

Dear Member,

The Geelong Chamber of Commerce is proud of our role as the 'voice' for this region's business community. We make sure that YOUR views and needs are heard at ALL levels of Government.

This week Chamber President Kylie Warne and I travelled to Canberra where we met with a number of senior Federal Government Ministers, government bureaucrats and industry leaders to expand relationships and prosecute the case for business in Geelong.

The list of doors opened to us included:

- Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chief Executive James Pearson
- Minister for Small Business the Hon Michael McCormack MP;
- Minister for Regional Development Senator the Hon Fiona Nash;
- Minister for Innovation, Industry and Science Chief of Staff to the Hon Greg Hunt MP;
- Deputy Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman Dr Chris Latham;
- Assistant Minister for Cities & Digital Transformation the Hon Angus Taylor MP;

As always, the Chamber was extremely well supported by our local federal MP's Sarah Henderson, Member for Corangamite, and Richard Marles, Member for Corio and the Shadow Minister for Defence.

We make this trip annually and I was delighted to be able to share with Ministers preliminary findings of our 2016 Geelong Business Trends Survey, undertaken in partnership with Deakin Business School, that shows a positive trend in the expectations of the business community for 2017.

Many topics were discussed, including the Federal Government's business simplification initiative, the national competitiveness agenda, industrial relations and Productivity Commission rulings, government and local procurement, the digital economy and advocacy and assistance for small business. What pleased me the most returning from these meetings is the message that Geelong's business community is leading the nation in many areas and the Federal Government is keen to ensure that our economy continues to grow - job creation therefore remains paramount.

Rest assured that the Chamber will continue to advocate for business to both State and Federal Governments to ensure that Geelong remains at the forefront of future discussions and decision-making processes.

We are a region that boasts a diverse business landscape and there are many exciting opportunities that lie ahead for us – and we're well positioned to capitalise on those in the eyes of the Federal Government.

As we near the end of the year, I wish to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your support of the Chamber in 2016. We look forward to a vibrant and prosperous 2017.

Kind regards

Bernadette Uzelac
Chief Executive Officer