

Activities & Achievements

April - June 2017

Highlights

CEO: James Pearson

This quarter the Australian Chamber has been **standing up for business** on energy, workplace relations, skilled visas and public spending, among other issues.

We hosted **Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull** at a business breakfast at Parliament House, where he spoke to our members about changes to the visas for skilled workers.

We offered a comprehensive response to the **federal Budget**, welcoming measures to improve Australia's competitiveness but expressing concerns about several new taxes that will impact on businesses and households.

“Australia’s 2.1 million small businesses are the backbone of our economy. Often the people who start these small businesses have risked everything they have, including their home, to turn their entrepreneurial dream into reality.”

James Pearson, Daily Telegraph, June 13

We represented Australian employers at the **International Labour Conference** and secured two significant positions in global organisations that influence employment policy.

Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association, Financial Planning Association of Australia, Australian Meat Processor Corporation, National Automotive Leasing and Salary Packaging Association and NSW Hire Car



Association have joined as Industry Association members, bringing our tally of industry associations to 69.

We welcomed **American Express** and **NetLinkz** as new Business Leaders Council members, bringing the total to 44.

We were pleased to welcome new staff **Lee-Anne Dean** (Executive Assistant), **Dargan Pearson** (Policy Advisor – Employment, Education and Training Policy), **Zoe Callaghan** (Communications and Events Coordinator) and **Jennifer Low** (Associate Director – Work Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation Policy). We also farewelled several staff.

Employment, Education and Training

Director: Jenny Lambert

The Australian Chamber has been busy seeking the **best outcome for business** on policy issues including skilled migration and jobs for young people.

When the Government announced significant changes to **visa arrangements for skilled workers**, the Australian Chamber hosted the Prime Minister at a breakfast to engage directly with the business community.



We then had frequent discussions with the **Department of Immigration and Border Protection** to seek to influence the detail of the policy. We also assisted our members to make the case for their sector and ensured they were informed of the detail.

Senior officials from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection attended our committee meeting to discuss **industry concerns**.

The day after the Budget, we hosted an event at which **Assistant Minister for Vocational Education and Skills Karen Andrews** told our members about the details of the new Skilling Australians Fund. We are having ongoing conversations with the Federal Government on how the fund will work.

To maximise the benefits of the Federal Government's PaTH youth employment program, we met with Employment Minister Michaelia Cash and her department to discuss increasing employer engagement.

Our staff joined meetings of the **Career Education in Schools Working Group**, the Industry Advisory Committee on **Veterans' Employment**, the Australian Skills Quality Authority's **Course Duration Reference Committee**, the Vocational Education and **Training Student Loans Advisory Group** and the **Training Product Reform Joint Working Party**.

Economics and Industry Policy

Director: Adam Carr

The Federal Budget drew a good deal of public attention throughout April and May, from the leaks in the lead up to **responding to the Budget** and providing members with **in depth coverage on Budget Night**.

The Australian Chamber has been addressing red tape, hosting several regulatory reform **roundtables with Senator the Hon James McGrath, Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister**. CCIQ kindly hosted further discussions on regulation, red tape, small business and energy with key Queensland stakeholders.

We have been involved in discussions around the **Australian Government Competitiveness Council** through which stakeholders within business, government and academia evaluate economic challenges and opportunities in relation to competition and make policy recommendations where suitable.

The Australian Chamber made a Submission in Reply and a Post-Budget submission to the **Annual Wage Review**, and has replied in the media to the decision.

We were pleased to see the recommendations from the **Finkel Review** take up issues we raised in our submission, and have been reported extensively in the media on the need to reduce power prices.

“Australian businesses and households are fed up because they face skyrocketing energy prices and unreliable supply. Instead, we need certainty so that energy prices will fall and supply will become more dependable.”

