



ACT
Government

Chief Minister, Treasury and
Economic Development

Freedom of Information Publication Coversheet

The following information is provided pursuant to section 28 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*.

FOI Reference: CMTEDDFOI 2022-303

Information to be published	Status
1. Access application	Published
2. Decision notice	Published
3. Documents and schedule	Published
4. Additional information identified	No
5. Fees	Waived
6. Processing time (in working days)	14
7. Decision made by Ombudsman	N/A
8. Additional information identified by Ombudsman	N/A
9. Decision made by ACAT	N/A
10. Additional information identified by ACAT	N/A



Dear Sir

In accordance with Freedom of Information legislation, I request access to the following:

Documents (such as reports) showing the activities of Commissioner Brendan Smyth over the year to 30 June 2022.

Yours faithfully





ACT
Government

Chief Minister, Treasury and
Economic Development

Our ref: CMTEDDFOI2022-303



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

I refer to your application under section 30 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (the Act), received by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) on 29 September 2022, in which you sought access to:

Documents (such as reports) showing the activity of commissioner Brendan Smyth over the year to 30 June 2022

Authority

I am an Information Officer appointed by the Director-General under section 18 of the Act to deal with access applications made under Part 5 of the Act.

Timeframes

In accordance with section 40 of the Act, we were required to provide you with a decision on access to the documents within the terms of your request within 20 working days of receipt. On 17 October 2022, you agreed to an extension of 15 working days, making a decision due by 18 November 2022. Thank you for agreeing to this.

Decision on access

Searches were completed for relevant documents and six documents were identified that fall within the scope of your request.

I have included as **Attachment A** to this decision the schedule of relevant documents. This provides a description of each document that falls within the scope of your request and the access decision for each of those documents.

I have decided to grant full access to five documents and partial access to one document relevant to your request.

My access decisions are detailed further in the following statement of reasons and the documents released to you are provided as **Attachment B** to this letter.

In accordance with section 54(2) of the Act a statement of reasons outlining my decisions is below.

Statement of Reasons

In reaching my access decisions, I have taken the following into account:

- the Act,
- the content of the documents that fall within the scope of your request.

Exemption claimed

My reasons for deciding not to grant access to components of the relevant documents are as follows:

Information that would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest to disclose under the test set out in section 17 of the Act

Public Interest

The Act has a presumption in favour of disclosure. As a decision maker I am required to decide where, on balance, public interest lies. As part of this process, I must consider factors favouring disclosure and non-disclosure.

In *Hogan v Hinch* (2011) 243 CLR 506, [31] French CJ stated that when ‘used in a statute, the term [public interest] derives its content from “the subject matter and the scope and purpose” of the enactment in which it [public interest] appears’. Section 17(1) of the Act sets out the test, to be applied to determine whether disclosure of information would be contrary to the public interest. These factors are found in subsection 17(2) and Schedule 2 of the Act.

Taking into consideration the information found to be within the scope of your request, I have identified that the following public interest factors are relevant to determine if release of the information contained within these documents is within the ‘public interest’.

Factors favouring disclosure in the public interest under Schedule 2, s2.1:

(a) *disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to do any of the following:*

- (i) *Promote open discussion of public affairs and enhance the government’s accountability.*
- (ii) *Contribute to positive and informed debate on important issues or matters of public interest.*
- (iv) *Ensure effective oversight of expenditure of public funds.*

I place considerable weight on the release of information concerning the work undertaken by Mr Smyth in his role as Commissioner for International Engagement and the COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner. It is reasonable to consider that the ACT public would be interested the visibility of this work.

However, these factors are required to be balanced against those factors favouring nondisclosure.

Factors favouring nondisclosure in the public interest under Schedule 2, s2.2:

(a) *disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to do any of the following:*

- (ii) *Prejudice the protection of an individual's right to privacy or any other right under the [Human Rights Act 2004](#).*
- (xi) *Prejudice trade secrets, business affairs or research of an agency or person.*
- (xii) *Prejudice an agency's ability to obtain confidential information.*

The following information relates to one attachment, which was Attachment C to document 5, titled COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner – Client Records. It is a spreadsheet that contains a significant amount of information.

Having reviewed this document, I consider that the protection of an individual's right to privacy, especially in the course of dealings with the ACT Government is a significant factor as the parties involved have provided their personal information for the purposes of working with the ACT Government. This, in my opinion, outweighs the benefit which may be derived from releasing personal information of the individual's involved in this matter.

Individuals are entitled to expect that the personal information they have supplied as part of this process will be dealt with in a manner that protects their privacy. Considering the type of information to be withheld from release, I am satisfied that the factors in favour of release can still be met while protecting the personal information of the individuals involved. I therefore weigh the factor for nondisclosure more highly than the factor in favour of release in this instance.

I have also considered the impact of disclosing information which relates to business affairs. In the case of *Re Mangan and The Treasury* [2005] AATA 898 the term 'business affairs' was interpreted as meaning 'the totality of the money-making affairs of an organisation or undertaking as distinct from its private or internal affairs'. Schedule 2 section 2.2(a)(xi) allows for government information to be withheld from release if disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to prejudice the trade secrets, business affairs or research of an agency or person. The information withheld from release concerns member contributions and could reasonably be expected to unfairly prejudice the business affairs of various stakeholders.

I also note that this information was provided with the understanding that it would be kept confidential. The release of this information could undermine trust in the ACT government and have negative impact on the future supply of this type of information.

Having applied the test outlined in section 17 of the Act and deciding that release of personal information and information pertaining to business affairs contained in the documents is not in the public interest to release, I have chosen to redact this information in accordance with section 50(2). Noting the pro-disclosure intent of the Act, I am satisfied that redacting only the information that I believe is not in the public interest to release will ensure that the intent of the Act is met and will provide you with access to the majority of the information held by CMTEDD within the scope of your request.

Online publishing – Disclosure Log

Under section 28 of the Act, CMTEDD maintains an online record of access applications called a disclosure log. Your original access application, my decision and documents

released to you in response to your access application will be published on the CMTEDD disclosure log three days after my decision. Your personal contact details will not be published. You may view CMTEDD disclosure log at <https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/functions/foi>

Ombudsman Review

My decision on your access request is a reviewable decision as identified in Schedule 3 of the Act. You have the right to seek Ombudsman review of this outcome under section 73 of the Act within 20 working days from the day that my decision is published in CMTEDD disclosure log, or a longer period allowed by the Ombudsman.

We recommend using this form [Applying for an Ombudsman Review](#) to ensure you provide all of the required information. Alternatively, you may write to the Ombudsman:

The ACT Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Via email: actfoi@ombudsman.gov.au

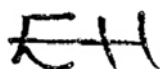
ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) Review

Under section 84 of the Act, if a decision is made under section 82(1) on an Ombudsman review, you may apply to the ACAT for review of the Ombudsman decision. Further information may be obtained from the ACAT:

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal
Level 4, 1 Moore St
GPO Box 370
Canberra City ACT 2601
Telephone: (02) 6207 1740
<http://www.acat.act.gov.au/>

Should you have any queries in relation to your request please contact me by telephone on 6207 7754 or email CMTEDDFOI@act.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,



Emma Hotham
Information Officer
Information Access Team
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

18 November 2022



ACT
Government

Chief Minister, Treasury and
Economic Development

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST SCHEDULE

WHAT ARE THE PARAMETERS OF THE REQUEST

Reference NO.

Documents (such as reports) showing the activity of commissioner Brendan Smyth over the year to 30 June 2022

CMTEDDFOI2022-303

Ref No	Page number	Description	Date	Status	Reason for Exemption	Online Release Status
1	1-9	Commissioner for International Engagement – Quarterly report July to September 2021	Sept 2021	Full		Yes
2	10-19	Commissioner for International Engagement – Quarterly report October to December 2021	Dec 2021	Full		Yes
3	20-27	Commissioner for International Engagement – Quarterly report January to March 2022	March 2022	Full		Yes
4	28-35	Commissioner for International Engagement – Quarterly report April to June 2022	June 2022	Full		Yes
5	36-55	COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner – August 2021 to July 2022 (includes attachments A and B) Attachment C – (spreadsheet) not provided	July 2022	Partial	Attachment C – Schedule 2.2(a)(xi) Schedule 2.2(a)(xii) Schedule 2.2(a)(ii)	Yes
6	56-	Office of International Engagement 2021-22 Report to the Chief Minister for the ACT (includes attachments A, B and C)	July 2022	Full		Yes
Total No of Docs						
6						

**COMMISSIONER FOR
INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT**

**QUARTERLY REPORT
JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2021**

Foreword

The Commissioner for International Engagement (CIE) plays an important role in advising, coordinating, and adding value to the ACT Government's existing international development and engagement activities across the spectrum of Government. In particular, the CIE focuses on nurturing and supporting engagement successes arising from direct air route links, Canberra's sister city relationships, evolving export markets and inward investment opportunities.

The ACT Government's 2016 *Canberra's International Engagement Strategy* (IES) demonstrates a clear commitment to building enduring international relationships for the economic, cultural and social benefit of the ACT. The Office of International Engagement (OIE) provides a central point within Government to coordinate and integrate the execution of the IES, and provides a clear access point for external stakeholders, such as the business community, the diplomatic community, and our regional partner organisations.

Abbreviations

Commissioner for International Engagement – CIE

Office for International Engagement – OIE

Canberra's International Engagement Strategy – IES

Key Capability Area – KCA

Canberra's International Engagement Strategy

Launched in September 2016, the IES provides direction for where the ACT Government will focus its international engagement activities, detailing our particular sector strengths (known as Key Capability Areas or KCAs), what its priority markets are, the priority cities for engagement within several of those markets, and what its specific focus of engagement activities will be. Further, the IES provides the framework for determining where the trade missions go and which of the seven KCAs and other activities will be the focus of these missions.

The IES is currently being updated to include new key countries, regions and KCAs.

Helping Realise the ACT's Ambitions through International Engagement

The OIE undertakes 12 fundamental activities in order to work toward achieving its strategic objectives.¹ Outlined in this section is the work of the OIE, categorised through these 12 fundamental activities.

TARGETED PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES TO GROW OUR REPUTATION AND PRESTIGE

Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the targeted program activities were suspended for this quarter.

PROVIDING STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP OVER THE INTERNATIONAL INBOUND AND OUTBOUND ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING CITY-TO-CITY ENGAGEMENT

All current international inbound and outbound activities have been suspended due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

OIE is preparing for the resumption of such activities when allowed by the lifting of Commonwealth travel restrictions, continued easing of COVID-19 restrictions of the ACT as implemented by the Chief Health Officer and the resumption of international flights.

DEFINING AND IMPLEMENTING A TARGETED PROGRAM OF ACT GOVERNMENT, MINISTERIAL AND INDUSTRY TRADE MISSIONS TO PRIORITY MARKETS

On an annual and ongoing basis, the CIE defines, plans or otherwise coordinates trade mission activity delivered across the ACT Government. Most trade missions involve the direct participation of the Chief Minister or the CIE, or both. Trade mission programs are revised yearly and take into consideration the dynamic and changing global landscape. These programs have been developed in close alignment of the IES.

During this quarter, the OIE continued longer-term planning of potential trade missions that will occur in a changed COVID-19 pandemic environment and following the reestablishment of safe international air travel.

¹ ACT Government – Office of International Engagement, 2019, *Canberra's International Engagement Strategy*, 8 September 2016, ACT Government, Canberra, p. 9.

COMMISSIONER FOR INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT

CREATING AN INBOUND MISSION FACILITATION PROGRAM THAT QUALIFIES ENQUIRIES, PROACTIVELY TARGETS INBOUND OPPORTUNITY AND MANAGES PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY FOR INBOUND DELEGATION VISITS

While inbound delegation activity ended during the third quarter of 2019-20 due to the COVID-19 pandemic conditions, the OIE continues to communicate with the diplomatic community to be prepared for a potentially rapid resumption of delegation activity.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND LIAISING WITH CANBERRA'S DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY

The CIE met with or had discussions with the following members of the Diplomatic Community:

- Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
- Embassy of the Argentine Republic
- Embassy of Austria
- High Commission for the People's Republic of Bangladesh
- Royal Belgian Embassy
- High Commission of the Republic of Botswana
- British High Commission
- High Commission of Brunei Darussalam
- Royal Embassy of Cambodia
- High Commission of Canada
- Embassy of the People's Republic of China
- Embassy of the Republic of Costa Rica
- High Commission of the Republic of Cyprus
- Royal Danish Embassy
- Embassy of France
- Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany
- Embassy of the Holy See to Australia
- Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia
- Embassy of Ireland
- Embassy of Italy
- Embassy of Japan
- Embassy of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
- Embassy of Lebanon
- High Commission of Malaysia
- High Commission of the Republic of Mauritius
- Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
- High Commission of the Republic of Nauru
- Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- New Zealand High Commission
- Embassy of the Republic of Panama

COMMISSIONER FOR INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT

- Embassy of the Republic of Peru
- Embassy of the Philippines
- Embassy of the State of Qatar
- High Commission of the Republic of Singapore
- Embassy of Spain
- Royal Thai Embassy
- Embassy of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
- Embassy of the United Arab Emirates
- Embassy of the United States of America
- Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

1 July - Met with Ambassador of Panama

5 July - Met with British High Commissioner

9 July – Met with Singapore High Commissioner

14 July – Meeting with British High Commission

20 July - Met with Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

23 July - Met with High Commissioner for the Republic of Nauru

28 July – Meeting with the Canadian High Commission

28 July - Attended Bicentennial Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Peru

28 July - Met with Apostolic Nuncio for Holy See

29 July - Attended Diplomatic Farewell Lunch for Ambassador of Ireland

30 July - Met with ASEAN Ambassadors

4 August - Met with Ambassador of Denmark

6 August - Met with Defence Attaché Canberra, Embassy of Spain

9 August - Attended farewell reception for His Excellency the Apostolic Nuncio

WORKING WITH THE CANBERRA BUSINESS CHAMBER TO CONNECT INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COUNCILS AND CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE TO UTILISE THEIR NETWORKS AND MARKET KNOWLEDGE

Regular communications with the Canberra Business Chamber (CBC) continued. The OIE has recurring meetings with CBC at an officer level to maintain the strong working relationship and to further coordinate international activities.

