



Kate Carnell MLA

Chief Minister

Australian Capital
Territory

INCREASED FUNDING FOR BUSINESS MARKETING AND THE BUSINESS INCENTIVE SCHEME MEANS MORE JOBS FOR CANBERRA

The ACT Government is continuing its commitment to attracting more business, investment and tourism to Canberra in the 2000-2001 Budget, providing more than \$1 million for marketing Canberra within Australia and overseas, and an extra \$675,000 for the ACT Business Incentive Scheme.

"Recent research has shown that Canberra has difficulty promoting itself as an attractive business destination because of entrenched barriers and lack of knowledge of Canberra as a business city," Chief Minister Kate Carnell said.

"However, the research showed that after being exposed to the ACT Government's marketing materials, many business decision-makers acknowledged that Canberra is an attractive business destination, offering a high technology environment and significant long-term opportunities and profitability.

"This research recommended we continue to promote Canberra as a business location to business decision-makers. This is vital for Canberra's future. Despite the ACT's exceptional economic position and the record low unemployment figures, the ACT Government is not resting on its laurels. We are continuing to work to ensure sustained economic growth through the development of strategic industries.

"A good example of the work the government is doing is the enormously successful *Focus on Business* conference and exhibition held in March. The event provided an opportunity for over 100 firms from Canberra and the region to showcase their business to local, national and international guests. These innovative businesses attracted a great deal of media attention, and as a result, awareness of Canberra as a smart business city is on a roll. With the assistance of a supportive Canberra and national media, we will continue a campaign to raise the profile of our innovative and often quiet achievers."

Mrs Carnell said efforts to raise the profile of the ACT and its world-class businesses in offshore markets will continue to be a government priority. A recent delegation to South Africa identified opportunities for the ACT to partner with South African firms, and more delegations are scheduled to China, Brunei and Japan later in the year to further develop the ties established over the past two years.

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Mrs Carnell said the extra \$675,000 allocated to the ACT Business Incentive Scheme (ACTBIS) will provide assistance packages for major business development projects.

"ACTBIS aims to attract real business activity to the ACT, creating major employment and investment opportunities. The government provides businesses with tailored assistance package," Mrs Carnell said.

"Since my government started the business incentive scheme in 1996, we have approved 64 applications, generating approximately 1,200 full time jobs to date, with approximately 3,000 to come as these companies grow. This funding allows us to continue supporting the development of a strong business environment and creating employment, while also supporting major strategic projects which will benefit the whole ACT community.

"We have increased the ACTBIS budget for the next four years to provide companies with assistance for strategic business development projects that will generate hundreds of new jobs in the next three to five years, with real long term economic outcomes for the ACT."

One of those companies, Ansett, is establishing a major reservation call centre in a brand new, purpose built facility in Tuggeranong. The new centre will initially accommodate 170 staff, an increase of 50 jobs over current staff levels. In line with Ansett's call centre policies, this centre will have the capacity to allow for rapid expansion.

In partnership with the ACT Government, Telstra is proposing to develop a 'managed business centre' in the ACT, providing business services to a range of local, national and international clients, including the ACT Government. The centre will start from an existing base of approximately 90 jobs and is expected to expand to more than 250 over the next three years.

Raytheon Systems Australia, a local subsidiary of a major US corporation, is establishing its South East Asia Regional Headquarters in Canberra. In Australia, the company is active in a variety of areas including system integration and flight testing, together with a significant presence in the training industry. Raytheon, the world's largest private training provider, has also agreed to expand its training facilities in the ACT.

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