

Small Business

SMALL BUSINESS

**ACT SMALL
BUSINESS
STRATEGY**
PROGRESS
UPDATE 2025



ACT
Government



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Ngunnawal people and any other families or people with connection to Canberra and the region. We pay respect to elders, past, present, and emerging and to the role Ngunnawal and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses make to the life of this city and this region.



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Front Cover: James Souter and Alice O'Mara, Beltana Farm

Key Highlights

ACT small businesses are critical to the diversity of the ACT economy, a significant employer and a driver of economic performance and community wellbeing. There are more than 36,000 businesses operating in the ACT (as at end March 2025¹) and nearly 97 per cent of them employ less than 20 people (referred to as small businesses). ACT businesses play a critical role in providing secure and stable employment for Canberrans and around two-thirds of Canberrans are employed in the private sector².

The ACT economy remains resilient with a steady increase in the number of jobs and increasing numbers in private sector employment. However, it is a challenging and competitive time for small businesses across Australia, and in the ACT.

In February 2021 there were approximately 247,000 people employed in Canberra. Four years later in February 2025, there were approximately 272,000 people employed in Canberra. This represents jobs growth of around 25,000 people over that four-year period³.

Through the actions in the ACT Small Business Strategy 2023-2026 the ACT Government aims to support a dynamic and thriving small business community in five priority areas:

1. Improve the business experience when dealing with government
2. Support for business to start, operate, grow and innovate
3. Showcase and promote local small businesses
4. Futureproofing small businesses
5. A one government approach to business

1. Counts of Australian Businesses, Including Entries and Exits, June 2020 – March 2025, (Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, June 2020-March 2025 | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au), Data Cube 12, Table 1 (accessed 10 June 2025).

2. Australian Bureau of Statistics (February 2025) Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, February 2025 (Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, February 2025 | Australian Bureau of Statistics), Table 05. Employed persons by State, Territory and Industry division of main job (accessed 10 June 2025).

3. Australian Bureau of Statistics (February 2025) Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, February 2025 (Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, February 2025 | Australian Bureau of Statistics), Table 05. Employed persons by State, Territory and Industry division of main job (accessed 10 June 2025).

Key Statistics

The success of this Strategy and the ACT Government's approach to economic growth and diversification is demonstrated through these key indicators.



5,700+
new businesses over
the past four years



4.4%
growth rate, the
highest in the country



9.7/10
client satisfaction with
Canberra Business Advice
and Support Service



25,000
new jobs over the past
four years



31,000
visits to the Business Hub
website in the last year



*Ben Alexander, The Dock
Supercurious*



Achievements in the second year of the Strategy

Over the past two years the ACT Government has made significant progress in delivery against the Priority Areas contained in the Strategy. More than 86 per cent of the Strategy's 52 Action Items are either *Completed* or *Completed and Ongoing*. Six Action Items remain *In progress*, and work is *Yet to commence* on one Action Item. Achievements include:

1. The Canberra Business Advice and Support Service (CBASS) has supported more than 500 businesses since July 2023.

2. Growth in businesses using the Access Canberra Event Coordination and Business Assist team.

3. Delivered Round 2 of the Social Enterprise Grants program assisting 13 businesses with matched grant funding to a total of \$360,000.

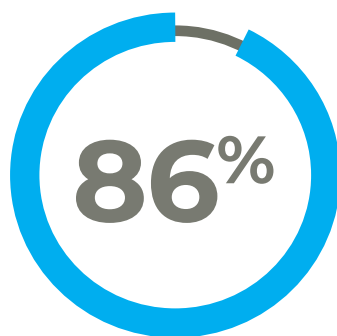
4. Updated guidance and training for businesses on supplying to the ACT Government.

5. Working with the Australian Government to support Creative Workplaces and to facilitate fundraising workshops to independent artists and arts organisations.

6. The establishment of CBRIN's Level 4 Scaleup Hub at 1 Moore St assisting ACT businesses to grow.

7. Funding for a pilot ACT Prototyping Voucher Program through CBRIN providing eligible entrepreneurs, startups, and innovative businesses with vouchers of up to \$10,000 to access specialised prototyping equipment, facilities, and technical expertise that would otherwise be cost-prohibitive.

8. Further reductions in liquor licensing fees commencing from 1 July 2025 to support the night-time economy and hospitality businesses.



More than **86%** of the Strategy's 52 Action Items are either Completed or Completed and Ongoing

45



The ACT Government has either completed or is delivering on an ongoing basis through existing initiatives **45** priority actions.

6



The ACT Government has commenced delivering on **6** priority actions under the Strategy which are progressing well

1



Work is yet to commence on **1** priority action under the Strategy

COMPLETED ACTIONS INCLUDE:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 1.6 | Procurement ACT has released the ACT Government Guide to Determining Appropriate Insurances for Procurements, which provides practical guidance to Territory entities to determine appropriate insurances for a procurement. Procurement ACT has also updated its goods and services templates to specify a default position that insurance need only be taken out at the time that a contract is entered into between the ACT Government and a supplier, not at the time of tendering, reducing costs and administrative work for suppliers at the tendering stage. |
| 2.10 | The Government has delivered a suite of reforms to grow the night-time economy, including significant reductions to liquor licensing fees, extended trading hours authorisations, and introducing new fit-for-purpose noise standards for entertainment noise in the City Centre Entertainment Precinct. |
| 2.12 | Expanding Canberra Innovation Network's (CBRIN's) accommodation to establish a purpose-built Scaleup Hub, catering to locally based enterprises that have demonstrated strong revenue growth. |
| 2.13 | Through CBRIN the ACT Government is delivering the ACT Prototyping Voucher Program, providing eligible entrepreneurs, startups, and innovative businesses with access to specialised prototyping equipment, facilities, and technical expertise. |
| 3.1 | The pilot CBR Small Business Expo was delivered in 2024 featuring more than 110 exhibitors from government, industry and business and almost 1,000 participants and attendees. |
| 3.8 | artsACT and Visit Canberra engaged the Tourism Collective to present a series of tourism workshops directed at the arts sector engaging with new audiences. |
| 4.10 | The ACT Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan 2023 – 2030 was released in August 2023, identifying actions to support businesses to transition to a more circular economy. |
| 4.11 | The ACT Infrastructure Plan was completed in August 2024, detailing the ACT Government's infrastructure priorities across seven sectors. |