Throughout the quarter, the CIE and OIE officers regularly met with; Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Australia China Business Council; Auckland Chamber of Commerce; and Wellington Chamber of Commerce.

COMMISSIONER FOR INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT

WORKING WITH OUR CANBERRA REGION PARTNERS TO ENHANCE EXPORT CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY

The OIE continued to assist in the work to establish daily exports of premium fresh food from the Canberra Region.

In this regard, the CIE has ongoing dialogue with the Canberra Airport, the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, and other participants in the Australia-based export supply chain.

Air freight export activity continues from Australia during the pandemic, assisted by the International Freight Assistance Mechanism.

REINVIGORATING THE ACT'S FORMAL GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIPS WITH A VIEW TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN CANBERRA'S KEY CAPABILITY AREAS

The CIE has discussions with foreign-government representatives to discuss bilateral trade and export from the ACT through our KCAs. In this quarter the CIE liaised with many diplomatic missions on economic opportunities. The OIE continued its positive dialogue with DFAT and Austrade regarding export conditions and opportunities.

MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ACT REPRESENTATION (EITHER AT AN OFFICIAL LEVEL OR THROUGH THE CANBERRA BUSINESS AND RESEARCH COMMUNITY) AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND TRADE SHOWS RELEVANT TO CANBERRA'S KEY CAPABILITY AREAS

While pandemic conditions have typically not allowed in-person attendance at international conferences and trade shows, the OIE continues to work with Business and Innovation, CMTEDD to identify key opportunities to represent Canberra at international events, particularly web-based ones.

The focus remains on boosting international opportunities in sector KCAs in which Canberra already excels and has a potential for continued growth.

LEADING ENGAGEMENT WITH THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INCLUDING AUSTRADE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE NETWORK TO PROMOTE ACT OPPORTUNITIES AND LEVERAGE THE INCENTIVES AND SUPPORT THAT ARE AVAILABLE

The OIE works with DFAT and Austrade to support programs of trade to key markets, as well as promote Canberra as a preferred place to visit, study, invest and do business in Australia. The OIE keeps abreast of Commonwealth-level incentives and support for ACT exporting stakeholders. This is especially important within a challenging export environment during

COMMISSIONER FOR INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

QUARTERLY REPORT

the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout this quarter the OIE officers and the Business Development Manager in Singapore continued working with Austrade to promote ACT opportunities in South East Asian countries.

ENSURING THAT, AT THEIR CORE, ALL FORMAL GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENTS SUPPORT THE GROWTH AND ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION OF THE ACT ECONOMY AND ALIGN WITH THE STRATEGIC INTENT OF THIS STRATEGY

The OIE has developed a draft *Sister City and other Formal Agreements Framework (Framework)*, a guideline for government-to-government arrangements. The draft *Framework* is designed to attract potential formal arrangements with international cities that maximise cultural, innovation and, foremost, trade potential for ACT businesses, other institutions and our community.

The OIE has been tasked with the implementation of the Commonwealth's Foreign Arrangement Scheme on behalf of the ACT and some federal departments.

ENSURING FUTURE CITY-TO-CITY RELATIONSHIPS ALIGN WITH THE ACT GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES, SHARE A COMMON ECONOMIC VISION AND BE PROACTIVELY RESOURCED AND MANAGED TO REALISE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL BENEFITS FOR THE CITY

Future city-to-city relationship requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and are proposed to be assessed against economic indicators, the ease of doing business, and the strategic importance of the relationship to the ACT. The requests will also be measured against parameters set in the *Sister City and other Formal Agreements Framework*, as discussed above, for future formal arrangements.

The OIE continues to engage with the Canberra Nara Sister City Committee on the Sister City Agreement. On 10 August a quarterly committee meeting took place to discuss the planning of Canberra Nara Candle Festival in October.

The OIE continues to engage with Nara City Council and conducted a quarterly meeting with Nara City officials on 27 July.

International Engagement

International Trade Missions were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restriction on international travel.

COMMISSIONER FOR INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT

Domestic Engagement

- 2 July – Attended Senior Business Leaders lunch function
- 2 July – Attended Warm Tree function
- 5 July – Attended CraftACT farewell reception
- 6 July – Design Canberra 2021 Design-in-Residence event
- 14 July – Met with ANU
- 19 July - Met with Canberra Friends of Dili
- 19 July - Met with Australia-Korea Business Council
- 20 July - Attended Festival of Ambitious Exporting Ideas
- 27 July – Meeting with Nara City Council
- 29 July - Met with CEO of CRJO
- 29 July - Met with Outlander Solutions
- 2 August - Attended Canberra Region Tourism Advisory Forum
- 3 August - Attended a webinar: *Bio-Circular-Green Economy Solutions from Thailand*
- 3 August - Met with Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Sydney, for Head of Service
- 3 August - Facilitated the ACT Directorates International Engagement Committee meeting
- 4 August - Met with the Chair of Canberra Nara Sister City Committee
- 5 August - Attended Australia China Business Council Canberra Networking Day
- 7 August - Attended Hiroshima and Nagasaki Commemoration event
- 7 August - Meeting with Friends of Dili
- 7 August - Attended Canberra Symphony Orchestra concert
- 9 August - Attended Austrade's Supply Chain Roundtable meeting
- 9 August - Attended Brumbies Brett Robinson & MacDougall Awards
- 10 August - Hosted Canberra Nara Sister City Committee meeting
- 11 August - Attended a webinar: *Greater Bay Area Opportunities – Innovation in Financial Services, by Australia China Business Council*
- 11 August - Met with Manuka Oval
- 12 August - Attended International Business Connect event
- 12 August - Attended a webinar: *Australia India Chamber of Commerce's celebration of Indian Independence Day*
- 13 August - Met with Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- 17 August - Met with the Australian Malaysia Business Council
- 17 August - Met with Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Australia
- 18 August - Met with Soldier On
- 19 August - Met with EarlyBirds
- 20 August - Met with BMNT Australia
- 23 August - Attended IFAM NSW & ACT Government Officials Discussion
- 23 August - Met with Deloitte

COMMISSIONER FOR INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT

- 24 August - Attended Austrade Shine with Australia briefing
- 26 August - Attended a webinar: *Unlocking Australia's \$27 billion Synthetic Biology opportunity*
- 31 August - Attended IFAM NSW & ACT Industry Freight Briefing
- 1 September - Met with PSD Global Inc
- 1 September - Attended Canberra Region Tourism Advisory Forum
- 1 September - Attended the United States Studies Centre's Alliance 70th Anniversary webinar
- 2 September - Met with Canberra Chamber of Business
- 6 September - Met with Australia War Memorial
- 7 September - Met with DFAT
- 7 September - Attended a webinar: *Let's get on with the Jab' series featuring Alan Joyce AC, Chief Executive Officer, Qantas Group*
- 8 September - Attended Australia Korea Business Council webinar
- 9 September - Attended a webinar: *How much will vaccine inequity cost?*
- 15 September - Met with Deloitte
- 17 September - Met with ACT Government Honorary Ambassadors
- 21 September - Attended 2021 International Day of Peace event
- 23 September - Attended a webinar: *Korea Konversations # 8 Enrico Palermo, Head of the Australian Space Agency*
- 23 September - Attended a webinar: *Common prosperity in China: change or continuity?*
- 30 September - Met with DFAT: updates on EU and UK FTA negotiations
- 30 September - Attended Austrade's Supply Chain Round Table
- 30 September - Met with Austrade to discuss Austrade's digital services

Delegations

Suspended due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

**COMMISSIONER FOR
INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT**

**QUARTERLY REPORT
OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2021**

Foreword

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The IES is currently being updated to include new key countries, regions and KCAs. This will reflect the evolving breadth of the ACT economy and the widening export, cultural and social opportunities for our community.

Helping Realise the ACT's Ambitions through International Engagement

The OIE undertakes 12 fundamental activities in order to work toward achieving its strategic objectives.¹ Outlined in this section is the work of the OIE, categorised through these 12 fundamental activities.

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QUARTERLY REPORT

CREATING AN INBOUND MISSION FACILITATION PROGRAM THAT QUALIFIES ENQUIRIES, PROACTIVELY TARGETS INBOUND OPPORTUNITY AND MANAGES PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY FOR INBOUND DELEGATION VISITS

While inbound delegation activity ended during the third quarter of 2019-20 due to the COVID-19 pandemic conditions, the OIE continues to communicate with the diplomatic community to be prepared for a potentially rapid resumption of delegation activity.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND LIAISING WITH CANBERRA'S DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY

The CIE met with or had discussions with the following members of the Diplomatic Community:

- Embassy of Austria
- Royal Belgian Embassy
- British High Commission
- Royal Bhutanese Embassy
- High Commission of Canada
- Embassy of the People's Republic of China
- Embassy of the Czech Republic
- Delegation of the European Union
- High Commission of the Republic of Fiji
- Embassy of France
- Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia
- Embassy of Ireland
- Embassy of Israel
- Embassy of Italy
- Embassy of Japan
- High Commission of the Republic of Nauru
- New Zealand High Commission
- High Commission of Papua New Guinea
- Embassy of the Republic of Peru
- Embassy of the Philippines
- Embassy of Poland
- High Commission of Samoa
- High Commission of the Republic of Singapore
- Solomon Islands High Commission
- South African High Commission
- Embassy of Spain
- Royal Thai Embassy
- Embassy of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
- High Commission of the Kingdom of Tonga
- Embassy of the United States of America

COMMISSIONER FOR INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT

- High Commission of the Republic of Vanuatu

24 October - Attended farewell reception for Indonesian Ambassador

28 October - Met with Embassy of the Czech Republic

1 November - Met with Ambassador of Indonesia

3 November - Met with High Commissioner of New Zealand

4 November - Met with Ambassador of the People's Republic of China

5 November - Met with Ambassador of Bhutan

5 November - Attended Share Your Experience of Japan reception

9 November - Attended New Zealand Defence Force dinner reception

10 November - Attended Next Steps for the UK-Australia FTA reception

15 November - Attended Belgian King's Day

16 November - Met with Delegation of the European Union

16 November - Met with British High Commission

16 November - Attended a film screening by British High Commission

19 November - Attended US Marine Corps reception

22 November – Met with New Zealand Agriculture Minister

23 November - Met with Ambassador of Peru

24 November - Attended 2021 Design Diplomacy at Embassy of Italy

24 November - Met with Ambassador of Ireland

25 November - Attended a reception at Embassy of Italy

26 November - Met with Australian Ambassador to the People's Republic of China

26 November - Attended a farewell reception for Ambassador of Peru

1 December - Attended National Day of Thailand

2 December - Attended a film screening, facilitated by Embassy of Poland

7 December - Met with Embassy of Ireland

8 December - Met with High Commissioner of New Zealand

13 December - Met with Ambassador of Poland

15 December - Attended at a reception at Embassy of Spain

17 December - Met with Delegation of the European Union

17 December - Met with Australian High Commission in Singapore

17 December - Attended National Day of Bhutan

21 December - Met with Embassy of People's Republic of China

WORKING WITH THE CANBERRA BUSINESS CHAMBER TO CONNECT INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COUNCILS AND CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE TO UTILISE THEIR NETWORKS AND MARKET KNOWLEDGE

Regular communication with the Canberra Business Chamber (CBC) continued. The OIE has regular meetings with CBC at an officer level to maintain the strong working relationship and to further coordinate international activities.

COMMISSIONER FOR INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT

On 25 November the CBC facilitated the ACT Export Awards Certificate Presentation. The winners of the ACT Export Awards were invited, and the National Export Awards was streamed live. The CIE presented the certificates to the following National Export Awards winners:

- WildBear Entertainment (Creative Industries category): a content studio that produces factual film and television for broadcast, theatrical and digital distribution.
- Penten (Emerging Exporter category): a Canberra-based cyber technology company providing secure wireless and software services for classified information exchange to defence and government agencies in Australia and abroad.
- Aspen Medical was honoured Hall of Fame 2021 after winning the Health and Biotechnology Award three times, in 2011, 2013 and 2018. Aspen Medical was also recognised as Australian Exporter of the Year for 2018.

Throughout the quarter, the CIE and OIE officers regularly met with; Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Australia China Business Council; and the Malaysia Australia Business Council.

