

# Industry calls for policy on skilling



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INDUSTRY heads are calling on Federal leaders to outline in detail how they expect to deal with a skills shortages facing the Gladstone region in coming years.

The Queensland Resources Council has called on both Labor and the Opposition to "start talking" to the Queensland's resources sector about skills needs.

QRC chief executive Michael Roche said while the major parties appeared at pains to emphasise which had the lowest immigration intake target, si-

lence prevailed on the resources sector's skills needs. Gladstone Industry Leadership Group chief executive officer Kurt Heidecker said Gladstone needed to look at how to attract skilled, experienced people from the rest of Australia, then internationally.

"What I haven't seen is the detail in their policies on how we can focus on skilled, experienced Australians," he said.

Mr Heidecker said there needed to be discussion on bringing experienced oil and gas industry professionals from overseas to train Australians first.

"The key thing is the benefit has to spread to the local community," he said. "If we employ local people, there will be fewer

houses needed to be built."

The National Resource Sector Employment Taskforce Report *Resourcing the Future*, released this month, highlights resource sector skills needs and shortfalls including 45,000 construction phase jobs (eg LNG projects) over the next few years and 3200 operational jobs in the LNG sector by 2015. Liberal National Party-endorsed candidate for Flynn Ken O'Dowd said the Opposition's Immigration Policy emphasised there would not be cutbacks in the vital area of skilled migration.

"The LNP will ensure that two thirds of our permanent migration program will be for the purpose of skilled migration."