



Australian
Chamber of Commerce
and Industry

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS

July - September 2019





About the Australian Chamber

The Australian Chamber is Australia's largest and most representative business network. Our vision is to make Australia the best place in the world to do business – so that Australians have the jobs, living standards and opportunities to which they aspire. Our purpose is to mobilise the ideas, influence and passion of people in business to achieve policy outcomes in the national and international interest. Our membership includes all state and territory chambers of commerce and over 70 industry associations. Together we represent hundreds of thousands of businesses in every state and territory and across all industries. Ranging from small and medium enterprises to the largest companies, our network employs millions of people. We focus on issues that impact on business, including economic reform, industry policy, energy, trade and investment, workplace relations, work health and safety, and employment, migration, education and training. We give Australian businesses a platform to advocate for free trade and open markets and influence policy decisions affecting business in national and global forums.

Working for **business.**
Working for **Australia.**

CEO REPORT

ACCI's engagement with the Federal Government has gone from strength to strength this quarter, with our priority policy areas at the forefront of the Coalition's agenda. We are also encouraging the Opposition, as it reviews its policies, to re-engage with people in business.

Since July we have worked closely with politicians and members to assist in the passage of the Ensuring Integrity Bill and the Workers Benefits Bill. This includes providing information sessions for new members of parliament, lobbying cross-benchers, putting our case in the media and talks with Minister for Industrial Relations, Attorney-General Christian Porter and his team.

We have a seat at the table, literally, on initiatives to reduce red tape. Our expertise has been recognised, with our Director of Trade Bryan Clark seconded to Assistant Minister Ben Morton's deregulation taskforce. His insights have proven invaluable and his secondment has been extended.

We have championed a more unified approach to boosting skills and vocational education and training, lobbying the Coalition of Australian Governments to develop a taskforce and strategy to address these critical areas. Our op-eds and media releases and close contact with Skills Minister Michaelia Cash and her team are bearing fruit for employers.

We are highlighting the importance of trade diversification amidst tensions between the United States and China. The developing nations around the Indian Ocean Rim are ripe with opportunities for Australia's importers and exporters. We lobbied for passage of the Closer Economic Partnership deal with Indonesia and Hong Kong Free Trade Agreement; and fought the union campaign to block them.

We have begun the next phase of our 'Small Business is a Big Deal' campaign, which transforms it from an election driver to an ongoing campaign which will continue to elevate small business. Over the coming months you will see more new content and outreach, particularly in the critical area of skills. We are highlighting the need for policy and practical support for people in business in regional communities impacted by the drought.

And finally this quarter we brought senior politicians together with business leaders and members at our annual Business Leaders' Summit. The debate was robust and centred on how to achieve stronger outcomes for Australian businesses, particularly smaller businesses which make up the bulk of Australian employers.

Chief Executive Officer:
James Pearson



EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING



Director:
Jenny Lambert

The focus this quarter was squarely on the **Vocational Education and Training (VET)** sector reform agenda. Leveraging the key message from the Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, **Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash**, that industry would be at the heart of the VET system; the Australian Chamber engaged with the Minister and the Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business (DESSFB) on reform initiatives. Minister Cash established a VET Stakeholder Committee to inform the reform process. We are represented by Jenny Lambert.

We made a formal submission to the review of the Australian **Apprenticeships National Skills Needs List** and provided early input into the Industry Training Hubs and Skills Organisations Pilots.

We lobbied the Minister and DESSFB on the **Employment Services Reform agenda** and are represented on the **New Employment Services Trial Reference Group** by Jenny Lambert. We made submissions to the Inquiry into Jobs for the Future in Regional Areas and are providing input to **Youth Jobs PaTH** employer-led pilots.

We continued advocacy to improve access to the skilled migration program for employers with the Minister for Immigration, the **Hon David Coleman MP** and the Department of Home Affairs, with a focus on practical steps.

