



ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS

January - March 2021

We commenced 2021 in much the same way as we worked throughout 2020, with COVID Pandemic responses dominating our activities. Throughout the first quarter, the cry from business for greater certainty and proportionality in government responses to COVID cases continued as strongly as ever, with lockdowns for most governments unfortunately being the default first response rather than relying on contact tracing, testing and localised targeting. These actions come at a considerable cost to business and jobs.

During the quarter, the vaccination rollout commenced and the view of business on the impact of early delays was widely saught by the media and led to significant attention on our on vaccine policy.

Even though a lot of media and community focus has been on these short-term challenges, our work on longer-term policy reform continues. Our pre-budget submission strongly reinforced the need for long-term tax reform, as well as increasing investment in our skills system. We also highlighted the need for a holistic policy to address youth unemployment and underemployment. It is vital that Australia invests in the future of young people so as to avoid a lifetime of welfare dependency and to improve their quality of life.

Closer to home, it was with excitement and relief to start running some of our events face to face. The ACCI network is powerful and engaged, and under the leadership of our member and events team Director, Paul Nicolaou, we have continued to bring significant influencers to speak to members about key issues that impact business.

Although we were not able to conduct our March General Council meeting in person, we are confident that the meeting on August 11 will go ahead in Darwin. Members are encouraged to book early as it is peak season.

Finally, it is very important that we acknowledge the departure of our CEO James Pearson who led ACCI for almost five years. James' advocacy on behalf of business and our members was highly regarded and much was achieved under his stewardship. We wish him well in his new role as head of a major local government council in his home city of Perth.

Thank you to all of our members who continue to see the importance of active engagement with ACCI's policy processes and events. We look forward to continuing to work with you to achieve the best possible outcomes for business.



Acting Chief
Executive Officer:
Jenny Lambert

EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS



Director:
Jenny Lambert

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic we have had frequent engagement with Ministerial Offices, the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) and other federal agencies on key issues around provision of support for job seekers and apprentices.

While there has been positive labour market growth, we are yet to see the impact of the cessation of JobKeeper in the labour market statistics. In addition, some industries remain especially hard hit by COVID-19. From an employment perspective the focus has been on mechanisms to support the most impacted industries. Our policy recommendation Boosting Apprenticeship Commencement Wage Subsidy beyond the 100,000 cap was accepted by Government, extending the scheme until end of September 2021, and uncapping it. This is forecast to generate an additional 70,000 jobs.

The Employment & Skills Committee also met this quarter. This meeting was an opportunity to discuss the Pre-Budget submission, Training Product Reform and the Productivity Commission report into the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development.

We have been especially vocal on difficulties employers face around skills shortages, as a result of the almost complete cessation of migration. We also made appearances before two parliamentary committees on migration, both skilled and temporary, and will continue to work closely with the new Minister for Immigration, the Hon Alex Hawke MP on the critical issues facing migration.

We also continued our engagement on the VET Stakeholder Committee, New Employment Services Advisory Group, Disability Employment Services Advisory Group, and the Australian Industry Skills Committee.



ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS

ECONOMICS, INDUSTRY & SUSTAINABILITY



Chief Economics:
Dr Ross Lambie

There was no let up in activity in the first quarter of 2021, with the Economics and Industry Policy team continuing to be active in representing the interest of members as the Government's focus moves from restart to recovery.

We participated in the Productivity Commission's Supply Chain Sovereignty Forum, Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources' (DISER) freight and logistics roundtable, the National Insolvency Seminar and consulted with the Attorney General's Department (AG's) on the small business exemption of the Privacy Act. The team also engaged with the DISER on rollout of industry roadmaps and grant funding for the Modern Manufacturing Initiative.

We provided evidence at a public hearing held by the Senate Select Committee on Economics on the proposed amendments to the National Consumer Credit Protections Act. We said that the intermingled nature of personal and business finances are leading to distortions on credit provision and assessments to small business.

The team persuasively represented member's views through a series of written submissions to reviews and Parliamentary inquiries, including: ACCC on amalgamation of payment platforms; Treasury's Review of the Australian Financial Complaints Authority; Treasury on increasing the statutory demand threshold; AG's on simplification of bankruptcy arrangements.

We continue to engage with key Ministers, the Shadow Ministry and bureaucrats in support of our key policy priorities set out in ACCI's 2021-22 Pre-Budget Submission.

We also continue to progress our longer-term policy vision, focused on economic policy and reforms to create the conditions for sustainable, strong, job creating growth necessary to ensure Australians have the future living standards to which they aspire over the next 30 years.



TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS | ICC AUSTRALIA



Director:
Bryan Clark

In the first quarter we made several submissions to DFAT and the Joint Standing Committees on Treaties, and Trade and Investment Growth on topics including the proof of origin system in the Australia-EU FTA, expansion of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement on Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), ratification of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and the impact of prudential regulation on Australian exporters.

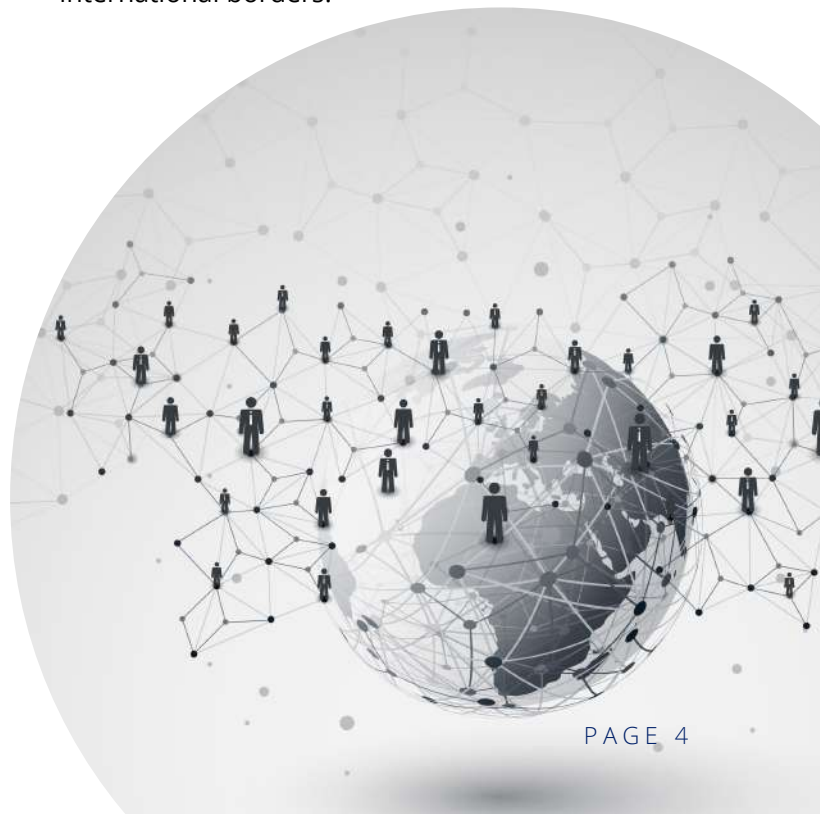
Our authority to issue Certificates of Origin was re-accredited in January following a successful audit by the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ). Majority of state chambers have also received full compliance in their assessments, with just one chamber left to go.

We successfully facilitated a project between CACCI and Dr Andrew Stoeckel on revitalising world trade which has seen excellent progress with interest from the ICC and WTO and is due for completion in mid-2021. Another achievement for ACCI in facilitating partnerships is that of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) with Global Trade Review (GTR). IORA partnered with GTR on the event GTR Mena 2021 and are continuing ongoing collaboration.

We met with DFAT, DISER and DAWE on advancing progress to remove non tariff barriers facing Australian exporters including establishing a Halal Working Group to address Halal import restrictions on food, cosmetics and textiles at a global level.

In March we welcomed 4 interns who are undertaking research projects to support our ongoing efforts on trade facilitation and diversification. These include supply chain diversification for Australian exporters, carbon border adjustment measures, and the intergovernmental ledger. Also in March, we participated in the B20 Trade and Investment Taskforce meeting considering the draft recommendations to the G20; and spoke at the OECD Forum on Trade and Climate Leadership in an Interconnected World, discussing Australia's position on carbon border adjustments.

After almost 12 months of work with the Tourism Committee, the two-way travel bubble between Australia and New Zealand has come to fruition. This is a welcome result and a good boost to our continuing efforts on opening international borders.



TOURISM



Director:
Jenny Lambert



Executive Chair:
John Hart

The tourism industry has undoubtedly been the hardest hit as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic. Despite the opening of domestic borders, and the decreasing likelihood of them closing with the rollout of the vaccines, the tourism industry has been significantly damaged by the ban on international travel and the inconsistent approach to border closures by some states and territories.

The Tourism Restart Taskforce met three times this quarter; the Tourism Committee twice. Focus has been on the need for additional support for the sector, including through mechanisms for the effective restart of tourism in Australia.

