

Memo to ScoMo: We

PETER MILNE



WA business leaders want the re-elected Morrison Government to give the sluggish economy a boost and start tackling a long list of festering problems instead of politicking.

Many business leaders believed WA prospers when the population climbs.

Phoenix Academy chief executive Robynne Walsh is concerned about a population policy that will give incentives to migrants to move to regional areas and smaller cities.

"It's an amazing story, it's fantastic, except WA is not included," she said. "We have been classified as a big city."

Master Builders WA executive director John Gelavis said the last construction boom was on the back of big levels of overseas migration and net interstate migration.

WA Museum Foundation chief executive Jenny Allen thinks Eastern States workers will be less inclined to come to WA after the last boom.

"They don't want to come here anymore because we don't have the credibility for security with their jobs," she said.

Brownes Dairy chief executive Tony Girgis is concerned about labour, with many locals not wanting to get up at 3am. "Some of the foreigners are quite happy to come and do that, and they think the wages are great," he said.

He laments the visa changes that have made it harder to hire workers from overseas, as does Tourism WA chairman Nathan Harding. "Every chef we bring in will enable four to five kitchen hands to start, and that chef can then have apprentices," Mr Harding said.

The tourism boss also wants visas for Asian tourists to be simpler and cheaper.

Motor Trade Association chief executive Stephen Moir thinks his industry is staring down a skills crisis. He said rather than boosting apprenticeship numbers the Federal Government should support mentoring to cut the current "appalling" completion rate.

"You'll get a much stronger outcome than simply chasing new apprentices and seeing them fail," he said.

Linda O'Farrell, people manager for Fortescue Metals Group, said that contrary to the perceptions of many, pay in the

Listen to people who know what they are doing ... stop pandering to a minority which is propping up ... coal-fired power stations.

Dominic Da Cruz
Perdaman Advanced Energy managing director



I think the most pressing issue for us all ... is Scott Morrison's population policy review he announced in March.

Robynne Walsh
Phoenix Academy chief executive



The NDIS: fixing that unwieldy horrible beast that I wouldn't want put my family through is something that they need to get right.

Mark Fitzpatrick
Telethon Speech & Hearing chief executive



For the automotive industry, our big issue is skills and we are staring down a massive skills crisis.

Stephen Moir
Motor Trade Association chief executive



Start-ups are now confronted with new issues they didn't have to deal with.

Chandra Sundareswaran
Spacecubed general manager



What do we do about the people in our community who just can't afford to put a roof over their heads?

Susan Rooney
St Vincent de Paul Society chief executive



In terms of a return to prosperity ... it's very important we see strong levels of both overseas and interstate migration.

John Gelavis
Master Builders WA executive director



It doesn't take an economist to figure out we aren't going to be able to pay for aged care (with Federal money).

Stephanie Buckland
Amana Living chief executive



Our farmers' chief complaint is getting labour.

Tony Girgis
Brownes Dairy chief executive



The cost of regulation has gone up massively.

Andrew Hadley
P&N Bank managing director



mining game was not rising substantially, except for specific skills such as heavy diesel fitters. She said the industry had to train people through both booms and busts.

FMG has struggled to fully train apprentices in the Pilbara so has set up a training centre at one of its mine sites so TAFE could come to its students.

She said training would help

workers deal with the consequences of automation.

Spacecubed general manager Chandra Sundareswaran said changing technology required a skills transformation.

"Look at the indigenous population in the Pilbara," he said.

"A lot of them do very basic low-skilled jobs in the mining sector. Five years from now, they won't have any jobs to go to."

THE CEO VOICE SERIES



Skilling the future workforce was just one of the long-running problems the business leaders identified as well-known and well-researched but sadly lacking decisive action.

Scotch College headmaster Alec O'Connell said the old school funding model unpicked in 2011 still hadn't been fixed.

"Just sort out the funding model, try to get some certainty

around it," he said. "Whatever funding is increased, it really should be going to disadvantaged communities, not to the western suburbs."

St Vincent de Paul Society chief executive Susan Rooney is also concerned about the less well off. She said social housing has lacked investment for decades and would not improve without a national policy.