Regional migration has been a specific focus of the Morrison government, and we made submissions to the Inquiry into the **New Skilled Regional Visas Bill 2019** and the Inquiry into Migration in Regional Australia. We met with DESSFB on the Review of the Skilled Migration Occupations Lists, which underpin Australia's skilled migration program and are actively working with members to provide input into the latest review. We continue our advocacy for a major review of the **Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO)** and met with the Assistant Treasurer, the **Hon Michael Sukkar MP** to maintain momentum.

Jenny continued her engagement on the Disability Employment Services Advisory Group, Industry Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment and the Collaborative Partnership on Mature Age Employment.



ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRY POLICY AND SUSTAINABILITY



Chief Economist:
Ross Lambie

A flurry of Reviews and Parliamentary inquiries were initiated following the election with the Australian Chamber being active in representing member's views through direct engagement with the Government and written submissions. These reviews and inquiries include: the Review of the Australian Domestic Gas Security Mechanism; Climate Change Authority's advice to the Minister on meeting the Paris Agreement commitments; Review of the Illegal Phoenixing Bill; Senate Inquiry into the Intellectual Property Laws Amendments; Currency (Restrictions on the Use of Cash) Bill and Tax Law Amendments. We are coordinating a working group on the abolition of the Point of Sale credit exemption; we continue to engage with **key Ministers, the Shadow Ministry and bureaucrats** in support of our key policy priorities and submissions; and have been active in representing the industry on a number of Government working groups and committees.

James Pearson was invited to join the **Manufacturing Roundtable** to shape the Government's industrial strategy and Daniel Popovski took on the **ATO Single Touch Payroll Committee and the Standard's Australia Artificial Intelligence Committee**.

At the end of September, we welcomed **Ross Lambie** to the role of Chief Economist. This builds the strength of our Economics and Industry Policy team and enhances the Australian Chamber's capability as a thought leader on economic policy going forward.



Our Chief Economist, Ross Lambie, with David Koch at the ACCI 2019 Business Leaders Summit Opening Cocktails

TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS | ICC AUSTRALIA



Director:
Bryan Clark

In September, **ACCI's trade specialist, Bryan Clark** was seconded to the **Government's Deregulation Taskforce** to help identify opportunities to reduce red tape for Australian food exporters. In Bryan's absence, Associate Director of ICC Australia, Andrew Willcocks has stepped into the role of Acting Director.

ICC Australia proudly launched our **Canberra City Chapter** with the inaugural event, hosted by MinterEllison, and opened by ICC Australia Chair Nola Watson, exploring political and legal issues surrounding the **Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB)**.

ICC Australia made a submission to the **Joint Standing Committee on Trade and Investment Growth (JSCTIG)**, advising the Australian Government on how to support Australia's exports and attract investments. Andrew Willcocks gave evidence to the Committee on behalf of ACCI's members. Our recommendations included a reduction in regulatory barriers to trade and measures to improve the reach of initiatives that enhance business trading activities.

As a Minister-appointed member, we attended the **International Trade Remedies Forum (ITRF)** on the Gold Coast. We proposed ways to improve the economic impacts of the anti-dumping system; and put forward the concept of a

national interest test which is currently under consideration at the Ministerial level.

We also met with **Trade Minister Simon Birmingham** and his office staff, which resulted in a fruitful discussion on rationalising red tape for small business that sometimes emerges from the proliferation of Australia's widely used Free Trade Agreements.

We are working with the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) headquarters in Paris to deliver global policy products. With the release of the **Incoterms® 2020** rules by the ICC we partnered with **BDO** to host a series of workshops on the updated rules of trade. **ICC Incoterms®** expert Bob Ronai led these workshops, bringing with him 40 years of experience using Incoterms® rules and his expertise arising from his position with the Drafting Group for Incoterms® 2020.



TOURISM



Director:
Jenny Lambert

The quarter focused on progressing the **Beyond Tourism 2020** process. Australian Chamber-Tourism participated in the **Tourism 2030 Roundtable** organised by Austrade to gather industry feedback on the process. We met with the office of **Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment** to discuss the next steps regarding the process as well as other important issues such as Working Holidaymakers, the Tourist Refund Scheme and the Visitor Visa Benchmarking Review.

