



Australian
Chamber of Commerce
and Industry

Activities & Achievements

April – June 2018

Highlights

CEO: James Pearson

This quarter the Australian Chamber has spoken out for Australian business in policy debates nationally and internationally.

We advocated on **tax reform, skills and training, migration and energy** and pushed back on the ACTU's 'Change the Rules' campaign against business.

We took a strong position in **Federal Budget commentary** with calls for more ambition in the Budget to tackle debt and spending, and for a wholesale review of the tax and transfer system.

At the same time we welcomed positive budget announcements for business including continuing commitment to company tax cuts, personal tax cuts and the extension of the instant asset write-down for small businesses for a further year.

We promoted Australian business interests at the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development** and the **International Chamber of Commerce**.

I was appointed as the new chair of the International Organisation of Employers' Committee on Employment, and our team led business advocacy globally on key labour issues at the **International Labour Conference**.



James Pearson with the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Shadow Minister for Education and Training, Shadow Minister for Women, following the launch of Federal Labor's inquiry into post-secondary education

We **led the business response** to the Fair Work Commission's decision to lift minimum and award wages arguing an increase of 3.5% to the minimum and award wages, would intensify pressure on people running small businesses, many of whom are already struggling, and make it harder for unemployed Australians to get a job and the underemployed to secure more hours of work.

On the vocational education front, we represented business at the launch of the **Federal Opposition's inquiry into post-secondary education**. This invitation reinforces our reputation as an advocate for business on vocational education and training and in the broader skills debate.

We've been busy in our **political engagement**, hosting networking events and meetings with all sides of politics as we lobby for members.

This quarter we welcomed **Bendigo and Adelaide Bank, Primary Communication Partners** and **Red Energy** as new Business Leaders Council members, bringing the total to 63.



Alana Matheson, calling for clear and supportable actions in 2019 to tackle violence and harassment in the workplace at the 107th Session of the International Labour Conference

Economics, Industry and Sustainability

Director: Adam Carr Chair: Mark Stone

The June 2018 quarter has been a busy, but rewarding, time for the Economics, Industry and Sustainability unit.

The Budget 2018-19 was handed down by the Treasurer on 8 May 2018. We attended the stakeholder Budget lock-up in Canberra, where we wrote a **Budget summary** document for members and provided a timely outline of **relevant Budget announcements**. We continued to voice our concerns about the lack of genuine structural budget repair. Our **pre-budget submission** continues to be noted by

The Federal Budget 2018 is heading in the right direction but business would have liked more ambition for long term budget repair and decreased reliance on increasing tax revenue.



Duncan Bremner, Director of Public Affairs and Advocacy, Maggie Kaczmarska, Senior Policy Adviser and Adam Carr, Director Economics and Industry Policy poised at Budget Night Lock-Up

politicians, including **Senator Storer** during his address at the Australian Chamber's reception in June 2018.

Alongside the Workplace Relations team, we appeared before the **Fair Work Commission (FWC) Expert Panel** as part of the annual wage review 2017-18. The FWC's decision to increase minimum and award wages by 3.5% risks the viability of many small businesses.

We continue our efforts in advocating for broader tax reform through our meetings with the **Prime Minister's and Treasurer's office**, **One Nation**, Senate crossbenchers and the **Centre Alliance Team**.

We lobbied on small business issues as part of our membership of the **ATO's Small Business Stewardship Group** and small business councils facilitated by private organisations. We attended a discussion on the **Digital Economy Strategy** with Minister Laundy and the Measurement Law Review Forum, hosted by the National Measurement Institute.

Our efforts on policy development accelerated during the quarter. We held our committee meeting where we developed, through the EIP committee, our **policy priorities**. We continue to work with committee members on refining these policies and the best way to message them.

Employment, Education and Training

Director: Jenny Lambert **Chair:** Denita Wawn

The past quarter saw wins for the Australian Chamber and our members. Budget 2018-19 delivered a win with the Government legislating to allow for some exemptions and refunds of the **Skilling Australians**

Fund (SAF) Migration Training Levy – a position advocated for throughout the first half of 2018. Post budget, Jenny Lambert received media coverage, including two Financial Review Op Eds, arguing for action on apprenticeships and Vocational Training.

We led the charge for the **SAF National Partnership Agreement** to be finalised in our engagement with extensive support from state chambers and industry members. The SAF finally saw **five states and territories signing** on by mid-June.

Australian Chamber President **Jeremy Johnson** was appointed to the **Ministerial Advisory Council on Skilled Migration (MACSM)** while **Jenny Lambert** was appointed to the **Global Talent Scheme Working Group**. Australian Chamber CEO James Pearson was appointed to the panel to refine the terms of reference for Labor's National Inquiry into post-secondary education in Australia.

