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## Labour shortage

**Article by James Pearson CCI, West Australian column**

Employers tell me that it is already getting harder to find the workers they need. And pressure is on wages to go up, again.

Two years ago, before the GFC hit, "Help Wanted" signs hung in shop windows and wages skyrocketed as employers struggled to find – and keep- their workers.

Those days will soon be upon us again.

Unless the federal government's proposed super tax on WA's resources industry throws a spanner in the works.

In our latest survey – taken before Prime Minister Rudd announced the new tax - CCI's members told us that labour shortages and wages costs were their number one concern.

This is backed up by CCI's research which shows that our future growth could be handicapped by a labour shortage that will be even worse than the last one.

WA needs almost half a million extra workers over the next decade, but we will fall short by more than 210,000 workers.

It won't be just miners. Construction, healthcare, office-based businesses and retail will all struggle to get, and pay for, the people they need.

It doesn't have to be that way.

CCI wants government to work with employers. Let's make sure we build the social and economic infrastructure WA needs, including affordable housing. Let's change migration policy to allow more workers into WA. Let's encourage more Western Australians to enter the workforce.

Let's get back to creating wealth in WA, rather than arguing about how much of our prosperity should be redistributed to the eastern states.