

Activities & Achievements

October - December 2015

Major Activities

CEO: Kate Carnell AO

This quarter the Australian Chamber took a leading role in public **policy debate**.

We hosted Prime Minister **Malcolm Turnbull** at our Business Leaders' Annual Dinner, in where he addressed more than 360 members, sponsors, parliamentarians and other guests on Australia's future prosperity. The dinner, supported by MYOB, the Australian Made Campaign and 3 Degrees Marketing allowed us to thank our members and supporters for their contribution during the year.

We joined with other leaders of the **National Reform Summit** in presenting our ideas to the new prime minister and senior ministers in the cabinet room, discussing tax, retirement incomes and ensuring businesses have access to the skills they need to grow.

We welcomed 11 new **industry association members**: the Association of Financial Advisers, the Australian Dental Association, the Australian Tourism Awards, the Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals, the Caravan Industry Association of Australia, Cement Concrete Aggregates Australia, the Cruise Lines International Association, the Customer Owned Banking Association, the Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia, the Hire and Rental Industry Association and the National Online Retail Association.

Our **Business Leaders Council** continues to grow, welcoming seven new participants: Australian Hearing, Dymocks, Ive Group Australia, JLL, PremierState, Sydney Airport and Thales Australia.

We have also had several staff changes at the Australian Chamber. **Richard Calver** has been appointed on a 12-month contract to serve as Director of Workplace Relations. **Steve Whan** has been appointed Manager of the National Tourism Council. **Mikayla Novak** has been appointed Senior Manager of Economics and Industry Policy. **Dominic Bunyan** has been appointed as Administration Assistant. We welcome them all to the team.

Workplace Relations

Directors: Richard Clancy (outgoing) and Richard Calver (on contract)

The Australian Chamber has worked to ensure the **perspective of business** is heard in workplace relations decision-making forums and public debate.

We secured the reintroduction to the Parliament of proposed amendments to the **Fair Work Act**.

We **represented members** at the National Workplace Relations Consultative Council, the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal, the International Labour Organization, the International Organisation of Employers, the Department of Employment's International Labour Affairs



"There has never been a more exciting time to be at the Australian Chamber tonight, and that's because ... there has never been a more exciting time to be Australian."

Malcolm Turnbull, Australian Chamber Annual Dinner, November 25.



"You have tremendous reach and responsibility at ACCI. You've been vocal leaders and advocates in business ever since 1992."

Kelly O'Dwyer, Business Leaders Council breakfast, October 8.

Committee, the tax office's **Gateway Network Governance Body** and before parliamentary committees.

We coordinated participation in an employer survey to defend against ACTU claims on **part-time and casual employment** at the Fair Work Commission.

We sought to reduce regulatory burdens for business on **gender equity reporting** through involvement in a government working group.

We worked to improve the administration of **superannuation** through meetings with the Australian Taxation Office and Treasury, and through our membership of the SuperStream Reference Group.

We lodged submissions to inquiries into superannuation, labour hire and "insecure work", long-service leave, employment discrimination against older and disabled people, and the Fair Work Act.

We participated in meetings on employment status in **Geneva** and global supply chains in **Bangkok**.

Employment, Education and Training

Director: Jenny Lambert

The Australian Chamber's Employment, Education and Training Committee met with the **new Employment Minister**, Michaelia Cash, to explain our policy priorities, and met with the Department of Education and Training to discuss apprenticeships.

We had extensive contact with senior government officials to discuss employment services and our **"training to work"** proposal, an alternative to work for the dole.

We influenced debate over the **China-Australia Free Trade Agreement**, ensuring that the income threshold for the use of skilled foreign workers was not immediately increased.

We kept members informed of progress on the Government's new **Skills Service Organisations** and **vocational education and training reforms** through our meetings with Minister for Vocational Education and Skills Luke Hartsuyker and his department, and involvement in the Australian Industry and Skills Committee.

We helped to shape the Government's **International Education Strategy** as a member of the coordinating council.

Our partnership with the **Group of 8** to facilitate internships for university students yielded expressions of interest from 17 applicants across 12 member organisations.

Economics and Industry Policy

Director: John Osborn



The Australian Chamber engaged with **key parliamentarians** on issues including tax reform, infrastructure and competition policy.

We responded to the **Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook**, warning against uncontrolled public debt and arguing we live in a fool's paradise if we think we can afford to keep the high level of public spending we locked in during the boom years.

We liaised with Treasurer **Scott Morrison** and his tax white paper office to ensure continued momentum on issues important to business, including income and company tax, payroll tax, stamp duty and the GST.

We lodged a submission to the Productivity Commission inquiry into **intellectual property**, responded publicly to the government's responses to the **Financial System Inquiry** and **Harper Review**, and hosted a roundtable of business organisations to discuss **competition policy** with government ministers.

"Competition reforms are absolutely critical to ensure greater value for money in public services."

John Osborn, *The Australian*, October 27

Our **economic surveys** showed improving business conditions, but suggest persisting difficulties and cost pressures in many parts of the economy.

Our **Business Expectations Survey** for the September quarter showed a significant boost to business sentiment following the change in federal leadership.

Our **Small Business Survey** for the September quarter showed that conditions were improving for small business, but cost pressures were on the rise.

The **AusChamber-Westpac Survey of Industrial Trends** for the December quarter showed conditions moderating slightly, but indicated that 2015 was a good year for manufacturers overall.

Trade and International Affairs

Director: Bryan Clark

The Australian Chamber ensured exporters had the administrative support they needed when the **China-Australia Free Trade Agreement** (ChAFTA) came into force in December.