WORKING WITH OUR CANBERRA REGION PARTNERS TO ENHANCE EXPORT CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY

The OIE continued to assist in the work to establish daily exports of premium fresh food from the Canberra Region.

In this regard, the CIE has ongoing dialogue with the Canberra Airport, the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, and other participants in the Australia-based export supply chain.

Air freight export activity continues from Australia during the pandemic, assisted by the International Freight Assistance Mechanism.

REINVIGORATING THE ACT'S FORMAL GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIPS WITH A VIEW TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN CANBERRA'S KEY CAPABILITY AREAS

The CIE has discussions with foreign-government representatives to discuss bilateral trade and export from the ACT through our KCAs. In this quarter the CIE liaised with many diplomatic missions on economic opportunities. The OIE continued its positive dialogue with DFAT and Austrade regarding export conditions and opportunities.

COMMISSIONER FOR INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT

MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ACT REPRESENTATION (EITHER AT AN OFFICIAL LEVEL OR THROUGH THE CANBERRA BUSINESS AND RESEARCH COMMUNITY) AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND TRADE SHOWS RELEVANT TO CANBERRA'S KEY CAPABILITY AREAS

While pandemic conditions have not allowed attendance in-person at international conferences and trade shows, the OIE continues to work with Business and Innovation, CMTEDD to identify key opportunities to represent Canberra at international events, particularly those that are web-based.

The focus remains on boosting international opportunities in sector KCAs in which Canberra already excels and has a potential for continued growth.

The OIE and the Office of the Pacific, DFAT co-hosted a virtual Canberra Pacific Roundtable on 27 October. Ten nations from the Pacific Region were present and discussed the challenges they are currently facing and predictions on what challenges lay ahead for post-COVID recovery.

The Canberra Singapore Space Forum took place online on 25 November. Participants learnt about both the ACT and Singapore space-industry landscape, in terms of opportunities and challenges in research and development, commercial and non-commercial joint ventures and investment needs of the industry.

LEADING ENGAGEMENT WITH THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INCLUDING AUSTRADE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE NETWORK TO PROMOTE ACT OPPORTUNITIES AND LEVERAGE THE INCENTIVES AND SUPPORT THAT ARE AVAILABLE

The OIE works with DFAT and Austrade to support programs of trade to key markets, as well as promote Canberra as a preferred place to visit, study, invest and do business in Australia. The OIE keeps abreast of Commonwealth-level incentives and support for ACT exporting stakeholders. This is especially important within a challenging export environment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout this quarter the OIE officers and the Business Development Manager in Singapore continued working with Austrade to promote ACT opportunities in Southeast Asian countries.

ENSURING THAT, AT THEIR CORE, ALL FORMAL GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENTS SUPPORT THE GROWTH AND ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION OF THE ACT ECONOMY AND ALIGN WITH THE STRATEGIC INTENT OF THIS STRATEGY

The OIE developed a *Sister City and other Formal Agreements Framework (Framework)*, a guideline for government-to-government arrangements. The *Framework* is designed to

COMMISSIONER FOR INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT

assist the OIE and other Government departments in considering the formation or formal agreements with other jurisdictions. It will help us attract formal arrangements with international cities that maximise cultural, innovation and, foremost, trade potential for ACT businesses, other institutions and our community.

The OIE has been tasked with the maintaining the ACT Governments submissions to the Commonwealth's Foreign Arrangement Scheme on behalf of the ACT.

ENSURING FUTURE CITY-TO-CITY RELATIONSHIPS ALIGN WITH THE ACT GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES, SHARE A COMMON ECONOMIC VISION AND BE PROACTIVELY RESOURCED AND MANAGED TO REALISE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL BENEFITS FOR THE CITY

Future city-to-city relationship requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and are proposed to be assessed against economic indicators, the ease of doing business, the strategic importance of the relationship to the ACT, among other factors. The requests will also be measured against parameters set in the *Sister City and other Formal Agreements Framework*, as discussed above, for future formal arrangements.

The OIE continues to engage with the Canberra Nara Sister City Committee on the Sister City Agreement. A regular quarterly committee meeting took place online on 9 November. The agenda included planning of the 30th Sister City anniversary in 2023.

The OIE continues to engage with Nara City council and conducted a quarterly meeting with Nara City officials on 19 October and 7 December. The agenda included COVID-19 updates and planning of the 30th Sister City anniversary in 2023.

International Engagement

International Trade Missions were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restriction on international travel.

Domestic Engagement

5 October - Attended Canberra Region Tourism Advisory Forum

5 October - Met with DFAT

5 October - Attended 2021 Australia Korea New Energy Forum

6 October - Attended Canberra Business Chamber's ACT Budget Breakfast 2021

12 October - Attended 2021 ACT Chief Minister's Export Awards

13 October - Met with DFAT

COMMISSIONER FOR INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT

- 15 October - Attended webinar: *Integrated deterrence in the Indo-Pacific: Advancing the Australia-United States alliance*
- 15 October - Met with Balance Mat
- 15 October - Attended a webinar: *Commerce Anywhere: The Borderless Shopping Experience*
- 15 October - Met with Outdoor Activation Taskforce Working Group
- 19 October - ACCI Business Leaders' Summit 2021
- 19 October - Attended a webinar: *A geoeconomic alliance, the potential and limits of economic statecraft*
- 20 October - Met with RMIT
- 20 October - Met with Outdoor Activation Taskforce Working Group
- 21 October - Attended IGEA Digital Australia 2022 launch
- 28 October - Attended International Freight Assistance Mechanism – NSW/ACT Government discussion
- 28 October - Attended Australia Korea Business Council meeting
- 28 October - Attended Indo-Pacific Business Forum
- 29 October - Met with Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- 29 October - Attended National Capital Art Prize
- 1 November - Met with CRJO
- 2 November - Facilitated ACT Government Directorates International Engagement Committee meeting
- 5 November - Attended China International Import and Export Briefing
- 9 November - Attended Canberra Region Tourism Advisory Forum
- 10 November - Met with DFAT
- 11 November - Attended a webinar: *Austrade Digital Platform for exporters*
- 11 November - Attended 2021 Lowy Lecture, delivered by [REDACTED]
- 16 November - Attended Australia China Business Council ACT AGM and end of year reception
- 17 November - Met with Cre8ive
- 17 November - Attended webinar: *EIU at 75—clarity in an uncertain world*
- 18 November - Met with ANU, TCCS and Nara Canberra Sister City Committee members
- 18 November - Met with Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
- 19 November - Attended Post Lockdown Business Recovery Transition Forum
- 23 November - Attended a briefing session by [REDACTED], Chief Executive Officer, Australian Digital Health Agency
- 23 November - Attended webinar: *Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province - advancing the economic partnership*
- 24 November - Attended DFAT's webinar: *Simplified Trade System*
- 25 November - Attended ACT Export Awards Certificate Presentation

COMMISSIONER FOR INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT

- 30 November - Met with Canberra Airport, Department of Defence, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, CRJO and Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
- 1 December - Attended DFAT's supply chain summit
- 3 December - Met with Italian Chamber of Commerce
- 6 December - Attended Canberra Region Tourism Advisory Forum
- 8 December - Met with Nara City council
- 9 December - Attended a briefing session by [REDACTED], Chief Information Officer, Department of Defence
- 10 December - Attended a briefing session by [REDACTED], Director-General, National Archives of Australia
- 10 December - Met with ACT Multicultural Honorary Ambassadors
- 13 December - Attended Launch of the 2021 Asia Power Index
- 15 December - Met with Chief Officer, ACT Emergency Services
- 15 December - Delivered a presentation at Australia Indonesia Youth Exchange Program
- 16 December - Met with DFAT
- 16 December - Met with Austrade
- 16 December - Attended Brumbies' Women in Business, Leadership and Sport luncheon
- 16 December - Attended the opening of Ancient Greeks exhibition
- 18 December - Attended Award and African Dinner night 2021
- 20 December - Met with Balance Mat
- 22 December - Met with Aussie Peace Walk

Delegations

Suspended due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

Commissioner for International Engagement

**Quarterly Report
January to March 2022**

Foreword

The Commissioner for International Engagement (CIE) plays an important role in advising, coordinating, and adding value to the ACT Government's existing international development and engagement activities across the spectrum of Government. In particular, the CIE focuses on nurturing and supporting engagement successes arising from direct air route links, Canberra's sister city relationships, evolving export markets and inward investment opportunities.

The ACT Government's *Canberra's International Engagement Strategy* (IES), prepared in 2016 and updated in this quarter, demonstrates a clear commitment to building enduring international relationships for the economic, cultural and social benefit of the ACT. The Office of International Engagement (OIE) provides a central point within Government to coordinate and integrate the execution of the IES, and provides a clear access point for external stakeholders, such as the business community, the diplomatic community, and our regional partner organisations.

Abbreviations

Commissioner for International Engagement – CIE

Office for International Engagement – OIE

Canberra's International Engagement Strategy – IES

Key Areas of Strength – KAS

Canberra's International Engagement Strategy

Launched in September 2016 the IES provides direction for where the ACT Government will focus its international engagement activities, detailing our particular sector strengths (known as Key Areas of Strength, or KAS), what its priority markets are, the priority cities for engagement within several of those markets, and what its specific focus of engagement activities will be. Further, the IES provides the framework for determining where the trade missions go and which of the seven KAS and other activities will be the focus of these missions.

The IES has a focus on 10 countries and seven KAS. This reflects the evolving breadth of the ACT economy and the widening export, cultural and social opportunities for our community.

Helping Realise the ACT's Ambitions through International Engagement

The OIE undertakes 12 fundamental activities in order to work toward achieving its strategic objectives.¹ Outlined in this section is the work of the OIE, categorised through these 12 fundamental activities.

Targeted Program of Activities to Grow Our Reputation and Prestige

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the targeted program activities were scaled down for this quarter.

The OIE is preparing for the full resumption of such activities when allowed by the lifting of Commonwealth travel restrictions, continued easing of COVID-19 restrictions of the ACT as implemented by the Chief Health Officer and the resumption of international flights.

Providing Strategic Leadership Over the International Inbound and Outbound Activities, including City-to-City Engagement

All current international inbound and outbound activities were scaled down due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

The OIE is preparing for the full resumption of such activities when allowed by the continued lifting of Commonwealth travel restrictions with the easing of COVID-19 restrictions of the ACT as implemented by the Chief Health Officer and the resumption of international flights.

Defining and Implementing a Targeted Program of ACT Government, Ministerial and Industry Trade Missions to Priority Markets

On an annual and ongoing basis, the CIE defines, plans or otherwise coordinates trade mission activity delivered across the ACT Government. Most trade missions involve the direct participation of the Chief Minister or the CIE, or both. Trade mission programs are revised yearly and take into consideration the dynamic and changing global landscape. These programs have been developed in close alignment of the IES.

During this quarter, the OIE continued longer-term planning of potential trade missions that will occur in a changed COVID-19 pandemic environment and following the reestablishment

¹ ACT Government – Office of International Engagement, 2019, *Canberra's International Engagement Strategy*, 8 September 2016, ACT Government, Canberra, p. 9.

of safe international air travel.

Creating an Inbound Mission Facilitation Program that Qualifies Enquiries, Proactively Targets Inbound Opportunity and Manages Program Development and Delivery for Inbound Delegation Visits

While inbound delegation activity was suspended in early 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic conditions, the OIE continues to communicate with the diplomatic community to be prepared for a potentially rapid resumption of delegation activity.

During this quarter, the OIE assisted the Nauru High Commission with programme elements of the President of Nauru's visit to Canberra.

Building Relationships and Liaising with Canberra's Diplomatic Community

The CIE met with or had discussions with the following members of the Diplomatic Community:

- Embassy of Ireland
- Royal Thai Embassy
- High Commission of Nauru
- Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania
- Embassy of the People's Republic of China
- Embassy of the Republic of Latvia
- Embassy of Japan
- Embassy of the United States of America
- Embassy of the United Arab Emirates
- High Commission of Canada
- Embassy of Spain
- High Commission of South Africa
- Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- Embassy of Mongolia
- Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- Embassy of the Philippines

21 January – Met with Irish Ambassador

24 January – Met with Royal Thai Embassy

9 February – Met with High Commission of Nauru

9 February – Attended opening of Lithuanian Embassy

11 February – Met with Latvia Ambassador

Commissioner for International Engagement Quarterly Report

- 14 February – Met with Irish Ambassador
- 14 February – Attended the Japanese National Day
- 15 February – Attended a Diplomatic Event with representatives from United States of America Embassy, New Zealand High Commission, and the Canadian High Commission
- 23 February – Met with the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates Embassy
- 2 March – Attended opening of Nauru High Commission
- 3 March – Met with President of Nauru
- 4 March – Met with Spanish Ambassador
- 4 March – Attended a diplomatic function with the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps
- 7 March – Met with High Commissioner of South Africa
- 15 March – Met with Ambassador of Jordan
- 15 March – Met with Ambassador of Mongolia
- 16 March – Attended an event at the Kingdom of the Netherlands Embassy
- 18 March – Met with Ambassador of Spain, Sydney and Melbourne Consul General for Spain
- 21 March – Attended Irish Embassy event
- 21 March – Attended Royal Thai Embassy event
- 28 March – Attended United States of America Embassy event
- 29 March – Attended Chinese Embassy event
- 31 March – Attended Philippine Embassy event

Working with the Canberra Business Chamber to Connect International Business Councils and Chambers of Commerce to utilise their Networks and Market Knowledge

Regular communication with the Canberra Business Chamber (CBC) continued. The OIE has reoccurring meetings with CBC at an officer level to maintain the strong working relationship and to further coordinate international activities.

