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INDUSTRY ADVOCATE VITAL TO ACT ECONOMY

Canberra Business Chamber has welcomed today's appointment of Kate Lundy as the Local Industry Advocate – a position that will help the ACT diversify its economy.

“The last few years have highlighted the need for the ACT to develop its own economy and be less reliant on employment and spending by the Commonwealth,” Canberra Business Chamber CEO, Robyn Hendry said. “This message was further driven home this week with the release of the mid-year economic and fiscal outlook.”

The mid-year economic and fiscal outlook unveiled on Tuesday, revealed another \$192 million will be cut from Australian Public Service spending. As the largest centre of Commonwealth Government departments, the ACT is likely to feel the impact of these reductions more than other jurisdictions.

“In addition, Canberra's cultural institutions, such as the National Gallery and National Museum, will have to implement a three per cent efficiency dividend as the Commonwealth strives to save \$52 million over four years,” Ms Hendry said.

“The Chamber has always argued the funding levels of our national institutions must be preserved to ensure the quality of visitor experiences and enable the institutions to continue to build their collections. These institutions and the associated tourism are important to the ACT economy.

“However, the good news on the horizon is that the new Local Industry Advocate will begin work to support ACT business in January 2016 and that the position is being filled by the very experienced and respected Kate Lundy.

“Ms Lundy will work with local industry to ensure businesses of all sizes here in the ACT can compete for government work. Local businesses are more than capable of doing jobs of all types needed by government, but we need to ensure the procurement process doesn't lock them out. The Advocate will help create opportunities and jobs and grow and diversify our economy.”

The Local Industry Advocate will complement the Light Rail Business Link Program. This partnership between the Chamber and ACT Government is designed to ensure local businesses can maximise opportunities created by the Capital Metro project. It will keep investment in the ACT and enhance local business capacity and skills.

“While we would have loved to have seen the Industry Advocate appointed and operating sooner, closer to when this initiative was first announced,” Ms Hendry said, “The Chamber looks forward to working with Kate Lundy as she steps into this new role.”

Media Contact: Robyn Hendry, CEO Canberra Business Chamber 0418 462 151