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## **CANBERRA IS THE NATURAL HOST FOR G20 IN 2014 BUT...**

“The G20 meeting being held in Australia in 2014 and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) recently held in Perth both highlight the potential and appropriateness of Australia’s National Capital being in a position to host national and international meetings of this calibre”, Canberra Business Council CEO, Chris Faulks said today.

“As the capital of Australia, the ACT should be the natural host of these important meetings”, Ms Faulks said. “In this context Canberra Business Council commends the ACT Government for agreeing to progress the planning for the Australia Forum.”

“The Council absolutely rejects the view that the ACT will never be large enough or have sufficient accommodation and high-quality meeting facilities to host major national and international meetings. To accept this position is to relegate Canberra to only ever hosting minor satellite and peripheral meetings – a totally unacceptable position for the future of Australia’s National Capital.

“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.

“The Scoping Study for the Australia Forum, released in April of this year, proved the positive impact developing a world-class convention centre in the National Capital would have on the region and the ACT economy. The ACT Government has committed \$1 million to a feasibility study of the proposed Australia Forum site.

“Proper planning of such a major piece of infrastructure is vital, but we need the Federal and ACT Governments to commit to funding this project, which is estimated to cost \$330 million, as soon as possible to capitalize on Australia’s increasingly important role in Asian and Pacific regional and international affairs.

“In addition to the critical need for Australia’s National Capital to be able to host these conferences, the Council has also drawn attention to the economic benefits to the ACT of the Australia Forum.

“To illustrate this point, Western Australia has estimated that last month’s three day CHOGM was worth \$30 million to its hotel and hospitality sector.

“Meanwhile, the Adelaide Convention Centre recently celebrated the \$1 billion contribution it has made to the South Australian economy since opening in 1987. The Adelaide Convention Centre (ACC) generated more than AUS\$90 million in economic benefit for South Australia in the past financial year, attracted approximately 22,500 visitors to South Australia, and generated more than 101,000 hotel bed nights. The ACC estimates that following Stage Two of the ACC expansion, the venue will generate an additional AUS\$76 million and 1,784 jobs on average a year.

“This clearly demonstrates the financial benefits of the Australia Forum proposal to the ACT economy and its capacity to recoup its initial cost.”

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