

Activities & Achievements

January-March 2016



Major Activities

CEO: Kate Carnell AO (outgoing) and Jenny Lambert (acting)

This quarter we have farewelled **Kate Carnell** as our CEO after nearly two years with the Australian Chamber. The Board appointed **Jenny Lambert** to serve as Acting CEO, while they carried out a recruitment process to select a permanent replacement. James Pearson has been appointed as the Australian Chamber's new CEO, starting in April.

We have continued to offer **quality service** to our members throughout this transition, including producing major contributions on the minimum wage, vocational education and training and climate policy.

We prepared a **Pre-Budget Submission** for Treasury that spelled out the case for returning the budget to surplus through spending restraint. For the first time this included proposals on tourism.

We took a leading role in promoting business involvement in an economic partnership under negotiation between **Australia and Indonesia**, hosting business leaders from our northern neighbour.

We welcomed as new **industry association members** the National Employment Services Association and the Outdoor Media Association, and as new **Business Leaders Council** participants Careers Australia, Kingsway Australia, ResMed and Uber.

We have also farewelled several staff members and made new appointments. **Paul Nicolaou** and **Nerida Pearson** are driving the Australian Chamber Business Leaders Council. **Tristan McCall** has been appointed Adviser, Trade Facilitation. **Daniel Popovski** has been



Kate Carnell on her first day at the Australian Chamber, Budget Night 2014.

appointed Economic Policy Analyst. **Raechel Riley** has been appointed Finance Officer. **Patricia Forsythe** has taken on a temporary role as Spokesperson. We welcome them all to the team.

Workplace Relations

Director: Richard Calver

The Australian Chamber has advanced the case for employers in **public policy forums**.

We lodged a submission to the **Annual Wage Review**, arguing for a job-friendly

increase in the minimum wage of no more than 1.2 per cent, equating to \$7.90 per week.

We made the case for the reinstatement of the **Australian Building and Construction Commission**, including lodging two submissions and appearing before a Senate inquiry.

We contributed to the Fair Work Commission's **Four-yearly Review of Modern Awards**, including explaining the harm that would be caused by a union claim on casual and part-time employment.

We joined **International Organisation of Employers** discussions on strategy for the upcoming focus on "decent work in global supply chains" at this year's International Labour Conference.

We pointed out some of the problems in **Labor Party** proposed changes to the Fair Work Act, which would introduce draconian criminal offences and have significant ramifications for employers.

We participated in hearings of the **Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal** to press our concerns about new pay rules for the trucking industry that we believe would harm small businesses.

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.



Robert Bergami, Victoria University; P. Mukundan, International Chamber of Commerce; and Bryan Clark

We monitored developments in the **Trans-Pacific Partnership**, informing members as the agreement is considered for ratification in signatory nations.

We administered **Certificates of Origin** across issuing chambers of commerce to help exporters benefit from trade agreements, ahead of a streamlined national management system.

The **Sustainability Committee** lodged a submission to the Climate Change Authority in which we put the case for a market-based approach to emissions reductions. We promoted the message in meetings with the Environment Minister and Shadow Minister.

“The government must go to the election with a comprehensive tax reform package, which must include a reduction in company tax rates to bring Australia in line with other OECD countries.”

Kate Carnell, *The Australian*, January 26

Work Health and Safety

Director: Carolyn Davis

The Australian Chamber has ensured industry **influences outcomes** 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 contributed to **SWA activities** on subjects including workplace exposure standards, explosives regulation, inorganic lead, diving work and other high-risk work activities.

We began consultation with members on the **Safe Work Australia Act** to inform our contribution to a government review.

We renewed our collaboration with *beyondblue* and continue to support **Heads Up**, which provides practical resources for businesses on achieving mentally healthy workplaces.

Biz Better Together

Manager: Adelina La Vita

The Australian Chamber has expanded 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.

We welcomed more than 130 people to our **Mobile-ising Women in Business** event in Brisbane, which offered participants a chance to hear from industry leaders on the use of mobile technology in business.



The Hon Leeanne Enoch, Queensland Minister for Small Business and Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy, at Mobile-ising Women in Business

We formed partnerships with the Australian National University, the National Retail Association, the Small Enterprise Association of Australia & New Zealand, the Safety Institute of Australia and the Australian Institute of Management to deliver content to businesses.

“We are pleased the government is focused on making it easier for small and medium enterprises to do business.”

Tim Hicks, *Herald Sun*, March 17

Employment, Education and Training

Director: Jenny Lambert

The Australian Chamber has worked to ensure Australia's workforce is ready for the **jobs of the future**.

We launched "**Focus on Skills: Building a Better National VET System**", a policy paper that explained the case for a federal overhaul of vocational education and training.

We met with new Vocational Education and Skills Minister **Scott Ryan** to brief him on our proposal to halt the decline in apprenticeships.



We contributed to three meetings of the **Australian Industry & Skills Committee** and kept members informed on the process for establishing Skills Service Organisations.

We met with Employment Minister **Michaelia Cash** to discuss employment services and our Training to Work proposal, which would offer expanded options for dole recipients.

