



Canberra
Business Chamber

2022-2023

Annual Report



Contents

Chairman's Report	3
Chief Executive's Report	6
The Chamber at a Glance	7
Program Delivery	8
Our Key Member Categories	9
Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry	12
Board & Governance	12
Our History	13
Canberra Business Chamber Chairs and CEOs	14
Canberra Business Chamber Board Members	14
Financial Statements	15

Published by Canberra Business Chamber Ltd
October 2023
ISSN: 2652-3353

Level 9, 12 Moore Street
Canberra ACT 2602

ABN: 33 600 390 538
ACN: 600 390 538
W: www.canberrabusiness.com
P: 02 6247 4199
E: info@canberrabusiness.com

Front cover image: VisitCanberra

Chairman's Report

CHANGES, HEADWINDS, AND HARD WORK

From the Chairman

2022/2023 was a year of change at the Canberra Business Chamber.

At the senior leadership level, Chief Executive Graham Catt stepped down in April 2023 to pursue a new role, having guided the Chamber through COVID-19 and its aftermath. While the Board was sorry to lose Graham, we were delighted to appoint Greg Harford, an experienced CEO in the associations space, with strong advocacy and communications experience, to the role. Greg started his role at the end of July 2023, just after the end of the reporting period. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Graham for his contribution to the Chamber, and also Kate Holland, our Chief Operating Officer, for her leadership of the team during the transition of CEOs.

Headwinds and financial performance

The fallout from the COVID-19 period meant that there were a number of headwinds facing our organisation during the year. We finished the year to 30 June 2023 with a loss of \$37k compared to a loss of \$152k to 30 June 2022. This small loss mainly reflected reduced revenues from memberships, workplace relations services and the timing of some program expenditure. Given the pressures on the economy, and on membership organisations generally, this result is a positive one. However, I expect the pressures on our organisation to continue through the 2023-24 financial year.

Our work

The Canberra Business Chamber is a not-for-profit membership organisation, and we are reliant on the support of our members to undertake our work. During the reporting year, the Chamber undertook a wide range of activities to promote and advocate on behalf of the Canberra business community.

Along with the skills and workforce crisis, increasing costs, rising interest rates, supply chain disruptions and global tensions have been the dominant features in the first part of the year. These "economic headwinds" set the scene for the short to medium term.

The 2022-23 ACT Budget seemed, from a macro perspective, to address some of the challenges, particularly skills shortages and support for emerging industries, but did not immediately address any of the pain points SMEs were dealing with.

Media, government, and the community recognised that skills and workforce shortages are a reality, as they impact education, health, and other areas of government services as well as private businesses. The National Jobs and Skills Summit skills summit held in Canberra in September kept media and public interest on the issue.

On a more positive note, the year brought the removal of many more restrictions and quarantine requirements that were having a significant impact on absenteeism, along with more borders opening internationally and travel patterns returning to pre-pandemic levels.

The change of Federal Government has changed the political dynamic in Canberra. The ACT now has a cabinet minister, a minister and two government MPs (1 with increasing committee responsibilities including review of the NCA) and an independent senator with a critical vote on the cross bench. These changes have delivered a corresponding lift in the rhetoric about the importance of the national capital.

+ IR Bill: Advocacy and Stakeholder Facilitation

By December, the dominant issue for business nationally was the Albanese Government's IR reform bill. Along with the other state and territory chambers, we expressed concern at the hastiness of the Federal Government to pass the proposed IR legislation which would force smaller businesses into complex, inflexible and unsuitable agreements.

In a snap [business survey](#), 85% of local businesses told us that they were worried about the legislation while 75% had either limited or no understanding of the IR Bill. A staggering 64% of businesses said that they would have no choice but to employ fewer staff and 8% said that they would be forced to close their business altogether.

In our advocacy and facilitation efforts, we worked closely with Senator David Pocock to ask for removal of the contentious parts of the Bill for further consideration.