Throughout the quarter, the CIE and OIE officers met with the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Australia China Business Council.

Working with Our Canberra Region Partners to Enhance Export Capability and Capacity

The OIE continued to assist in the work to establish daily exports of premium fresh food from the Canberra Region.

In this regard, the CIE has ongoing dialogue with the Canberra Airport, the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, and other participants in the Australia-based export supply chain.

Commissioner for International Engagement Quarterly Report

Air freight export activity continues from Australia during the pandemic, assisted by the International Freight Assistance Mechanism.

Reinvigorating the ACT's Formal Government-to-Government Relationships with a View to Raise Awareness of the Economic Opportunities within Canberra's Key Areas of Strength

The CIE has discussions with foreign-government representatives to discuss bilateral trade and export from the ACT through our KAS. In this quarter the CIE liaised with many diplomatic missions on economic opportunities. The OIE continued its positive dialogue with DFAT and Austrade regarding export conditions and opportunities.

Making recommendations for the ACT Representation (either at an official level or through the Canberra Business and research community) at International Conferences and Trade Shows relevant to Canberra's Key Areas of Strength

The OIE continues to work with Business and Innovation, CMTEDD to identify key opportunities to represent Canberra at international events, particularly those that are web-based.

The focus remains on boosting international opportunities in sector KAS in which Canberra already excels and has a potential for continued growth.

Leading Engagement with the Australian Government including Austrade and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Network to Promote ACT Opportunities and Leverage the Incentives and Support that are Available

The OIE works with DFAT and Austrade to support programs of trade to key markets, as well as promote Canberra as a preferred place to visit, study, invest and do business in Australia. The OIE keeps updated with the Commonwealth-level incentives and support for ACT exporting stakeholders. This is especially important within a challenging export environment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout this quarter the OIE officers and the Business Development Manager in Singapore continued working with Austrade to promote ACT opportunities in Southeast Asian countries.

Commissioner for International Engagement Quarterly Report

Ensuring that, at their core, All Formal Government-to-Government Agreements Support the Growth and Economic Diversification of the ACT Economy and Align with the Strategic Intent of this Strategy

The OIE developed a *Sister City and other Formal Agreements Framework (Framework)*, a guideline for government-to-government agreements. The *Framework* is designed to assist the OIE and other Government directorates in considering the formation of formal agreements with other jurisdictions. It will help us attract formal agreements with international cities that maximise cultural, innovation and, foremost, trade potential for ACT businesses, other institutions, and our community.

The OIE continues with the upkeep of the Commonwealth's Foreign Agreement Scheme on behalf of the ACT.

Ensuring Future City-to-City Relationships Align with the ACT Government Priorities, share a Common Economic Vision and be Proactively Resourced and Managed to Realise Economic and Cultural Benefits for the City

Future city-to-city relationship requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and are proposed to be assessed against economic indicators, the ease of doing business, the strategic importance of the relationship to the ACT, among other factors. The requests will also be measured against parameters set in the *Framework*.

The OIE continues to engage with the Canberra Nara Sister City Committee on the Sister City Agreement. A regular quarterly committee meeting took place online on 15 February. The agenda included planning of the 30th Sister City anniversary in 2023.

The OIE continues to engage with Nara City Council and conducted a quarterly meeting with Nara City officials on 22 February. The agenda included COVID-19 updates and planning of the 30th Sister City anniversary in 2023 and the possibility of attending a Sister City trade fair.

International Engagement

International Trade Missions were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restriction on international travel.

Domestic Engagement

19 January – Met with RAND Australia
19 January – Met with Canberra Data Centre
27 January – Met with Austrade
2 February – Met with Balance Mat
2 February – Met with Canberra Region Joint Organisation
2 February – Met with DFAT
2 February – Met with the International Urban and Regional Cooperation
4 February – Met with Altina Drinks
8 February – ACT Government Directorates International Engagement Committee
8 February – Met with Australian High Commission Tokyo
14 February – Met with DFAT
16 February – Met with the International Urban and Regional Cooperation
16 February – Met with Austrade
21 February – Met with Australia India Business Council
23 February – Attended MilCIS
24 February – Met with DFAT
24 February – Attended an event with Australian China Business Council
28 February – Met with American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham)
1 March – Attended ACT Renewables Export Opportunities event
3 March – Attended AmCham event
4 March – Met with Austrade
7 March – Attended CMAX and AmCham event
7 March – Met with DFAT
8 March – Attended the Canberra Region Tourism Advisory Forum
9 March – Attended the AmCham Local Leadership Academy event
9 March – Met with IFAM
10 March – Attended Spanish Embassy event
10 March – Attended Ailevon event
15 March – Met with National Portrait Gallery
21 March – Met with AmCham
21 March – Met with Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
23 March – Met with DFAT
23 March - Met with the International Urban and Regional Cooperation
30 March - Met with the International Urban and Regional Cooperation

Delegations

3 March – President of Nauru
18 March – Spanish Consul Generals for Sydney and Melbourne

Commissioner for International Engagement

**Quarterly Report
April to June 2022**

Commissioner for International Engagement

Quarterly Report

Foreword

The Commissioner for International Engagement (CIE) plays an important role in advising, coordinating, and adding value to the ACT Government's existing international development and engagement activities across the spectrum of Government. In particular, the CIE focuses on nurturing and supporting engagement successes arising from direct air route links, Canberra's sister city relationships, evolving export markets and inward investment opportunities.

The ACT Government's *Canberra's International Engagement Strategy* (IES), prepared in 2016 and updated in this quarter, demonstrates a clear commitment to building enduring international relationships for the economic, cultural and social benefit of the ACT. The Office of International Engagement (OIE) provides a central point within Government to coordinate and integrate the execution of the IES, and provides a clear access point for external stakeholders, such as the business community, the diplomatic community, and our regional partner organisations.

Following the 2020 ACT election, the Office of International Engagement reports directly to the Chief Minister, through the Head of ACT Public Service, under the new Administrative Agreements. Trade and Export functions are now under the responsibility of the CIE.

Abbreviations

Commissioner for International Engagement – CIE

Office for International Engagement – OIE

Canberra's International Engagement Strategy – IES

Key Areas of Strength – KAS

Canberra's International Engagement Strategy

Launched in September 2016 the IES provides direction for where the ACT Government will focus its international engagement activities, detailing our particular sector strengths (known as Key Areas of Strength, or KAS), what its priority markets are, the priority cities for engagement within several of those markets, and what its specific focus of engagement activities will be. Further, the IES provides the framework for determining where the trade missions go and which of the seven KAS and other activities will be the focus of these missions.

The IES has a focus on 10 countries and seven KAS. This reflects the evolving breadth of the ACT economy and the widening export, cultural and social opportunities for our community.

Commissioner for International Engagement Quarterly Report

Helping Realise the ACT's Ambitions through International Engagement

The OIE undertakes 12 fundamental activities in order to work toward achieving its strategic objectives.¹ Outlined in this section is the work of the OIE, categorised through these 12 fundamental activities.

Targeted Program of Activities to Grow Our Reputation and Prestige

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the targeted program activities were scaled down for this quarter.

The OIE is preparing for the full resumption of such activities when allowed by the lifting of all Commonwealth travel restrictions, continued easing of COVID-19 restrictions of the ACT as implemented by the Chief Health Officer and the resumption of international flights.

Providing Strategic Leadership Over the International Inbound and Outbound Activities, including City-to-City Engagement

All current international inbound and outbound activities were scaled down due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

The OIE is preparing for the full resumption of such activities when allowed by the continued lifting of all Commonwealth travel restrictions with the easing of COVID-19 restrictions of the ACT as implemented by the Chief Health Officer and the resumption of international flights.

Defining and Implementing a Targeted Program of ACT Government, Ministerial and Industry Trade Missions to Priority Markets

On an annual and ongoing basis, the CIE defines, plans or otherwise coordinates trade mission activity delivered across the ACT Government. Most trade missions involve the direct participation of the Chief Minister or the CIE, or both. Trade mission programs are revised yearly and take into consideration the dynamic and changing global landscape. These programs have been developed in close alignment of the IES.

During this quarter, the OIE organised Trade Missions to Fiji, New Zealand and Singapore. The main focus of these Trade Missions were to establish new relationships in Fiji, reconnect

¹ ACT Government – Office of International Engagement, 2019, *Canberra's International Engagement Strategy*, 8 September 2016, ACT Government, Canberra, p. 9.

Commissioner for International Engagement Quarterly Report

with key stakeholders in New Zealand and Singapore, all of which had a focus on international aviation.

Creating an Inbound Mission Facilitation Program that Qualifies Enquiries, Proactively Targets Inbound Opportunity and Manages Program Development and Delivery for Inbound Delegation Visits

Inbound delegation activity has resumed with the OIE receiving more requests for assistance. The OIE continues to communicate with the diplomatic community regarding offering support for inbound delegations.

During this quarter, the OIE assisted the Korean female journalist delegation on learning about the Canberra Space sector. The OIE also delivered a seminar for the ACT planning market for the US Department of State on the ACT planning regime.

The OIE collaborated with the Queensland University of Technology in delivery an education program about Canberra to delegations from Cambodia and Thailand.

Building Relationships and Liaising with Canberra's Diplomatic Community

The CIE met with or had discussions with the following members of the Diplomatic Community:

- European Union
- Embassy of the Republic of Peru
- Embassy of Uruguay
- Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia
- Royal Bhutanese Embassy
- Embassy of the Republic of Latvia
- Embassy of Israel
- Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco
- Embassy of Ireland
- Embassy of Italy
- Embassy of Ukraine
- Embassy of the Republic of Ecuador
- High Commission of the Republic of Fiji
- High Commission of India
- Embassy of Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
- Embassy of Germany
- Embassy of Jordan

Commissioner for International Engagement Quarterly Report

- Embassy of France
- Embassy of Belgium
- High Commission of Singapore
- Embassy of Croatia
- British High Commission
- Embassy of the United States of America

5 April – Attended event at Venezuelan Embassy
7 April – Attended event at New Zealand High Commission
11 April – Met with Ambassadors of the European Union
20 April – Met with Ambassador of Peru
20 April – Event with the Embassies of Czechs and Slovakian
21 April – Met with Ambassador of Uruguay
3 May – Met with High Commission of Fiji
9 May – Met with Ambassador of Indonesia
10 May – Met with Ambassador of Bhutan
11 May – Met with Ambassador of Latvia
13 May – Met with Ambassador of Israel
19 May – Met with Ambassador of Morocco
19 May – Attended event at the German Embassy
20 May – Attended event at the Jordanian Embassy
21 May – Attended event at Belgium Embassy
24 May – Met with Ambassador of Bhutan
25 May – Attended event at French Embassy
26 May – Met with the Singapore High Commission
31 May – Attended event at Embassy of Croatia
2 June – Attended event at Italian Embassy
8 June – Met with the British High Commission
8 June – Attended event at British High Commission
16 June- Attended event at German Embassy
21 June – Met with Ambassador of Ukraine
23 June – Attended event for New Zealand High Commission
28 June – Attended event for United States Embassy
29 June – Met with Ambassador of Ecuador
30 June – Attended event with United States Embassy

Working with the Canberra Business Chamber to Connect International Business Councils and Chambers of Commerce to utilise their Networks and Market Knowledge

Regular communication with the Canberra Business Chamber (CBC) continued. The OIE has regular meetings with CBC at an officer level to maintain the strong working relationship and to further coordinate international activities.

Commissioner for International Engagement Quarterly Report

Throughout the quarter, the CIE and OIE officers met with the Australia China Business Council and the Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Working with Our Canberra Region Partners to Enhance Export Capability and Capacity

The OIE continued to assist in the work to establish daily exports of premium fresh food from the Canberra Region.

In this regard, the CIE has ongoing dialogue with the Canberra Airport, the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, and other participants in the Australia-based export supply chain.

Air freight export activity continues from Australia during the pandemic, assisted by the International Freight Assistance Mechanism.

Reinvigorating the ACT's Formal Government-to-Government Relationships with a View to Raise Awareness of the Economic Opportunities within Canberra's Key Areas of Strength

The CIE has discussions with foreign-government representatives to discuss bilateral trade and export from the ACT through our KCAs. In this quarter the CIE liaised with many diplomatic missions on economic opportunities. The OIE continued its positive dialogue with DFAT and Austrade regarding export conditions and opportunities.

Making recommendations for the ACT Representation (either at an official level or through the Canberra Business and research community) at International Conferences and Trade Shows relevant to Canberra's key capability areas

The OIE continues to work with Business and Innovation, CMTEDD to identify key opportunities to represent Canberra at international events, particularly those that are web-based.

The focus remains on boosting international opportunities in sector KAS in which Canberra already excels and has a potential for continued growth.

Leading Engagement with the Australian Government including Austrade and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Network to Promote ACT Opportunities and Leverage the Incentives and Support that are Available

The OIE works with DFAT and Austrade to support programs of trade to key markets, as well as promote Canberra as a preferred place to visit, study, invest and do business in Australia. The OIE keeps updated with the Commonwealth-level incentives and support for ACT

exporting stakeholders.

