PAUL FLETCHER MP

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LABOR PRESIDING OVER GROWING TECH WORKER SHORTAGE

The National Skills Commission's 2022 Skills Priority List released today reveals increasing worker shortages in Australia's tech industry, shortages the Albanese Labor Government is failing to address, Shadow Minister for Science and the Digital Economy, Paul Fletcher said today.

"Today's report again highlights the Australian technology sector's significant skills shortage, which the downturn in skilled immigration during the pandemic compounded," Mr Fletcher said.

"Occupations in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector represent almost 10 per cent of those assessed as being newly in shortage this year.

"The occupations of ICT Business Analyst, System Analyst, Web Developer, Analyst Programmer, Database Administrator, Network Analyst, ICT Quality Assurance Engineer, ICT Systems Test Engineer and ICT Systems Test Engineer, were all assessed as being in shortage.

"The Skills Priority List, initiated by the Coalition, provides a national picture on skills shortages to help steer policy in securing Australia's workforce.

"It was designed to inform a range of government policy responses, including skilled migration.

"For Australia's technology sector to meet its growth potential, the skilled immigration pipeline needs to be opened.

"The Tech Council of Australia has quantified the sector's employment shortfall at 653,000 in the next eight years.

"Much of this gap can and should be met with workers trained and developed in Australia. But it will also require the government, in the words of the Tech Council, to 'streamline skilled migration for high-salary, experienced technical roles with chronic shortages.'

"Bringing in such critical people can generate more jobs for Australians.

"However the Albanese Labor Government and its supporters in the unions have sought to frustrate skilled migration.

"The Australian Workers Union wants all new migrants to be automatically signed up to a union upon arrival. It is also demanding employers pay at least a $10,000 fee to hire a migrant.

"Peak union body the ACTU wants to get rid of employer sponsored visas. Instead they want sponsorship done by an industry wide body with union involvement. Inevitably this would be slower, more bureaucratic and less responsive to business needs.

"Labor has a clear agenda to impose union control over the tech sector. If Labor persists with seeking the pre-approval of the union movement before taking any policy actions, the inevitable outcome will be even greater skills shortages in tech, hurting our industry and economy," Mr Fletcher said.

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