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PROCUREMENT PROCESS NEEDS TO BE TRANSPARENT

Canberra Business Chamber is concerned by revelations today that input from UnionsACT is mandatory before the ACT Government awards any procurement contracts.

“Additional, unnecessary and undisclosed hurdles in the ACT Government procurement process, such as review by a non-government entity, seem to add little to the process, while potentially compromising it,” Canberra Business Chamber CEO, Robyn Hendry said.

Canberra Business Chamber believes the procurement process has sufficient checks and balances to enable the ACT Government to assess bidders.

“Certainly we do not oppose bidders being asked to show they are running viable businesses that meet all legislative requirements, including workplace health and safety and industrial relations responsibilities,”

“We believed the procurement process already allowed for this and for ACT Government procurement staff to impartially and fairly assess bids. The MoU brings this into question.” Ms Hendry said.

Analysis of the MoU between the ACT Government and UnionsACT suggests they are both parties in the decision-making process and preference is given to union-friendly provisions.

“For example, the MoU seems to indicate successful tenderers will be obliged to provide access to union officials in excess of their statutory rights under the Fair Work Act 2009,” Ms Hendry explained.

“Of equal concern is the fact the role of UnionsACT has not been clearly disclosed to tenderers.

“This secretive deal allows unions to push up costs across the industry and may well result in the Government missing out on the best supplier,” Ms Hendry concluded.

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