

# Activities & Achievements

## July - September 2015

### Major Activities

**CEO:** Kate Carnell AO

This quarter we were proud to launch the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry's **new corporate identity**, reflecting our status as an organisation that is dynamic, innovative and focused on the future.

The new identity is displayed on our **new website**, which uses a sleek design to showcase the organisation's work. The website includes a **customer relationship management tool** that allows us to better communicate with our members and other stakeholders.

In August we held our inaugural **Business Leaders Summit** (sponsored by Google Australia and Isentia), bringing together leaders in business, politics and media. Speakers at the event included Julie Bishop, Josh Frydenberg, Joe Hockey, Bruce Billson and Bill Shorten, along with business leaders.

**"ACCI has, for more than two decades, been an outstanding voice for Australian business — whether here in Canberra, nationally or overseas."** Joe Hockey  
Australian Chamber Business Leaders Summit, August 17

We welcomed the **new Prime Minister** to office and made early contact with Malcolm Turnbull and his ministers to brief them and their staff on policies affecting business.

This also welcomed eight **new industry association members**: the Australian Federation of Travel Agents, the Australian Recording Industry Association, the Australian Veterinary Association, the Direct Selling Association of Australia, the Large Format Retail Association, National Disability Services, the National Roads and Motorists Association and the NSW Taxi Council. This brings our total membership to 52 organisations.

Joining our **Business Leaders Council** this quarter was BRI Ferrier, Certica, Commonwealth Bank, Corrs Chambers Westgarth Lawyers, Echo Entertainment, EP&T Global, Murrays Australia, Samsung Australia, Star Ratings Australia and Universal Business School Sydney.

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.



Kate Carnell launching the Australian Chamber's new identity



## Economics and Industry Policy

**Director:** John Osborn

### Policy Advocacy

Tax reform, infrastructure and competition policy were among the subjects of our engagement with the **Government, Opposition and crossbenchers**.

At the **National Reform Summit** in Sydney we played a central role in tax discussion and worked with other peak groups on the communique.



Our second submission to the Federal Government's **Re:think tax discussion paper** focused on retirement income issues. We also lodged a submission on reforms to facilitate **crowd-sourced equity funding**, advocating reducing red tape and allowing increased fundraising for proprietary companies.

At the Australian Financial Review **Tax Reform Summit** in Sydney we advocated fundamental tax reform to strengthen economic growth, productivity and employment opportunities.



“Australia will only return to higher long-run growth rates or better if we break the reform paralysis and secure necessary changes to tax, workplace relations and red tape.”

John Osborn, Australian Financial Review, July 3

We advocated **competition reforms** in the wake of the Harper Review, including changes to misuse of market power laws, secondary boycott rules and trading restrictions in industrial agreements.

In our response to the **Australian Infrastructure Audit** we argued that infrastructure needs should be primarily addressed by the private sector. The Government's decision to take a responsible **emissions reduction target** to the United Nations Climate Change Conference was applauded.

**Steve Schmidt**, a senior US Republican campaign strategist, shared with us his innovative advocacy methods and showed how they can be used Australia.

### Economic surveys

Our trio of economic surveys showed some **green shoots** for Australian manufacturers, but suggest that difficulties persist in parts of the economy.

The **Business Expectations Survey** for the June quarter showed that sinking confidence moderated in the Australian economy but businesses remain pessimistic.

The **Small Business Survey** for the June quarter showed that conditions remain tough for small businesses but declines have moderated in most areas and some indicators show signs of improvement.

The **Survey of Industrial Trends** for the September quarter showed stronger conditions in the manufacturing sector than in other parts of the economy, with gains spreading to investment and employment measures.

## Employment, Education and Training

**Director:** Jenny Lambert

### Policy advocacy

**Vocational education and training** has been a major focus of the unit.

Australian Chamber members met with senior officers from the Department of Education to discuss **reform of VET** and apprenticeships. Along with the NSW Business Chamber, we convened a meeting of members and the NSW Minister for Skills to identify solutions to **youth unemployment**.

We contributed to meetings of the Federal Government's **Australian Industry and Skills Committee** and the Apprenticeships Advisory Board, to which we were appointed, and also offered input into the selection of Skills Service Organisations and the International Education Strategy.

Much of the public debate surrounding the **China-Australia Free Trade Agreement** focused on labour market issues. Our detailed analysis of the issue shaped the key messages in our media strategy and a briefing sent to members of parliament.

“Members of this parliament should sing from the rooftops about the benefits of trade and a strong relationship with our most important trading partner.” Jenny Lambert, AAP, July 20

In an effort to improve the administration of **457 visas**, we lodged a submission to the Federal Government's integrity review of the training fund contribution system.

We have welcomed to the team Kevin O'Loughlin as our **Employment and Partnership Manager**.

## Productivity Education and Training (PET) Program

**Manager:** Zoe Piper

The work of the unit, supported by the Federal Government's **Productivity Education and Training Fund** to help businesses become more productive, has expanded significantly.

We welcomed Adelina La Vita as our **Business Engagement Manager** and Amanda Ogilvie as our **Communications Officer**, both of whom bring significant experience in their fields. The team is developing an engagement plan, campaign theme and graphic design to maximise impact on target businesses.

Plans for the **2016 Future of Work Conference**, in partnership with the Centre for Workplace Leadership, is underway. The **University of Queensland** has been engaged to help us understand the current array of workplace relations productivity materials.