We hosted a breakfast in August with Minister Birmingham as a platform for the Minister's first major tourism policy statement after the May Federal Election. The Minister highlighted our international markets with a positive and realistic appraisal of our prospects, in a slower growth phase of development. The panel discussion included the Minister, the **Managing Director of Tourism Australia**, Phillipa Harrison and the **Managing Director of Australian Tourism**

Export Council, Peter Shelley around a number of important issues such as infrastructure investment needed for growth in regional tourism and the need to collaborate with industry.

John Hart is on the Board of Tourism Australia and continues to represent the Australian Chamber-Tourism on the Passenger Facilitation Committee, the Tourism Visa Advisory Group and the Tourism Access Working Group. John was also a member of the Beyond Tourism 2020 Strategy Steering Committee, which oversaw the development of medium and long-term targets for the growth potential of Australian tourism.



Breakfast with Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, Phillipa Harrison, Managing Director of Tourism Australia, Peter Shelley, Managing Director of Australian Tourism Export Council, John Hart, Executive Chair of Australian Chamber -Tourism

WORKPLACE RELATIONS



Director:
Scott Barklamb

A key focus of the ACCI workplace relations team this quarter has been the continued advocacy in relation to two key workplace relations bills before Parliament; the **Ensuring Integrity Bill** and the **Proper Use of Worker Benefits Bill**. ACCI has lodged substantial written submissions, met with cross-bench Senators, and appeared before the Senate Employment and Education Committee in support of both bills.

We consulted members and drafted submissions in response to the first two discussion papers released by the Attorney-General's department about selected aspects of the industrial relations system. Suggesting options to improve specific parts of our industrial relations system is set to be a significant area of ACCI effort during the next 12 months.

We have also engaged with the **Fair Work Commission**, writing an open letter to Justice Ross seeking the release of comprehensive data on how long it is taking to have agreements approved, to help address member concern about delayed agreement approvals and to inform further submissions to the government's review of parts of our industrial relations system.

In September the **Minister for Industrial Relations** announced his intention to seek leave to appeal the **decision of the Full Federal Court in Mondelez v AMWU** (relevant

to the interaction of personal leave with shift and part-time work). A disallowance motion seeking to overturn the **Casual Offset Loading Regulation** was also defeated, resulting in greater certainty in relation to casual entitlements. Both developments followed extensive advocacy by the Chamber and members.

ACCI's Director – Workplace Relations, Scott Barklamb was a key panellist at the University of Sydney Business School in its workshop on **“Wage Theft and Non-Compliance in the Australian Labour Market: What Should be Done?”** highlighting among other things the need to address the complexity of our employment regulations.



WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY & WORKERS' COMPENSATION



Director:
Jennifer Low

This quarter saw increased attention to chemical safety and a continuation of discussions around industrial manslaughter provisions and psychological regulations.

In July, ACCI attended the **Safe Work Australia Members meeting** in Sydney. The meeting drew significant attention from the media seeking to know the outcome of the decision on the **silica exposure standard**. Members of ACCI's Chemical Reference Group coordinated efforts to influence state WHS Ministers along with the federal Attorney-General's office to defer a decision on the silica standard pending further review and analysis, and we wrote to all state and federal Health Ministers on this.

The WHS&WC Committee rolled out a **business survey** on the proposed changes to the model Work Health and Safety laws. 207 businesses responded including 103 small businesses, providing valuable evidence for our submission to the Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS). The

Decision RIS for the model WHS laws expected in December will address the validity of a new industrial manslaughter offence along with other recommendations for change. ACCI is **engaging with the Federal Attorney-General's Department and Office** to discuss concerns and is working with Committee members to engage with state WHS Ministers in a coordinated advocacy plan.

On 30th September, Safe Work Australia launched the new **national RTW strategy 2020-2030**. We have been working collaboratively with other SWA members to develop this strategy over the last year and are pleased to see the increased attention and focus on employers and small businesses this Strategy provides.