1

PRIORITY ONE

Improve the business experience when dealing with government

● On track or completed ● Behind schedule ● Paused / Resource or Priority restrained

Action	How this will help business	Timeframe	Status
1.1 Provide dedicated individual business support through the Access Canberra Event Coordination and Business Assist (ECBA) team	Businesses get personalised service to navigate licensing and approvals	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
1.2 Deliver an expanded Business Hub website connecting business owners and operators with the information they need to start, run, and grow their business	Businesses get easy access to clear information about what to do and where to go for help	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
1.3 Provide plain English information to inform diverse audiences of business owners and operators including culturally and linguistically diverse businesses and those with lived experience of disability	Business owners from all backgrounds can access information	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
1.4 Explore enhancements to the supplier procurement portal, Supplying to ACT Government , to provide a one-stop-shop to allow businesses to create their business profile, access training and guidance material, communicate with the ACT Government and apply for procurement opportunities	Businesses will be supported to access government procurement opportunities, information, and real time support to set them up for success	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing



The Piccolo Mondo Cafe and Access Canberra Business Assist Team

June 2025 Update

Access Canberra's Event Coordination and Business Assist (ECBA) team provides services for new and existing businesses to connect with relevant areas across government. The ECBA team also supports event promoters and organisers in the ACT to obtain the approvals they require for safe and vibrant events.

The ECBA team has received and assisted with 232 unique business enquiries since 1 July 2024 (as at May 2025). Approximately 40 per cent of enquiries received pertain to hospitality businesses, including restaurants, cafes, home-based food businesses and mobile food businesses, such as food trucks. Other enquiries relate to varied business types, including industries such as education, retail, beauty, construction, entertainment, fashion, technology, and logistics.

The team has, and is meeting, a commitment to respond to enquiries within five working days and is continually working with businesses to resolve their enquiries.

The [ACT Business Hub](#) is a central portal bringing together a range of government information for businesses. Ongoing reviews and updates are made to the Business Hub website content as needed.

Since July 2024 to May 2025 the Business Hub received more than 31,471 unique visits with just over 40,000 views of content on the site.

The top five viewed pages are:

- Get help and advice: 9,265 page views;
- Start a food business in Canberra: 5,664 page views;
- Homepage: 4,327 page views
- Apply for grants and funding: 3,619 page views;
- Start a business in Canberra: 2,092 page views.

Ongoing reviews and updates have been made to the [ACT Business Hub](#) website content as needed.

The website meets accessibility standards and, in most cases, exceeds these standards.

- Accessibility score of 94.7 out of 100.
- The industry government benchmark is 83.8 out of 100.
- Level AA conformance with the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1](#).

The Google Translate function is available on the ACT Business Hub website to assist businesses with languages other than English.

Procurement ACT has continued to update supplier guidance materials, including the [Guide for Businesses Supplying to the ACT Government](#), and training materials for the use of TendersACT to assist suppliers to understand how to work with the ACT Government.

The modernised procurement solution including the one-stop-shop for businesses, as proposed under the Procurement Reform Program, is expected to be delivered as part of ongoing business as usual activities.

	Action	How this will help business	Timeframe	Status
1.5	Review and streamline the ACT Government's procurement legislation, policies, processes, and templates to ensure they are efficient, easy to understand and easy to engage with	Businesses will be supported to access government procurement opportunities	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
1.6	Provide guidance to ACT Government Buyers to assist in determining the appropriate level of insurance requirements in accordance with the risk profile of the procurement	Businesses will only need to have appropriate levels of insurance	2023-25	Completed
1.7	Reform standard ACT Government contract terms to require contractors to extend the same payment terms to their subcontractors	Support small and micro-businesses and sole traders who subcontract	Ongoing	In progress
1.8	Strengthen the Local Industry Participation Policy (LIPP)	Ensure local businesses receive the intended benefits of the policy	Ongoing	In progress
1.9	Review the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy (ATSIPP) to ensure it continues to meet its objectives	Strengthen the policy to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses	Ongoing	In progress
1.10	Establish the Business Sentiment survey in collaboration with Canberra Business Chamber	Better data on businesses and their needs	2023-24	Completed
1.11	Establish a Measure of Regulatory Burden and Value in particular sector	Provide a baseline to measure progress and inform future regulatory work	2023-25	Completed
1.12	Explore a digital account for business that would allow businesses to manage their transactions with government through a single account	Businesses would only need to provide their information once	2023-26	Yet to commence

June 2025 Update

The *Government Procurement Amendment Act 2024* took effect on 1 July 2024, implementing substantive amendments aimed at greater clarity, efficiency and transparency.

Procurement ACT continues to streamline and enhance its procurement related policies, processes and templates to ensure that they support the ACT Government's updated Procurement Framework, with a focus on ensuring that they are efficient, easy to understand and easy to use.

Procurement ACT has released the ACT Government Guide to Determining Appropriate Insurances for Procurements, which provides practical guidance to Territory entities to determine appropriate insurances for a procurement.

Procurement ACT has also updated its goods and services templates to specify a default position that insurance need only be taken out at the time that a contract is entered into between the ACT Government and a supplier, not at the time of tendering, reducing costs and administrative work for suppliers at the tendering stage.

Work to update relevant Government contract terms is ongoing.

Work to review the Local Industry Participation Policy has occurred and further work is required to progress recommendations.

The Comprehensive Review of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy is nearly finalised, with the intention to release the updated Policy in the 2025-26 financial year.