Throughout this quarter the OIE officers and the Business Development Manager in Singapore continued working with Austrade to promote ACT opportunities in Southeast Asian countries.

Ensuring that, at their core, All Formal Government-to-Government Agreements Support the Growth and Economic Diversification of the ACT Economy and Align with the Strategic Intent of this Strategy

The OIE developed a *Sister City and other Formal Agreements Framework (Framework)*, a guideline for government-to-government agreements. The *Framework* is designed to assist the OIE and other Government directorates in considering the formation of formal agreements with other jurisdictions. It will help us attract formal agreements with international cities that maximise cultural, innovation and, foremost, trade potential for ACT businesses, other institutions, and our community.

The OIE continues with the upkeep of the Commonwealth's Foreign Agreement Scheme on behalf of the ACT.

Ensuring Future City-to-City Relationships Align with the ACT Government Priorities, share a Common Economic Vision and be Proactively Resourced and Managed to Realise Economic and Cultural Benefits for the City

Future city-to-city relationship requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and are proposed to be assessed against economic indicators, the ease of doing business, the strategic importance of the relationship to the ACT, among other factors. The requests will also be measured against parameters set in the *Framework*.

The OIE continues to engage with the Canberra Nara Sister City Committee on the Sister City Agreement. A regular quarterly committee meeting took place online on 27 May 2022. The agenda included planning of the 30th Sister City anniversary in 2023.

The OIE continues to engage with Nara City Council and conducted a quarterly meeting with Nara City officials on 30 June 2022. The agenda included COVID-19 updates and planning of the 30th Sister City anniversary in 2023 and the possibility of attending a Sister City trade fair.

Commissioner for International Engagement Quarterly Report

International Engagement

- 2 - 7 May – Fiji and New Zealand Trade Mission
- 13 – 18 June – Singapore Trade Mission

Domestic Engagement

- 1 April – Met with Austrade
- 3 April – Attended Canberra Airport event
- 5 April – Met with Australian Institute of International Affairs
- 6 April – Met with Canberra Airport
- 7 April – Attended Canberra Region Tourism forum
- 14 April – Met with DFAT
- 19 April – Met with DFAT
- 28 April – Met with ANZ Bank
- 13 May – Met with the International Urban and Regional Cooperation
- 19 May – Met with Vietnamese Business Association Australia
- 23 May – Met with Taipei Economic Office
- 24 May – Met with AgriGate Singapore
- 24 May - ACT Government Directorates International Engagement Committee
- 25 May – Attended European Union Indo-Pacific event
- 31 May – Met with Canberra Airport
- 1 June - Attended AmCham event
- 6 June – Attended Canberra Region Tourism event
- 8 June – Attended Australian GCC Trade and Investment event
- 27 June – Met with National Arboretum Canberra
- 28 June – Met with Balance Mat
- 29 June – Met with ArchTIS
- 29 June – Met with Hong Kong Economic Trade Office
- 30 June – Met with Australian Bureau of Statistics
- 30 June – Met with Nara City Council

Delegations

- 11 April – Ambassadors of the European Union
- 3 – 4 May – Korean Female Journalists
- 25 May – Cambodian Government representatives
- 22 June – Thailand Government representatives
- 30 June – US Department of State representatives

**COVID-19 LOCAL
BUSINESS COMMISSIONER**

AUGUST 2021 TO JULY 2022

Introduction

On 2 April 2020 the ACT Government tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly its COVID-19 emergency response, *Leases (Commercial and Retail) COVID-19 Emergency Response Declaration 2020*, in response to the economic circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Commonwealth's announcement of the *National Cabinet Mandatory Code Of Conduct* (The Code). The Bill was passed the same day and assented to on 7 April 2020.

The Government, on 4 April 2020, appointed the ACT's Commissioner for International Engagement, Mr Brendan Smyth, as the COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner (LBC) to work with the ACT business community on the implementation of the ACT Government's business support measures relating to COVID-19.

The ACT Attorney General, Mr Gordon Ramsay MLA, made a declaration, the *Leases (Commercial and Retail) Emergency Response Declaration 2020*, under the Act on 11 May 2020. The Declaration gave effect to The Code during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner was tasked to specifically work on the following:

- Working with commercial landlords and tenants to mediate mutually agreeable outcomes relating to changes to commercial lease arrangements;
- Being a "public face" in delivering marketing and communications messages that are developed by the government through Economic Development;
- Providing advice to the ACT Government through the relevant part of government on systemic issues facing the business community in the ACT as a result of COVID-19. This advice will focus on information exchange and implantation, with policy development remaining within current government mechanisms; and
- Referring individual businesses that require assistance to the relevant part of government.

The LBC also meets regularly with the Commercial Tenancies Code Administration Committee to provide updates on feedback from the business community and gain an understanding from industry on what feedback is coming from their networks.

As per the Instrument of Appointment, the LBC utilises existing resources assigned to the Commissioner for International Engagement. As such the staff of the ACT's Office of International Engagement, as well as continuing their efforts in delivering Canberra's *International Engagement Strategy*, assisted and enabled the LBC in his activities. The original appointment ended on 31 July 2021.

The outbreak of the Omicron variant of the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the lockdown of the ACT in August 2021. As a consequence the ACT Government tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly its COVID-19 emergency response, *Leases (Commercial and Retail) COVID-19 Emergency Response Declaration 2021 (Attachment A)* and the position of COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner was re-established in August 2021, again by Ministerial Declaration, and Mr Brendan Smyth was reappointed as the LBC on 24 August 2021. The appointment was until 31 July 2022. Please refer to [Attachment B](#).

Working with commercial landlords and tenants to mediate mutually agreeable outcomes relating to changes to commercial lease arrangements

For the period 24 August 2021 to 30 June 2022 there were 216 requests for assistance. The 216 requests can be broken down into the following:

- 31 requests from landlords;
- 72 requests from tenants; and
- 113 requests for business advice only.

A breakdown of the requests by contact can be found at [Attachment C](#).

Whilst most mediations were able to be conducted over the phone or via a video conference, there was a requisite for the more difficult mediations to occur in person. When meeting in person, all necessary precautions were taken to ensure that the mediations occurred in a COVID safe environment.

Five cases were referred to the Conflict Resolution Service for mediation and resolution.

It should also be noted that with every request for assistance – regardless of where the request came from – the LBC and supporting staff were clear and concise in stating that any financial, legal or business advice should be sought from professionals in those fields and that the purpose of the LBC and supporting staff is purely for mediation.

Delivering marketing and communications messages that are developed by the government

As each announcement in relation to the impact of the COVID pandemic on commercial tenancy and the business community has been made public, the LBC and staff were diligent in ensuring that these communications are conveyed to relevant stakeholders.

Providing advice to the ACT Government through the relevant part of government on systemic issues facing the business community in the ACT as a result of COVID-19

Feedback from the business community and from those that requested assistance were provided to relevant government officials in Policy and Cabinet, the Treasury, the Revenue Office and Economic Development to assist in understanding the evolving business and economic ecosystem in the midst of the COVID pandemic.

The issues that have been widely raised are as follows:

Code of Conduct

- When does it end?

- At what point do I start paying/charging full rent?
- At what percentage of downturn does the assistance start/stop?
- Do I include Government Payments in the turnover?

Communications

- Timeliness of the notification of changes to the restrictions.
- Clarity of the announcements.

Leasing Issues

- Many businesses have end of lease issues during the Period.
- Rent increments and their application.

Business Literacy

- People in Business vs Businesspeople.
- A number of cases of poor to very poor business literacy.
- Several cases of poor to very poor business numeracy.
- A number of cases of poor to very poor contractual literacy.

Government Assistance

- More financial assistance and ease of access to assistance.

A number of requests for information were received from interstate businesses in the absence of clear advice within their home jurisdictions.

Referring individual businesses that require assistance to the relevant part of government

Of the 216 requests for business advice and other assistance, the businesses were referred to the relevant sections of Government that were best able to respond. Some businesses were also redirected to the Canberra Business Advice and Support Service (a free, tailored advice for ACT businesses impacted by COVID-19) and to the Access Canberra Business Liaison Line for advice about operating in a COVID safe environment, as well as to the Conflict Resolution Service. Others were referred to business organisations such as the Canberra Business Chamber.

Areas of requests included:

- Assistance accessing Government Business Grants;
- Assistance with the progress of a Government Business Grant;
- Assistance with review of a Government Business Grant;
- General business advice;
- Advice on multiple business sites;

COVID-19 LOCAL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER REPORT

- Advice on the progress of the ACT regulations;
- Request for assistance beyond the scope of the Government's packages;
- Assistance with foreign governments;
- Assistance with the Commonwealth Government;
- Business reopening issues;
- Access to ACT Government Business support programs;
- Planning issues; and
- Heritage Issues.

Such requests were dealt with by the LBC and staff or referred to the appropriate area of the Government.

Attachments

ATTACHMENT A

Leases (Commercial and Retail) COVID-19 Emergency Response Declaration 2021

ATTACHMENT B

Instrument of Appointment and Terms of Reference COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner

ATTACHMENT C

Breakdown of requests for assistance

Leases (Commercial and Retail) COVID-19 Emergency Response Declaration 2021

Disallowable instrument DI2021–218

made under the

[Leases \(Commercial and Retail\) Act 2001](#), s 177 (Declaration—COVID-19 emergency response)

1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Leases (Commercial and Retail) COVID-19 Emergency Response Declaration 2021*.

2 Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after its notification day.

3 Expiry

This instrument expires on—

- (a) the first day no COVID-19 emergency is in force; or
- (b) if a later day is notified by the Minister under the Act, section 177 (3) (b)—that day.

Note The Minister may notify a day (not later than 3 months after the COVID-19 emergency ends) under the Act, s 177 (3) (b) if the Minister considers the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic justifies this instrument being in force for a period after the COVID-19 emergency ends.

4 Definitions

- (1) In this instrument:

impacted tenant means a tenant under a prescribed lease who—

- (a) is an SME entity; and
- (b) satisfies the decline in turnover test under section 5.

prescribed breach, by an impacted tenant—

- (a) means a failure by the tenant during the prescribed period—
 - (i) to pay rent; or

- (ii) to pay outgoings or other amounts due under the lease; or
 - (iii) to operate the business on the premises under the lease during the hours required under the lease; and
- (b) includes a breach mentioned in paragraph (a) of a lease as varied following negotiations required by previous declarations under the Act, section 177.

Example—par (b)

An impacted tenant under a previous declaration and a lessor agree that the tenant will pay a reduced rent for a certain period. Because of the economic impact of the outbreak of the delta variant of COVID-19, the tenant fails to pay the reduced rent at the end of August 2021. The tenant's failure to pay the reduced rent is a prescribed breach under this instrument.

prescribed lease—

- (a) means a lease to which the Act applies that was entered into before 12 August 2021; and
- (b) includes—
 - (i) an extension of the term of a lease mentioned in paragraph (a) (the ***original lease***) made on or after 12 August 2021; and
 - (ii) a renewal of lease entered into on or after 12 August 2021 that is substantially on the same terms as the original lease; and
 - (iii) a lease arising, on or after 12 August 2021, from the tenant holding over after the end of the original lease.

prescribed period means the period—

- (a) beginning on 12 August 2021; and
- (b) ending on—
 - (i) the first day no COVID-19 emergency is in force; or
 - (ii) any later day notified by the Minister under the [Act](#), section 177 (3) (b).

Note The Minister may notify a day (not later than 3 months after the COVID-19 emergency ends) under the Act, s 177 (3) (b) if the Minister considers the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic justifies this instrument being in force for a period after the COVID-19 emergency ends.

turnover, of a tenant, includes—

- (a) turnover from internet sales of goods or services; and
 - (b) any COVID-19 business support grants from the ACT government.
- (2) In this section:

business, includes business conducted on a not-for-profit basis.

corporate group means a corporation and all its related bodies corporate.

COVID-19 emergency means—

- (a) a state of emergency declared under the *Emergencies Act 2004*, section 156 because of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19); or
- (b) an emergency declared under the *Public Health Act 1997*, section 119 (including any extension or further extension) because of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

lease to which the Act applies—see the *Act*, section 177 (5).

related body corporate—see the *Corporations Act*, section 9.

SME entity means a tenant—

- (a) who carried on business for the whole of the financial year ending 30 June 2021 and had an annual turnover for that year of less than \$50 million; or
 - (b) who did not carry on a business for the whole of the financial year ending 30 June 2021 and whose annual turnover for the financial year ending 30 June 2022 is likely to be less than \$50 million.
- (3) For subsection (2), definition of **SME entity**, a reference to **business** means—
- (a) for a franchisee in a business—the business conducted at the premises or land under the lease; or
 - (b) for a member of a corporate group—the business of the group; or
 - (c) for any other tenant—the business conducted by the tenant.

