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CBC Welcomes Innovative Solution to Skills Shortage

Canberra Business Council (CBC) has welcomed the launch today of a new business which is taking a novel approach to strengthening the ACT economy. *SkilledFutures* aims to harness international students to help solve the ongoing skills shortage that is threatening to constrain the ACT economy within the next five years.

SkilledFutures has been established to help link Canberra's businesses with international students who are keen to experience employment related to their field of learning while they are studying in Canberra.

"Acute skills shortages are again hurting businesses in Canberra", Chris Faulks, CEO of Canberra Business Council said today. "Many employers are reporting that they are unable to fill positions in critical areas and are desperate for well trained and motivated staff. And recent research suggests that this skills shortage will worsen significantly over the next five years".

Ms Faulks said that the inability to attract and retain skilled staff is proving to be a major constraint on growth for many local businesses. Canberra's international students may hold the key to solving this problem.

"We congratulate *SkilledFutures* for developing a creative and forward-thinking solution to this increasingly serious problem", Ms Faulks said. "I encourage Canberra businesses to get involved."

Peter Gordon, the principal of *SkilledFutures*, created this innovative venture following an extensive period of engagement with international students and ACT businesses.

"There are over 8,000 international students in Canberra who are not only well-qualified and enthusiastic, but who can bring an invaluable international perspective to local businesses. Their potential is just waiting to be tapped by Canberra's business community", Peter Gordon commented.

Skilled Futures will carefully assess each student's industry knowledge and language skills before matching them with part-time or casual jobs in Canberra-based businesses that have expressed an interest in employing an international student.

"I have met many of these international students and I can say confidently that I am yet to encounter a brighter, more enthusiastic and well-rounded group of young people", Ms Faulks said. "I would not hesitate to recommend them to ACT employers for internships or part-time positions."

Employers interested in accessing international students as interns or for part-time positions can register their interest with Peter Gordon on mobile: 0417 064 767 or email: pgordon@economicfutures.com.au

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