+ Extension of the Portable Long Service Leave

On the local front, we opposed changes regarding the expansion of the ACT Portable Long Service Leave scheme. Amidst the backdrop of skills shortages impacting small businesses, we urged the ACT Government not to expand the Scheme for specific sectors. Submissions received from many small businesses and industry representatives all indicated that the expansion would add cost and complexity to local businesses that are already struggling to find staff.

Any expansion of the portable long service leave scheme must be based on a proper analysis of the costs, risks and benefits for workers, businesses, and the economy. It should follow a proper consultation process with the industry and employees to determine where expansion would be appropriate, and must deliver positive outcomes.

+ Upgrade ageing infrastructure

The vision for a modern and state-of-the-art stadium and Convention Centre in our city has been an area of consistent focus. In December 2022, we supported a new proposal for the renewal of critical Infrastructure for the Sporting, Entertainment, Convention and Visitors markets in the National Capital.

The proposal titled *“Realising the National Capital Plan; Creating Intergenerational Infrastructure for the National Capital Region”* was released to the ACT Chief Minister and the Prime Minister. It envisions a City Precinct, replacing the ageing and increasingly dilapidated stadium and Convention Centre on a site on and around the Civic Pool on Constitution Avenue. This position is supported by over 20 Organisations from sporting, business and Union backgrounds. The chosen location is consistent with the vision of Walter Burley Griffin.

There is no doubt that the existing stadium facilities have operated beyond their useful life and are a barrier to attracting cultural events and sporting activities to the National Capital. The National Convention Centre is the only centre in the country that hasn’t expanded its footprint since it was built, and that results in a lack of capacity and an inability to accommodate important national and global events.

+ Policy Taskforce - Vision for Canberra

Connected to this issue, we have sought to facilitate a discussion about the vision and ambition for the nation’s capital. We brought together a group of business leaders, along with our policy taskforce, for a facilitated discussion of the “Vision for Canberra.”

An extended taskforce meeting, CBC Forum - Vision for Canberra, took place in November 2022.

The focus was on identifying the Vision for Canberra - what makes an attractive nation’s capital, fit for the global challenges ahead. In a facilitated workshop-style format, the group discussed the interdependence between the government and the private sector, and the role of each; the global megatrends; the risks and opportunities for Canberra; trends in the business environment and our economic landscape; the post-pandemic business paradigm; and the adoption of digital technologies.

The result was a one-sentence vision for the national capital: ***Canberra, the city to realise yours (and the nation’s) ambitions.***

Following the second “extended taskforce” meeting in February, a scorecard was developed to identify the top priorities and to engage and present the work done so far to the ACT Senators and MPs.

The Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories, chaired by Alicia Payne MP, conducted an inquiry into *fostering and promoting the significance of Australia’s National Capital*.

The Chamber’s submission was provided to the Committee in May 2023. It presented 14 recommendations, drawing from the work of the CBC Policy Task Force on a Vision for Canberra. These action items were grouped around four priority areas – Infrastructure, Innovation, Growth and Sustainability, and the submission generated significant media interest.

Kindred organisations

Meetings of the CEOs of our Kindred Members were held throughout the year. These have continued to provide an effective forum for local association leaders to meet and exchange ideas on areas of common interest. A central focus of the meeting in August 2022 was to provide updates on the ACT government targets and priorities in their Net Zero Emissions strategy; what it means for business in the ACT; and what programs and resources are available to assist with the transition. The consequent meetings focused on the ACT budget submissions from Kindred Members and also included a session with Tara Cheyne, MLA, Minister for Business and Better Regulation.

Business Chamber urges ACT Budget support for local businesses

In March 2023, we called on the ACT Government to ensure that the budget prioritises initiatives for the now almost 34,000 local businesses who are managing spiralling costs, falling consumer confidence, workforce shortages, and ongoing supply chain pressures.

