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Cyber security the next frontier

The ACT is home to some of the most respected cyber security firms in the world, yet less than 30 per cent of local businesses are very confident their data is secure.

“Canberra Business Chamber has been concerned for some time that cyber security has not been prioritised across the whole supply chain,” Canberra Business Chamber CEO, Robyn Hendry said.

“No matter how well protected an individual organisation is, they are only as safe as their weakest link, which might be a contractor, a supplier, or a customer. All companies interact with others and for our computer-based records to be truly safe, every player must have strong cyber security.”

To assess the cyber-hygiene of Canberra’s business sector, the Chamber conducted a survey of local businesses and government agencies.

“We had organisations from a broad range of sectors and business sizes respond,” Canberra Business Chamber Innovation Taskforce Chair, Dr Lyndal Thorburn explained. “This was the ACT’s, and possibly Australia’s, first survey of business cyber-awareness.

“While the majority of businesses have taken positive steps to protect themselves, like installing firewalls, having PINs on company devices and updating software, the survey shows there is still some way to go.

“It reveals that only just over half of local businesses have a plan in place to respond to a cyber security incident, such as theft of computer equipment, and less than 50 per cent provide staff with distinct training on using mobile devices, email and the internet securely.

“Yet in the past two years, over a third of respondents were the victims of a privacy or cyber security attack.”

The goal of conducting the survey was to determine steps the Chamber may be able to take to enhance the cyber-hygiene of the Territory’s businesses.

“What participants told us would be most useful, is a self-assessment tool through which they can judge their own cyber security readiness,” Ms Hendry said. “We are also developing a list of trusted third party suppliers who business can turn to for expert advice.

“It is Stay Smart Online Week and it is timely for the business sector to proactively come together to protect against cybercrime.”

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