SMALL BUSINESS IS A **BIG DEAL**
SAFETY IS A **BIG DEAL**
BE A SAFETY **CHAMPION**
#safetychampion

national safe work month
October

safeworkmonth.swa.gov.au

#safeworkmonth

Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

MEDIA



Senior Advisor - Media
Marie Hogg

July marked a new phase for our media and campaign effort, with Marie Hogg taking over the reins after running communications in recent successful state and federal election campaigns.

The Reserve Bank's decision to deliver multiple rate cuts this quarter has the conversation circling around economic policy. James Pearson began the quarter urging the Federal Government and Parliament to boost the economy by passing tax cuts, stepping up investment in infrastructure and making practical industrial relations reforms.

Recently he has been in print urging the Government to focus on the digital and circular economies to drive future growth, and appealed to lenders to make it easier for small businesses to access finance.

ACCI has maintained a **strong position in national economic commentary**, with James interviewed on **Sky News** pressing the big four banks to pass on the interest rate cuts in full.

In other areas, Australian Chamber's Jenny Lambert joined **Graham Wolfe from the Housing Industry Association** on **ABC's The Money** to discuss the critical importance and value of apprenticeships and traineeships, while our workplace relations director, Scott Barklamb, has had multiple successful interviews in print, online and on broadcast advocating for the **Ensuring Integrity Bill** and changes to the **Small Business Fair Dismissal Code**. James debated ACTU Assistant Secretary Liam O'Brien on IR reform on Sky News on **penalty rates, wages growth** and called on Parliament to back the Ensuring Integrity Bill.



Scott Barklamb on Sky News discussing IR Reforms

In the last quarter, ACCI has had six op-ed articles published in mainstream media, from **criticising union thuggery** to **promoting trade diversification**. Our views have been supported in editorials in **The Australian** and **Australian Financial Review**. For example, as the US-China trade tensions continue to dominate the headlines, we spoke on the need to diversify trade and the untapped **Indian Ocean Rim** opportunities in **The West Australian newspaper** – resonating with WA political and business aligned with the national interest to look west. Our op-ed was welcomed by both sides of federal politics in Canberra.

The **Business Leaders Summit** was a challenging and busy day in the media. In and amongst the stories reported as a result of Ben Morton's speech, we were able to cut through with some strong national reports on our objection to Labor's motion to disallow a government regulation designed to **protect small business from double-dipping by casual employees**. Following the speech, in which Ben announced Bryan Clark's secondment to the **government's taskforce on deregulation**, we made a broader announcement on this exciting development.

Economy vulnerable despite rate cuts: ACCI

By GRENDA KIRIPORAAI
CHIEF CORRESPONDENT
Follow @GrendaKiriporai

11:00 EST WED JULY 4, 2018
● COLUMNISTS



PHOTO: PHILIP LANE IN DENVER, PHOTO: JAMES ALAN

The country's largest business association, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, has warned the economy remains vulnerable to slowing global trade, lower

Article in The Australian Business Review with James urging Federal Government and Parliament to pass tax cuts, step up investment in infrastructure and make practical industrial relations reforms.



Tuesday, 16 July, Brisbane. Australian Chamber in conjunction with Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland (CCIQ) Luncheon with the Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, Treasurer of Australia, sponsored by Suncorp at the Hilton.

James Pearson, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Chamber, the Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, Treasurer & Renee Viellaris, Federal Political Editor, The Courier-Mail (Q&A Facilitator)



Tuesday, 6 August, Sydney. Australian Chamber – Tourism Breakfast with Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment at the City Tattersalls Club.

Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, Phillipa Harrison, Managing Director, Tourism Australia, Peter Shelley, Managing Director, ATEC and John Hart, Executive Chair, Australian Chamber – Tourism (Q&A Facilitator)



Thursday, 18 July, Brisbane. Energy Forum with John Pierce AO, Chairman, Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) at MinterEllison.

Stephanie Bird, Chief Operating Officer, Certica, John Pierce AO, Rebecca Kenny, Chief Executive Officer, Certica



Monday, 12 August, Melbourne. Melbourne Drinks Reception with Rod Sims, Chair, ACCC at PwC.