Our pre-budget submission listed 14 actions designed to deliver tangible benefits for the ACT economy, local businesses and not-for-profits. Given the fiscal challenges facing governments, 10 of those 14 actions require minimal or no investment.

We also renewed calls for the ACT Government to invest in major projects including a new convention centre, stadium, and affordable housing. These projects would provide jobs and would continue to deliver significant economic benefits to the ACT for many years to come.

Our advocacy activities included:

- + Regular meetings with ACT Ministers and the Chief Minister.
- + Meetings with other parliamentarians, including government backbenchers, Opposition members, and federal Members of Parliament from all sides of politics.
- + Regular meetings with government officials and regulators.
- + Hosting political roundtables for members with ACT Ministers and federal parliamentarians.
- + Issuing 22 media releases on a variety of issues, including ACT Budget, the ACT government takeover of Calvary Hospital, Portable Long Service Leave, wages increase in the private sector, the announcement of Greg Harford as new CEO, ACT Budget Lunch 2023, ACT Export Awards 2022 and the RBA rate increases.

External representation

The Chamber continues to have representatives on several external consultative and advisory committees. This is an important tool in ensuring the voice of the business community is provided to government and other bodies.

In closing, I would like to express the Board's thanks to each and every member for their ongoing support. Being a membership organisation, our collective strength hinges on the commitment of our members, and we could do not do it without your support.

Our thanks

The Chamber is supported by a small team of eight staff, and by the enormous goodwill of members and board of directors. We are fortunate to have such a depth of talent and experience available in a small organisation, and as a result the Chamber is greater than the sum of its parts and always manages to punch above its weight. We take this opportunity to thank each and every member of the staff team and the board, for bringing their passion and ongoing commitment and support to the Chamber in another very challenging environment. We thank every member for their support. As a membership organisation we are only as strong as our members, and we have been fortunate and proud to see that strength grow over the past twelve months. We are excited about the challenges and opportunities of the year ahead as together we continue to help Canberra through businesses start, grow and transform.



Archie Tsirimokos
Chair



Chief Executive's Report

LOOKING AHEAD

From the Chief Executive

I am very excited to have started my new role as Chief Executive of the Canberra Business Chamber in late July 2023.

I am pleased to be here in Canberra, enjoying everything that our city has to offer; and I have spent the last several weeks meeting members, officials, and relevant political stakeholders.

There are consistent themes coming through in the conversations that I've been having, and it's clear to me that the Canberra Business Chamber has an important role to play in helping our business sector, and our city, move forward. As the peak body for all business here in the Nation's capital, the Chamber is the voice of business; and helps connect businesspeople, not only with each other, but also with the politicians who, ultimately, determine our regulatory framework.

There is a huge opportunity for the Chamber to push hard to make the ACT the best place in Australia to do business, but in order to achieve that mission, we need the ongoing support of the business community. I'd like to thank everyone who is a member and, if you're not, I would like to extend to you an invitation to join. Only with your continued support can we make a difference.

I hope to see you at one of our upcoming events.

Greg Harford

Chief Executive (from 24 July 2023)

2022/2023

THE CHAMBER AT A GLANCE

11,000+

people engaged
in Chamber
activities

16,500

digital media
followers

3rd

most followed
LinkedIn page
in Canberra

2560+

attendees at
our events

47,000

website
views

150+

media
appearances

Program Delivery

During the 2022-23 financial year, the Chamber delivered two programs on behalf of the ACT and Federal government - International Business Engagement Program and the Building Employer Confidence Program. These programs exemplify our commitment to fostering a resilient and thriving business community while addressing critical facets of growth and development.

+ International Business Engagement Program:

Our International Business Engagement Program successfully empowers local businesses to explore new horizons and expand beyond domestic markets. By providing insights into global market trends, facilitating networking opportunities, and offering support in navigating export complexities, this program enables businesses to tap into international markets with confidence.

Over the year, as part of the Program, we organised, co-hosted, facilitated or actively cross-promoted sixteen events (in-person and online) that were attended by 500+ people. Events were delivered in conjunction with partner organisations, universities, bilateral trade associations and Canberra-based exporting firms.

