

# Calls for more migrants to rebuild

**EXCLUSIVE**

**BEN PIKE**

THE country's richest property developer has called on the federal Government to "roll out the welcome mat to skilled migrants".

Meriton founder Harry Triguboff (pictured) said migrants are the key to rebuilding the country post-COVID, just as they did after World War II.

The Urban Taskforce will launch a new BIS Oxford Economics report on Wednesday that found skilled migrants have a participation rate in the workforce of 92 per cent, compared to 66 per cent of the entire working age population.

"As soon as we can safely reopen our borders we need to once again roll out the welcome mat to skilled migrants,"

Mr Triguboff, born in China,



said. "Migrants work hard, they spend money and they pay taxes. That creates jobs, keeps small businesses alive and helps us pay

the bills to look after our ageing population. And, of course, migrants need housing and that is good for the building industry that employs millions of people in this country."

Federal Budget papers released this week cited "a gradual return of temporary and permanent migrants" from the middle of 2022, with international students expected to return under "small phased programs" in late 2021.

The impacts of COVID-19 have shaved our population growth forecast by more than one million over the next decade. And with more Australians turning 65 than turning 18 for the first time since World War II, developers and builders say the government should look to accelerate the return of skilled migrants.

The BIS Oxford Economics report found there will be a reduction of 822,000 people of working age by 2024.

"That is a big hit to the country's economic growth potential, so the importance of returning migration numbers as soon as possible is critical," Urban Taskforce CEO Tom Forrest said.