The announcement by the Federal Government of subsidised flights was welcome, however, we actively sought additional support for cities which felt the brunt of the pandemic, with no inbound tourists from overseas, and a major reduction in business travel domestically. This is encompassed in ACCI's 'Tourism Post March 2021 Support Package Proposal', which was provided to Austrade and to the Minister for their consideration. ACCI will continue to push these recommendations.

Aus Chamber Tourism's Pre-budget submission made in January expanded the focus beyond the immediate pandemic responses to issues relating to taxation and labour and skills.



WORKPLACE RELATIONS



Director:
Scott Barklamb

March saw the culmination of more than a year of ACCI advocacy deliver important changes to the Fair Work Act to restore certainty and confidence in casual employment (the passing of the amended Fair Work Amendment (Supporting Australia's Jobs and Economic Recovery) Act 2021). We represented members in extensive policy discussions with unions and government on drafting amending legislation, and support its passage in the Parliament. The amendments resolve various serious problems for Australian employers with casual employment, including an up to \$39 billion backpay liability to current and former casuals. Whilst it was disappointing that further changes were not passed to support small businesses and jobs and to restore confidence in enterprise bargaining; there is a solid foundation for ongoing advocacy in these areas.

We completed a series of JobKeeper guides assisting employers in preparing for the end of JobKeeper in late March, including providing employers with template letters to send to staff.

The Australian Government released its response to the Sex Discrimination Commissioner's Respect@Work Report which followed a historic national inquiry into sexual harassment. We represented members throughout the inquiry advancing practical, balanced ideas to change attitudes and behaviours, and to help employers respond more effectively to unacceptable workplace conduct. The Government's response is consistent with a number of our key recommendations and priorities.

Across the first quarter of 2021, we represented members at the Fair Work Commission on 2021/22 increases to the National Minimum Wage and award minimum wages, with a decision expected in June. We also represented members at the Fair Work Commission with respect to working from home under the Clerks Award, and submitted to a Senate select committee on Job Security.

We also continued to represent members, particularly small to medium sized businesses, on the Australian Government's Modern Slavery Expert Advisory Group, as businesses navigated the first tranches of modern slavery statements ahead of the 31 March 2021 deadline.



WORK, HEALTH AND SAFETY & WORKERS' COMPENSATION



Director:
Jennifer Low

In the New Year our focus was squarely on the vaccine rollout. We began working on our vaccine policy and engaging stakeholders in the latter half of 2020 which put us well ahead of other peaks in our thinking. Our Vaccine Considerations Guide was delivered in January and was discussed in detail with Treasury's Business Liaison Unit, Health and Department of Industry as the start of the rollout approached in February.

We continued to engage with the Attorney-General's team, Safe Work Australia (SWA) and other key departments in relation to the vaccine's impact on workplaces, addressing the complex legal issues arising from requiring vaccination to work. We also worked with SWA to draft new guidance for WHS duties and vaccination in workplaces.

We joined the steering committee for the global initiative B2BCONVINCE along with representatives from the ICC, IOE, WHO and university based public health experts. As the Australian business representative on this coalition, we launched the Global Workplace Challenge designed to combat vaccine hesitancy in March. We also collated a range of vaccine rollout campaign resources published in a "COVID Vaccine Communications Campaign Kit" for members.

We worked with SWA to publish new WHS guidance on workplace sexual harassment, violence and aggression and gendered violence whilst continuing consultation on the Workplace Exposure Standards Review and preparing for the meeting of WHS Ministers on the Boland Review recommendations.

We also continued to advocate for industry and small business in discussions around psychological safety and health with the Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance, in development of a new mental health and organisational disruption skillset for the VET sector, and consultation on an NSW and national model psychosocial hazards code of practice.

We Joined THE CHALLENGE!

We are proud to be part of a growing group of companies and organizations that has joined the **Global COVID-19 Workplace Challenge!**



Join the Challenge and make an impact on your community, your workplace & the world.
#JoinTheWorkplaceChallenge #BeVaccineStrong



 Listen to employees' needs and concerns about the impact and prevention of COVID-19.	 Follow the latest public health guidance to protect myself, my employees, my workplace, my customers and my community from COVID-19.
 Promote vaccine literacy through the latest scientific evidence of vaccination benefits and risks.	 Encourage vaccine confidence and uptake.
 Advocate for accessible, equitable and timely vaccination of employees.	 Engage with stakeholders, schools, faith-based organizations and public health leaders to stop the spread of COVID-19.

ACCI is a Steering Committee Partner of the global initiative - Business Partners to CONVINCE.