Building on the Chamber's strong relationship with the diplomatic missions in Canberra, the IBE Program enables further, more strategic, engagement focused on priority markets and key sectors. It sets up a framework for a coordinated approach that complements the work of other stakeholders, primarily the ACT government and its Office of International Engagement. The collaboration between the Chamber and the ACT Government demonstrates a shared dedication to enhancing the global competitiveness of our region's businesses.

+ Building Employer Confidence Program through Disability Employment:

The Building Employer Confidence in hiring People with Disability Program champions diversity and inclusivity within the business community and our wider community.

The objectives are to build connections and sustainable, trusted pathways between Canberra employers and job-ready employees who have disability and are eager to work. Many Canberra business are currently finding it difficult to attract and retain employees. The Chamber seeks to help these businesses plug their employee gaps by utilising the currently underutilised and untapped cohort of work-ready employees with disability. The Chamber is achieving this by providing a suite of resources on our web-page, by engaging with employers via events, workshops and webinars.



Our Key Member Categories

PRINCIPAL MEMBERS AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

Principal Members are the leaders of Canberra's business community and key players in shaping our policy and advocacy program. They are actively engaged with the Chamber, government and community, while driving discussions about the issues that impact businesses in the ACT now and into the future.

- + amplifyCBR
- + Beca
- + Canberra Airport
- + CanPrint Communications
- + Capital Link Services
- + CareSuper
- + Deloitte
- + Elite Event Technology
- + Employers Mutual Management
- + Encore Event Technologies
- + EY
- + Hyatt Hotel Canberra
- + KPMG
- + Lend Lease Building Group
- + Master Builders Association of the ACT
- + McDonald's ACT
- + PwC Australia
- + Telstra Corporation
- + The Village Building Co.
- + University of Canberra
- + University of New South Wales - Canberra
- + WV Technologies



KINDRED MEMBERS AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

Kindred Members are for-purpose organisations from across the Canberra region, including industry and professional associations, charities, and community groups. They are an important part of our policy work, and we facilitate their access to government and other key decision-makers. We consult with them on major policy issues, and regularly collaborate to address industry or sector concerns. This also adds to our individual and collective strength when advocating to the Territory and Commonwealth Governments.

- + Access Programs Australia
- + ACT Bar Association
- + ACT Law Society
- + ACT Playgroups Association
- + ACT Shelter
- + Anglican Diocesan Services
- + Australasian College of Road Safety
- + Australian Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- + Australian Hotels Association (AHA)
- + Australian Institute of Architects
- + Australian Institute of Company Directors
- + Australian Institute of Health & Safety
- + Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors - ACT
- + Australian Museums and Galleries Association
- + Australian Seed Federation
- + Bosom Buddies ACT
- + Canberra Glassworks
- + Canberra Highland Society and Burns Club
- + Canberra Hospital Foundation
- + Canberra Opera
- + Canberra Region Tourism Leaders Forum
- + Capital Region Community Services
- + Carers ACT
- + CBR Innovation Network
- + ClubsACT
- + Communities@Work
- + Complementary Medicines Australia
- + CPA Australia
- + David Maywald
- + Directions Health Services
- + Engineers Australia - Canberra Division
- + Enterprise Plus
- + Fearless Women
- + Fyshwick Business Association
- + Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia
- + Hands Across Canberra
- + Marymead Catholic Care Canberra & Goulburn
- + Master Builders Association of the ACT
- + Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT)
- + Motor Trades Association ACT
- + National Capital Attractions Association
- + National Youth Science Forum
- + Nexus Human Services
- + NSW/ACT Truffle Marketing Cooperative
- + Palliative Care ACT
- + Property Council of Australia (ACT Division)
- + Real Estate Institute of the ACT
- + Regional Development Australia (ACT)
- + Riding for the Disabled ACT
- + RSL Australia (ACT)
- + Scouts ACT
- + Self Plus Plus
- + Soldier On
- + St John Ambulance ACT
- + TAFE Directors Australia
- + The Mill House Ventures
- + The Personnel Group
- + The Pharmacy Guild of Australia ACT
- + Transitions and Careers ACT Education Directorate
- + Volunteering ACT
- + Wellcare Australia
- + YMCA Canberra
- + YWCA Canberra