James Pearson, Financial Review, June 9

Further submissions have covered areas as diverse as the Department of **Innovation and Science Australia's 2030 Strategic Plan**, the Senate Red Tape Committee's inquiry into the effect of **red tape on environmental assessment and approvals**, the Productivity Commission's review into **Horizontal Fiscal Equalisation**, the Treasury's review into the **major impediments to business investment** and the Senate Inquiry into the **Government Procurement (Judicial Review) Bill 2017**.

International Chamber of Commerce Australia

Director: Bryan Clark

ICC Australia has been active promoting Australia's **trade interests** in domestic and international forums.

Our advocacy led to the ICC developing a working group on **liability in compliance arrangements** for international trade. This followed a research project on the impact on Australian importers.

Our work on **rules of origin** was cited in a Productivity Commission report into free trade agreements.

We made submissions to the ICC on **Incoterms®** (International Commercial Terms) and to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on the **Foreign Policy White Paper** and the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership**.

We participated in a KPMG study on **data transfer with China** and a Charles Sturt University study on a **Customs single window**.

We held the inaugural Mediation Week in Melbourne in July, the highlight of which was the inaugural **ICC Asia-Pacific Commercial Mediation Competition**.



The winning team at the ICC Asia-Pacific Commercial Mediation Competition with Peter McMullin, Special Counsel, Cornwall Stodart

We held an event on the theme of **arbitration** at the ICC headquarters in Paris. Our two events in South Africa to support **women's economic empowerment** in the Indian Ocean Rim were attended by more than 400 people.

Sustainability

Policy advisor: Joe Doleschal-Ridnell

The Australian Chamber has worked to ensure industry has access to **affordable and reliable energy** as the country confronts environmental challenges.

The Finkel Review into the **National Electricity Market** adopted several of our recommendations, including reliability obligations for new generators, a technology-neutral approach to emissions reductions, changes to security parameters and a case-by-case approach to natural gas development.

Our submission to the Department of Environment and Energy's **Review of Climate Policies** argued that engaging with business is the only way emissions can fall while Australia maintains strong economic growth and improving living standards. We argued that policies should be **low-cost, technology-neutral and uphold trade competitiveness**.

We successfully applied for an advocacy grant for **further research** on energy policy.

Tourism

Director: Jenny Lambert, **Policy advisor:** Richard Lindsay (outgoing)

Following a restructure **Australian Chamber – Tourism** now works closely with our Employment, Education and Training Unit, making the most of strong synergies on skills, migration and employment issues.

Our tourism response to the **federal Budget** raised concerns about cuts to Tourism Australia funding and the increases in visa charges.

We held a **Tourism Briefing** with John O'Sullivan (Managing Director of Tourism Australia) and Kerrie Mather (CEO of Sydney Airport).

We addressed the Bus Industry Confederation's **National Coach Connections Summit**.

We provided **media comment** on tourism data, calling for policies that support continued growth.

Our committee met with the Department of Employment to discuss the **seasonal worker program**.

Workplace Relations

Director: Scott Barklamb

The Australian Chamber has been actively advancing the case for **pro-jobs workplace policies** through domestic and international activity.

At the **International Labour Conference** in Geneva our director of workplace relations Scott Barklamb was elected to the Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and our CEO James Pearson was appointed to the Management Board of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE).



Australian Chamber CEO James Pearson and Workplace Relations Director Scott Barklamb at the International Labor Conference, Geneva

At the conference, Scott Barklamb led global employer representation in the **discussion on skilled migration**, ensuring when we avoid any discouragement of labour migration this is discussed at the highest levels of the UN during 2018. The Australian Chamber also served on the ILO's Committee on the **Application of Standards** and helped negotiate an action plan on **labour market regulation**.

“If we make it too expensive to employ people, we will take away the primary pathway to social inclusion for vulnerable people.”

James Pearson, Sydney Morning Herald, May 24

Back home we had substantial successes in resisting damaging union claims to restrict access to casual and part time work and to require employers to provide 10 days paid domestic violence leave. The Chamber network was the critical voice in influencing what was awarded in place of the union claims, which will be more sustainable and less damaging to doing business.

