

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12.00am Tuesday 25th February 2020

Workforce plan and skills strategy – No.1 requirement for Canberra business

Canberra Business Chamber members have provided a clear picture of what they need from the ACT Government in a member wide survey. A workforce plan and skills strategy topped the list, along with a Minister for Business, investment in the CBD and local business precincts, business support services and a review of the controversial commercial rates regime.

The survey has highlighted key policy issues that respondents want their Chamber to focus on and will inform the Chamber's policy platform and their advocacy work leading into the October ACT election.

Business Chamber interim CEO Graham Catt said, "the Chamber's role is to lead the discussion about issues that impact ACT business - now and into the future. This survey has given all our members the opportunity to contribute their views, and generally confirms what we've been hearing from businesses and community organisations across Canberra".

The survey found that priorities for Chamber members include:

- Skills and workforce are the number one concern for Canberra businesses, who want the ACT Government to work with them to develop a long-term skills strategy.
- 60% of respondents highlighted the need for investment in both the CBD and local business precincts.
- There is significant support (58% of respondents) for the Chamber's call for a Minister for Business and consolidation of the 37 portfolios ACT businesses currently engage with.

"The private sector employs 64% of Canberra's workforce, so business is a big deal for the ACT", said Mr. Catt. "Our members want to keep driving the economic prosperity and growth of the Territory. They want the skills needed to fill jobs now and, in the future, incentives to keep investment coming to the ACT, and a government that's easy to do business with".

Support services for small businesses are also a priority for members. "The ACT is currently the only jurisdiction not funding a dedicated small business support and advice service", Mr. Catt said. "Businesses are still feeling the impact of smoke haze, hail damage and the Corona Virus, and resources to help them plan ahead and rebuild are critical.

"Canberra Business Chamber is a member-based organisation, and we thank our members for providing such a clear picture of their priorities in an election year."

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