5 Decline in turnover test

- (1) For this instrument, a tenant **satisfies the decline in turnover test** if—
- (a) the tenant's turnover for any month in the prescribed period (including August 2021) (an **impacted month**) falls short of the following (**the comparison turnover**):
 - (i) the tenant's turnover for a comparison month;
 - (ii) if the tenant did not carry on business in 2019 or 2020—an amount of turnover negotiated in good faith and agreed by the lessor and tenant; and
 - (b) the shortfall, expressed as a percentage of the comparison turnover equals or exceeds—
 - (i) for a tenant conducting a business on a not-for-profit basis—15%; or
 - (ii) for any other tenant—30%.
- (2) In this section:
- comparison month**, for an impacted month, means—
- (a) the same month as the impacted month in 2019; or

- (b) if the tenant did not carry on business in 2019—the same month as the impacted month in 2020.

6 Meaning of *good faith negotiations*

- (1) For this instrument, a lessor engages in *good faith negotiations* with an impacted tenant if the lessor, in acknowledging the financial hardship suffered by the tenant because of the economic impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), negotiates with the tenant having regard to the overarching principles and leasing principles set out in the code of conduct.

- (2) In this section:

code of conduct means the National Code of Conduct for SME Commercial Leasing Principles as set out in schedule 1 with any reference to a tenant being eligible for the Commonwealth Government’s Jobkeeper payment to be read as a reference to the tenant being an impacted tenant under this instrument.

7 Application

- (1) This instrument applies to any termination notice given to, or prescribed action taken against, an impacted tenant by the lessor in relation to a prescribed breach, including—

- (a) a termination notice given in relation to the breach after the day this instrument expires; and
- (b) any prescribed action taken by the lessor against the tenant in relation to the breach after the day this instrument expires.

- (2) To remove any doubt, nothing in this instrument prevents the lessor terminating or taking prescribed action against an impacted tenant in relation to a prescribed breach if—

- (a) the tenant agrees to the termination or action; or
- (b) the lessor has engaged in good faith negotiations with the tenant and the tenant surrenders the lease.

- (3) In this section:

prescribed action—see section 10 (2).

8 Lessor must negotiate before giving termination notice for prescribed breaches

- (1) A lessor must not give a termination notice to an impacted tenant in relation to a prescribed breach unless the lessor has engaged in good faith negotiations with the tenant in relation to the breach.
- (2) A termination notice given in contravention of subsection (1) is void.

9 Existing termination notices for prescribed breaches

- (1) This section applies if—
 - (a) a lessor has given an impacted tenant a termination notice in the pre-commencement period in relation to a prescribed breach; and
 - (b) either—
 - (i) the tenant contests the termination under the [Act](#), section 122 (2); or
 - (ii) the lessor applies to the Magistrates Court for confirmation of the termination under the [Act](#), section 124 (2).
- (2) The Magistrates Court must not confirm the termination unless satisfied that the lessor has engaged in good faith negotiations with the impacted tenant.
- (3) In this section:

pre-commencement period means the period beginning on the day the prescribed period started and ending the day before this instrument commences.

10 Other actions by lessor against tenant

- (1) A lessor must not take any prescribed action against an impacted tenant in relation to a prescribed breach unless the lessor has engaged in good faith negotiations with the tenant in relation to the breach.
- (2) In this section:

prescribed action, by a lessor against an impacted tenant, means taking action under the lease or starting a proceeding for any of the following:

- (a) eviction of the tenant from premises or land under the lease;
- (b) giving a notice to vacate in relation to holding over period under the lease;
- (c) exercise of a right of re-entry to the premises or land;
- (d) recovery of the premises or land;
- (e) distraint of goods on the premises or land;
- (f) forfeiture;
- (g) damages;
- (h) requiring payment of penalty interest on, or a fee or charge related to, unpaid rent otherwise payable by the tenant;
- (i) recovery of the whole or part of a security bond under the lease;
- (j) performance of obligations by the tenant or any other person guaranteeing the tenant's obligations under the lease;
- (k) possession of the premises or land;

- (l) any other remedy otherwise available against the tenant under a territory law.

11 Guidelines

- (1) The Minister may make guidelines in relation to the following matters:
 - (a) for section 5—how a tenant’s turnover is to be worked out;
 - (b) how good faith negotiations are to be conducted by impacted tenants and lessors;
 - (c) how the overarching principles and leasing principles set out in the code of conduct are to be applied by impacted tenants and lessors in good faith negotiations;
 - (d) any other relevant matter.
- (2) A guideline is a notifiable instrument.

12 Previous declarations

- (1) To remove any doubt, the repeal or expiry of a previous declaration does not—
 - (a) affect any right, remedy, protection or requirement arising in relation to a prescribed breach under the previous declaration; or
 - (b) affect any negotiation or agreement started or completed under, or in accordance with, the previous declaration.
- (2) In this instrument:

previous declaration means—

- (a) the *Leases (Commercial and Retail) COVID-19 Emergency Response Declaration 2020* (DI2020-92); or
- (b) the *Leases (Commercial and Retail) COVID-19 Emergency Response Declaration 2020* (No 2) (DI2020-283).

Shane Rattenbury
Attorney-General
31 August 2021

Schedule 1 Code of conduct

(see s 6 (2))

NATIONAL CABINET MANDATORY CODE OF CONDUCT

SME COMMERCIAL LEASING PRINCIPLES DURING COVID-19

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Code of Conduct (“the Code”) is to impose a set of good faith leasing principles for application to commercial tenancies (including retail, office and industrial) between owners/operators/other landlords and tenants, where the tenant is an eligible business for the purpose of the Commonwealth Government’s JobKeeper programme.

These principles will apply to negotiating amendments in good faith to existing leasing arrangements –to aid the management of cashflow for SME tenants and landlords on a proportionate basis –as a result of the impact and commercial disruption caused by the economic impacts of industry and government responses to the declared Coronavirus (“COVID-19”) pandemic.

This Code applies to all tenancies that are suffering financial stress or hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic as defined by their eligibility for the Commonwealth Government’s JobKeeper programme, with an annual turnover of up to \$50 million (herein referred to as “SME tenants”).

The \$50 million annual turnover threshold will be applied in respect of franchises at the franchisee level, and in respect of retail corporate groups at the group level (rather than at the individual retail outlet level).

The Parties to this Code concur that during the COVID-19 pandemic period, as defined by the period during which the JobKeeper programme is operational, the principles of this Code should nevertheless apply in spirit to all leasing arrangements for affected businesses, having fair regard to the size and financial structure of those businesses.

Appendix I gives examples of proportionate solutions that may be agreed under this Code, and forms part of the overall Code.

The Code has been developed to enable both a consistent national approach and timely, efficient application given the rapid and severe commercial impact of official responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

PARTIES TO THE CODE

The Code will be given effect through relevant state and territory legislation or regulation as appropriate. The Code is not intended to supersede such legislation, but aims to complement it during the COVID-19 crisis period.

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

The objective of the Code is to share, in a proportionate, measured manner, the financial risk and cashflow impact during the COVID-19 period, whilst seeking to appropriately balance the interests of tenants and landlords.

It is intended that landlords will agree tailored, bespoke and appropriate temporary arrangements for each SME tenant, taking into account their particular circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

The following overarching principles of this Code will apply in guiding such arrangements:

- Landlords and tenants share a common interest in working together, to ensure business continuity, and to facilitate the resumption of normal trading activities at the end of the COVID-19 pandemic during a reasonable recovery period.
- Landlords and tenants will be required to discuss relevant issues, to negotiate appropriate temporary leasing arrangements, and to work towards achieving mutually satisfactory outcomes.
- Landlords and tenants will negotiate in good faith.
- Landlords and tenants will act in an open, honest and transparent manner, and will each provide sufficient and accurate information within the context of negotiations to achieve outcomes consistent with this Code.
- Any agreed arrangements will take into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tenant, with specific regard to its revenue, expenses, and profitability. Such arrangements will be proportionate and appropriate based on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic plus a reasonable recovery period.
- The Parties will assist each other in their respective dealings with other stakeholders including governments, utility companies, and banks/other financial institutions in order to achieve outcomes consistent with the objectives of this Code.
- All premises are different, as are their commercial arrangements; it is therefore not possible to form a collective industry position. All parties recognise the intended application, legal constraints and spirit of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010.
- The Parties will take into account the fact that the risk of default on commercial leases is ultimately (and already) borne by the landlord. The landlord must not seek to permanently mitigate this risk in negotiating temporary arrangements envisaged under this Code.

- All leases must be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, considering factors such as whether the SME tenant has suffered financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic; whether the tenant’s lease has expired or is soon to expire; and whether the tenant is in administration or receivership.
- Leases have different structures, different periods of tenure, and different mechanisms for determining rent. Leases may already be in arrears. Leases may already have expired and be in “hold-over.” These factors should also be taken into account in formulating any temporary arrangements in line with this Code.
- As the objective of this Code is to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tenant, due regard should be given to whether the tenant is in administration or receivership, and the application of the Code modified accordingly.

LEASING PRINCIPLES

In negotiating and enacting appropriate temporary arrangements under this Code, the following leasing principles should be applied as soon as practicable on a case-by-case basis:

1. Landlords must not terminate leases due to non-payment of rent during the COVID-19 pandemic period (or reasonable subsequent recovery period).
2. Tenants must remain committed to the terms of their lease, subject to any amendments to their rental agreement negotiated under this Code. Material failure to abide by substantive terms of their lease will forfeit any protections provided to the tenant under this Code.
3. Landlords must offer tenants proportionate reductions in rent payable in the form of waivers and deferrals (as outlined under “definitions,” below) of up to 100% of the amount ordinarily payable, on a case-by-case basis, based on the reduction in the tenant’s trade during the COVID-19 pandemic period and a subsequent reasonable recovery period.
4. Rental waivers must constitute no less than 50% of the total reduction in rent payable under principle #3 above over the COVID-19 pandemic period and should constitute a greater proportion of the total reduction in rent payable in cases where failure to do so would compromise the tenant’s capacity to fulfil their ongoing obligations under the lease agreement. Regard must also be had to the Landlord’s financial ability to provide such additional waivers. Tenants may waive the requirement for a 50% minimum waiver by agreement.
5. Payment of rental deferrals by the tenant must be amortised over the balance of the lease term and for a period of no less than 24 months, whichever is the greater, unless otherwise agreed by the parties.
6. Any reduction in statutory charges (e.g. land tax, council rates) or insurance will be passed on to the tenant in the appropriate proportion applicable under the terms of the lease.

7. A landlord should seek to share any benefit it receives due to deferral of loan payments, provided by a financial institution as part of the Australian Bankers Association's COVID-19 response, or any other case-by-case deferral of loan repayments offered to other Landlords, with the tenant in a proportionate manner.

8. Landlords should where appropriate seek to waive recovery of any other expense (or outgoing payable) by a tenant, under lease terms, during the period the tenant is not able to trade. Landlords reserve the right to reduce services as required in such circumstances.

9. If negotiated arrangements under this Code necessitate repayment, this should occur over an extended period in order to avoid placing an undue financial burden on the tenant. No repayment should commence until the earlier of the COVID-19 pandemic ending (as defined by the Australian Government) or the existing lease expiring, and taking into account a reasonable subsequent recovery period.

10. No fees, interest or other charges should be applied with respect to rent waived in principles #3 and #4 above and no fees, charges nor punitive interest may be charged on deferrals in principles #3, #4 and #5 above.

11. Landlords must not draw on a tenant's security for the non-payment of rent (be this a cash bond, bank guarantee or personal guarantee) during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic and/or a reasonable subsequent recovery period.

12. The tenant should be provided with an opportunity to extend its lease for an equivalent period of the rent waiver and/or deferral period outlined in item #2 above. This is intended to provide the tenant additional time to trade, on existing lease terms, during the recovery period after the COVID-19 pandemic concludes.

13. Landlords agree to a freeze on rent increases (except for retail leases based on turnover rent) for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic and a reasonable subsequent recovery period, notwithstanding any arrangements between the landlord and the tenant.

14. Landlords may not apply any prohibition on levy any penalties if tenants reduce opening hours or cease to trade due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

BINDING MEDIATION

Where landlords and tenants cannot reach agreement on leasing arrangements (as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic), the matter should be referred and subjected (by either party) to applicable state or territory retail/commercial leasing dispute resolution processes for binding mediation, including Small Business Commissioners/Champions/Ombudsmen where applicable.

Landlords and tenants must not use mediation processes to prolong or frustrate the facilitation of amicable resolution outcomes.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are provided for reference in the application of this Code.

1. Financial Stress or Hardship: an individual, business or company's inability to generate sufficient revenue as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic (including government-mandated trading restrictions) that causes the tenant to be unable to meet its financial and/or contractual (including retail leasing) commitments. SME tenants which are eligible for the federal government's JobKeeper payment are automatically considered to be in financial distress under this Code.

2. Sufficient and accurate information: this includes information generated from an accounting system, and information provided to and/or received from a financial institution, that impacts the timeliness of the Parties making decisions with regard to the financial stress caused as a direct result of the COVID-19 event.

3. Waiver and deferral: any reference to waiver and deferral may also be interpreted to include other forms of agreed variations to existing leases (such as deferral, pausing and/or hibernating the lease), or any other such commercial outcome of agreements reached between the parties. Any amount of reduction provided by a waiver may not be recouped by the Landlord over the term of the lease.

4. Proportionate: the amount of rent relief proportionate to the reduction in trade as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic plus a subsequent reasonable recovery period, consistent with assessments undertaken for eligibility for the Commonwealth's JobKeeper programme.