We made a submission to the **Senate Committee on Red Tape** regarding occupational licensing and gave evidence at the Senate hearing. We engaged with the **Department of Home Affairs** regarding the roll out of the new Temporary Skills Shortage Visa, the Global Talent Scheme and the Skilling Australians Fund Migration Training Levy. Following extensive consultations with the Department of Jobs and Small Business and members regarding regional skills shortages, we made a submission to the Department's **bi-annual review of skilled occupation lists**. We also made a submission to the Australian Bureau of Statistics to prioritise and resource a review of the ANZSCO.

Jenny was reappointed to the **Australian Industry and Skills Committee** this quarter.

"No one that I talk to in the vocational training sector believes the system is better now than it was 10 years ago. Not only has the sector been impacted by falling investment by all governments, but its reputation has been dragged down by controversy."

Jenny Lambert, Op-Ed, Australian Financial Review, 14 May

Trade and International Affairs

Director: Bryan Clark **Chair:** Peter Hood

We continue to advocate for Australia's trade and business interests abroad. Over the quarter Bryan Clark travelled to Europe for meetings with our international partners including the **International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) World Council** meeting. Bryan also participated in the ICC Commission on Competition and held meetings with business representatives at the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** and the UK Brexit negotiating team.



Bryan Clark at the Launch of the Trade Community System at the Port of Brisbane

We welcomed announcements from the Federal Budget including support for addressing non-tariff trade barriers which are replacing tariffs in many countries as a means to protect local industries against international competition and the announcement of \$50 million in support of the development of agricultural exports along with measures to support tourism and trade-related infrastructure.

The Australian Chamber, PwC Australia and the Port of Brisbane collaborated to develop a new system to link supply chain information through block chain technology dubbed the 'Trade Community System' (TCS). The Australian Chamber and its partners hosted an industry showcase on Tuesday 29 May at the Port of Brisbane to showcase the TCS proof of concept. The project attracted significant media attention, nationally and internationally.

We also prepared various submissions including the Comprehensive and Progressive Transpacific Partnership (TPP11), Peru-Australian Free Trade Agreement (PAFTA), Inquiry into access to free trade agreements by small and medium enterprises and Senate inquiry into TPP11.

"What we've come up with is the potential for significant cost savings if we can deploy technology like block chain into the trading environment. We're wanting to make sure the government is aware of what we're doing in the private sector, trying to improve things on our side and where that interfaces with what the government is up to."

Bryan Clark on the Trade Community System

Tourism

Director: Jenny Lambert **Executive Chair:** John Hart

The quarter began with a successful Tourism Networking Luncheon with Geoff Culbert, CEO of Sydney Airport, John O'Sullivan, Managing Director of Tourism Australia and Lyn Lewis-Smith, CEO of Business Events Sydney. Budget 2018-19 delivered for Tourism with \$45 million allocated under round three of the Building Better Regions Fund to improve tourism related infrastructure.

We made submissions to the Beyond 2020 consultation process with Executive Chair John Hart continuing to represent the interests of our members on the Beyond 2020 Working Group. The team also held meetings and made submissions to the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Jobs and Small Business in conjunction with the Employment Education and Training unit on skilled migration. John Hart represented Australian Chamber and members on the Tourism Access Working Group, the Passenger Facilitation Working Group and the Tourism Visa Advisory Group.

We continue to look for opportunities to collaborate with members and are currently working on a research partnership with Euromonitor across the membership.

Workplace Relations

Director: Scott Barklamb **Chair:** Stephen Cartwright



John Hart, John O'Sullivan, Lyn Lewis-Smith and Geoff Culbert at the Tourism Networking Luncheon

The Australian Chamber took a leadership role in a standard setting discussion at the 2018 International Labour Conferences (ILC) addressing "violence and harassment in the world at work", the outcome of which is likely to be a new treaty that may be ratified by a future Australian government and future workplace health and safety, and workplace relations laws. The Australian Chamber's Workplace Relations Deputy Director, Alana Matheson represented employers from more than 180 countries during the first year of a two year process. The Chair of the Australian Chamber's Workplace Policy Committee, Theresa Moltoni OAM participated in a review of the ILO's work to support



James Pearson with Workplace Relations Director Scott Barklamb, Workplace Relations Deputy Director Alana Matheson and CCIQ President Theresa Moltoni OAM, promoting Australian business interests at the global general council of employers in Geneva

collective bargaining / social dialogue, ensuring the ILO's messaging and priorities are consistent with **Australian law and practice**.