Completed. See [2024 Progress Update](#)

The Australian National University (ANU) was engaged to establish a measure of value and burden of existing regulatory systems. This was piloted on the hospitality and fitness sectors as examples of a core and a non-core component of the night-time economy.

The RegValue tool project was completed in September 2024. Since then, the tool has been presented at the Australian New Zealand School of Governance National Regulator Community of Practice ACT forum in December 2024. The report is expected to be published by the ANU in 2025.

The next step will be to continue working with the ANU and areas of ACT Government to further test the tool with a view to develop a practical user guide for policy areas to use this tool to review their own regulatory systems.

This initiative has not yet been prioritised for direct funding.

Through initiatives such as Universal Access to Preschool, the ACT Government's Digital, Data and Technology and Technology Solutions branch has established baseline architectures for a business account. These architectures offer a flexible framework that can be reapplied where appropriate and built upon to meet higher-order needs of business and industry, as funding becomes available in the future.

Work will be undertaken over the next 12 months to consider the applicability of this architecture for a digital business account, and the resourcing that would be required for implementation.

2

PRIORITY TWO

Support for business to start, operate, grow and innovate

● On track or completed
 ● Behind schedule
 ● Paused / Resource or Priority restrained

Action	How this will help business	Timeframe	Status
2.1 Continuing the Canberra Business Advice and Support Service (CBASS) to deliver tailored small business advice, including business planning	Professional and tailored support for businesses at all stages of the business lifecycle	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
2.2 Deliver and evaluate the Badji Program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses	Culturally appropriate and tailored advice and support for businesses	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
2.3 Investigate barriers to more women, LGBTIQ, people with a disability and culturally and linguistically diverse people becoming business owners	Support the development of targeted actions to break down barriers to business ownership	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
2.4 Increase participation of women in CBRIN programs	Support more women to become entrepreneurs	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
2.5 Through the ACT Arts Fund, invest in programs to enhance outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and arts businesses	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and creatives are supported to start and grow	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
2.6 Deliver social enterprise grants to support start-ups in this sector	Provide more opportunities to start a social enterprise	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing



June 2025 Update

From July 2023 to May 2025 CBASS has assisted more than 500 businesses, demonstrating an ongoing demand for the program. Just under half of these client engagements have been with women-owned businesses or intenders. Satisfaction ratings by users of the program consistently rate the services greater than 9 out of 10.

The ACT Government delivered a dedicated marketing campaign to drive CBASS awareness and usage from January to February 2025. CBASS reports strong client enquiries in the typically quieter January to March quarter as a result of the campaign.

CBASS has reported a cross section of business stages (intenders, start-ups, small, established and growing businesses), ages of clients, genders of clients and businesses in different industries engaging in the program. CBASS continues to provide a wide range of advice and referrals to clients.

The Badji Program has steadily increased the count of unique businesses supported since it began in May 2022. 96 unique businesses have been supported and 144 consults have been delivered at May 2025.

Over 44 per cent of these businesses have used the Badji program multiple times, indicating that clients see value in returning to use the services again.

The ACT Government is utilising research conducted by the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman regarding barriers to accessing information by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners and business owners from non-English speaking backgrounds. This research reinforces the importance of accessible websites and email communication as well as in-person, telephone options.

Work to understand barriers is ongoing through engagement with key stakeholder networks and available research.

CBRIN continues to deliver programs targeting women entrepreneurs such as its Female Founders program and tracks participation of women across their programs and support for founders and entrepreneurs.

During 2024-25 CBRIN's co-working facility had 83 women coworking members and nine local women-led start-ups received \$238,500 in grant funding through the Innovation Connect grant program.

The third round of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Arts Program was delivered in two stages. Expressions of Interest opened on 3 March 2025. Shortlisted applicants were invited to submit a full application on 14 April 2025 and stage two closed on 14 May 2025. The outcomes will be announced in June 2025 for projects commencing from 1 July 2025.

The ACT Government has engaged The Mill House Ventures to deliver a two-year pilot Social Enterprise Grant Program on behalf of the Government. The Program offers matched funding grants between \$10,000 and \$30,000.

The second grant round under the Program was open for applications from 25 November 2024 to 7 February 2025. During this round, 39 applications were received and 13 were successful in receiving matched grant funding to a total of \$360,000.

In the two rounds of the program 27 social enterprises from a diverse range of sectors and focus areas were successful in receiving \$700,000 in matched grant funding.



Action		How this will help business	Timeframe	Status
2.7	With the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions, explore the challenges facing business of accessing affordable and appropriate insurance	Support the understanding of businesses across a range of insurance issues	Ongoing	In progress
2.8	Provide information to support small businesses with Portable Long Service Leave	Improve access to clear information to support employees	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
2.9	Provide information to support small businesses as changes are progressively introduced to the Discrimination Act	Improve access to clear information to support business owners	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
2.10	Deliver a vision for Canberra's Night-time economy and a comprehensive and coordinated approach to making the night-time experience in Canberra better for everyone	Night-time businesses are supported through regulatory and non-regulatory actions and have clear information and opportunity to operate in the night-time	2023-25	Completed

June 2025 Update

The ACT Government provided a submission to the Standing Committee on Economics, Industry and Recreation Inquiry into insurance costs in the ACT and participated in the public hearings held in April 2025. Outcomes and recommendations from the Inquiry are expected to be released later in 2025.

In December 2024 Procurement ACT released updated guidance for ACT Government directorates regarding indicative insurance requirements for procurement risk levels (low, medium, high, extreme) informed by risk assessments for professional indemnity, public liability and product liability insurance in amounts ranging between \$1 million and \$20 million. This guidance is aimed at ensuring organisations are not requested to obtain liability limits that are excessive and not representative of the risk.

The *Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Amendment Act 2023* expands portable long service leave schemes in the ACT to additional industries. The expanded industries in the new services industry scheme are scheduled to commence on 1 July 2026.

From 1 April 2025 the portable schemes legislation has been amended with the existing contract cleaning industry scheme becoming the services industry scheme.