The Chamber also made submissions to **parliamentary inquiries** on a wide range of matters including **protecting vulnerable workers**, scrapping **four-yearly reviews** of modern awards, banning potentially **corrupting benefits**, limiting the scope of **enterprise bargaining**, **corporate avoidance of the Fair Work Act** and **modern slavery**.

We continued our advocacy in support of the modest reductions in **penalty rates** in some awards announced by the Fair Work Commission earlier this year, ensuring the benefits will flow to businesses, workers, unemployed people and customers.

Work Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation

Associate Director: Jennifer Low (incoming)

The Australian Chamber consulted with members to inform employer representation at Safe Work Australia (SWA), National Industrial Chemicals and Notification Assessment Scheme Consultative Committee (NICNAS) and Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance (MHWA) meetings.

We facilitated a consultation **roundtable between members and SWA** on the Mid-Term Review of the Australian WHS Strategy 2012-2022.

James Pearson, the Chamber member of Safe Work Australia, will be the industry representative to a five-member reference group tasked with working with the independent reviewer for the **2018 review of the model Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws**.

The Australian Chamber has also responded to Safe Work Australia **reviews of the model codes** on *Work health and safety consultation, co-operation and co-ordination* and *Managing WHS Risks*, the draft national guide for *An integrated approach to work-related psychological health and safety*, the *Quad bikes in rural workplaces information sheet*, national guidance on *Working in heat* and the *Best Practice Framework for the Management of Psychological Injury Claims*.

The review of model codes of practice has provided a unique opportunity for members to address issues within the existing codes, and the Chamber has reviewed, and in some instances, created **new WHS & WC reference groups** of members to contribute to this work.

Biz Better Together

Manager: Sarah McGregor

Biz Better Together partnered with Business SA to **deliver Mobile-ising Women in Business** in Adelaide on June 27.

Over 240 business owners and entrepreneurs attended the full day conference featuring author and documentary maker **Tara Moss**, 'Dame of Drones' **Catherine Ball**, futurist **Jamie Skella** and Amazon Web Services' **Shannon O'Brien** to learn about how emerging technologies such as augmented reality, beacon technology and artificial intelligence is changing how we do business and live our lives.

The hashtag **#MobileBizWomen** trended throughout Australia.



Futurist Jamie Skella and Jessica Adamson, Channel 7 at Mobile-ising Women in Business

Funded by the Productivity Education and Training Fund, Australian Chamber member **Air-Conditioning and Mechanical Contractors' Association of Australia (AMCA)** successfully completed a program that provides the air-conditioning industry with **immediate productivity gains** through standardisation. The lessons learnt from this project can be used to continue this effective approach internationally. This is a true example of creative positive productivity-enhancing legacies into the future, which was the purpose of the **Australian Chamber PET Fund**.

Biz Better Together also presented a **free webinar** in partnership with Smart Company on how to establish an **LGBTI-friendly workplace**, and the next webinar in the series – focusing on how diversity impacts the bottom line – is scheduled for 13 July.

Media and Campaigns

Senior Manager: Ari Sharp

The Australian Chamber has been active in **public debate** on issues including the Federal Budget, penalty rates and energy supply.

Australian Chamber staff undertook more than **30 broadcast interviews** on outlets including the Seven Network, Sky News, 3AW, 2GB and ABC television and radio. We also achieved more than **100 mentions** in print media outlets, including The Australian, the Sydney Morning Herald, the Herald Sun, the Financial Review and Crikey.

Opinion pieces by the CEO were published in the **Herald Sun** (on the big questions for the federal budget), the **Sydney Morning Herald** (on the impact of the wage increase on employers), the **Daily Telegraph** (on the struggles faced by small businesses) and **The West Australian** (on the future of manufacturing). The Australian Chamber also issued more than 20 media releases.

Online, we achieved more than 130,000 impressions on **Twitter** and more than 80,000 **website** page views, and reached more than 50,000 people via **Facebook**.