CORPORATE MEMBERS AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

Corporate Members are a diverse group of businesses from a wide range of industry sectors, including local operations of national and global businesses, Canberra's leading SME'S educational institutions and more. They actively engage with the Chamber's policy work, and have access to key decision makers, government and other stakeholders as well as opportunities to build their brand and markets through engagement with the territory's small business community.

+ ActewAGL	+ EPC Solar	+ Seeing Machines
+ Agile Digital Engineering	+ Evolve & Amplify	+ Service One Mutual
+ Ainslie Football and Social Club	+ EvolveFM	+ Shaw Building Group
+ ANZ Banking Group	+ Gallagher	+ Snedden Hall & Gallop
+ ARUP	+ GHD	+ St George Bank/Westpac Bank
+ Aspen Medical	+ Gulson Canberra	+ St. Vincent de Paul Society
+ Australian Catholic University	+ Hays Specialist Recruitment (Australia)	+ Summit Health Solutions ACT
+ Australian National University	+ Hindmarsh Corporation (Equity Investments)	+ Supabarn Supermarkets
+ Blue Ink Group	+ Icen	+ Synapse Worldwide
+ Bright & Duggan	+ Inside Outside Facility Services	+ Tailored Accounts
+ Brumbies Rugby	+ Institute of Public Accountants	+ The Canberra Times
+ Callida Consulting	+ IT Alliance Australia	+ The Salvation Army Employment Plus
+ Canberra Convention Bureau	+ KBR	+ The Sebel Canberra
+ Canberra Institute of Technology	+ Luton Operations	+ TLR Global
+ Canberra Metro	+ Manteena Commercial	+ TorchMedia
+ Canberra Southern Cross Club	+ Maple Advisory Solutions	+ TSA Management
+ Canberra Weekly	+ Minter Ellison Lawyers	+ VCA Services
+ Capital Hotel Group	+ MV Law	+ Vee H Aviation
+ Casino Canberra Limited	+ National Press Club	+ Walker Executive
+ Chartered Accountants Australia New Zealand	+ Nexis Accountants and Business Advisors	+ Wildbear Entertainment
+ Chartertech	+ ORD Minnett	+ Windlab
+ Colliers International (ACT)	+ Project Coordination (Australia)	+ XTEK
+ Communication Link	+ Project Wing	
+ Core Facilities International	+ RD Consulting / Raging Digital	
+ Crowne Plaza Canberra	+ Region Group	
+ Dimeo Cleaning Services (ACT)	+ Rolfe Property Services	
+ Elliott Gray		

Other membership categories include Life/Honorary, Business and Micro Business.

The Canberra Business Chamber is a full foundation member of ACCI, which provides ACT business a voice in national forums and policy deliberations for the chamber movement across Australia. During the financial year, the Canberra Business Chamber participated in over 13 meetings including ACCI General Meeting, CEO meetings and associated functions.

As a member of ACCI, the Chamber is also a member of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Australia which acts as a conduit for Australian business to access international representation and take a seat at the global table. The Chamber attended the ICC Policy committee Meeting on the 23 Nov 2022.

Board & Governance

The Canberra Business Chamber is a company limited by guarantee. The entity was incorporated on 30 June 2014 and replaced two previous organisations, the Canberra Business Council and ACT & Region Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

A copy of the Chamber's constitution is accessible on the website at www.canberrabusiness.com.

The Company Secretary as at 30th June 2023, and throughout the year, was Harry Hoang (Tailored Accounts).

