas industry, such as women, Indigenous Australians and the mature aged.

"In the meantime, the industry will continue to rely on access to skilled migration and therefore measures to enhance and maintain the integrity of the temporary skilled migration program are welcome."

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