SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

SIX MONTHS TO JULY 2014

AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

ABOUT ACCI

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) is Australia's most established representative and largest peak council of Australian business organisations. As a member based organisation, it combines the brand strength of the international, national and local chamber of commerce movement with the capacity of Australia's specialist industry associations. The ACCI network represents in excess of 300,000 private enterprises, of which 85 per cent are small and medium businesses, engaging over four million employees or contractors. As a part of its service to members and businesses in Australia, ACCI provides a network of support services and operates across a range of policy areas, including: Productivity, economics, tax, education & training, employment, health & safety, trade, deregulation and small business.

THIS SNAPSHOT SUMMARISES THE WORK, KEY INTERVENTIONS, AND POLICY WINS UNDERTAKEN BY ACCI FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY – JULY 2014.

PREFERENTIAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

- ACCI continued to assist Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade negotiators and **submitted technical advice** on Trans-Pacific Partnership, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and Korea and Japan bilateral agreements.
- Preparing responses to Joint Standing Committee on Treaties on the **Australia Japan Economic Partnership Agreement** and the **World Trade Organisation Bali Package.**
- Continued to assist Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on **Indonesia Australia Comprehensive Economic** partnership negotiations.
- Provided advice to the Department of Industry about aspects of **Free Trade Agreements** negotiation re the non-agriculture sectors.
- ACCI submission on Rules of Origin was cited in the annual **Productivity Commission report on Trade and Assistance (2012-13)** released in June 2014.

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

- Participated in a **"deep dive" into the Indian Ocean Rim Association** with Minister for Foreign Affairs, Julie Bishop.
- Drafted a new vision statement for the **Indian Ocean Rim Association Business Forum.**
- **Hosted delegations** from multiple countries.
- Addressed the joint meeting of **EU heads of Missions.**
- Meetings with **Ambassadors.**
- Participated in the **International Chamber of Commerce Permanent Heads** meeting in Paris.

LEADING ON G20/B20

- ACCI is engaged in the **B20 Leadership Group** and a number of the **B20 taskforces**.
- **Established the G20/B20 Working Group** of interested members to further strengthen ACCI's policy response and to coordinate consistent themed initiatives across the ACCI network.
- Partnered with the Minister for Small Business, the Hon Bruce Billson MP, on delivering the **G20 Agenda for Growth: Opportunities for SMEs on 20 June**, which concentrated on the role of SMEs in meeting the G20's target of 2% growth and enabling SMEs.
- ACCI's messages from the ***Big 4 you can't Ignore*** born out of Small Business, Too Big to ignore campaign have been included in a summary paper outlining specific policy recommendations which will be presented to the B20 Sherpa.
- Preparing hosting arrangements for international visiting guests from the **ICC, BIAC and IOE** when they arrive for the B20 meeting in July.

Small business owner, John Sharpe with Kate Carnell and Minister for Small Business, the Hon Bruce Billson MP

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ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY POLICY

- Commissioned a major modelling exercise by Deloitte Access Economics on the economic impact and inefficiency of the **Renewable Energy Target**.
- **Nationally televised broadcast of interview** by Chief Economist on ABC's flagship current affairs program 7:30 successfully prosecuting the case for major reform of the Renewable Energy Target to lift its cost burden on Australian industry.
- Conducted **Joint Committee Meeting in Parliament House** featuring diverse range of guests, including **Mr Clive Palmer MP, Liberal Democrats Senator-elect David Leyonhjelm, Independent Senator Nick Xenophon and Industry Minister Ian MacFarlane MP.**
- Represented ACCI on the **Emissions Reduction Fund Expert Reference Panel.**
- Continued to press the case for the repeal of the economically damaging **carbon tax** on the Australian economy.
- Provided strong business leadership on the case for **abolishing payroll tax** following suggestions it be extended to small business to cover growth in unfunded social spending.
- Highlighted the **unfolding emergency in the youth labour market** that has been neglected over the past six years.
- Drew national attention to the **decline in real wages** over the past year and the fact that it reflects the failure to progress any significant structural reform during the last two terms of government and the impact of productivity sapping policy failures.
- Published the **ACCI National Survey of Red Tape for 2013**, which found a majority of respondents believed red tape had increased over the past year and that 40 per cent of respondents reported regulation had prevented them from growing their businesses.
- **Real time commentary by Chief Economist** on the state of the national economy as economic data is released or monetary policy decisions are announced

- **Compiled high profile business surveys** gauging trading conditions and expectations regularly referenced in the media and in Parliament. The four economic surveys produced are;
  - ACCI Survey of Investor Confidence;
  - ACCI Business Expectations Survey;
  - ACCI Small Business Survey;
  - ACCI – Westpac Survey of Industrial Trends.