EPISODE 17
ADVOCATING FOR INDUSTRY
AIRS 11 MARCH

Jennifer Low | Director WHS & WC Policy
Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Listen to the full episode [here](#).

MEDIA



Senior Adviser - Media:
Marie Hogg

Our public advocacy kicked off this year with Jenny as new lead spokesperson, complemented by a series of standout appearances from John Hart on behalf of tourism and Scott Barklamb in IR.

We have consistently called out our leaders' disproportionate reactions to local COVID outbreaks, particularly as state borders slammed shut over the school holiday period in January and whole industries such as tourism were left high and dry. Since then, "proportionate to the risk" has become a well-worn phrase from ACCI.

We advocated strongly for post-JobKeeper support throughout this period, as well as targeted support for tourism. John Hart was a TV regular on Sky and ABC as he emphasized tourism's needs – together with print, digital and radio media he appeared more than 140 times between New Year and March.



We brought the need for a national reopening plan (both domestic and international) into sharp relief with our *Vaccine Considerations Guide*, launched with a front-page splash in *The Weekend Australian* in January. This laid the foundation for our *Reopening Plan Part A & B*, in the following months, and considerable media coverage.

We were unabashedly strong in advocating for the majority of the IR Omnibus Bill, while voicing our objections to its schedule on criminalization. We stood up to rounds of misinformation from unions, including a tasteless 'bus' ad campaign, and attempts to delay the Bill because of controversy surrounding the Attorney General at the time – our sensible approach, avoiding spin and misinformation, was also vindicated by editorials in the national papers.

We joined our voices with members and colleagues at Ai Group and BCA more than once to stress how important some of the proposed changes in the Bill were. While only the section on casuals made it through (for now), it meant countless businesses would stay open and employees in work.

With Jenny leading public advocacy, ACCI was mentioned more than 1,100 times across radio and TV and 2,400 times in print and digital media over the first quarter of the year.



MEMBER EVENTS

Thursday 18th February, ACCI Zoom Conference with Stephen Smith, Partner, Deloitte Access Economics



Stephen Smith, Partner, Deloitte Access Economics



Sally Sinclair, Chief Executive Officer, National Employment Services Association

Monday 22nd February, ACCI Video Conference with the Hon Jason Wood MP, Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs



The Hon Jason Wood MP, Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs



Michael Dawson, State Manager Vic, Tas, SA, Australian Steel Institute

Wednesday 24th February, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry exclusive keynote address with the Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, Treasurer of Australia



The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP, Treasurer of Australia and Diane Tate, CEO, AFIA



Jason Falinski MP, The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP, Treasurer of Australia and Jenny Lambert, Acting CEO, ACCI



The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP, Treasurer of Australia and Rebecca Kenny, CEO, Engage Comply Pay



The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP, Treasurer of Australia and Peter Shelley, CEO, ATEC



The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP, Treasurer of Australia and Steve Knott AM, CEO, AMMA

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS

Tuesday 2nd March, ACCI Zoom session with James O'Halloran, Deputy Commissioner, Economic Stimulus Branch, Australian Taxation Office



James O'Halloran, Deputy Commissioner, Economic Stimulus Branch Australian Taxation Office



Stephen Ferguson, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Hotels Association

Tuesday 2nd March, ACCI Breakfast with the Hon John Barilaro MP, Deputy Premier of NSW



The Hon. John Barilaro MP, Deputy Premier of NSW with Susan Wheeldon, Country Manager – Australia and New Zealand, AirBnb



The Hon. John Barilaro MP, Deputy Premier of NSW with Matt Bekier, Managing Director and CEO of The Star Entertaining Group

Tuesday 9th March, The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ) exclusive breakfast in Brisbane with the Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, Treasurer of Australia



Christine McLoughlin, Chair, Suncorp Group, The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP, Treasurer of Australia and Steve Johnston, Group Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Suncorp Group



The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP, Treasurer of Australia with Nola Watson, Deputy President, ACCI



Stephanie Bird, Business Development Manager, Engage Comply Pay, The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP, Treasurer of Australia and Rebecca Kenny, CEO, Engage Comply Pay



The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP, Treasurer of Australia and Amanda Rohan, General Manager Advocacy, CCIQ



Stephen Tait, CEO, CCIQ, Christine McLoughlin, Chair, Suncorp Group, Tony Schiffmann, President, CCIQ and Karl Morris AO, CEO & Managing Director, Ord Minnett Ltd

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Thursday 11 March, ACCI Zoom Conference - The Chain of Survival with Greg Page AM, Founder, Heart of the Nation and Adj. Prof John G. Kelly AM, CEO, National Heart Foundation



