



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2024-2025**

Ms Nicole Lawder MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair),  
Miss Laura Nuttall MLA

**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Asked By: Leanne Castley MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Business

Redirection to: N/A

Reference: Business

Hearing Date: 29/07/2024

In relation to: Canberra Business Chamber response to budget

QON lodgement Date: 30/07/2024

Answer Due date: 06/08/2024

- 1) In its budget submission, the Canberra Business chamber outlined that “The Canberra Business Chamber and the ACT Government can work together to achieve what is needed for private enterprise in the ACT. In this submission, we are not proposing a significant wish list of new spending in the 2024-25 Budget, rather, we propose a series of principles and actions that will deliver better outcomes for business, consumers and, ultimately, the ACT economy as a whole”. Do you think this budget responds to these actions and statement of principles? Do you agree with them?
- 2) Noting that the first action under section C is to ‘commit to no new taxes or tax increases over the coming year’ – do you agree that this budget has increased fees and taxes on businesses?
- 3) What actions will you take to “work together with the Canberra business chamber” as they ask?
- 4) In their budget submission the Canberra Business Chamber has asked “for meaningful response to all enquiries from businesses and individuals within a week of receipt and to set targets, measure performance and report on the outcomes”
  - (a) What are the current response times?
  - (b) Will you commit to public reporting of performance?

- 5) Noting that at the budget lunch with Andrew Barr, Labor Candidate for Ginninderra Heidi Prowse posted to her LinkedIN that this budget was rated as only 3.5 stars, do you agree with Heidi and the business community that this is a poor budget for the business sector? What is your rating for the budget?

**Mick Gentleman MLA:** The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

- 1) The Canberra Business Chamber's 2024-25 Budget submission identifies three priority areas:
- Priority Area A: Make the ACT more competitive for business so we can grow and attract new firms;
  - Priority Area B: Making it easier to deal with the ACT Government; and
  - Priority Area C: Deliver the framework, infrastructure and resources to support growth.

The ACT Government's programs and initiatives which support these priority areas are reflected in the following three strategies:

- *CBR Switched On - ACT's Economic Development Priorities 2022-2025* - setting out the ACT Government's economic development priorities to enhance community wellbeing and capitalise on our strengths in knowledge-based economic growth;
- *The ACT Small Business Strategy 2023-2026* – recognising the central role small businesses play in our community; and
- *Skilled to Succeed* – outlining the ACT Government's priorities to grow the capability of our workforce and create strong employment opportunities for Canberrans.

- 2) The ACT has the highest payroll tax-free threshold of all states and territories, making it a competitive place to do business. As a result, around 90 per cent of ACT businesses do not pay payroll tax.

From 1 July 2024, a payroll tax surcharge rate applies for large businesses, at an additional:

- 0.25 per cent on ACT taxable wages above the payroll tax threshold, for businesses with Australia-wide wages above \$50 million per annum; and
- 0.5 per cent on ACT taxable wages above the payroll tax threshold, for businesses with Australia-wide wages above \$100 million per annum.

- 3) The ACT Government has worked closely with the Canberra Business Chamber since its establishment in 2014, and its preceding entities, the Canberra Business Council and the ACT Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The ACT Government and the Canberra Business Chamber work together to support business and economic growth in the interests of the ACT business community through the International Business Engagement program. The Canberra Business Chamber is also a member of the Business and Economic Development Consultative Forum, which provides an opportunity to provide advice directly to ACT Government. On 9 May 2024, the Canberra Business Chamber supported and participated in the ACT Government's inaugural CBR Small Business Expo.

Further, the Chief Minister, the Minister for Government Services and Regulatory Reform and I have each participated at the Canberra Business Chamber's Business Roundtables. Most recently, the Minister for Government Services and Regulatory Reform attended a Roundtable on 17 July 2024.

4) The Access Canberra Business Assist team has an accountability commitment to engage with a business within five business days of receiving a query.

Access Canberra's Customer Service Charter is publicly available and identifies a commitment to respond to enquiries and process transactions accurately, thoroughly and promptly. The Charter requests that customers be patient during busy times such as days before and after a public holiday. The complexity of the variety of transactions managed by Access Canberra impacts the amount of time required to complete a customer transaction.

Access Canberra's Business transaction surveys and Customer satisfaction surveys are publicly available and show satisfaction with Access Canberra's services across Service Centres, Contact Centres and digital services.

<https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/about-us/access-canberra-policies-accountabilities-and-reporting>

Accountability Indicator performance reporting identifies satisfaction levels with ACT Government funded business support services (CBASS, Badji and CBRIN) are very high, with the 2023-24 overall satisfaction level above the targeted 80 per cent.

5) The 2024-25 Budget reflects the ACT Government's priorities and aspirations for our growing community – to be the best place in the country to live, to work, to do business in, to invest, to study and to call home.

The 2024-25 Budget commits \$167 million toward economic development, tourism, sports and arts, and \$3.550 million over two years to promote and attract investment to the ACT, foster innovation and support key sectors in the ACT's knowledge economy.

The 2024-25 Budget continues the Government's investment in supporting new businesses, both through a second round of the ACT Social Enterprise Grant program and continuation of the Priority Investment Program. In addition, the budget commits to infrastructure which encourages new economic activity. This includes investment in the Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct, the Bruce Sports, Health and Education Precinct and the redevelopment of EPIC. Funding also continues for the refurbishment of Level 4, 1 Moore Street for the Canberra Innovation Network to expand its presence in support of later stage start-ups, innovative small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and high-growth potential companies.

Further, the 2024-25 Budget includes dedicated support for the hospitality sector through Access Canberra for the implementation of Night-time economy reforms.

The Government does not apply ratings to its budgets.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2024-2025

Signature:



Date: 6/8/2024

By the Minister for Business, Mick Gentleman MLA