



SPENDER CALLS FOR FAST TRACK VISA PATH FOR OFFSHORE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

Community Strong MPs Allegra Spender and Zali Steggall have called on the Albanese Government to open the construction skilled visa pathway to offshore applicants:

"The country is talking about migration because of concerns about housing. Surely priority for migration should therefore be construction workers.

"Our current visa settings are locking out the very workers we need to fix the housing crisis.

In July this year, the Minister for Home Affairs issued Ministerial Direction 119, giving priority for construction worker visa processing in acknowledgement of the skill shortage. But the direction only fast-tracks construction visa applicants who are already living in Australia.

As reported by the ABC's [7:30](#), this means offshore construction workers who apply from overseas are not prioritised, leaving a backlog of applicants and construction businesses waiting months to fill critical shortages.

"The Government has acknowledged there is a shortage of construction workers by adding them to the priority skills list, but the onshore-only restriction means we're relying on workers who happen to already be here on other visas, instead of actively recruiting the skilled labour we need.

Spender said the construction sector continues to report chronic shortages of carpenters, electricians, plumbers and other trades, compounding delays and cost blowouts on housing projects across the country.

"Builders and industry groups are telling me the problem is only getting worse, as housing construction increasingly competes for skills and trades with the data centre and renewable energy roll out as well as state and federal government infrastructure projects.

"Every state and territory is currently behind the individual housing targets. Housing [approvals](#) are ticking up but [completions](#) remain well below what is required. The problem is we don't have the workers to get these projects off the ground.

"These visa processing settings are self-defeating. The Government is looking at cutting migration because we're in a housing shortage, but we're going to need a lot more construction workers if we want to build more homes."

Spender and Steggall are calling on the Government to urgently amend Ministerial Direction 119 and related visa settings to prioritise offshore applicants in construction as well as onshore.