Oversight of the Chamber is vested in the board of directors.



Our History

Canberra's business chamber has been supporting local business for almost 90 years. It originates from the Canberra Chamber of Commerce, founded in 1932. Since then, there have been a variety of name changes and mergers that lead to the organisation being constituted in its current legal form and name in 2014.

The Canberra Chamber of Commerce held its first meeting on 25th February 1932¹. Although surviving records are limited, by 1936 it had 79 members². The Chamber continued operating for many years, and in 1991 merged with a small local trader district group, the Fyshwick Chamber of Commerce, to become the ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Alongside the Chamber, a specific industrial organisation for local employers, the ACT Employers Association, was formed in the 1940s. It began publishing wages guidelines, newsletters, trader directories and other material for its members in 1949; other sources suggest it may in fact have begun as early as 1943. In subsequent years its name changed to the ACT Employers Federation (which it traded under in the 1960s and 1970s), and then to the Confederation of ACT Industry (in the 1980s and 1990s)³.

The Confederation was one of the original founding members of the national Confederation of Australian Industry in 1977, which in turned merged with the Australian Chamber of Commerce in 1992 to form the modern-day peak national voice of business, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI)⁴. The Confederation later merged with the ACT Chamber to form one organisation, and the name of the merged entity was slightly changed once more, to that of the ACT & Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACT CCI).

Yet another separate business organisation emerged in 1979 – a group of local business leaders operating under the title of the “Committee of 22,” to lobby for business-friendly policies. It underwent its own series of name changes, becoming the Canberra Association for Regional Development and then in the early 1990s the Canberra Business Council.

In mid-2014 the ACT & Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Canberra Business Council merged into today's current entity, the Canberra Business Chamber.

Canberra Business Chamber Foundation Members

Platinum Foundation Member

- + Aspen Medical
- + Canberra Airport
- + EY
- + Hindmarsh
- + KPMG
- + Nexis Accountants & Business Advisors
- + Telstra
- + TP Dynamics
- + The Village Building Company

Silver Foundation Member

- + CBRE
- + Cre8ive
- + eWAY
- + The Good Guys (Tuggeranong)
- + Hays Specialist Recruitment
- + Intelledox
- + Laurie McDonald
- + National Australia Bank
- + Noetic Group
- + Toshiba

¹ Canberra Chamber of Commerce (1989), 56th Annual Report, p.12

² Canberra Times (1936) “*Chamber of Commerce*” Wednesday 15 July, p.3.

³ National Library of Australia “*ACT Employers Federation*”; Annual Report – Confederation of ACT Industry [online] <https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/639491> (accessed 06 September 2019).

⁴ WE Cleary, undated, “*Some Memories of the Confederation of ACT Industry*” Canberra

Chairs and CEOs

Canberra Business Chamber Chairs

2018-Present: Archie Tsirimokos

2014-2018: Glenn Keys

Canberra Business Chamber CEOs

2023 – Present: Greg Harford

2020 – 2023: Graham Catt

2018-2020: Dr Michael Schaper

2014-2018: Robyn Hendry

Board Members

Archie Tsirimokos (Chair)	<i>Term expires Nov 2025</i>
Sarah Rajic (Deputy Chair)	<i>Term expires Nov 2023</i>
Richard Snow	<i>Term expires Nov 2023</i>
Mark Field	<i>Term expires Nov 2024</i>
Craig Wagstaff	<i>Term expires Nov 2023</i>
Lisa McPherson	<i>Term expires Nov 2024</i>
Kimberley Ohayon	<i>Term expires Nov 2024</i>
Stephanie Bates (Board appointed 17 June 2022)	<i>Term expires Nov 2025</i>
Rhys Cormick (Board appointed April 2023)	<i>Term expires Nov 2025</i>
Matthew Andrews	<i>Resigned Feb 2023</i>
Scott Leggo	<i>Term expired Nov 2022</i>
Carrie Leeson	<i>Term expired Nov 2022</i>



