

PM mulls migration policy to address skills shortage

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Prime Minister Kevin Rudd says he'll consider making changes to Australia's migration policy as a way of addressing the skills shortage. (ABC: Graeme Powell)

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd says he will consider making changes to Australia's migration policy as a way of addressing the skills shortage affecting the economy.

Earlier today Woodside officials in Karratha told Mr Rudd the company will need foreign workers as part of a major expansion of its North West gas processing plant.

Yesterday Mr Rudd promised an infrastructure task force as part of his plan to combat inflation.

Mr Rudd says he will look at changes to visas for foreign workers to meet the shortfall of skilled workers.

The Prime Minister promised greater investment in skills and training and calibrating the migration program to the needs of this economy.

Decision welcomed

The Chamber of Minerals and Energy has welcomed the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's suggestion he may consider increasing the number of foreign workers to address the skills shortage.

The Chamber's Chief Executive Officer Reg Howard-Smith says it is good to see all viable options will be reviewed.

"We will continue to talk to the Federal Government about a range of issues to do with immigration and other skilling issues but we are very pleased with the initial response," he said.

"Workers are definitely needed to come to Australia, the resource sector is an industry which has the world's best practice when it comes to occupation health and safety. Yes, Western Australia certainly needs people coming from overseas."