



Canberra
Business Chamber

ABN 33 600 390 538

PO Box 6308

O'Connor ACT 2602

T: 02 6247 4199

E: info@canberrabusiness.com

W: canberrabusiness.com

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2025-26 Budget Submissions
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
ACT Government

BY EMAIL: budgetconsultation@act.gov.au

2025-26 BUDGET SUBMISSION

Introduction

1 The Canberra Business Chamber is the peak body representing the ACT's business sector. Our membership is diverse, reflecting the 35,000 businesses operating here. Collectively, the business sectors employs around two-thirds of working Canberrans, compared to around one-third that work in the public sector. The private business sector is a key part of the ACT economy, and drives employment, economic growth and, ultimately, the revenue base of the ACT Government.

2 This submission is in two parts, viz:

- (i) some commentary on broad initiatives to support better Government services and a stronger ACT economy; and
- (ii) some specific recommendations around funding for some services delivered by the Canberra Business Chamber to support ACT Government initiatives.

Broad initiatives - our vision for business

Recommendation: that the Government take steps to implement the Chamber's Vision for Business, including funding a \$100k pilot to implement real-time net promoter score metrics in Access Canberra and EPSDD.

3. Last year, the Canberra Business Chamber, alongside a number of other industry associations, published our Vision for Business. This made a number of recommendations which revolved around:

- (i) making the ACT more competitive for business so we can grow and attract new firms;
- (ii) making it easier to deal with the ACT Government; and
- (iii) delivering the framework, infrastructure and resources to deliver growth.

4. A copy of our Vision for Business is attached.

5. We submit that the proposals outlined in the Vision for Business are important and suggest that they be factored into the 2025-26 Budget.

6. In particular, we recommend that the Government set aside up to \$100k to implement a real-time net promoter score metric across key departments. We recommend this be piloted in EPSDD and Access Canberra, which anecdotally create significant concerns for business stakeholders. Measuring and reporting real-time net promoter score metrics would enable Government to understand fully customer perceptions of key services; and generate useful data to identify areas of challenge in delivering top-class services. It would also provide insight that could allow Government to improve its service delivery.

The Chamber's International Business Engagement Program

Recommendation: \$195k be allocated to the Canberra Business Chamber to deliver six events and three podcasts next year as part of the International Business Engagement Program

7. Exporting goods and services from the ACT is an important means of growing the overall economic pie, and generating new revenue for the Territory's businesses, as well as the Government.

8. For the past eight years, the Canberra Business Chamber has delivered an International Business Engagement program, funded by the ACT Government. The annual funding of \$195k comes to an end on 30 June 2025, and we understand that there is no provision to fund the program in out-years.

9. Our program aims to boost understanding of the opportunities for exporters; and upskill exporters and would-be exporters with the knowledge they need to be more effective. This program is on track to deliver 15 milestones this financial year. While figures are not yet available for the 2024-25 financial year, during the 2024 calendar year, we delivered:

- nine events, with a total of 485 attendees;
- four podcasts discussing exporting challenges and opportunities (we are contracted for three);
- 7,114 social media interactions relating to exporting;
- a digital resource library relating to exporting available to all businesses, to ensure longevity of the content;
- a research snapshot of export knowledge and readiness amongst the ACT business Community.

10. The Program directly supports the ACT Government's International Engagement Strategy. Feedback in relation to our International Business Engagement program has been positive, and we play a vital role in helping ready businesses for exporting. We therefore request that the Government continue to fund the Chamber in 2025/26 and out-years to a level of \$195k (excluding GST) to deliver eight events (either in-person or online) and three podcasts each year focused on building capability and capacity in the export community. This program is scalable depending on funding, and all events and podcasts will be focused either on an ACT Government priority trade market, or on sharing generic expertise useful for all exporters.

The Chamber's Diplomatic-Business Connections Gala dinner

Recommendation: \$40k be allocated to the Canberra Business Chamber to purchase an Emerald Sponsorship of the Diplomatic-Business Connections Gala dinner.

11. For the last nine years, the Chamber has connected the business and diplomatic communities at an annual Gala Dinner. This event, a fixture of the annual diplomatic calendar, is well-attended and directly builds networks, engagement and business opportunities for Canberra exporters. This is a

Chamber event that sits outside the International Business Engagement program, but is dependent on sponsorship. We ask that the ACT Government provide funding of \$40k (excluding GST) to secure an Emerald Sponsorship of the event. This exclusive sponsorship opportunity would enable the ACT Government to supply a guest speaker for the event, and have premium brand exposure in the lead-up to it, on the night, and in post-event social and media communications.

The Chamber can deliver business knowledge training

Recommendation: Provide funding of \$50k to the Chamber to develop and deliver a half-day training program for public servants on business knowledge.

11. A significant frustration for many businesspeople is an apparent lack of appreciation inside the ACT Government about the realities of running a small business. Well-intentioned policy is sometimes impractical, does not deliver the policy outcomes, or creates significant compliance issues or costs because the impacts on businesses are often not well-understood. We propose to develop and deliver a series of half-day courses for up to 50 senior ACT public servants and other officials to help them understand business and the interface with policy. The course represents good value at \$1,000 for each employee. The course would include understanding:

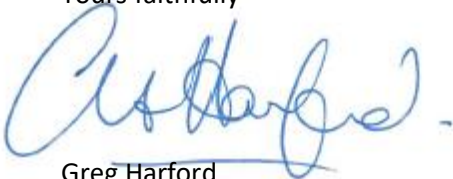
- business finances and revenues;
- margins, net margins and profit;
- profit as a wage for small-business owners;
- where a business owner's time goes;
- key business costs;
- key compliance requirements, including BAS, tax, and workplace relations compliance.

12. The course would include practical exercises, and be intended to improve the quality of regulatory and compliance activity.

Conclusion

13. Thank you for the opportunity to present this submission. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any point (including over the Christmas period) should you wish to discuss this submission or have any questions.

Yours faithfully



Greg Harford
Chief Executive