CODE ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

This Code will be supported by state based Industry Code Administration Committees, comprising representatives from relevant industry bodies representing landlord, tenant and SME interests, with an Independent Chair appointed by the relevant State/Territory Government.

Committee members' roles will be to (1) promote awareness of the Code; (2) encourage application of the Code; (3) encourage its application by the broader retail industry; and (4) monitor the operation of the Code.

The Committee should meet at least fortnightly, and may communicate and meet via email, telephone calls, or video conferencing.

No formal minutes will be taken; however, the Committee will document key action items and outcomes of each meeting.

The Committee may invite advisers, upon agreement by all Committee members, to assist on specific issues in the course of discharging their obligations under this section.

COMMENCEMENT/EXPIRY

This Code comes into effect in all states and territories from a date following 3 April 2020 (being the date that National Cabinet agreed to a set of principles to guide the Code to govern commercial tenancies as affected by the COVID-19

pandemic) to be defined by each jurisdiction, for the period during which the Commonwealth JobKeeper program remains operational.

APPENDIX I

EXAMPLES OF THE APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF PROPORTIONALITY

The following scenarios are examples only, noting the circumstance of each landlord, SME tenant and lease are different, and are subject to negotiation and agreement in good faith.

Examples of practical variations reflecting the application of the principle of proportionality may include, but are not limited to:

- Qualifying tenants would be provided with cash flow relief in proportion to the loss of turnover they have experienced from the COVID-19 crisis
 - ie. a 60% loss in turnover would result in a guaranteed 60% cash flow relief.
 - At a minimum, half is provided as rent free/rent waiver for the proportion of which the qualifying tenant's revenue has fallen.
 - Up to half could be through a deferral of rent, with this to be recouped over at least 24 months in a manner that is negotiated by the parties
 - So if the tenant's revenue has fallen by 100%, then at least 50% of total cash flow relief is rent free/rent waiver and the remainder is a rent deferral. If the qualifying tenant's revenue has fallen by 30%, then at least 15% of total cash flow relief is rent free/rent waiver and the remainder is rent deferral.
 - Care should be taken to ensure that any repayment of the deferred rent does not compromise the ability of the affected SME tenant to recover from the crisis.
 - The parties would be free to make an alternative commercial arrangement to this formula if that is their wish.



Andrew Barr MLA
Chief Minister
Treasurer
Minister for Climate Action
Minister for Economic Development
Minister for Tourism

Member for Kurrajong

Mr Brendan Smyth
ACT Commissioner for International Engagement

Letter of Appointment COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner

Dear Mr Smyth

I am writing to formalise your appointment to the role of COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner.

Thank you for taking on this important role again.

Please perform these duties for a term commencing on the date of this letter and ending on 31 July 2022, unless concluded earlier.


Pursuant to clause 2.6 of the terms of appointment for the Commissioner for International Engagement dated by myself on 29 July 2021 and the Deputy Chief Minister on 2 August 2021, I ask you to perform the functions of the COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner in accordance with the attached Terms of Reference.

Yours sincerely


Andrew Barr MLA
Chief Minister

6 September 2021

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TERMS OF REFERENCE - COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner

Role

The ACT Government's recently announced economic support package contains measures that directly impact on the ACT business community, particularly the new commercial tenancy scheme. Assistance to business can be enhanced by increasing direct engagement with businesses in relation to the new measures.

The COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner will work with the ACT business community on the implementation of the ACT Government's business support measures relating to COVID-19, specifically:

- working with commercial landlords and tenants to resolve issues and refer parties for mediation to support mutually agreeable outcomes relating to changes to commercial lease arrangements
- being a 'public face' in delivering marketing and communications messages that are developed by the government through Economic Development
- providing advice to the ACT Government on systemic issues facing the business community in the ACT as a result of COVID-19. This advice will focus on information exchange and implementation, with policy development remaining within current government mechanisms
- referring individual businesses that require assistance to the relevant part of government.

Referral points to existing government business units

- The COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner will not duplicate the functions already established within government and, in accordance with Administrative Arrangements, the relevant Minister/s will remain responsible for the delivery of services to business, including all policy development and communications with Commonwealth, State and Territory like functions.
- The COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner will work closely with and refer decisions to the following referral points in government:

Treasury

- Treasury will maintain its responsibility to lead work in analysing economic conditions and designing support measures to assist the business community, including liaison with other directorates, Commonwealth Treasury and Canberra business and union sectors as appropriate.

Economic Development (CMTEDD)

- *Tailored business assistance* – the COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner will refer all requests for assistance from the business community to Economic Development to coordinate and manage (that are not related to commercial lease arrangements). All enquiries for individual business assistance will be referred to Economic Development for case management.

TERMS OF REFERENCE - COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner

- *Business advice and support service* – the COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner will make appropriate referrals to the Southern Region Business Enterprise Centre which has been contracted to provide up to four hours of fully subsidised, tailored advice and access to online business development resources to small business.
- *Business communications and marketing* – the COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner will feed information and insights into the communications and marketing activities to the business community that are developed and implemented by Economic Development, which has a team focused on communicating government initiatives and decisions to the business community and to promote local business to the ACT community. Economic Development will work with the Public Information Coordination Centre (PICC) in the development of the communications strategy, messaging and activities.
- Economic Development will maintain its responsibility to liaise across government to coordinate matters relating to the business sector in the ACT. Economic Development will also represent the ACT in relevant business-related national coordination meetings.

Better Regulation Taskforce (CMTEDD)

- The COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner will liaise with the Better Regulation Taskforce in relation to the volume of referrals to government-funded mediation services, including to share information about mediation outcomes and key issue themes.
- Through the Better Regulation Taskforce the COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner will provide advice on business sentiment and key emerging issues to the Commercial Tenancies Administration Committee.

Access Canberra

- *Business Liaison Team* – the COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner will refer requests for information by business to the Access Canberra Business Liaison Team, established to assist business understand the support available and to provide advice for businesses operating through changed arrangements due to COVID-19.

Resources

The existing resources assigned to the ACT Commissioner for International Engagement will be used to support the COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner. Any additional administrative or support resources required will be supported within existing resources by CMTEDD.

Office of International Engagement

2021-22 Report to the Chief Minister for the ACT



Background

To provide coordination and integration of international engagement activities on a whole-of-Government basis, the ACT Government initially appointed in August 2016 the Commissioner for International Engagement (CIE) and then reappointed in August 2021. The CIE delivered in September 2016 the *International Engagement Strategy* (IES), which expressed a *2050 Vision* for Canberra:

“to be recognised as one of the world’s great innovation, creative and art cities while remaining the world’s most liveable city”

This *2021-22 Report to the Chief Minister for the ACT* provides an opportunity to highlight the engagement work that has been undertaken by the CIE, to position Canberra as a global city and bring the Territory closer to achieving the *2050 Vision*.

The CIE will continue to report annually in order to promote his engagement and elicit feedback from the Legislative Assembly and the community. The CIE welcomes your feedback and comments.

Canberra's *International Engagement Strategy*

Launched in September 2016, Canberra's *International Engagement Strategy* (IES) provided an overarching framework for the inbound and outbound activities of the Office of International Engagement, including formal city-to-city engagement. The IES is currently being updated to reflect emerging opportunities.

The IES details how the Commissioner for International Engagement (CIE) and the broader Government intends to promote a range of major economic activities, across seven key areas of strength: Education & Research; Tourism; ICT & e-Government; Defence & Cyber Security; Space & Spatial Science; Health & Sports Science; and Renewable Energy. These will be explored in the ten priority markets of: Singapore; New Zealand; China; the United States of America; Japan; India; Indonesia; Malaysia; Thailand; and South Korea.

Below, the CIE provides a summary report of international engagement activities undertaken in the 2021-22 financial year, and their connection to the programs described in the IES.

Update of the *International Engagement Strategy*

During 2021-22 the OIE prepared an updated draft of the IES that reflects evolving, long-term Government priorities and market opportunities. This updated strategy will take into consideration the effect of the COVID-19 global pandemic and building a resilient economy for future generations.

Helping to realise the ACT's ambitions and 2050 Vision through international engagement

As stated in the IES, the OIE undertakes 12 fundamental activities in order to work toward achieving its strategic objectives.¹ Outlined in this section is the work of the OIE, categorised through these 12 fundamental activities.

A targeted program of activities to grow our international reputation and prestige.

For part of the 2021-22 financial year targeted program activities were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Towards the end of the 2021-22 financial year, OIE resumed delivery on a limited range of activities aimed raising the reputation and prestige of Canberra on the world stage.

Between 2 - 7 May OIE organised a trade mission to Fiji and New Zealand to focus on the key areas of strength; tourism, international aviation, education, renewable energy, health and defence. The other areas of focus included the MoU's that were signed between Canberra and Wellington institutions/organisations, and to renew and invigorate existing

¹ Act Government - Office of International Engagement, 2019, *Canberra's International Engagement Strategy*, 8 September 2016, Canberra, p. 9.

relationships. This trade mission assisted in building greater opportunities for the Chief Minister's trade mission to New Zealand and Fiji in October 2022.

The CIE led a trade mission to Singapore 13-18 June 2022 as a prelude to the Chief Minister's trade mission for August. The CIE connected with valuable stakeholders in the aviation and freight industry, tourism, fintech institution, education sector and renewing networks to benefit the ACT.

Providing strategic leadership over the international inbound and outbound activities, including our city-to-city engagement.

The OIE organises, in cooperation with the Chief Minister's Office, a three-year rolling program on outbound international missions.

During most of the 2021-22 financial year, all international inbound and outbound activities were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Defining and implementing a targeted program of ACT Government, ministerial and industry trade missions to priority markets.

On an ongoing basis, the CIE defines, plans or otherwise coordinates mission activity delivered by stakeholders across the ACT Government. Most missions involve the direct participation of the Chief Minister or the CIE, or both. Mission programs are typically revised yearly and take into consideration the dynamic and changing global landscape. These programs have been developed in close alignment of the IES.

During the 2021-22 financial year, the OIE continued longer-term planning of potential trade missions that will occur in a changed COVID-19 pandemic environment following the reestablishment of safe international air travel.

Three-year forward programs were developed and agreed by the Chief Minister.

The proposed major missions for 2021/2022:

- Singapore in October 2021;
- New Zealand in November 2021;
- Singapore and Malaysia in January 2022;
- South Korea and Japan (post Budget) 2022; and
- Thailand and Vietnam 2022 (CIE only).

The proposed major missions for 2022/2023:

- United Kingdom and EU member nations in August 2022;
- Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam in August/September 2022;
- New Zealand in November 2022;
- India in February 2023; and

- United States of America (post-Budget) 2023.

The proposed major missions for 2023/2024:

- Singapore and Malaysia in September 2023;
- New Zealand in November 2023;
- Indonesia (CIE only) 2023; and
- Singapore and Japan (post Budget) 2024.

It should be noted that the proposed programs were made with flexibility around other opportunities arising or changes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Creating an inbound mission facilitation program that qualifies enquiries, proactively targets inbound opportunity and manages program development and delivery for inbound delegation visits.

Inbound delegation activity was again suspended in the first quarter of financial year because of COVID-19 pandemic conditions. However, the OIE continued to respond to requests of the business and diplomatic community. At the same time the OIE provided introductions of Canberra businesses to various diplomatic missions, furthering the ACT's economic goals.

During the third quarter the OIE assisted the Nauru High Commission with programme elements of the President of Nauru's visit to Canberra.

In the last quarter, the OIE assisted the Korean female journalist delegation on the Canberra Space sector. The OIE also delivered a seminar for the ACT planning market for the US Department of State on the ACT planning regime.

The OIE also collaborated with the Queensland University of Technology in delivering an education program about Canberra to delegations from Cambodia and Thailand.

Building relationships and liaising with Canberra's diplomatic community.

On behalf of the ACT Government the CIE was highly active in liaising with the Canberra-based diplomatic community. Specific liaison activities are documented in the Quarterly Reports accompanying this Annual Report. Activities included formal meetings to representation at national day receptions, ambassadorial inductions and farewells, cultural events and diplomatic dinners. Such activities serve to maintain ongoing, positive relationships with the diplomatic community and assist in their participation and ongoing contributions to the broader ACT community.

Working with the Canberra Business Chamber (CBC) to connect with International Business Councils and Chambers of Commerce to utilise their networks and market knowledge.

Regular contact with the Canberra Business Chamber continued throughout the reporting year. The OIE has regular meetings with CBC at an officer level to maintain our strong working relationship and to further coordinate international activities.

On 25 November the CBC facilitated the ACT Export Awards Certificate Presentation. The winners of the ACT Export Awards were invited, and the National Export Awards was live streamed. The CIE presented the certificates to the following National Export Awards winners:

- WildBear Entertainment (Creative Industries category): a content studio that produces factual film and television for broadcast, theatrical and digital distribution.
- Penten (Emerging Exporter category): a Canberra-based cyber technology company providing secure wireless and software services for classified information exchange to defence and government agencies in Australia and abroad.
- Aspen Medical was honoured Hall of Fame 2021 after winning the Health and Biotechnology Award three times, in 2011, 2013 and 2018. Aspen Medical was also recognised as Australian Exporter of the Year for 2018.

Throughout the financial year, the CIE and OIE officers met with various business organisations including the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Australia China Business Council; Auckland Chamber of Commerce; and Wellington Chamber of Commerce.