We worked with the **Group of 8 universities** to place interns in member organisations as part of our commitment to work-integrated learning among tertiary students.

We made the case for the economic and social benefits of skilled migration in a submission to a **Productivity Commission** inquiry into the migrant intake.

We renewed our collaboration with **Campbell Page** to help employers navigate publicly funded employment services.

Economics and Industry Policy

Director: John Osborn and Tim Hicks (acting)

The Australian Chamber has made progress on several **major economic reforms**.

We played a key role in the Government's decision to **strengthen protections against misuse of market power**, including making submissions and meeting with ministers.

"Every day the government raises about \$1 billion and spends \$1.1 Billion, so every day we have to borrow \$100 million."

Kate Carnell, Financial Review, February 22

We used our **Pre-Budget Submission** to urge the Government to put spending growth on a more sustainable trajectory and lift revenue through economic reform rather than raising taxes.

We joined public debate on **tax issues**, arguing for lower company tax, urging caution on changes to negative gearing, capital gains and work-related deductions, and seeking a revision to the "backpacker tax".

Our economic surveys showed increasing optimism among Australian businesses.

Our **Business Expectations Survey** for the December quarter showed business conditions accelerated their recovery, with all indicators at or above their five-year average.

Our **Small Business Survey** for the December quarter showed confidence among small businesses rose but still lags behind larger counterparts as cost pressures persist.

Our **AusChamber-Westpac Survey of Industrial Trends** for the March quarter showed that Australia's manufacturers started the new year with a surge of confidence.

Trade and International Affairs

Director: Bryan Clark

The Australian Chamber has continued to help businesses improve their **international engagement**.

We met with the Australian and Indonesian trade ministers and hosted a meeting of the **Business Partnership Group**, which aims to ensure the Indonesia-Australia Closer Economic Partnership Agreement considers the wishes of business.

We hosted a seminar on **international trade and cargo fraud**, led by P. Mukundan, the Director of Commercial Crime Services at the International Chamber of Commerce.

We advised exporters in chambers of commerce and industry associations on compliance with Australia's **free trade agreements**, and worked with the Federal Government to resolve issues.

National Tourism Council

Manager: Steve Whan

The Australian Chamber strives to ensure tourism businesses get the **support they deserve**.

We used our **Pre-Budget Submission** to propose policies including lowering the Passenger Movement Charge, simplifying visa processes, reforming the Tourism Refund Scheme, overcoming labour and skills shortages, funding promotional activity and better staffing international gateways.

We hosted a cocktail event at which Austrade CEO **Bruce Gosper** discussed growth opportunities for the Australian tourism sector.

We contributed to **government consultations** with Austrade (on research priorities and labour force planning), with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (on passenger facilitation) and with the Departments of Industry and Employment (on Northern Australia initiatives).

Media, Marketing and Communications

Managers: Sarah McGregor, Ari Sharp and Jessica Wright



AusChamber Communications Summit with Social Media Strategist and Former Turnbull adviser, Thomas Tudehope

The Australian Chamber was vocal in offering a business response to **key political developments**.

We maintained a strong public profile throughout our organisation's leadership transition. After Kate Carnell's departure as CEO, **Patricia Forsythe** has become our Spokesperson.

We wrote an op-ed in **The Australian** putting the case for a federal takeover of vocational education and training. Our staff were interviewed on media outlets including 702 ABC Sydney, 774 ABC Melbourne, 3AW and Sky News.

We brought together communications professionals from our member organisations at the inaugural **AusChamber Communications Summit** to learn from each other.

We produced the autumn edition of our agenda-setting **Commerce & Industry** magazine, including articles by Treasurer Scott Morrison and member organisations outlining election policy priorities.

We hosted members at a **General Council** meeting in Melbourne, featuring guest speakers Steve Lewis from Newgate Communications and former Finance Minister Lindsay Tanner.

We developed **partnerships** with the Economist Events, the World Business Forum and Cebit to deliver discounts for our members.

“The national Chamber movement gains much of its strength and influence from the collaboration of individual State and Territory Chambers and the central Australian Chamber office in Canberra.”

Nigel McBride, The Advertiser (Adelaide), March 22

Business Leaders Events

Director: Paul Nicolaou



Vocational education and training luncheon: Linda Brown, Laureate Universities Australia; John Hart, Commonwealth Vocational Education and Training Advisory Board; and Jenny Lambert, Australian Chamber



Business Leaders Luncheon: Chris Bowen, Shadow Treasurer



Business Leaders Luncheon: Rod Sims, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.



National Tourism Alliance Cocktails: Bruce Gosper, Austrade



Federal election cocktail forum: Bob Carr, former Foreign Minister; Louise Adler, Melbourne University Publishing; and Troy Bramston, The Australian



Competition policy briefing: Scott Morrison, Treasurer, and Kelly O'Dwyer, Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Small Business



AusChamber/Australian Business Defence Industry luncheon: Nick Xenophon, independent senator



Red Tape Repeal Breakfast: Jenny Lambert, the Hon Dr Peter Hendy MP Assistant Cabinet Secretary and Assistant Minister for Finance and Robyn Hendry, Canberra Business Chamber