Karen Gomez, Chief Executive Officer, Paintback with Rod Sims



Friday, 26 July, Sydney. Australian Chamber in conjunction with NSW Business Chamber Breakfast with the Hon Michael McCormack MP, Deputy Prime Minister of Australia, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development at the Hilton, Sydney



Thursday, 22 August, Brisbane. Australian Chamber in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ) Breakfast with the Hon Michael McCormack MP, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development, sponsored by Suncorp at The Grove.

Neil Glentworth, Founder and Chair, GWI (Q&A Facilitator), Stephen Tait, Chief Executive Officer, CCIQ, Elizabeth McIntyre, Group CEO, Think Brick Australia & the Hon Michael McCormack MP



Wednesday, 28 August, Sydney. Australian Chamber Breakfast In Conversation with Alan Kohler AM, Financial Expert, to mark the release of his book "It's Your Money" at Lander & Rogers

Alan Kohler AM & Nicki Hutley, Partner, Deloitte Access Economics



2019 Business Leaders Summit Panel discussion "Strengthening Skills: Building Australia's skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow" with Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash.

Thursday, 5 September, Sydney. Health Forum and Morning Tea with Dr Zoran Bolevich, Chief Executive and Chief Information Officer, eHealth NSW at PwC.

Dr Zoran Bolevich & Ruchi Kanajio, Policy Manager, Medical Technology Association of Australia



25 September, Sydney. Roundtable Breakfast with the Hon John Barilaro MP, Deputy Premier of NSW @ MinterEllison

Cindy Carpenter, Chair, Bread & Butter Project & the Hon John Barilaro MP



11 & 12 September, Canberra. 2019 Business Leaders Summit Opening Cocktails and Business Leaders Summit.

2019 Business Leaders Summit Opening Cocktails addressed by Melanie Silva, Managing Director of Google Australia and New Zealand.

Activities & Achievements

2019 Business Leaders Summit & Cocktail Reception





Australian
Chamber of Commerce
and Industry

AUSTRALIA'S BUSINESS VOICE

To make Australia the best place in the world to do business

ECONOMIC REFORM

- Investment, R&D and tax incentives to support business growth
- Reduction in red tape and compliance costs
- Competitive energy markets, private sector investment and innovation to address the energy trilemma
- Elimination of barriers to SMEs benefiting from the digital economy.
- Business-led solutions to drive productivity and sustainable growth in the circular economy.
- A national approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions that is internationally equitable and does not compromise Australia's international competitiveness.
- Lending regulations and practices that improve small business access to finance.
- Support for SME participation in government procurement and independent decision making for government infrastructure spending

TRADE

- Promotion of free trade to support import and export opportunities and to harness the power of competitive forces.
- Reduction in tariffs and other barriers to trade and investment
- Support for the World Trade Organisation to progress trade
- A new Free Trade Area in the Indian Ocean Rim
- Incentive to modernise and digitise trade
- Increased support for exporting businesses
- An Australian Centre for International Trade to promote the benefits of trade



WORKPLACE RELATIONS

- A simpler workplace relations system that is more practical and understandable and better supports job creation, harmonious workplaces and compliance with the law
- Updated enterprise bargaining rules so employers and employees can negotiate arrangements that suit both, and help make Australia more productive & competitive
- Unfair dismissal laws that deliver on community expectations and provide a fair go for everyone, giving business the confidence to employ more Australians
- Reform of the Small Business Unfair Dismissal Code to deliver genuine balance and common sense
- Support for employers, employees, unions and employer organisations complying with our workplace laws

SKILLS

- Increased funding for vocational education and training to meet critical skills needs
- Stronger partnerships between government, education providers and industry to better assist people moving from education to work
- Improved collaboration between the Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments to deliver more effective & efficient employment & training programs
- A migration program that improves employer access to skills and labour in the short term when it can't be sourced locally
- Restoration of the permanent migration cap to 190,000 with greater access to employer-sponsored migration

SMALL BUSINESS IS A BIG DEAL

Most Australian businesses are small businesses.

Small business is a big deal for millions of Australian workers and their families.

 Find us on Facebook @SmallBizABigDeal

