



Australian  
Chamber of Commerce  
and Industry

# TRANSCRIPT

**Event:** Andrew McKellar interview with Charles Croucher and Belinda Russell, The Today Show.

**Speakers:** Andrew McKellar, chief executive Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Charles Croucher and Belinda Russell, co-hosts The Today Show.

**Date:** 15 April 2022.

**Topics:** Supporting small business this Easter, effect of pandemic on small business, Easter travel, cost of living pressures, household savings.

## E&OE

**Charles Croucher, co-host The Today Show:** It's been a tough couple of years for small businesses across the country, but let's hope this Easter long weekend will deliver a much needed boost.

**Belinda Russell, co-host The Today Show:** Yeah, we need it. For more, we are joined by Andrew McKellar from the Australian Chamber of Commerce in Canberra. Good morning, Andrew. This is desperately needed. It's the first holiday with no restrictions, no lockdowns. Good news.

**Andrew McKellar, chief executive Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry:** Good morning, Belinda. Good morning, Charles. Indeed, I'm here at Eighty/Twenty Cafe in Braddon in Canberra. They're up bright and early working hard already. There's a stream of customers coming in, but look, the key message we've got this Easter is really, let's get out and support small business. Let's do something for the economy, for jobs. As you say, it's been a tough couple of years. Many businesses have been struggling, but now's the chance, for the first time in two years, really, we don't have any significant restrictions in place. The borders are open. Many of the shops are going to be open. Let's get out there and support the economy, and let's make it a great Easter.

**Charles:** Andrew, I was out at the airport yesterday. A lot of the travellers, in fact, probably most of the travellers we spoke to were going to Queensland. \$2 billion boost we are hearing up there, but where else will benefit?

**Andrew:** We're expecting somewhere in the era of about \$9 billion to be spent over the Easter holiday period. Really, I think people can get out, spend some money, get to a restaurant or cafe, spend some money on some food, retail, take a holiday, obviously buy some chocolate, but I think really, it's a chance to support our great small business sector. Many people who are running local family businesses, they've been doing it tough for two years, but now is the chance to really get out there, and I think get the economy going again. Let's help those that have suffered through the pandemic, many areas that have had floods, bushfires before that, so I look I think it's a chance to really get the economy moving.

**Belinda:** It's the boost that they certainly need. Is this a sign of things to come, life after COVID, finally getting back to normal?

**Andrew:** We certainly hope so. We certainly hope that's the end of restrictions for the time being. We know that people have taken the time. They've been careful during the pandemic. We've seen household savings built up. There's a bit of a buffer there. I think there's the chance to enjoy these holidays. While you're doing that, take the time to treat yourself, support your local community, support the people who are running businesses, and the people that have got jobs in those small businesses.

**Charles:** It's interesting you mentioned that households have saved, because there is also this cost of living that is rising. How concerned are small businesses about how that's going to impact people's ability to spend, and their willingness to spend?

**Andrew:** Well, I think it's a confidence thing. Yes, there has been pressure on prices. We've seen some measures put in place to ease some of that pressure over the next short while, but I think we can be confident as well. We know people have been careful during the past a couple of years. There is a bit of a buffer there. There's about \$250 billion in household savings that people have put away. I think this is the thing. If we get out there, if we're confident about the economy, then really it will support people who are in jobs and in turn, then they can also have the confidence to get out and spend. That's how the economy works. I think, really, let's do the right thing for Australia. Let's do the right thing for local communities, and for those people who are really giving it a go.

**Charles:** Yeah, well, Andrew, we can hear the coffee machine working behind you. It's good coffee there at Eighty/Twenty, as well, from a couple of experiences. You go and enjoy one, and fingers crossed for all those small businesses. This is the weekend they've been waiting for.

**Andrew:** Absolutely.

**Belinda:** Yeah. Thanks Andrew. Yeah. Get out there and support whoever you can.

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