However, employers in the expanded industries set to enter the new services industry scheme will now have an additional 15 months to register by 30 June 2026 to be ready for full commencement of the expanded services scheme by 1 July 2026.

There are two new positive duties under the *Discrimination Act 1991* (ACT) which take a proactive approach towards addressing direct and indirect discrimination.

The new positive duty to provide reasonable adjustments that arise because of a person's protected attribute (e.g. disability access, space to breastfeed/express milk, leave for carer responsibilities or sorry business etc.) commenced for everyone on 11 April 2024, including small businesses.

The positive duty to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and unlawful vilification will commence for businesses on 11 April 2027, and will be proportionate to the size, nature, resources and operational priorities of that business.

Information about these positive duties is available on the ACT Human Rights Commission website:
<https://www.hrc.act.gov.au/discrimination/act-discrimination-act-positive-duty>.

JACS will work with the ACT Human Rights Commission and CMTEDD to develop resources for small businesses closer to the commencement date.

In July 2024, the final tranche of reforms under the *Liquor (Night-Time Economy) Amendment Act 2024* commenced. These included:

- Offering an 80 per cent reduction on annual liquor licensing fees for venues with occupancies of 150 or less that showcase live music, artists and cultural activities.
- Increasing the number of free extended trading authorisations to 10, across any 12-month period, for events.
- Increasing the number of free authorisations available for licensees to change their floor plan to 10, across any 12-month period, for events where there is approval from the landlord.
- Providing for the Head of Access Canberra to declare a 'special event' which will automatically extend trading hours.

In August 2024, the ACT Government made changes to the *Environment Protection Regulation 2005* to introduce new fit-for-purpose noise standards for entertainment noise in the City Centre Entertainment Precinct.

In May 2025, the ACT Government announced further reductions in liquor fees, building on the significant fee reductions that commenced in January 2024. This next tranche of reductions will commence July 2025:

- An automatic 50 per cent liquor licence fee reduction will be expanded to cafes and restaurants with occupancies between 81 and 150 people.
- General licence holders with an occupancy between 21 and 150 people will have their annual liquor licence fees reduced by 50 per cent.
- A 50 per cent liquor licence fee reduction will be expanded to venues with occupancies of 151 to 350 people that showcase artists and musicians. This reduction will be available upon application and is in addition to the existing fee reduction of 80 per cent for venues up to a 150-person capacity.

Action		How this will help business	Timeframe	Status
2.11	Deliver an ACT Venture Capital Fund to support pre-seed, seed, and Series A business in the ACT	Support for early-stage commercialisation	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
2.12	Expansion of the Canberra Innovation Network's (CBRIN) premises	Improve access to CBRIN's programs and spaces for businesses	2023-25	Completed
2.13	Explore opportunities to allow businesses to access maker spaces	Businesses can prototype their products	2023-25	Completed

Craft your story
Lightbulb Studios

June 2025 Update

The ACT Government as a cornerstone investor has committed \$10 million for the new Activate Capital Fund managed by EpiCorp.

The Fund will support start-ups, the innovation ecosystem, and the commercialisation of ideas generated by ACT-based tertiary education, research, and business sectors, and will help guide some of Canberra's most innovative companies to scale up, which will help grow new and emerging sectors in the ACT.

In 2024 the ACT Government provided Level 4, 1 Moore Street, doubling Canberra Innovation Network's (CBRIN's) presence in the building. This space was refurbished with ACT Government funding as a purpose-built facility designed to support ACT-based high-growth potential businesses and was opened in November 2024 as the Scaleup Hub.

The Scaleup Hub caters to locally based enterprises that have secured capital or demonstrated strong revenue growth, positioning them for rapid customer acquisition and job creation. The facility offers a collaborative and innovation-driven environment, equipped with modern coworking spaces, meeting rooms, breakout areas, and high-speed connectivity.

First tenants started moving to the Scaleup Hub in December 2024 and 68 per cent of the facility was utilised as at March 2025.

In 2024 Canberra Innovation Network (CBRIN) received \$270,000 in funding through the ACT Government's Priority Investment Program to pilot the ACT Prototyping Voucher Program.

This program provides eligible entrepreneurs, startups, and innovative businesses with vouchers of up to \$10,000 to access specialised prototyping equipment, facilities, and technical expertise that would otherwise be cost-prohibitive. The program is designed to accelerate the development of new products and significantly improve existing solutions, with a strong emphasis on innovation, sustainability, and commercial potential.

Participating institutions include Canberra's leading higher education and research organisations, including the Australian National University, University of Canberra, University of New South Wales Canberra and the Canberra Institute of Technology, offering access to advanced prototyping tools and expert support.



3

PRIORITY THREE

Showcase and promote local small businesses

● On track or completed ● Behind schedule ● Paused / Resource or Priority restrained

Action	How this will help business	Timeframe	Status
3.1 Pilot hosting a Small Business Expo codesigned with business and industry groups	Strengthen the small business eco-system by supporting opportunities for showcasing and networking	2023-24	Completed
3.2 Through our promotion, reflect the diversity of business owners including those living with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse owners, women and LGBTIQ+ business operators	Seeing the diversity of business owners will encourage more people to consider starting a business	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
3.3 Team Canberra events – industry showcases and major conferences and business events	Opportunities to connect with new customers and showcase capabilities	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing



*Dr Yasmine Gray, GetAboutAble at the National Arboretum Canberra
Lightbulb Studios*

June 2025 Update

Completed. See [2024 Progress Update](#).

Since July 2023, the ACT Government has featured 18 female-owned businesses in the CBR Business Newsletter, including Her Kitchen Table, Giggly Wiggly Balloons, Digital Confluence, Evalu8, Remote Water Analytics, and Digital Confluence.

The ACT Government has also promoted nine culturally and linguistically diverse businesses, including Bruce Super Convenience, Les Bistronomes and Minami Studios, and two businesses that are run by people with disability - RecycleAbilities and GetAboutAble.