- Development and release in April of a major policy statement on youth employment and engagement, entitled ***Learning to Work***, which was sent to key Ministers, both State and Federal, and stakeholders.
- Policy Director participated as a Panel member conducting **the Integrity Inquiry into 457 visas**, with report to Government delivered at the end of June.
- Appeared before the **Senate Committee inquiry into TAFE.**
- Extensive engagement with the office of the **Minister for Industry on VET reform**, and attendance at the inaugural industry forum connected to the Industry and Skills Ministerial Council.
- Participation in the **VET in schools taskforce** convened by the Assistant Minister for Education.
- Participated in the working group **reviewing the quality standards for training providers.**
- As the only organisation representing Australian Employers, **attended the International Labour Conference** including discussions on ILO action on employment.
- Joined with Universities Australia and other employer bodies on a **Joint Statement of Intent concerning work integrated learning at universities.**
- Jointly launched with the Australian Human Rights Commission and the ACTU a new Sexual Harassment Campaign; **Know where the Line is.**

SUBMISSIONS

- Delivered a strong **Pre-Budget Submission** to government calling for a clear pathway back to surplus and no further increase in the overall burden of taxation.
- Submission to the **Energy White Paper** process calling for the repeal of the carbon tax, abolition of the **Renewable Energy Target**, privatisation of public owned energy assets and to reconsider the option of developing nuclear power in Australia.
- Submission to **Board of Taxation Review of Tax Impediments Facing Small Business** arguing for the instant asset write-off for small businesses to be raised to $10,000 in line with the Henry Tax Review recommendation and for the abolition of payroll tax in the longer term.
- Submission in February to the **Productivity Commission Inquiry into Childcare and Early Learning.**
- Secured major input from industry sectors and members of Chamber Network for submissions and shared key messages from member submissions on **various WHS topics and issues.**
- Lodged a major submission in the **2014 annual wage** review which advanced a collectively determined position.
- Lodged a submission to the **Competition Policy Review** by advocating changes which would enhance the transparency of the ACCI's boycott enforcement activity and better protect against anti-competitive anti-contractor provisions.
- Made a formal submission to the **Korea Australia Free Trade Agreement Inquiry** by the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties.

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WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY

- Continued to meet requirements of Department of Employment contractual arrangements for participation in **Safe Work Australia (SWA)**. These arrangements will change after 30 June 2014.
- Continued **advocacy and representation for industry at high-level forums and meetings** of Safe Work Australia and other forums.
- Managed representation (some direct) on **SWA Committees and Technical Advisory Groups.**
- Managed **ACCI health and safety working parties**, reference groups and consultative forums.
- Led and coordinated industry input to on-going work on **national harmonisation of WHS laws and workers compensation** – including strong advocacy for SMEs.
- Actively participated in SWA Collaborative Projects as part of **Australian Workplace Health and Safety Strategy 2012-2022** and other activities under the **Australian Strategy** and co-ordinated member input on various projects.
- **Supported SWA Awards** including members participation as Judges.
- Continued to advocate for industry and provide input to **Fair Work Commission Anti Bullying** jurisdiction and their quarterly reporting process.
- Successful in being granted observer status on newly established **Asbestos Safety and Eradication Council**, attending meetings and providing industry input and nominations to Council.
- Continued to **collaborate on resources for business with *beyondblue*** on approaches to mental health and co-ordinated ACCI Business Advisory Forum.
- Became a founding member of the **Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance**, provided input on the formation stages of Alliance and continued to represent ACCI.
- Conducted industry presentations on particular **WHS issues for members such as bullying**, as requested.
- ACCI was a huge supporter of the *beyondblue* and the Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance's "Heads Up" Campaign highlighting the business case for mentally healthy workplaces www.headsup.org.au
- Advocated for government policy change allowing opportunity for a wider range of businesses to assess if they wish to apply to join the **Comcare scheme**. ACCI advocated that businesses should be given the opportunity to make a commercial decision.
- Presented at and conducted a workshop for ILO ACT/EMP-ACE technical meeting on **"Increasing Enterprise Productivity through Enhancing the Safety and Health of Migrant Workers"** held in Bangkok, 29-30 April 2014.

WORKPLACE RELATIONS

- Have reconstructed the secretariat and have secured a more **fully resourced workplace relations policy unit.**
- Secured a co-ordinated and collective approach to the "annual leave" common issue – the first common issue in the 4 **yearly review of modern awards.**
- Responded to member requests to assist with **officer training obligations** by moving to have a member access course approved.
- Generally supported Government legislation which seeks to make beneficial changes to the **Fair Work legislation.**
- Participated in **post implementation reviews of Labor's 2012 TCF** and state transmission of business amendments to the Fair Work Act recommending that the amendments be repealed.
- Continued active advocacy in the second **Pay Equity case** (directed to the childcare sector) which is currently before a Full Bench of the Fair Work Commission.
- Continued active advocacy before the **Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal** opposing the "safe rates" orders which have been proposed.

