

Forum Focus: Services

ISSUE 4 - 19 December 2011



Knowledge Influence Support

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
AND INDUSTRY
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Chairman's Message *from Tony Joyner, Partner – Freehills*

Dear members,

Welcome to the December edition of CCI Forum Focus: Services.

This month's meeting, chaired by Tom Gardner focused on key policy issues affecting members. Much of the Forum discussion centred on work around CCI's future policy agenda. The discussion was robust and frank and I wish to thank those members who expressed their views on the strategic areas of policy that will shape CCI's approach to the next twelve months.

Next year also will be critical for CCI as it will mark the countdown to the next WA State Election being held in March 2013. The CCI's 2012-13 Pre-Budget Submission sets to focus the attention of the WA Government on the key issues facing the WA business community. The next 12 months are a critical opportunity for WA to commit to critical reforms that will underpin the State's prosperity and growth into the future.

This Forum Focus includes articles on recent policy papers, the CCI Workforce Participation Forum, and the outcomes from the National Taxation Forum.

May you and all of your staff have a Safe and Merry Christmas and Prosperous 2012.

2012-13 Pre-Budget Submission to the WA Government

In recent weeks, CCI submitted its 2012-13 Pre-Budget Submission to the WA Government.

With the 2012-13 Budget the last before the election, CCI has called upon the Government to deliver its promised reform agenda, which has stalled in recent times.

The Government should use the 2012-13 Budget to deliver a reform agenda that can be implemented immediately to ease the cost of doing business in the state, and to help those businesses outside of the resources sector to navigate through the current conditions.

[Click here](#) for CCI's 2012-13 Pre-Budget Submission to the WA Government.

Fast Fact: CCI's submission sets out a non-negotiable list of nine priorities, which the business community expects to see in the upcoming budget.

ACCI Higher Education Working Group

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) will establish a Higher Education and Training Working Group in 2012.

The higher education sector has, as a result of the Bradley Review, undergone substantial reform recently. A number of issues have been identified by ACCI that will require timely and business focussed input including base funding, teaching and learning standards and international education sector issues.

CCI has nominated its interest in participating in the group. We will be seeking input from our members on these issues throughout the year and will update you on the progress made by the working group.

For further information on the Higher Education Working Group please contact Lena Constantine, manager - Policy, on 08 9365 7514, or email lena.constantine@cciwa.com

Fast fact: The Australian Government has set the targets of 40 per cent of 25 to 34 year olds holding a Bachelors degree by 2025, and 20 per cent of undergraduate students enrolled in universities being from the lowest socioeconomic quartile of the population by 2020.

CCI Workforce Participation Forum 2011 – Utilising the Untapped Workforce

Featuring a number of Western Australian business leaders, including an address by Richard Goyder, Wesfarmers Limited, the CCI Workforce Participation Forum was held on Friday 4 November, 2011.

The Forum provided attendees with an insight into some strategies to increase workforce participation in order to address the skills and labour shortage facing Western Australia. There is a large section of the community that employers, with some flexibility and appropriate procedures, can greater engage to fill some of the predicted shortages.

Speakers included Tony Noonan from Doorn-Djil Yoordaing Mining and Construction, Dr Penny Flett from Brightwater Care Group, Zoe Weir of Freehills, Damir Kucan from Burswood and Sue Robertson of Edge Employment Solutions.

The speakers presented participants with insight into the reality of engaging, managing and retaining a wide range of under-represented groups, including Aboriginal people, mature age employees, women in the workforce and people with disabilities.

The Forum was attended by a diverse range of participants who were appreciative of the calibre of speakers and the practical solutions they provided, particularly the knowledge of support services available for employers.

Fast Fact: 1.7 million Australians over the age of 18 years wanted to contribute more to the labour force, according a recent report issued by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia, July 2010 to June 2011 (cat. no. 6239.0).

Cabinet reshuffle

On 12 December 2011, Prime Minister Julia Gillard made a number of announcements in a reshuffle of the cabinet. The reshuffle has created a super department bringing together the industry, innovation, science and research portfolios with the tertiary education portfolio.

The newly named Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education will be headed up by Greg Combet, while Senator Chris Evans continues as minister responsible for higher education.

The new structure ensures higher education, research and innovation continue to have two voices in the cabinet room. Initial reactions from the tertiary education sector have been positive to changes.

Fast fact: Minister Carr, former minister for innovation, industry, science and research has been given the manufacturing and defence material portfolios.

Carbon Tax update

The Federal Government's Clean Energy Future package passed the Senate on 8 November 2011 and will become operational on 1 July, 2012. The package has wide ranging implications for CCI members. A relatively small number will be direct participants in scheme. Others will be captured through changes in the fuel tax system. However, the majority of businesses will see an impact on their energy bills.

CCI is now focusing its efforts on helping members in the WA business community, particularly small and medium sized employers, to understand the impact on their businesses and prepare for the impact of the tax.

Fast Fact: Only around 500 individual facilities will be liable to pay the carbon tax, of which around 75 operate solely within Western Australia, 45 across multiple states.

For further information on the carbon tax please contact Drew Pearman, senior policy adviser - Resources, Energy and Environment, on 08 9365 7720, or email drew.pearman@cciwa.com

Hon Peter Beattie visit to WA

The Federal Government's Resources Sector Supplier Envoy and former Queensland Premier, the Hon. Peter Beattie visited Perth from November 22 to 25. It was Mr Beattie's first visit to WA in his new role as Resources Sector Supplier Envoy.

CCI was proud to host a visit by Mr Beattie at its Hay Street Office on November 24. Mr Beattie received a briefing from the Industry Capability Network WA as well as Project Connect that are both housed at CCI.

The highlight of Mr Beattie's visit was the CCI hosted Forum that was attended by more than 70 CCI members representing a cross section of suppliers, proponents and consultants involved in the WA resources sector.

CCI has received very positive feedback from Mr Beattie and the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research on the input of CCI members into Mr Beattie's visit. CCI shall continue to be in contact with Mr Beattie to ensure that its members opinions are included as part of his recommendations to the Federal Government on local content.

Fast Fact: The attendance at the CCI Forum was the highest there has been for all of the industry consultations Mr Beattie has held across Australia.

2012 CCI Advocacy Agenda

Each year the CCI Advocacy team, in consultation with members, determines the policy priorities for the year ahead.

Having consulted with members, the CCI Advocacy Team has identified the following list of priority issues for 2011:

- Productivity – examining ways to lift Australia's flagging productivity;
- Participation – the issue of labour shortages remains a priority for WA employers. This series will examine what changes are needed to increase the participation levels among certain groups, including older people, Indigenous Australians, migrants, women and people with a disability; and
- 2013 State Election Plan - setting out the issues of importance to business in the lead up to the March 2013 State Election. It will be similar to the previous state Strategies for Growth document.

These papers will be in addition to the advocacy work already being undertaken by the team. CCI Senior Policy officers will be consulting with members throughout 2012 in the development of these flagship papers.

Fast Fact: In 2011, CCI released policy papers on Local Content, Industrial Relation Reform, Preventative Health Measures, the cost of doing business in WA, and Tax Reform.