All these businesses have a connection with ACT Government delivered or supported programs and encourage action from other women in business to access support or programs.

Programs that support diverse businesses are also promoted, including the 2024 Badji Pitch on a Page microgrant program to support local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses engage in learning and mentoring activities to enhance competitiveness.

CBRIN continues to deliver programs targeting women entrepreneurs such as its Female Founders program and tracks participation of women across their programs and support for founders and entrepreneurs.

The ACT Government has continued to facilitate Team Canberra representation at industry events including:

- Land Forces 2024 – 11 companies supported
- MilCIS 2024 – 12 companies supported
- Avalon 2025 – 18 companies supported
- International Aeronautical Congress 2025 – to be delivered in October 2025 – anticipated support to 10-15 companies

Action	How this will help business	Timeframe	Status
3.4 Support and feature small businesses through ACT festivals and events including the Multicultural Festival, Enlighten and Floriade	Opportunities for small businesses to showcase their products and services to local and interstate audiences	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
3.5 Enable small businesses to connect to Brand Canberra resources via an online toolkit and reflect their Canberra connections	Small businesses will have tools to help them express the unique Canberran qualities of their business	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing

June 2025 Update

Floriade

- 63 per cent local food and beverage vendors (engaged directly by Events ACT)
- 54 per cent local contractors
- 94 per cent individual local performers
- 36 per cent market stalls engaged (by Events ACT)

Enlighten

- 85 per cent local food and beverage vendors (engaged directly by Events ACT)
- 14 Canberra region beverage producers featured through Bar Berra
- 8 per cent local food and beverage vendors (engaged by partners)
- 90 per cent local contractors
- 88 per cent individual local performers

Lights! Canberra! Action!

- 100 per cent local food and beverage vendors (engaged directly by Events ACT)
- 83 per cent local contractors
- 100 per cent individual local performers

Symphony in the Park

- 100 per cent local food and beverage vendors (engaged by partners)
- 100 per cent local market stall holders (engaged by partners)
- 89 per cent local contractors
- 86 per cent individual local performers

Canberra Day Celebrations

- 100 per cent local food and beverage vendors (engaged by partners)
- 89 per cent local contractors
- 100 per cent individual local performers
- 100 per cent local market stall holders (engaged by partners)

Canberra Balloon Spectacular

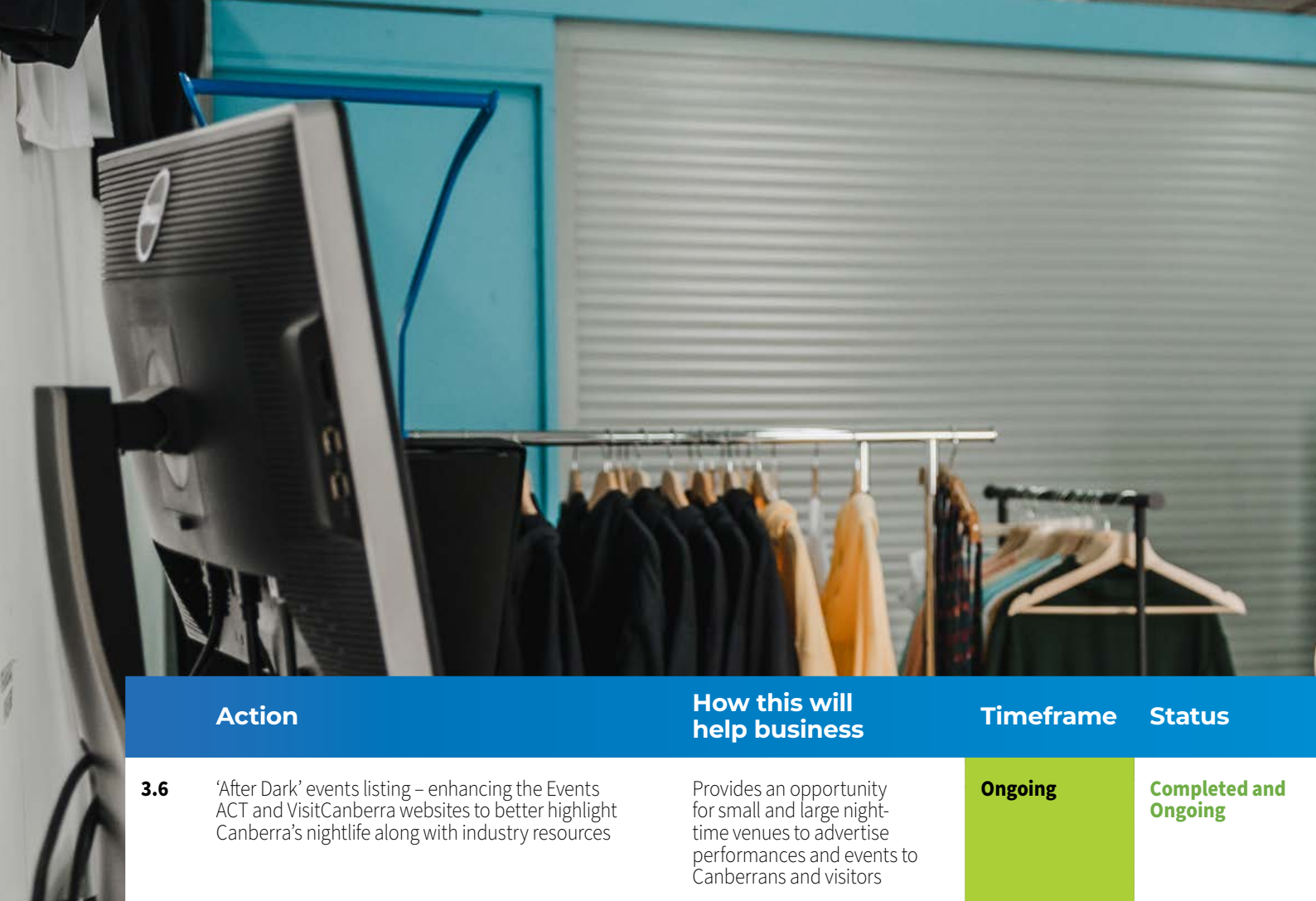
- 100 per cent local food and beverage vendors (engaged directly by Events ACT)
- 92 per cent local contractors
- 100 per cent individual local performers
- 89 per cent local market stall holders (engaged by Events ACT)

National Multicultural Festival 2025

- 81 per cent (approx.) local food vendors/market stall holders
- 78 per cent (approx.) local performers/artists/community groups (not including Showcase performances programmed by community)
- 80 per cent (approx.) local contractors/suppliers (or with local branches)

The [Canberra Toolkit](#) continues to make Canberra imagery and Brand CBR guides and logos accessible to businesses who wish to promote their local pride.