Low consumer confidence and sluggish wages growth put

GARY MARTIN



Political and policy stability — promised by the re-elected Morrison Government — is vital for any organisation, whether it is engaged in developing world-scale industrial projects in WA's

north, trying to introduce and execute long-term strategies to drive business growth, or relying on a much-needed improvement in consumer confidence.

But stability on its own will not fix what are arguably the most significant twin challenges facing WA, and Australia, low consumer confidence and low wages growth.

The Morrison Government has a mandate to deliver a platform for the Australian economy to grow.

It raises the question of what WA needs from Canberra, in terms of policy settings and, more importantly, government actions.

The GST issue has been fixed, for now, and WA is benefiting

from unsustainably high iron ore prices.

However, sustainable gains will rely on considered support from Canberra.

At the very least, the call will be for the Federal Government to invest further in economic growth-enhancing infrastructure.

Around Perth that means a

continuation in investment to remove transport bottlenecks — whether that be road or rail — to boost productivity.

Across the State we need more infrastructure to assist in the development of new resources projects and to boost WA's regional tourism potential.

That sort of investment also

need some leadership



Picture: Jackson Flindell

Stability on its own will not fix ... low consumer confidence and low wages growth.

Gary Martin
Australian Institute of Management WA chief executive

Whatever (school) funding is increased it should be going to disadvantaged communities not to the western suburbs.

Alec O'Connell
Scotch College headmaster

Eastern States people: they don't want to come here any more because we don't have the credibility for security with their jobs.

Jenny Allen
WA Museum Foundation chief executive

The single biggest ask tourism has for the Federal Government is around visas.

Nathan Harding
Tourism WA chairman

While there is a view that remuneration generally in mining has increased that's not actually true.

Linda O'Farrell
Fortescue Metals Group people manager

This is a moment for Scott Morrison and his Government to do something crazy, like actually lead.

Nic Hayes
Media Stable managing director

Telethon Speech and Hearing chief executive Mark Fitzpatrick said identifying where best to invest in social infrastructure to also stimulate the broader economy should be a priority for the incoming Government. He said the appointment of the first Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme raised hopes for real progress. "Fixing that unwieldy horri-

ble beast that I wouldn't want to put my family through is something that they need to get right," he said. Amana Living chief executive Stephanie Buckland said the number of people older than 80 is set to increase 30 per cent in just eight years and aged care needed some urgent attention. P&N Bank managing director Andrew Hadley talked banking

and warned that the Government's response to the Hayne royal commission should not result in regulations that favoured the "absolute oligopoly" of the big four banks. Perdaman Advanced Energy managing director Dominic Da Cruz was equally forthright on energy. "Listen to people who know what they are doing ... stop pandering to a minority

which is propping up an industry — coal-fired power stations — which is dead," he said. Media Stable managing director Nic Hayes summed up the group's mood, and perhaps that of the nation, after a decade of turmoil in Canberra. "This is a moment for Scott Morrison and his Government to do something crazy, like actually lead," he said.

PM under the pump for policy solutions, appropriate action

creates jobs and may help sluggish wages growth across the State, notwithstanding inflationary pressure on pay in parts of the Pilbara mining sector. Low wages growth undermines the confidence of consumers when they consider investing in a new home or renovating, going on a holiday, upgrading their car or thinking

about funding a comfortable retirement. Another policy area for Canberra to consider is to encourage east coast workers to return to WA in pursuit of better opportunities, in the process providing a boost to residential housing demand and reversing the negative trend in house prices in Perth, in particular.

The Morrison Government will be expected to deliver on tax reform. Although there will always be winners and losers with any tax change, the key will be to deliver a system that boosts employment and consumer and business confidence and reduces the need for welfare payments.

As the Prime Minister is fond of saying, he wants to help those who are willing to have a go. Perhaps above all what WA needs from Canberra is a clearly articulated set of policies on how to deal with sluggish wages growth, low jobs growth, weak house prices and negative consumer confidence — and appropriate actions.

And this action will need to address the needs of metropolitan Perth and regional WA and assist the resources sector as well as service industries such as tourism, hospitality and aged care.

Professor Gary Martin is the chief executive of the Australian Institute of Management WA