We delivered a **professional development** workshop to members in Canberra, in partnership with our Workplace Relations unit.

## Workplace Relations

**Director:** Richard Clancy

### Policy advocacy

The unit has been busy representing employers at the **Fair Work Commission**.

We successfully put the employer position on **annual leave** issues, filed a response to an FWC discussion paper on **purchased leave**, opposed the union application for **accident pay** and appealed the decision to maintain the **Broken Hill District Allowance**.

We worked with the Fair Work Ombudsman on the development of the new **Pay and Conditions Tool (PACT)** and worked with the Australian Taxation Office on superannuation matters. We participated in consultations with the Federal Government regarding **workplace gender equality reporting**.

After the **Productivity Commission** released its draft report on workplace relations we welcomed the recommendations but argued for further change. We joined public debate immediately after the release of the report and then lodged a detailed submission and gave evidence at a public hearing.

**“We want to ensure that businesses in the hospitality, tourism area can open longer hours. If they open longer hours, they can pay more staff, employ more people.”**

Kate Carnell, 7.30, August 13

We filed submissions to a Senate inquiry into changes to **paid parental leave**, to the Royal Commission into **Trade Union Governance and**

**Corruption** and to a Victorian parliamentary inquiry into the **portability of long service leave**. We also responded to exposure drafts of legislation to alter **superannuation governance** arrangements and the **superannuation guarantee**.

**“We should be encouraging people to save for retirement to reduce the burden on the age pension system.”**

Kate Carnell, Australian Financial Review, July 27

### Work Health and Safety

Our efforts have focused on influencing the activities of **Safe Work Australia** (SWA), the responsible statutory agency. We represented employers on issues including high-risk work licensing, explosives regulation, returning to work and deemed diseases.

Our SWA **Construction Regulation Review Workshop** and contribution to the Australian Workplace Health and Safety Strategy 2012-2022 shaped policy.

We also put the view of employers to the **Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency** (ASEA), National Industrial Chemicals and Notification Assessment Scheme (NICNAS) and other forums.

Work Health and Safety (WHS) specialists among our members gained insights from speakers from the **Safety Institute of Australia**, CodeSafe, SWA and other key organisations at events we facilitated.

We coordinated employer input into the Council of Australian Governments effort to **harmonise WHS laws** and reviews of workers' compensation laws in several jurisdictions.

The **Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance** and Heads Up continue to benefit from our involvement.

## Trade and International Affairs

**Director:** Bryan Clark

The unit has been active in putting the case for **Australia's trade agreements**, including the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement and Trans-Pacific Partnership.

As these trade agreements advance we are **analysing the implications** for business, using this to inform members, parliamentarians and the public.

To build support for ChAFTA the Australian Chamber united with other business organisations on a **promotional campaign** involving ads on television, radio, print and online. The campaign showcased the benefits of ChAFTA for small business and jobs in mining, agriculture and manufacturing. We made submissions to several **parliamentary inquiries into free trade**, promoting the message that agreements should be framed to give businesses the best chance to use them.

As an organisation registered to issue **Certificates of Origin**, the Australian Chamber has been supporting the use of free trade agreements

with Japan and Korea. We are also preparing Certificates of Origin for use under the agreement with China.

We have launched the **2016 Australian Chamber Trade Survey**, seeking responses from Australian businesses.

Our **Women Mean Business** initiative, which aims to economically empower women, has delivered presentations in Indian Ocean Rim Association countries Seychelles and South Africa.



## Media, Marketing and Communications

**Managers:** Sarah McGregor and Ari Sharp

The Australian Chamber's **new corporate identity** has been introduced, including through a new typeface, stationery design, business cards, office branding, website and social media presence.

The Australian Chamber has been active in external communications. Through media releases, interviews, opinion pieces and social media we have **influenced public debate** on tax reform, workplace relations, trade agreements, business confidence and other public policy issues.



CEO Kate Carnell delivered **several significant speeches** this quarter, including an address to the Sydney Institute on strategies to improve Australia's international competitiveness, and an address to Asialink on ways to improve Australia's engagement with Asia.

Ms Carnell was frequently **interviewed** in the media. She debated workplace relations with a union representative on ABC's 7.30, put the case for political stability to boost business confidence to 2GB, explained the merits of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement to ABC's AM and argued for budget repair on Sky News.

**Opinion pieces** by Ms Carnell were published in forums including the Financial Review, The Drum, Australian Outlook and the Huffington Post.

Our media appearances reached a cumulative audience of **32 million people** and achieved an equivalent to \$6.6 million in advertising spending. On social media, 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**.

The Australian Chamber has welcomed **new administrative** staff Michelle Fischetti and Sarah Lyngstad.

"I spoke to ACCI and I spoke to ACOSS because I see them as both strong partners in the sort of economic plan that we need."

Scott Morrison, media conference, September 23

"Under Carnell's leadership, ACCI has gained a more credible voice and greater respect in Canberra."

Australian Financial Review, September 25

## Business Leaders Council events



**Senator the Hon Eric Abetz,**  
Then Minister for Employment



**Professor Ian Harper,**  
Economist and Chair,  
Competition Policy Review Panel



**Professor K C Chan,**  
Secretary for Financial Services  
and the Treasury



**Chris Jordan AO,**  
Commissioner of Taxation



**Dr Paul Sheard,**  
Chief Global Economist at  
Standard & Poor's Ratings Services



## 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](http://www.acci.asn.au/our-members).