A brand guide for tourism industry businesses was released in December 2024.



Action	How this will help business	Timeframe	Status
3.6 'After Dark' events listing – enhancing the Events ACT and VisitCanberra websites to better highlight Canberra's nightlife along with industry resources	Provides an opportunity for small and large night-time venues to advertise performances and events to Canberrans and visitors	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
3.7 Sponsor a range of awards programs including the Canberra Women in Business Awards	Local small businesses are celebrated and recognised	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
3.8 Deliver Arts and Cultural Tourism Capability workshops to the arts sector on storytelling, marketing and providing a quality tourism experience	Increase capability to attract visitors	2023	Completed
3.9 Develop a future arts precinct in Kingston as a destination for Canberra's visual arts and culture. This will include working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Network and community on the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Space in the precinct	Artists and arts businesses will showcase their work as part of a premier arts precinct	Ongoing	In progress



*Evi Oju, Capital Socks
Supercurious*

June 2025 Update

The [VisitCanberra](#) and [Events ACT](#) websites both continue to feature an After Dark section that highlight the range of events and performances available in Canberra in the evenings.

Where possible events from this listing are also promoted through the Events ACT electronic direct mail (EDM) and Events ACT social media posts.

The [Canberra Region Visitors Centre \(CRVC\)](#) continues to actively support businesses to list their events in the 'What's On' guide and 'After Dark' section to ensure there is a good diversity of activity. Volunteers at the CRVC continue to proactively call businesses they know are running night-time events.

The After Dark guide has been promoted through ACT Government channels.

To date the After Dark pages have had more than 19,000 views since launch, and the "What's On" section has been viewed more than 860,000 times.

The ACT Government was a Gold Sponsor of the 2024 Canberra Women in Business Awards. This sponsorship supported the 2024 ACT Government Small Businesswoman of the Year awarded to Bryden Campbell of Brand Rebellion. The sponsorship was valued at \$10,000.

The ACT Government supported the nomination process via promotion through ACT Government business communication channels (for example, the CBR Business Update e-newsletter). The ACT Government has committed to support the 2025 Canberra Women in Business Awards.

Other industry event sponsorships supported by the ACT Government in 2024-25 include:

- 2024 Canberra International Riesling Challenge
- 2024 ACT Chief Minister's Pearcey Award
- 2025 Inaugural National Wine Festival

Completed. See [2024 Progress Update](#).

The Kingston Arts Precinct project is progressing, with the Subdivision Design Application due to be submitted with the Territory Planning Authority in June 2025.

Design of the Territory assets is occurring concurrently with the subdivision. The Concept Design phase has concluded and consultation with arts organisations on the Schematic Design will commence in June 2025.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Space Reference Group is guiding the design and development of the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Space within the precinct. Two strategic planning workshops on 1 November 2024 and 28 February 2025 explored the vision and governance structure for this new organisation.

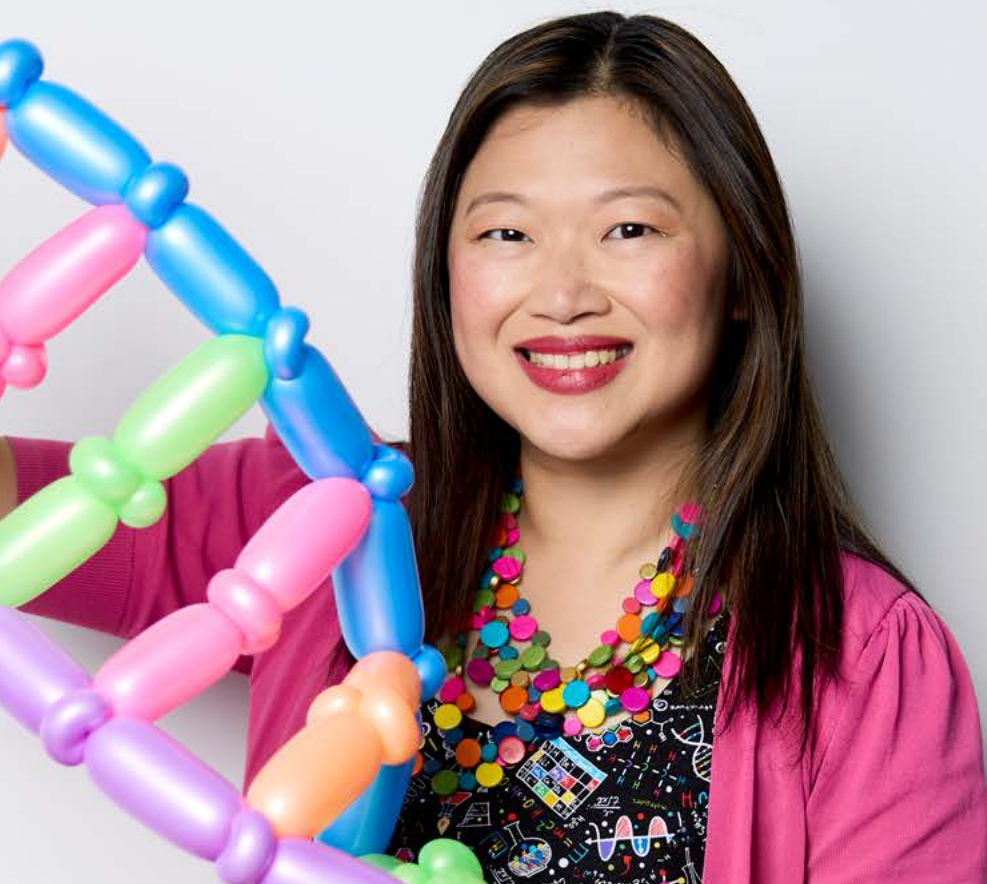


PRIORITY FOUR

Futureproofing small businesses

● On track or completed ● Behind schedule ● Paused / Resource or Priority restrained