SUPERANNUATION

- Secured a gradual and managed phase-in process for the **SuperStream** requirements for contributions and member registration which formally commence for employers with more than 19 employees on 1 July
- Significantly influenced the ATO's move to **co-ordinate communication about SuperStream.**

BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY

- As a Foundation Partner of the Centre for Workplace Leadership, ACCI was closely involved in developing the program for the hugely successful **'Future of Work: People, Place Technology' Conference**. The Productivity unit sponsored 24 members to attend the conference to learn how to increase productivity and boost profits by accessing cutting edge technology, research and thought leadership for the modern workforce.
- Developed the **Women's Empowerment Principles: Equality Means Business** luncheon taking place on 16 July, to raise awareness amongst Australian businesses on how to increase productivity and boost growth by using the seven principles set by the UN to empower women in the workforce.
- **Launched productivity initiatives** related to retail, electrical contracting, printing and services export.
- Delivered professional development training to members on **ICC Mediation Rules and Motivation Strategy & Design.**
- Provided input into the Grattan Institute report: **'Silver Lining: Cloud Computing and Small and Medium Enterprises'**
- Provided input in the Australian Council of Learned Academies **'Securing Australia's Future'** program.

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

- Produced the **2014 Autumn Commerce & Industry magazine** focussing on key priorities for retuning the federal budget back to surplus and featured articles from Treasurer, the Hon Joe Hockey MP and Leader of the Opposition, the Hon Bill Shorten.
- Partnered with **Herbert Smith Freehills** to co-brand the Employment and Workplace Relations Guide: A Summary of the Key Laws Affecting Australian Employers for the benefit of members.
- Maintained current partnership agreements, and secured new relationships.
- Partnered with **Start Up Australia** and supporting their 1 million entrepreneurs campaign to help highlight the importance of entrepreneurs to the Australian economy.
- Provided real time reporting to members on the key changes to the **2014 Federal Budget** in the form of a snapshot analysis minutes after budget lock up, along with ACCI's first response media release, followed by a full detailed summary at 9.30pm.

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MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

ACCI has held a high media profile on the major political and economic issues over the past six months, most notably;

- **THE FEDERAL BUDGET**

"The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief executive Kate Carnell welcomed a 1.5 percentage point cut to company tax as promised and a heavy road spending program but was not happy with everything." (The Australian Financial Review, pg 2, 14 May 2014)

ACCI CEO, Kate Carnell's addresses to the media immediately after the 2014 federal budget was handed down.

Bryan Clark, ACCI's Director of Trade & International Affairs appeared on ABC's The World program with Zoe Daniel to discuss the benefits that the Federal Budget will have on Tourism and Trade, 14 May 2014

- **PENALTY RATES**

ACCI CEO, Kate Carnell speaks to Ten's Eyewitness News about the Penalty Rate's impact on "mum and dad" type businesses ability to employ, 6 March 2014

John Osborn, ACCI Chief Operating Officer, provided Business' perspective to the Penalty Rate reform debate on Channel 10's Eye Witness News on 7 March

'We expect to shop, eat and get pharmaceuticals on weekends,' Ms Carnell said, 'But we need to address the profit issue for businesses that want to trade on weekends. I think Australians are accepting that penalty rates need to be addressed to help small-to-medium-mum-and-dad businesses create more jobs for our kids' (The Australian, Pgs 1 & 2, 3 June 2014)

- **MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE**
- 'Imposing unreasonable minimum wage hikes will result in job losses and fewer job opportunities for the most vulnerable and low-paid workers' said ACCI's chief operating officer, John Osborn. (The Australian Financial Review, pg 9, 28 March 2014)

- **YOUTH EMPLOYMENT /APPRENTICESHIPS**
- "ACCI policy director Jenny Lambert told The Australian the chamber wanted 'job outcomes' from work for the dole." (The Australian, pg 4, 1 April 2014)
- Youth Jobs top the list of ACCI Chief (The Australian Financial Review, pg 10, 20 May 2014)

Jenny Lambert, ACCI Director of Employment Education & Training addressing the media to launch a major policy statement on youth employment and engagement entitled Learning to Work.

MEDIA BREAKDOWN

- 30 Press Conferences
- 56 Press Releases
- 282 Radio and TV interviews
- 489 Raw Print Mentions
- 180,469 Website Hits

STATE AND TERRITORY CHAMBERS

ACT & REGION CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
BusinessSA South Australia's Chamber of Commerce and Industry
CCIQ Powering business potential
CCI
Chamber of Commerce NORTHERN TERRITORY
NSW Business Chamber
TCCI Invigorating Business
vecci

NATIONAL INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

accord hygiene, cosmetic & specialty products industry
ADIA Australian Dental Industry Association
AFEI Australian Federation of Employers & Industries
AFGC Australian Food and Grocery Council
AHA
apmf Australian Paint Manufacturers' Federation Inc.
AMCA
AMMA
ARA Australian Retailers Association
AUSTRALIAN MADE
BIC Bus Industry Confederation moving people
ASMI Australian Self Medication Industry
Australian Beverages
CONSULT AUSTRALIA
HIA
Live Performance Australia
MASTER BUILDERS AUSTRALIA
National Baking Industry Association
neca national electrical and communications association
NRA
PACIA
The Pharmacy Guild of Australia
Restaurant & Catering
VACC You're in good hands
National Fire Industry Association Victoria

- Oil Industrial Association
- Australian International Airlines Operations Group