The Fair Work Commission's Expert Panel increased minimum award wages by 3.5%, from 1 July 2018. This followed **extensive submissions and representations** from the Australian Chamber in favour of a more measured 1.9% increase, and a significant ambit claim from the ACTU for a 7.2% increase, as part of a longer term campaign to peg our minimum wage at 60% of median earnings. We are lobbying hard - so far successfully - against the union's campaign to massively increase minimum wages.

We also participated in a **review** of the Building and Construction Industry (Improving Productivity) Act 2016 to support the re-established **Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC)** remaining in place with powers to address unlawful behaviours.

We developed **advocacy materials** for members to respond to the ACTU "Change the Rules" campaign and union rallies, including **facts sheets** on so-called "insecure work" and minimum wages.

Following three years of Australian Chamber **network advocacy**, the **Minister for Revenue and Financial Services** announced a 12 month amnesty for employers to rectify missed superannuation contributions.

The Australian Chamber's Workplace Policy Committee met on 17 May 2018, addressing a range of developments in compliance, inspection and enforcement as well as recommendations from the **Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman** to better assist small and family businesses in navigating Australia's complex workplace relations framework.

Work Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation

Associate Director: Jennifer Low **Chair:** Nola Watson

The Australian Chamber lodged its submission to the 2018 review of the model WHS laws, providing **29 recommendations**. Safe Work Australia (SWA) is expected to provide a first draft report in late August.

Saturday 28 April was World Day for Safety and Health at Work. The Australian Chamber made a number of social media posts and released a media statement.

We participated in the inaugural **National Return to Work Strategy Workshop**, through SWA that will see a strategy finalised for the 2018 – 2022 period. This strategy will stand-alone but will be complimentary to the **Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012-2022**.

We lodged a submission to the **Department of Jobs and Small Business** on the "Review of WHS Regulatory Framework in the Building and Construction Industry."

We wrote to state and territory **regulators to support our call for regulator developed guidance to support SMEs** with the adoption of the new ISO 45001 safety standard.

We supported members in responding to a significant number of state-based reviews of proposed amendments to WHS/OHS legislation or respective regulator functions and performance.

In late March the Senate referred an inquiry into industrial deaths in Australia to the **Education and Employment References Committee** for inquiry and report by 20 September 2018. The Australian Chamber lodged a response on behalf of members.

The WHS&WC Committee is looking at a work plan to address priority issues for 2018-19. In late June, we launched our new small business WHS campaign: **#PartandParcel. Working with small biz; it's in the delivery**. This campaign is backed by an independent report commissioned by the Australian Chamber, **Enabling Safe and Healthy Workplaces for Small Business**, highlighting the disconnect between policy makers, regulators and SMEs and explaining why better communication is needed to improve workplace health and safety in small business.



Small Enterprise Association of Australia and New Zealand researcher Sujana Adapa, James Pearson, Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman Kate Carnell AO and Jennifer Low at the launch of Enabling Safe and Healthy Workplaces for Small Business report and Part and Parcel campaign

Biz Better Together

Manager: Sarah McGregor

"Why do we have to empower our people at work now? Because we took it all away. One of the ways to catapult us into the future is to stop telling the lies of the past"

Netflix Chief Talent Officer for 12 years and Author of Powerful: Building a Culture of Freedom and Responsibility



Netflix's former Chief talent officer Patty McCord, speaking at NextGen in Business

Six months of work from the Biz Better Together team saw the light of day at the end of May with the **NextGen in Business** event series coming to life. The three-day event series saw close to **800 delegates** attend events in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne to learn from global workplace experts about the changing workplace landscape.

Australian Chamber members had a strong presence in each location and heard from the likes of Silicon Valley's HR legend **Patty McCord**, business transformation guru **Tom Goodwin** from Zenith Media USA, plus local experts **Dominic Price** Atlassian's Work Futurist and HubSpot Australia's Culture Manager **Claudia Shepherd**. Brands such as Workplace by Facebook, Australia Post, Canva, Envato and ANZ participated in the panel discussions.

Content from our speakers and from the events is available on the Biz Better Together Facebook page.

NextGen in Business was the final activity for the **Productivity Education Training (PET) Fund**, a six year project funded by the Department of Jobs and Small Business that has engaged over **37,000 people to improve productivity in business**. The Australian Chamber will continue with the Biz Better Together legacies into the future.

Media and Campaigns

Director: Duncan Bremner **Chair:** Terry Wetherall

The Australian Chamber garnered **extensive media attention** for our Federal Budget commentary. A full page profile of Australian Chamber CEO James Pearson, coupled with a Federal Budget statement was featured in Victoria's Herald Sun, while further Australian Chamber commentary was published across Fairfax, News Corp and independent outlets both online and in print. James also **debated the ACTU** on ABC radio and left wing think-tank, the Australia Institute, on ABC's National Wrap post-budget.