Greg Page AM, Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Heart of the Nation



Adj. Prof. John G. Kelly AM, Group Chief Executive Officer, National Heart Foundation of Australia



Julie Anne Mitchell, Director Health Strategy, National Heart Foundation of Australia

Tuesday 16th March, ACCI Zoom Conference - The Indigenous Voice proposals update with Co-chairs of the Senior Advisory Group, Professor Dr Marcia Langton AO and Professor Tom Calma AO



Professor Tom Calma AO, Co-chair, Senior Advisory Group, The Indigenous Voice proposals



Professor Dr Marcia Langton AO, Co-chair, Senior Advisory Group, The Indigenous Voice proposals

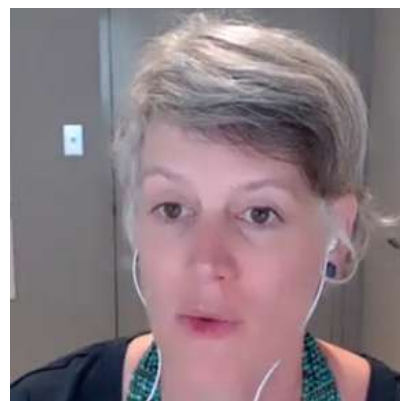


Nyunggai Warren Mundine AO, Chairman and Managing Director, Nyungga Black Group

Friday 19th March, ACCI Zoom Conference with Julian Leeser MP Chair of Joint Standing Committee on Migration & Chair of Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs



Julian Leeser MP, Federal Member for Berowra and Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration



Nicola Grayson, Chief Executive Officer, Consult Australia

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Tuesday 30th March, ACCI Breakfast with the Hon Michael McCormick MP, Deputy Prime Minister



The Hon. Michael McCormick MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Silvio de Denaro, Company Director, Australian Tyre Industry Council



The Hon. Michael McCormick MP, Deputy Prime Minister and The Hon. Katrina Hodgkinson, Director, Government and Regulatory Affairs, AARNet



Allyn Beard, Chairman, Australian Made Campaign, The Hon. Michael McCormick MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Ben Lazzaro, CEO, Australian Made Campaign



The Hon. Michael McCormick MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Tess Phillips, Director of Government & Public Relations, JCDECAUX Australia & New Zealand



The Hon. Michael McCormick MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Peta Seaton AM, Chair, Hearing Australia



Matthew Deaner, CEO, Screen Producers Australia and The Hon. Michael McCormick MP, Deputy Prime Minister

Tuesday 30th March, ACCI/Mastercard Zoom session on cyber security and business resilience with Michael Lashlee, Chief Security Officer for Mastercard and Nigel Phair the Director of UNSW Canberra Cyber and Megan Haas, Non-Executive Director, Tesseract



Michael Lashlee, Senior Vice President, Deputy Chief Security Officer, Mastercard



Megan Haas, Non-Executive Director, Tesseract



Nigel Phair, Director, UNSW Canberra | Cyber

GUEST SPEAKERS



Stephen Smith, Partner,
Deloitte Access Economics



Professor Dr Marcia Langton AO, Co-Chair,
Senior Advisory Group,
Indigenous Voice



The Hon Jason Wood MP,
Assistant Minister for
Customs, Community
Safety and Multicultural
Affairs



Professor Tom Calma AO, Co-Chair, Senior
Advisory Group,
Indigenous Voice



The Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, Treasurer of Australia



Julian Leaser MP, Chair,
Joint Standing Committee
on Migration & Chair,
Standing Committee on
Indigenous Affairs



James O'Halloran, Deputy
Commissioner, Economic
Stimulus Branch
Australian Taxation Office



The Hon Michael McCormack MP, Deputy
Prime Minister



The Hon John Barilaro MP, Deputy Premier of
NSW, and Minister for
Regional New South
Wales, Industry and Trade



Megan Haas, Non-
Executive Director,
Tesseract



Greg Page AM, Founder,
Heart of the Nation



Michael Lashlee, Deputy
Chief Security Officer,
Mastercard



Adjunct Professor John Kelly AM, CEO, Heart
Foundation



Nigel Phair, Director,
UNSW Canberra Cyber

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS

NEW MEMBERS

We welcomed **8 new Industry Association and Business Leaders Council members**, including Australia's Academic & Research Network, Axicom, ClubsAustralia/ClubsNSW, Collective Wellness Group, Construction Specialties, Life Without Barriers, QBE & Serco.

We thank all our business leaders and speakers for attending our events and video conferences to date and plan to continue to provide for our members as the year progresses.