Bryan Clark met with Mr. Suryo Sulisto, Chairman, Indonesian Chamber of Commerce (KADIN) during 2015 IORA Business Forum, held in Jakarta.

We guided chambers of commerce on the procedures for issuing ChAFTA **Certificates of Origin**, which are required by exporters using the agreement. Our documentation was available before the agreement entered into force, so exporters could hit the ground running. Thousands of businesses registered for ChAFTA across all issuing chambers.

We worked with Chinese Customs and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to gather **technical information**, which we shared each day with our members.

We helped to build public support for the **Trans-Pacific Partnership** and explained to our members how the trade pact may open new investment opportunities.

An article on the **Trade Facilitation Agreement** by Andrew Willcocks, an AusChamber Senior Adviser, was accessed by more than 23,000 people.

Our **Women Mean Business** initiative advanced, with team members visiting South Africa, Indonesia and the United Arab Emirates. Consultations there helped establish project priorities as being helping women-run businesses with international trade and digital literacy.



Our **Sustainability Committee** has established a newsletter to share information, including analysis of the Paris climate change talks. We wrote to Federal Government ministers to explain what businesses are doing to reduce carbon emissions.

Work Health and Safety

Director: Carolyn Davis

The Australian Chamber has ensured the **voice of industry** is heard in forums including Safe Work Australia (SWA), the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency (ASEA) and the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme (NICNAS).

We influenced the outcomes of **SWA's activities**, including on explosives, high-risk work, return-to-work matters and workplace exposure standards.

We participated in **National Safe Work Month** in October (including facilitating a virtual seminar), led a session at the recent **ASEA International Conference** and hosted the launch of the **OECD Mental Health and Work report**.

We coordinated industry input to the national harmonisation of WHS laws and workers' compensation.

Biz Better Together

Manager: Adelina La Vita

The Australian Chamber has launched **Biz Better Together**, our campaign to improve productivity in workplaces. The website (bizbettertogether.com), Twitter (@BizBT) and Facebook (BizBetterTogether) pages have a growing range of content offering practical guidance to businesses.

Our inaugural **Mobile-ising Women in Business** event in Sydney attracted more than 200 attendees to hear from speakers including former Sydney Lord Mayor Lucy Turnbull, journalist Mia Freedman and Etsy managing director Helen Souness.

We have advanced plans for Mobile-ising Women in Business events in **other cities** in 2016.

We submitted an **engagement plan** to the Department of Employment, which funds the Productivity Unit through its Productivity Education and Training fund.



National Tourism Council

Manager: Steve Whan

The Australian Chamber's National Tourism Council is getting down to business in providing a **peak lobbying voice** for tourism following its September launch. The Council's first event took place in Sydney in October and was attended by who's-who in the tourism sector, and was addressed by Minister for Tourism and International Education, **Senator Richard Colbeck**.



Exhibitions and Events Association Australasia CEO Joyce DiMassio and Sydney Business Chamber Executive Director Patricia Forsythe with Senator Richard Colbeck.

We appointed former NSW government minister **Steve Whan** as manager of the Council.

The Council met twice during the quarter to establish its **policy priorities** and discuss tourism's expectations for the budget and tax reform.

We participated in **government working groups** on passenger facilitation and transport access, and in an industry working group on reform of the Tourist Refund Scheme.

We influenced public debate with several **media statements** and contributed to an industry publication to introduce the Council.

Media, marketing and communications

Managers: Sarah McGregor, Ari Sharp and Jessica Wright

The final **2015 General Council** focused on innovation and technology. Guest speakers included Assistant Ministers the **Hon Dr Peter Henty MP** and the **Hon Wyatt Roy MP**; Entrepreneurs **Gen George** of OneShift and **Sebastien Eckersley-Maslin** of Blue Chilli discussed innovation disruption; **Chris Richardson** of Deloitte Access Economics provided an update on the economy and emerging trends; **Jemal Inaishvili**, President of the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI), provided an international update; and **Mark Jackson** from the Australian Business Register provided an update on the government's progression in online invoicing and moving government services online.

The Australian Chamber was vocal in offering a **business response** to key political developments, including the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook, the completion of the Trade Union Royal Commission and the Productivity Commission final report on workplace relations.

An op-ed from Kate Carnell was published in the **Australian Financial Review** putting the case for economic growth and spending restraint rather than tax increases.

Kate Carnell and John Osborn were interviewed on media outlets including Sunrise (Channel Seven), Sky News, ABC News 24 and ABC radio.



Kate Carnell speaking to Channel 7's Sunrise about the Productivity Commission final report on workplace relations.

Across the quarter we issued **55 media releases**. Our media appearances reached a cumulative audience of **2.9 million people** and achieved an equivalent to \$321,000 in advertising spending.

Our social media presence on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn remains strong. The number of engaged users on our social media pages for the quarter hit 4050 and the reach of our content hit 200,600 users.

We produced the **2015 Annual Report and Business Review**, and the summer edition of **Commerce & Industry magazine**, focused on policy reform.

Australian Chamber Business Leaders' Events



The Hon Andrew Robb AO, MP
Minister for Trade and Investment



Senator the Hon Marise Payne
Minister for Defence



The Hon Kelly O'Dwyer MP
Minister for Small Business and
Assistant Treasurer



The Hon Paul Fletcher MP
Minister for Territories, Local
Government and Major Projects



Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck
Minister for Tourism and International
Education and Minister Assisting the
Minister for Trade and Investment



Bruce Billson
Outgoing Minister for Small
Business



Senator Jacqui Lambie
Senator for Tasmania



Glenn Stevens
Governor,
Reserve Bank of Australia



Greg Medcraft
Chairman, Australian
Securities and Investments
Commissions Chairman



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.