

SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

APRIL–JUNE 2015



AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

MAJOR ACTIVITIES

CEO: Kate Carnell AO

THIS QUARTER HAS BEEN A BUSY ONE FOR ACCI.

We hosted the **Prime Minister**, Tony Abbott, at a business lunch to discuss the state of the economy (thanks to sponsor Isentia) and hosted the **Treasurer**, Joe Hockey, at a formal function to talk about the Budget (thanks to sponsor Servcorp). In partnership with Corrs Chambers Westgarth we hosted a Boardroom Lunch, addressed by the **Assistant Treasurer**, Josh Frydenberg.

We welcomed eight new **industry association** members to our network – Aged Care and Community Services Australia, the Association of Independent Schools NSW, the Australian Steel Institute, the Australian Subscription Television and Radio Association (ASTRA), Commercial Radio Australia, Fitness Australia, the Medical Technology Association of Australia and Screen Producers Australia.

We also launched the **ACCI Business Leaders Council**, a platform to facilitate advocacy policy discussion, access and influence between the business community and legislators. Already several businesses have joined the Council, including Allied Express Transport, Brown & Chase, Employers Mutual, Google Australia & New Zealand, Intralot Australia, Isentia, Paynter Dixon Constructions, Samsung Australia, Southern Cross Group Services and Thorn Group.

Each of our policy divisions have been busy with advocacy, submissions, events and media engagement to help make Australia a **better place to do business**.



EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Director: Jenny Lambert

POLICY ADVOCACY

Progress is being made on the **National Strategy on Work Integrated Learning**, which involves tertiary students gaining more practical experience. A **forum** on the issue was held in June, hosted business and university organisations, including ACCI.

We ensured industry has influence on the development of training packages by taking up an appointment to the **small industry working group** to advise the Federal Government on the process for selecting new **Skills Service Organisations**. We have also been appointed to the **Australian Industry and Skills Committee**, which advises the government on vocational education and training policy.

On international issues, we made a submission into the Senate inquiry into **temporary migration visas**. We were vocal in the media on that process and also the Federal Government's response to the **457 Visa Integrity Review**. We have participated in consultations on the Federal Government's **International Education Strategy** and have secured a position on the Coordinating Council for International Education.

PRODUCTIVITY, EDUCATION AND TRAINING (PET) PROGRAM

Our PET program took a major step forward in May with the Department of Employment's approval of a **New Milestones and Deliverables** plan. The new plan focuses on dialogue with business on the **future of workplaces** and offers support for research into **workplace policy**. To execute the plan we will hire **three new staff**.

The PET program was the subject of a presentation at the inaugural meeting of our new **Small Business Working Group**, which has been established to identify ways to reinforce ACCI's strength as the voice of small business.

"IT'S GOOD THAT BUSINESS, LED AS IT SO OFTEN IS BY THE AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, HAS PLEDGED ITSELF SO STRONGLY FOR REFORM."

Tony Abbott, ACCI lunch, April 15

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TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Director: Bryan Clark

POLICY ADVOCACY

As part of Australia's hosting of the **Indian Ocean Rim Association**, DFAT has funded ACCI to undertake a project to **promote women's economic empowerment**.

The first event in the project was the **Women Mean Business** roundtable at the World Chambers Congress (WCC) in Torino, Italy. The roundtable attracted more than 40 participants from chambers of commerce in Africa, the Middle East, Australia and the islands of the Pacific.



▲ Participants sign statement of support



▲ Program Manager Dr Imogen Reid

Our representatives were active at the Congress and at meetings held on the sidelines by groups affiliated with the **International Chamber of Commerce**.

We lodged a submission and gave evidence at a parliamentary inquiry into **Australia's treaty-making process**. We also participated in the **ICC's Annual Roundtable on Competition Policy** in Sydney.

We have established a Trade and International Affairs Committee **e-newsletter** and offer weekly electronic updates on the Trans-Pacific Partnership.



▲ Paul Lugard, Kate Carnell and Rod Sims at the ICC Annual Roundtable on Competition Policy

CERTIFICATES OF ORIGIN

We have joined the **Australian Trade Facilitation Committee** formed to help Australia meet its obligations under the World Trade Organisation's Trade Facilitation Agreement. We have also influenced the **Trusted Trader** scheme being developed by Customs.

When some Australian exporters had their claims for preference under the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA) rejected in **Indonesia** we undertook substantial compliance work to offer support.

ACCI's Andrew Willcocks spoke at a **session on rules of origin** at the WCC. NSW Business Chamber's Ian Bennett represented ACCI at an **AANZFTA protocol meeting** in Vietnam in April to assist negotiators.

TRADE

We have teamed up with Lexbridge, a specialist international trade and investment legal practice, to establish the **ACCI-Lexbridge Trade Law Support Service**



to provide businesses with a subscription to legal services to help them navigate Australia's trade agreements.

WORKPLACE RELATIONS

Director: Richard Clancy

FAIR WORK COMMISSION

We had successful outcomes on behalf of members at the Fair Work Commission.

In the **Annual Wage Review** we advocated a minimum wage increase of no more than \$5.70 per week, while the eventual result of a \$16-a-week increase was well short of the \$27 per week increase proposed by the ACTU.

In the **Annual Leave Common Issue** proceedings we secured award variations that enable more flexibility in the administration of annual leave.

