



CANBERRA
BUSINESS COUNCIL

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MEDIA RELEASE

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ACT MUST BE ABLE TO HOST FUTURE MAJOR EVENTS

Canberra Business Council supports the ACT Government's bid to jointly host the 2014 G20 Summit with NSW, but reiterates its call for urgent development of infrastructure to enable Canberra to hold this type of event on its own in the future.

"The ACT Government is meeting with NSW to discuss the potential of a joint bid to host the G20 – with the major summit meeting being held in Sydney and Canberra playing host to a number of significant side events," Canberra Business Council (CBC) CEO, Chris Faulks explained.

"CBC will do everything it can to help the ACT secure the pre and post G20 summit meetings and associated business meetings.

"However, we are also asking the ACT Government to recognise the urgent need for Canberra to have a conference facility that would allow it to host national and international meetings such as the G20 Summit in the future.

"Canberra Business Council has actively promoted construction of a large and highly secure convention venue, known as the Australia Forum, in Canberra. The plan includes conference and exhibition facilities, hotel accommodation, retail and restaurant outlets and would have all of the functionality and capacity needed to host a G20 meeting. It would be a first step in enabling the ACT to successfully compete for conferences of this type.

"As the capital of Australia, the ACT should be the natural host of these important meetings", Ms Faulks said.

"The Council commends the ACT Government on the support it has given the Australia Forum to date. The Government has committed \$1 million to a feasibility study of the proposed Australia Forum site and recently released an EOI for an Urban Design Study that would include evaluation of the Australia Forum in terms of site use, staging options, cost and benefits.

"While this shows goodwill on the part of the ACT Government, it must urgently secure and commit funding for construction of the Australia Forum and ensure associated infrastructure, such as hotel accommodation, can facilitate major events.

"Ten years ago the ACT was unable to host CHOGM; 10 years later we cannot independently hold the G20. As the nation's capital it would be tragic if we are still in this position in another 10 years.

"The estimated cost of the Australia Forum is \$330m, but the benefits clearly outweigh this initial investment. For example, Western Australia has estimated that last year's three day CHOGM was worth \$30 million to its hotel and hospitality sector.

"Meanwhile, the Adelaide Convention Centre (ACC) recently celebrated the \$1 billion contribution it has made to the South Australian economy since opening in 1987. The ACC generated more than \$90 million in economic benefit for South Australia in the past financial year.

"Any major meeting held in Canberra is also an opportunity to showcase the ACT to the world. We have seen the rewards this can bring in terms of profile and potential tourism growth with the recent visits of The Queen and President Obama."

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