Action	How this will help business	Timeframe	Status
4.1 Commission research to better understand the survival rates of businesses in Canberra including the success factors and the range of reasons businesses close	Provide an evidence base for government decision making to help improve survival rates for business	2023-26	In progress
4.2 Explore the development of micro-credentials for small business owners in areas such as business administration and digital skills	Opportunities for professional development for business-people delivered in a way that meets their needs	Ongoing	Completed
4.3 Create opportunities for businesses to increase awareness and knowledge about cyber security and data security and how to protect their business and their customers	Information and support for businesses	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing



*Chloe Lim, Giggly Wiggly
Lightbulb Studios*

June 2025 Update

Specific commissioned research has not progressed due to resourcing constraints and prioritising other actions in consultation with stakeholders. The ACT Government continues to monitor national data sources and engage with stakeholders about issues affecting businesses in the ACT.

From 2024 the ACT and Australian Governments have partnered to deliver Fee Free TAFE through the Canberra Institute of Technology. Eligible learners have been able to apply for course and skill sets in subjects such as Literacy for the Workplace, Numeracy for the Workplace, Introduction to Organisational Cyber Security, Leadership and Management, Networking and Web Development and Project Management.

The ACT Government's [Industry Action Plans](#) were released in 2024 and include 100 actions that can be taken over the short, medium and long term to grow an increasingly qualified workforce, improve equity access and participation, and ensure we have a high-quality, flexible and responsive VET system.

The ACT Government will continue to implement these actions with training and industry partners in 2025, including exploration of possible micro-credentials to support small business.

Cyber security information continues to be frequently featured in the CBR Business Update e-newsletter, including an article during Cyber Awareness Month in October 2024.

The Canberra Cyber Hub undertook a survey during the period to understand the current state of business cyber resilience in the ACT, covering topics such as:

- common cyber security concepts
- implementation levels of these concepts
- barriers to implementation
- preferred resources

Survey results are being used to shape work for cyber business uplift activities through the Canberra Cyber Hub.

Action	How this will help business	Timeframe	Status
4.4 Developing more free resources for businesses to learn, including webinars, workshops, and case studies	Professional development and support for people in business to access at a time that suits them	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
4.5 Under the Arts Action Plan, partner with Creative Australia to increase the capacity of local artists, arts organisations and creative businesses to engage with philanthropy, develop private sector partnerships and make connections	Professional development to support arts and creative businesses to learn and grow	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
4.6 Work with the Australian Government to ensure our skilled migration needs are met	Businesses are supported to build, attract, and retain the right workforce	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing

June 2025 Update

The [Tools and Resources](#) page of the Business hub website is frequently updated with information, advice and resources to support businesses.

The Canberra Business Advice and Support Service (CBASS) has delivered multiple workshops through the period including:

- Turn your Creative Hobby into a Business - July 2024
- Managing Expectations in Business - September 2024
- Transform your Business: Incorporate meditation into your daily routine - September 2024
- Expect the Unexpected - Surviving and thriving in a changing global landscape - May 2025

CBRIN's bi-monthly Female Founder events feature inspirational keynote speakers, tradeshow events featuring women-led businesses, and access to sharing share valuable advice and experiences with supportive colleagues who share their entrepreneurial journeys.

The Sustainable Business Program provides advice and training to workplaces, either in-person or online. The Program held various events on electrification and showcased leading businesses, including:

- Shaping your sustainable business: hear from women leading the charge to net zero - September 2024
- Commercial Kitchen Showcase - February-March 2025
- Electric connections: the benefits of induction - February 2025
- Electric connections: the future of cooking - March 2025
- Electrification for commercial properties - March 2025

Three fundraising workshops were delivered by Creative Australia in 2024-25:

'Fundraising in the Arts: A cultural and creative industries meet up' was attended by 55 people including independent artists and representatives from arts organisations – December 2024

'Fundraising in the Arts' workshop was attended by 25 arts managers, administrators and board members - May 2025

'Artist as Fundraiser' workshop was attended by 12 independent artists – May 2025

artsACT is leveraging the work of the Australian Government Creative Workplaces to support creative businesses in the ACT build fair, safe and respectful workplaces. This includes through participation on the Creative Workplaces Reference Group and promoting Creative Workplaces as a resource for local artists, arts organisations and creative businesses.

In the 2023-24 period, the ACT Government nominated 1,200 skilled migrants across a diverse range of occupations to support local businesses and industries.

For the 2024-25 period, the ACT Government received an increased skilled migration allocation of 1,800 places. This allocation is divided into 800 Temporary Skilled visas and 1,000 Permanent visas, reflecting the growing demand for skilled workers in the Territory.

The ACT Government has continued its collaboration with the Australian Government on the implementation of the Migration Strategy. This includes the introduction of the National Innovation Visa. This visa is designed to attract exceptionally talented individuals who can drive innovation and make significant contributions to various industries.