In the remaining common issue proceedings in the **Four-yearly Review of Modern Awards** we secured workable timetables and processes and also opposed union applications for accident pay.

We filed submissions objecting to the jurisdictional basis of ACTU claims for new award clauses relating to family and domestic violence and **family-friendly work arrangements**.

POLICY ADVOCACY

To ensure industry concerns are reflected in changes to **workplace gender equity reporting requirements**, ACCI's CEO is serving on a working group. We also provided input into guidance to employers on **supporting working parents** being developed by the Human Rights Commission.

We filed submissions to two **Senate inquiries** on bills relating to the construction industry and registered organisations. We also made a submission to a **House of Representatives** inquiry into barriers to job creation by small business.

We lodged a submission to the **post-implementation review** of the Fair Work Amendment Act 2013 regarding provisions that involved parental leave and flexible working arrangements.

We represented Australian employers at the **International Labour Conference** in Geneva, participating in discussions on SMEs and employment creation, the informal economy and social protection.

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ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY POLICY

Director: John Osborn

POLICY ADVOCACY

Setting the economic agenda, we joined with other leading business organisations to **author a statement** calling on our political leaders to stand on the shoulders of the past giants of economic reform. The statement was reported prominently in the media, including on the front of the Daily Telegraph.

"TODAY, OUR LEADERS MUST STAND ON THE SHOULDERS OF THESE REFORM GIANTS AND ENSURE OUR LIVING STANDARDS REMAIN AMONGST THE HIGHEST IN THE WORLD"

Business leaders joint statement, April 7



▲ John Osborn and Ian Macfarlane at the Economics and Industry Workshop

We hosted the **Economics and Industry Workshop** for ACCI members to network at Parliament House. Participants met with ministers Greg Hunt, Bruce Billson and Ian Macfarlane, shadow ministers Chris Bowen and Mark Butler and senior government officials.

We helped to secure a major reduction to the **Renewable Energy Target** from 41,000 gigawatt hours to 33,000 GWh, for which our influence was acknowledged in Parliament.

"BRACKET CREEP IS INCREASING TAXATION BY STEALTH."

John Osborn, The Australian, June 5

We also successfully advocated on behalf of members to address concerns regarding the Australian Taxation Office's **Single Touch Payroll** initiative.

We lodged submissions to the **Re:think** tax discussion paper and **Harper Review Final Report** assessment undertaken by Treasury.

Our advocacy was recognised with the "Small Business. Too Big to Ignore" campaign being named a finalist at the **World Chambers Competition** in Torino, Italy.



▲ Peter Hood and John Osborn at the World Chambers Congress in Torino

ECONOMIC SURVEYS

Our trio of economic surveys shed light on the **direction of the Australian economy** before and after May's Federal Budget.

The **Business Expectations Survey** for the March quarter showed that businesses were craving a confidence boost, with the expected performance of the Australian economy over the coming year falling for the fourth consecutive quarter.

The **Small Business Survey** for the March quarter found that small business struggled through difficult trading conditions, with all current indicators except for wages and non-wage labour costs in contractionary territory.



▲ Kate Carnell at the ACCI Small Business Survey doorstep

The **ACCI-Westpac Survey of Industrial Trends** for the June quarter revealed that the mood among the nation's manufacturers was upbeat following the Budget.

During the quarter the decision was made to discontinue the **Survey of Investor Confidence** in order to focus resources on the other surveys in the portfolio.

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MEDIA, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Managers: Sarah McGregor and Ari Sharp

The **Federal Budget** has a tremendous impact on ACCI members, so to ensure they had quick and reliable analysis we produced two communications products – Budget in Brief and Budget in Depth – within hours of the Budget's release.

"TONIGHT'S FEDERAL BUDGET WILL TURBOCHARGE AUSTRALIA'S 2 MILLION SMALL BUSINESSES, GIVING THEM THE CONFIDENCE THEY NEED TO GROW, INVEST AND HIRE NEW STAFF."

ACCI, Media Release, May 12

We produced the winter edition of **Commerce & Industry** magazine, featuring articles by the Treasurer and Shadow Treasurer and other contributions on the Federal Budget, the Tax White Paper and competition policy.

We rolled out four roadshow events in partnership with **Google**. The events, designed to teach small businesses how to make the most of the internet, took place in Frankston, Dubbo, the Sunshine Coast and Launceston and each attracted about 100 small business owners. The roadshow will continue to WA, SA, NT and ACT.

We have announced the **ACCI Business Leaders Summit** will take place in Canberra in August. The event will give ACCI members a chance to hear from leading figures in Australian business, politics and media.

We are continuing to develop a **new website** and customer relationship management system.

We have ensured we remain prominent in the **media**, including in relation to the Intergenerational Report and Federal Budget. Our media appearances reached a cumulative audience of 43 million people and achieved an equivalent to \$8.1 million in advertising spending.

We have increased our engagement on social media by introducing more visual elements, including infographics for our economic surveys. The number of engaged users on our Facebook page for the quarter hit 23,000 and the reach of our content hit 1.4 million users.

ABOUT ACCI

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry is the voice of Australian business, representing businesses of all sizes and industries from across the country. It combines the brand strength of the global chambers movement with the skills of Australia's specialist industry associations. The ACCI network represents more than 300,000 businesses which in total employ over 4 million people.

STATE AND TERRITORY CHAMBER MEMBERS



NATIONAL INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