Australian Chamber CEO James Pearson's full page profile and Federal Budget statement in Victoria's Herald Sun, Thursday 10th May, 2018

We **responded strongly** to the Fair Work Commission's decision to lift minimum and award wages by 3.5% in early June. The Australian Chamber was the **lead employer voice** across radio, TV, print and social media. Our messages about the effects the increase will have on small businesses and the unemployed and underemployed received **national coverage** and were repeated widely across Fairfax and News Ltd outlets. Our commentary also received an overwhelming response on social media - **the largest social media response recorded by the Australian Chamber to date**.

We continue to **challenge the false claims** and misleading information in the ACTU's 'Change the Rules' campaign. Over the course of the quarter we called out the ACTU's attempts to scapegoat temporary migrants, to abolish the Australian Building and Construction Commission, its calls for unaffordable wage increases and attacks on so-called "insecure work."

The Australian Chamber featured in **311 media items**, stretching across print, online and broadcast media, reaching a **total audience of over 19 million**. We issued **35 media releases**.

Our presence across social media platforms continues to grow. This is reflected in the considerable **increase in engagement, new followers** and reach achieved across Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.



This is a major hit for small business, for those who are unemployed

Jenny Lambert addressing the press following the Fair Work Commission's decision to lift the award and minimum wage rates

Business Leaders Council Events

Director: Paul Nicolaou

April 5 Networking lunch and TAFE skills announcement with the Hon John Barilaro MP, Deputy Premier of NSW, Minister for Regional NSW, Minister for Small Business and Skills hosted by the Commonwealth Bank in Sydney



Jenny Lambert, Australian Chamber, Megan Aitken, TAFE NSW Digital, Deputy Premier and Stephen Cartwright, NSW Business Chamber

April 16 Welcome Reception for the Consul General of Greece in Sydney, Christos Karras and the Trade Commissioner of Greece in Australia, Katia Gkikiza hosted by Clayton Utz in Sydney



Christos Karras, John Mangos and Katia Gkikiza

April 18 Reception with the Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP, Shadow Assistant Minister for Treasury, Shadow Assistant Minister for an Australian Head of State hosted by Hall & Wilcox in Sydney



The Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP, Shadow Assistant Minister for Treasury

April 23 Morning tea and roundtable with the Hon Alex Hawke MP, Assistant Minister for Home Affairs in Sydney



Rebecca Lacey, Pfizer, the Hon Alex Hawke MP and Josh Bihary, Pfizer

April 30 Australian Chamber Tourism Lunch with Geoff Culbert, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Airport hosted by City Tattersalls Club in Sydney



John Hart, Executive Chair, Australian Chamber –Tourism, John O'Sullivan, Tourism Australia, Lyn Lewis-Smith, Business Events Sydney and Geoff Culbert, Sydney Airport

May 11 Federal Budget Briefing Luncheon with the Hon David Coleman MP, Assistant Minister for Finance hosted by MinterEllison in Sydney



Chris Richardson, Deloitte Access Economics, Nicole Green, MinterEllison and the Hon David Coleman MP

May 15 Major Luncheon with the Hon Michael McCormack MP, Deputy Prime Minister, held at the Hyatt Regency Sydney sponsored by Telstra



James Pearson, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Michelle Landry MP, Chief Nationals Whip, the Hon Michael McCormack MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Kieran Gilbert, Sky News

May 17 Federal Budget Reply Reception with Dr Jim Chalmers MP, Shadow Minister for Finance hosted by Corrs Chambers Westgarth in Sydney



Elizabeth McIntyre, Think Brick Australia, Dr Jim Chalmers MP and Robert Regan, Corrs Chambers Westgarth

May 25 Breakfast with the Hon Christian Porter MP, Attorney-General hosted by Clayton Utz in Sydney



Sally Loane, Financial Services Council and the Hon Christian Porter MP, Attorney General

June 12 Reception with Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations hosted by Clayton Utz in Sydney



Amanda Mansini, Australian Mines and Metals Association and the Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations

June 13 Reception with Senator Tim Storer, Independent Senator for South Australia hosted by KPMG in Sydney



Senator Tim Storer, Independent Senator for South Australia

June 14 Reception and Book Launch, Why Australia Slept by the Hon Dr Peter Hendy hosted by Lander & Rogers in Melbourne



Mark Stone AM, Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Jeremy Johnson, Australian Chamber, Professor Judith Sloan, the Hon Dr Peter Hendy and the Hon Peter Costello AC

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. The Australian Chamber membership list can be viewed online at www.australianchamber.com.au/membership/current-members/

OUR MEMBERS



CHAMBER



Chamber of Commerce
NORTHERN TERRITORY

CCIQ Powering business potential



TCCI Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION



AUSTRALIAN Gift & Homewares ASSOCIATION