Working with our Canberra Region partners to enhance export capability and capacity.

During the year, the OIE continued to assist in the work to establish exports of premium fresh food from the Canberra Region.

In this regard, the CIE has ongoing dialogue with the Canberra Airport, the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, and other participants in the Australia-based export supply chain.

Air freight export activity continued from Australia during the pandemic, assisted by the International Freight Assistance Mechanism.

Reinvigorating the ACT's formal government-to-government relationships with a view to raise awareness of the economic opportunities within Canberra's Key Areas of Strength.

The CIE has had discussions with foreign-government representatives to discuss bilateral trade and export from the ACT from within our key areas of strength.

As part of the planning process of international trade missions the OIE also works with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Austrade to identify suitable opportunities and facilitate in market connections and events.

Making recommendations for ACT representation (either at an official level or through the Canberra business and research community) at international conferences and trade shows relevant to Canberra's Key Areas of Strength

Pandemic conditions did not allow for attendance in-person at international conferences and trade shows, the OIE continues to work with Business and Investment, CMTEDD to identify key opportunities to represent Canberra at international events, particularly web-based ones.

The focus remains on boosting international opportunities in economic sector KAS in which Canberra already excels and have a potential for continued growth.

The OIE and the Office of the Pacific, DFAT co-hosted a virtual Canberra Pacific Roundtable on 27 October. Ten nations from the Pacific Region were present and discussed the challenges they are currently facing and predictions on what challenges lay ahead for post-COVID recovery.

The Canberra Singapore Space Forum took place online on 25 November. Participants learnt about both the ACT and Singapore space-industry landscape, in terms of opportunities and challenges in research and development, commercial and non-commercial joint ventures and investment needs of the industry.

Leading engagement with the Australian Government including Austrade and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Network to promote ACT opportunities and leverage the incentives and support that are available.

The OIE works with DFAT, Austrade, and other Commonwealth departments to support programs of trade to key markets, as well as promote Canberra as a preferred place to visit, study, invest and do business in Australia. The OIE keeps updated with the Commonwealth-level incentives and support for ACT exporting stakeholders. This is especially important during a challenged export environment during a fast-emerging COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout the year, the OIE officers and the Business Development Manager in Singapore continued working with Austrade to promote ACT opportunities in South East Asian countries.

Ensuring that, at their core, all formal Government-to-Government arrangements support the growth and economic diversification of the ACT economy and align with the strategic intent of this Strategy

The OIE developed a *Sister City and other Formal Agreements Framework (Framework)*, a guideline for government-to-government agreements. The *Framework* is designed to assist the OIE and other Government directorates in considering the formation of formal agreements with other jurisdictions. It will help us attract formal agreements with international cities that maximise cultural, innovation and, foremost, trade potential for ACT businesses, other institutions, and our community.

The OIE was tasked with the upkeep of the Commonwealth's *Foreign Arrangement Scheme* on behalf of the ACT.

Ensuring future city-to-city relationships align with the ACT Government priorities, share a common economic vision and be proactively resourced and managed to realise economic and cultural benefits for the city.

Future city-to-city relationship requests will be considered case-by-case, and are proposed to be assessed against economic indicators, the ease of doing business, the strategic importance of the relationship to the ACT and will be measured against parameters set in the *Sister City and other Formal Agreements Framework*, discussed above, for future formal arrangements.

The OIE continues to engage with the Canberra-Nara Sister City Committee on the Sister City Agreement and conducts regular quarterly meetings.

The OIE continues to engage with Nara City council and conducts regular quarterly meetings with Nara City officials. The agenda included COVID-19 updates and planning of the 30th Sister City anniversary in 2023.

Country-by-country summary of activity

Appendix A summarises activity of the CIE, against the specific country actions described in Canberra's *International Engagement Strategy*.

International Engagement Program Results

During the last six years, the OIE has established relationships and organised missions to nine of the ten priority, target market countries outlined in Canberra's *International Engagement Strategy*.

All of the international engagement activity undertaken by the CIE is guided by Canberra's *International Engagement Strategy*. The full program of mission activity for the 2021-22 financial year is set out at Appendix B.

The countries that formed part of this mission activity are identified in the IES as priority markets and have been chosen due to their strong economic indicators signalling both capacity and willingness to engage with Australia.

The ten priority markets are: Singapore, New Zealand, China, the United States, Japan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and South Korea.

The IES also identifies key cities within these priority markets. Cities are becoming increasingly important as people, economic activity and political power become more concentrated in cities.

Key Areas of Strength

The 2016 Canberra's *International Engagement Strategy* recognises that the ACT has seven individual Key Areas of Strength, and the IES further recommends strategies and specific actions to support the Government's economic diversification objectives.

Economic diversification objectives considered in the development of the IES were found in these Government strategies: *CBR: Switched On*; *2015 ACT Arts Policy* and *Tourism 2020: Growing the Visitor Economy 2014-20*. A summary of the KAS addressed in trade missions is set out in [Appendix C](#).

<p>Singapore – what we will do</p> <p>The ACT Government will focus on consolidating existing and growing new networks that support key capability area growth.</p>		
<p>Action</p>	<p>Response</p>	<p>Status Ongoing, Complete, Under Development, yet-to-commence</p>
<p>Establishing destination marketing partnerships with Tourism Australia and Singapore Airlines to drive inbound visitation.</p>	<p>VisitCanberra has established destination marketing partnerships with Tourism Australia and Singapore Airlines to drive long term inbound visitation. The Commissioner for International Engagement (CIE) continued to support VisitCanberra activities including ongoing engagement with Singapore Airlines. Relationships with hotel firms were also a part of this year’s Singapore mission.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Growing international education partnerships with the education sector through StudyCanberra.</p>	<p>VisitCanberra continues to lead the development of long term international education tourism partnerships.</p> <p>The CIE continued to work with Study Canberra to promote and build in-country alumni networking.</p> <p>The CIE will continue to coordinate planning and of future trade missions related to this market sector.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Leveraging the Australian Government’s Singapore Landing Pad to support entrepreneurship and growth of the innovation ecosystem.</p>	<p>The CIE continues to support and promote these activities and relationships.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Building relationships and driving investment opportunities linked to Key Capability Areas of space and spatial science, cyber security and defence.</p>	<p>The CIE supported inward investment through the promotion of investment opportunities.</p> <p>The CIE continues to support relationships through</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

	knowledge sharing of our defence industry with in-country representatives.	
Supporting regional freight opportunities and product exports to Singapore in partnership with our partners in the CBR Region.	The CIE has further assisted in the build-out of local perishable produce export capability from Canberra Airport to Singapore. The CIE continues to represent local industry in opening various freight opportunities, including through Austrade's International Freight Assistance Mechanism (IFAM). As a consequence, Canberra Region firms are supplying produce and other products to Singapore.	Ongoing
Other Activity	<p>The OIE organised with Austrade a sustainable industries and climate change forum in Singapore.</p> <p>The CIE continued to build relationships the Australian High Commission related to the art, innovation and film sectors.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

New Zealand – what we will do

The ACT will continue to foster the strong partnership that has been established with Wellington City Council under the Sister-City Agreement (SCA).

Action	Response	Status
Partnerships that facilitate tourism promotion, marketing and product development.	The OIE works with Visit Canberra and Wellington City Council, ACCI, and various New Zealand-based business groups to establish trans-Tasmin quarantine-free travel.	Ongoing
Government-to-government collaboration and knowledge sharing across economic, environmental and social priorities.	The OIE facilitated the organisation of a program of events covering the full scope of the SCA which encompassed government-to-government collaboration and knowledge sharing.	Ongoing

Jointly supporting innovation and technology start-up ecosystems.	The OIE works with Wellington City Council to grow business opportunities between the two cities.	Ongoing
Collaboration on opportunities to secure events, grow partnerships and increase participation in sport.	Sport and Recreation continue to work on networking and information sharing event opportunities.	Ongoing
Mutual exchange regarding smart city technologies and implementation	Mutual networking and information sharing continue with Wellington, showing strong interests in smart-city transport projects.	Ongoing
Mutual exchange of delegations that connect Wellington City Council and the ACT Government.	The OIE organised and delivered the 2019 <i>Canberra Week in Wellington</i> .	Delivered
Programs that support opportunities for Indigenous people from both countries.	The CIE assisted in the establishment of an indigenous artist exchange program. This program will have its first artist exchange in 2019.	Delivered
Other	The CIE is working with Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO) and the Wellington Regional Economic Development Agency (WREDA) to establish closer relations between the two organisations.	Ongoing

China – what we will do

The ACT will continue to foster formal relationships with Beijing, Shenzhen and Hanzhou to promote informal relationships in the wider Guangdong region.

Action	Response	Status
Growing international education partnerships with the education sector through Study Canberra.	<p>Many of Canberra’s educational institutions have links with China and, long term, the OIE assists in maintaining those links.</p> <p>Discussions with the mayor of Beijing occur predominantly around education and science. The OIE is working also with the Beijing municipal government in these areas.</p>	Ongoing
Growing international visitation in partnership with Tourism Australia and travel trade through VisitCanberra.	VisitCanberra, partnered with Tourism Australia and commercial trade partners, to continue to promote Canberra as a place to visit.	Ongoing
Promoting and leveraging opportunities linked to the Australian Government ‘Landing Pad’ in Shanghai.	The ACT Government and CBRIN continue to look for ways to use of all Australian Government Landing Pads.	Ongoing
Supporting regional freight opportunities and product exports to China with our partners in the Canberra Region.	The CIE has held several discussions with local exporters and Chinese officials regarding the [long term] potential for local exports and freight clearance opportunities to enhance export options to China.	Ongoing

United States of America – what we will do

The ACT Government will focus on programs that grow export opportunities and promote investment in our key capability areas.

Action	Response	Status
Promoting and leveraging opportunities linked to the Australian Government Landing Pad in San Francisco.	The ACT Government and CBRIN continue to look to make use of all Australian Government landing pads.	Ongoing
Delivering targeted programs that promote opportunity for investment in priority areas particularly, cyber security, space and spatial science, defence, ICT and renewable energy.	The OIE consults with the US Embassy, and with the Australian posts based in the US.	Ongoing
Linking trade mission activity to Australian Government initiatives or major trade events that enable business to business connections.	Trade mission activities will resume depending on changing COVID-19 conditions.	Under development
Ensuring city-to-city engagement continues to enhance relationships already established with San Francisco, Washington DC, Austin and Portland.	The CIE has continued discussions with the government of Washington DC regarding a future sister city agreement.	Under development
Develop other relationships and agreements to enhance the ACT's reputation and standing in the US.	The CIE continued discussions with the US Navy regarding establishing a formal relationship with the new <i>USS Canberra</i> .	Ongoing

Japan – what we will do

The ACT Government will focus on growing the profile of the CBR brand in the Japanese market.

Action	Response	Status
Further promoting the Canberra-Nara Sister City Agreement (SCA).	Unfortunately, the 2019 Candle Festival was cancelled because of severe weather conditions. The OIE continues to provide secretariat support for the Canberra-Nara Sister City Committee.	Delivered
Exploring potential opportunities in Japan's renewable energy sector.	Discussions continue with Japanese officials in this area.	Ongoing
Maintaining our deep financial connections, particularly in relation to Government bonds.	Connections established are a result of meetings with investors over time.	Ongoing

Canberra in the Asian Region

On 27 October the OIE hosted the Canberra Pacific Forum. The purpose of the Forum was to introduce the ACT to Canberra's diplomatic community from the Pacific Region, with a view to assisting the Commonwealth in delivering the *Pacific Step-up Initiative*. It was a significant event for building relations between the ACT Government, DFAT and Pacific Island Members.

Mission Program Results

Date	Market	City focus	Activity	Capability Focus Areas
2-7 May	Fiji & New Zealand	Suva, Nadi & Wellington	Between 2 and 7 May 2022 the CIE and OIE began building networks within Fiji for the Chief Minister’s intended Trade Mission for later in the year. The CIE and OIE also reconnected with Sister City Wellington to recommence the relationship after the COVID-19 shut down.	Inter-government relations; Tourism; Sister City relations; Pacific outreach.
13-18 June	Singapore	Singapore	The CIE led a mission to Singapore, which was focused on tourism, investment, health, export of Canberra region produce, supporting Canberra businesses.	Tourism; Education & Research; Health; Investment; Export, Aviation

Key Areas of Strength and Future Planning

Capability Focus Areas	Date	Market	City												
				Education & Research	Tourism	Defence & Cyber Security	Renewable Energy	ICT & e-Government	Space & Spatial Science	Health & Sports Science	Creative Can berra	Investment Attraction and Facilitation	Trade and Export Development	Inter-governmental relations	
Inter-government relations; Tourism; Investment Attraction and Facilitation; Trade and Export Development; Sister City relations.	2-7 May	New Zealand	Wellington		✓								✓	✓	✓
Inter-government relations; Tourism; Trade & Export Development; Pacific outreach.	2-7 May	Fiji	Suva & Nadi		✓									✓	✓
Education; Research; Tourism; Renewable Energy; ICT & e-Government; Space & Spatial Science; Health & Sports Science; Investment Attraction & Facilitation; Trade & Export Development; Inter-governmental relations	13-18 June	Singapore	Singapore	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