

MEDIA RELEASE

INDUSTRY BODY URGES IMMIGRATION TO ADD ADVANCED SCAFFOLDERS TO SKILLS LIST

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New Zealand needs to add highly-qualified scaffolders to its Skilled Occupations list for migrants to meet the growing needs of the construction industry and other trades, says the head of the industry body.

Graham Burke, Chief Executive of Scaffolding, Access and Rigging New Zealand (SARNZ), is urging the Government to address a “glaring omission” and add those with Advanced Scaffold qualifications to the list.

Currently scaffolding is included on Immigration NZ’s Canterbury Skills Shortage and Immediate Skills Shortage lists but not on its Long Term Skilled Shortages List or List of Skilled Occupations.

Mr Burke says New Zealand has a critical shortage of advanced level scaffolders – an NCEA level five qualification - and the construction sector will struggle to find enough to meet the increased requirement for scaffolding - delaying residential, commercial and industrial projects.

“The sector is working to recruit and train as many New Zealand scaffolders as possible but it is a lengthy process - taking one to two years to become an elementary scaffolder and another two to become advanced,” said Mr Burke.

“But when I contacted Immigration New Zealand about this I was told the Advanced qualification isn’t an essential qualification for scaffolders.

“That isn’t correct - there is a legal requirement for scaffolders to hold a Certificate of Competence for the appropriate class and many of the scaffolds needed for the industrial, commercial and civil sectors require an advanced scaffold certificate.”

Mr Burke said more than 80 per cent of SARNZ members already cite skills shortages as their biggest challenge.

“We are only asking immigration to add the most highly skilled scaffolders. Advanced scaffolders are in such short supply that, as well as the high demand from industry, the training organisations are struggling to find enough to be tutors.

“The List of Skilled Occupations contains many other construction trades with skill levels the same as scaffolding. It’s grossly unfair that scaffolding is precluded despite it being a skilled and safety-sensitive industry. Immigration needs to address this so that highly skilled scaffolders, including those already working here on visas, have a path to residence as skilled migrants.”

ENDS