Action	How this will help business	Timeframe	Status
4.7 Under the Skilled to Succeed: Workforce and Skills Agenda for the ACT, implement specific industry skills and workforce action plans for priority industries, Building and Construction, Technology, Experience (hospitality, tourism, recreation and creative industries), Renewable and Sustainable energy and Caring industries	Specific and tailored actions to support businesses with workforce challenges	Ongoing	Completed
4.8 Expand the workforce attraction online Toolkit and provide resources to promote the distinct benefits of working and living in Canberra	Businesses will have tools and resources to help them market Canberra to help attract potential employees	Ongoing	Completed
4.9 Continue supporting small businesses with emission reduction and electrification by delivering the Sustainable Business Program.	Businesses can contribute to the government's policy and actions	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
4.10 Develop an action plan for the Circular Economy with stakeholders and the community, including business and industry	Businesses can influence actions to achieve a circular economy	2023-24	Completed
4.11 Releasing updates to the ACT Infrastructure Plan, setting the vision for the short, medium, and long term, and outlining a pipeline of infrastructure projects to support the building and construction industry	Businesses have visibility of and can respond to government's future infrastructure plans	2023-25	Completed

June 2025 Update

The ACT Government's [Industry Action Plans](#) were released in 2024 and include 100 actions that can be taken over the short, medium and long term to grow an increasingly qualified workforce, improve equity access and participation, and ensure we have a high-quality, flexible and responsive VET system.

The ACT Government will continue to implement these actions along with the National Skills Agreement and ACT Skills Plan 2024–28.

Information and resources on canberra.com.au/live were updated in 2024, including new stories of people who have made the move to Canberra to live and work.

The ACT Government's [Integrated Energy Plan 2024-2030](#) was released in 2024, detailing support for businesses through programs such as the Sustainable Business Program and Commercial Cooking Trial.

Businesses can access:

- free onsite assessments from technical experts to consider opportunities to improve energy and water efficiency, waste management independent advice and a tailored action plan;
- access to resources, training and rebates of up to \$13,000, comprised of up to \$10,000 for energy and water efficiency upgrades and up to \$3,000 for an EV charger; and
- technical advice for commercial fleets to accelerate the adoption of zero emissions vehicles.

Completed. See [2024 Progress Update](#)

Updating the ACT Infrastructure Plan was completed in August 2024. The new plan details Government's infrastructure priorities across seven sectors:

- City Services, Recreation and Community Facilities
- Climate Action, Energy and Environment
- Education
- Entertainment, Arts and Sports
- Health
- Housing and Land Release
- Transport

The Plan is supported by the ACT Government Infrastructure Pipeline. Information regarding the ACT Infrastructure Plan and Pipeline can be found here:

[Built for CBR - Infrastructure plan](#)

5

PRIORITY FIVE

A one-government approach to business

● On track or completed
 ● Behind schedule
 ● Paused / Resource or Priority restrained

Action	How this will help business	Timeframe	Status
5.1 Support an Economic Development Business and Industry Consultative Forum for consultation and engagement with business leaders	Provides a regular forum to discuss and inform issues of importance to all small businesses	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
5.2 Support an Inter-Directorate Committee of senior ACT Public Servants to lead and coordinate initiatives for business and Canberra's economic development	Supports coordination of strategy and policy across government	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
5.3 Explore a government to business secondment program	More ACT Government employees understanding the business context and experience	Ongoing	Completed
5.4 Co-design a 'small business awareness' training module with business and industry stakeholders for the ACT Public Service and guidance material for engaging with business	More ACT Government employees understanding the small business experience	2023-25	Completed
5.5 Improve the understanding of business within government by further mapping the business user-experience for priority regulated industries	Supports the creation of user-centred programs and information	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing
5.6 Host an annual 'Women in Business meets Women in Government' speaker and networking event	Will create an opportunity to build connections and awareness between government and business	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing

June 2025 Update

This Forum has been re-established to align with the current term of government priorities.

The Forum met in June 2025 with additional members and is in the process of updating the governance arrangements to ensure it remains current and fit for purpose.

The Inter-Directorate Committee continued to meet up until the ACT Election in October 2024.

This Inter-Directorate Committee is in abeyance until the new Machinery of Government changes take effect on 1 July 2025.

It is intended that the Committee will re-convene shortly after these changes take effect.

In March 2025 the updated Secondment Policy was published, identifying how secondment arrangements can occur in two ways:

- A secondment to the ACTPS: is where an eligible person employed by an external organisation works in the ACTPS as if the eligible person was employed by the ACTPS. This is established under a temporary written arrangement between the ACTPS and the external organisation.
- A secondment of an ACTPS employee to an external organisation: is established under a temporary written arrangement between the ACTPS and the external organisation.

In addition, the benefits of entering into secondment arrangements with the business sector are highlighted in the policy as including, but not limited to:

- Developing or gaining expertise and knowledge.
- Supporting the gaining organisation to improve process or gain knowledge ACTPS holds.
- Cross jurisdictional deliverables.
- Partnering across community and industry sectors.

The ACT Government will utilise the Whole of Government HR Executive Leadership Group to promulgate this Policy within directorates and encourage the uptake of secondments.

The ACT Public Service Small Business Awareness Training module has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders and deployed to the Learning Management System.

The training module's target audience is ACTPS working with small business as part of their duties, for example those in front of house roles, policy and regulatory roles, officers undertaking procurement and other roles that deal with local businesses. Guidance material is being finalised.

Results from the Phase 1 user experience mapping continue to inform reforms for the hospitality industry.

Planning is underway for the Women in Business meets Women in Government event 2025 which will be hosted in conjunction with Canberra Women in Business.

Action	How this will help business	Timeframe	Status
5.7 Establish stronger connections with the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments	Will support more consistency and opportunities for improvement – this includes sharing resources, data where appropriate, and insights to better service business.	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing



Bruce Super Convenience Store
Lightbulb Studios

June 2025 Update

The Australian Government's Small Business Ministers' Meeting in December 2024 included participation by all state and territory jurisdictions, at which Ministers endorsed the National Small Business Strategy.

The Australian Government is developing its schedule of 2025 meetings post the 2025 Federal Election.

ACT Government also connects with a range of Australian Government departments and agencies and is a conduit to communicate information and resources to ACT businesses through the ACT's Business Hub website, and e-newsletter.



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