To better connect with people on social media we have expanded our **range of content**. We live stream events (such as the Prime Minister's address to an Australian Chamber breakfast), offer video messages on key issues (such as penalty rates) and use infographics (such as for the Australian Chamber-Westpac Survey of Industrial Trends).

Business Leaders Council Events

Director: Paul Nicolaou

April 10: Cocktail Reception with the Hon Jason Clare MP, Shadow Minister for Trade, Investment, Resources and Northern Australia hosted by Hall & Wilcox Lawyers in Sydney



The Hon Jason Clare MP and Adjunct Prof John Kelly AM, CEO, The Heart Foundation

April 27: Cocktail Reception with Chris Richardson, Partner, Deloitte Access Economics, hosted by PremierState in Sydney



Chris Richardson, Partner, Deloitte Access Economics

May 5: CCI WA and Australian Chamber Breakfast with the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, Minister for Urban Infrastructure, in Perth



Deidre Willmott, CEO, CCI WA, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP and James Pearson, CEO, Australian Chamber

May 11: Book Launch and Reception, "The Unlikely Entrepreneur" by Alan Manly hosted by Dymocks in Sydney

May 17: Budget Briefing with the Hon Michael McCormack MP, Minister for Small Business, hosted by Commonwealth Bank in Sydney



James Pearson, the Hon Michael McCormack MP and Angela Clark, Executive General Manager Small Business, Commonwealth Bank

May 18: Budget Reply and Reception with the Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP, Shadow Assistant Treasurer, hosted by EML in Sydney



Prof Robert Deutsch, Senior Tax Counsel, The Tax Institute, Jenny Lambert, Director Employment, Education & Training, Australian Chamber, and the Hon Andrew Leigh MP

May 25: Luncheon and Business Briefing on the Internet of Things, hosted in conjunction with Vodafone and Nokia in Sydney



James Pearson, Leticia Jennings, Country Manager IoT, Vodafone, the Hon Wyatt Roy, former Assistant Innovation Minister, and Justin Nelson, Head of Asia IoT, Vodafone

May 26: Lunch with the Hon Bob Katter MP, Federal Member for Kennedy, hosted by the VACC in Melbourne



Geoff Gwilym, Executive Director, VACC, the Hon Bob Katter MP and Tony Sanchez, President, VACC

May 30: Australian Chamber - Tourism Reception with John O'Sullivan, Managing Director, Tourism Australia and Kerrie Mather, Managing Director, Sydney Airport, Cruise Bar in Sydney



Kerrie Mather, John O'Sullivan and John Hart, Chair, Australian Chamber - Tourism

June 15: Australian-Greek Business & Wine Tourism Forum at The Establishment in Sydney

22 June: Reception with Nigel Hadgkiss APM, Commissioner, Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC), hosted by Corrs Chambers Westgarth in Sydney



Nigel Hadgkiss APM, Suresh Manickam, CEO, NECA, and Denita Wawn, CEO, Master Builders Australia

June 27: Reception with Natalie James, Fair Work Ombudsman, hosted by Australian Business Lawyers & Advisers in Sydney



Russell Zimmerman, Executive Director, Australian Retailers Association, Natalie James and Nigel Ward, CEO, Australian Business Lawyers and Advisors

June 28: Boardroom Breakfast and Luncheon with Senator the Hon James McGrath, Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister, Assistant Minister for Regulatory Reform, in Sydney



Australian Chamber Director of Economic Policy Adam Carr with Senator the Hon James McGrath and Chamber Members

June 29: Luncheon in conjunction with Mastercard with the Hon Dan Tehan MP, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Cyber Security, hosted by PwC in Melbourne



Joseph Vukasovic, Global Head of Mastercard's Global Risk Management Program, the Hon Dan Tehan MP and Andrew Cartwright, Country Manager, Mastercard Australia



About the Australian Chamber

The Australian Chamber represents over 300,000 businesses in every state and territory and across all industries. Ranging from the top 100 companies to small and medium businesses, our network employs more than 4 million people. The Australian Chamber membership list can be viewed online at www.acci.asn.au/our-members.

AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER MEMBERS: BUSINESS SA | CANBERRA BUSINESS CHAMBER | CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY QUEENSLAND | CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY WESTERN AUSTRALIA | CHAMBER OF COMMERCE NORTHERN TERRITORY | NSW BUSINESS CHAMBER | TASMANIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY | VICTORIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

MEMBER NATIONAL INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS: ACCORD – HYGIENE, COSMETIC AND SPECIALTY PRODUCTS INDUSTRY | AGED AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AUSTRALIA | AIR CONDITIONING & MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS' ASSOCIATION | ANIMAL MEDICINES AUSTRALIA | ASSOCIATION OF FINANCIAL ADVISERS | ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS OF NSW | AUSTRALIA ARAB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY | AUSTRALIAN AUTOMOTIVE DEALER ASSOCIATION | AUSTRALIAN BEVERAGES COUNCIL | AUSTRALIAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION | AUSTRALIAN DENTAL INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION | AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF EMPLOYERS AND INDUSTRIES | AUSTRALIAN GIFT AND HOMEWARES ASSOCIATION | AUSTRALIAN HOTELS ASSOCIATION | AUSTRALIAN MADE CAMPAIGN LIMITED | AUSTRALIAN MEAT PROCESSOR CORPORATION | AUSTRALIAN MINES AND METALS ASSOCIATION | AUSTRALIAN MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION | AUSTRALIAN PAINT MANUFACTURERS' FEDERATION | AUSTRALIAN RECORDING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION | AUSTRALIAN RETAILERS ASSOCIATION | AUSTRALIAN SELF MEDICATION INDUSTRY | AUSTRALIAN STEEL INSTITUTE | AUSTRALIAN SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION AND RADIO ASSOCIATION | AUSTRALIAN TOURISM INDUSTRY COUNCIL | AUSTRALIAN VETERINARY ASSOCIATION | BOATING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION | BUS INDUSTRY CONFEDERATION | BUSINESS COUNCIL OF CO-OPERATIVES AND MUTUALS | CARAVAN INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA | CEMENT CONCRETE & AGGREGATES ASSOCIATION | CHEMISTRY AUSTRALIA | CHIROPRACTORS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA | CONCRETE MASONRY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA | CONSULT AUSTRALIA | COUNCIL OF PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION | CRUISE LINES INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION | CUSTOMER OWNED BANKING ASSOCIATION | DIRECT SELLING ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA | EXHIBITION & EVENT ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALASIA | FINANCIAL PLANNING ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA | FITNESS AUSTRALIA | FRANCHISEE FEDERATION AUSTRALIA | HOUSING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION | LARGE FORMAT RETAIL ASSOCIATION | LIVE PERFORMANCE AUSTRALIA | MASTER BUILDERS AUSTRALIA | MASTER PLUMBERS' AND MECHANICAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA | MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA | MEDICINES AUSTRALIA | NATIONAL AUTOMOTIVE LEASING AND SALARY PACKAGING ASSOCIATION | NATIONAL DISABILITY SERVICES | NATIONAL ELECTRICAL AND COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION | NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICES ASSOCIATION | NATIONAL FIRE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION | NORA | NATIONAL RETAIL ASSOCIATION | NATIONAL ROADS AND MOTORISTS ASSOCIATION | NSW HIRE CAR ASSOCIATION | NSW TAXI COUNCIL | OUTDOOR MEDIA ASSOCIATION | PHARMACY GUILD OF AUSTRALIA | PHONOGRAPHIC PERFORMANCE COMPANY OF AUSTRALIA | PRINTING INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA | RECRUITMENT & CONSULTING SERVICES ASSOCIATION | RESTAURANT AND CATERING AUSTRALIA | SCREEN PRODUCERS AUSTRALIA | THE TAX INSTITUTE | THINK BRICK AUSTRALIA | VICTORIAN AUTOMOBILE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE