

Small Business

SMALL BUSINESS

**ACT SMALL
BUSINESS
STRATEGY**
PROGRESS
UPDATE 2024





Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Ngunnawal people and any other families or people with connection to Canberra and the region. We pay respect to elders, past, present, and emerging and to the role Ngunnawal and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses make to the life of this city and this region.

Contents

Key highlights from year one	2
Improve the business experience when dealing with government	8
Support for business to start, operate, grow and innovate	12
Showcase and promote local small businesses	16
Futureproofing small businesses	22
A one-government approach to business	26

Front Cover:
Thomas Coen Jewellery

Lightbulb Studios

Key highlights from year one

The ACT has experienced 33 consecutive years of economic growth. In 2022-23, the ACT economy grew by 4.3 per cent, representing the highest growth rate of any state or territory, and above the national average of 3.0 per cent.¹ The Public administration and safety sector, the Professional, scientific and technical services sector, and the Accommodation and food services sector made the most significant contributions to economic growth in the ACT. There were 269,300 Canberrans employed in May 2024.²

Small businesses are critical to the diversity of the ACT economy, a significant employer and a driver of economic performance and community wellbeing. There are more than 36,000 businesses operating in the ACT and nearly 97 per cent of them employ less than 20 people (referred as small businesses)³. ACT businesses play a critical role in providing secure and stable employment for Canberrans. Around two-thirds of Canberrans are employed in the private sector.

The ACT Small Business Strategy 2023-2026 (the Strategy) sets out the ACT Government's commitment to supporting a dynamic and thriving small business community and states the value and importance of small businesses to the ACT economy and to Canberra achieving on its ambitions for the future. The Strategy was released in July 2023 and reflects what the ACT Government has heard in conversation and consultation with business owners and industry

leaders over recent years. The Strategy highlights the following five priority areas the government will deliver on between 2023-2026 and includes more than 50 actions to support Canberra small businesses to start, operate, grow and innovate:

- Improve the business experience when dealing with government;
- Support for business to start, operate, grow and innovate;
- Showcase and promote local small businesses;
- Futureproofing small businesses; and
- A one government approach to business.

During the first year since release, the ACT Government has made significant progress in implementing the Strategy. Of the Strategy's priority actions, 40 per cent have been either completed or are being delivered through ongoing government initiatives. The ACT Government has also commenced progressing work under 28 priority actions (54 per cent of all actions) and work under a further 3 actions (6 per cent of all actions) have not yet commenced.



21

priority actions have either been completed or are being delivered on an ongoing basis through existing initiatives by the ACT Government.



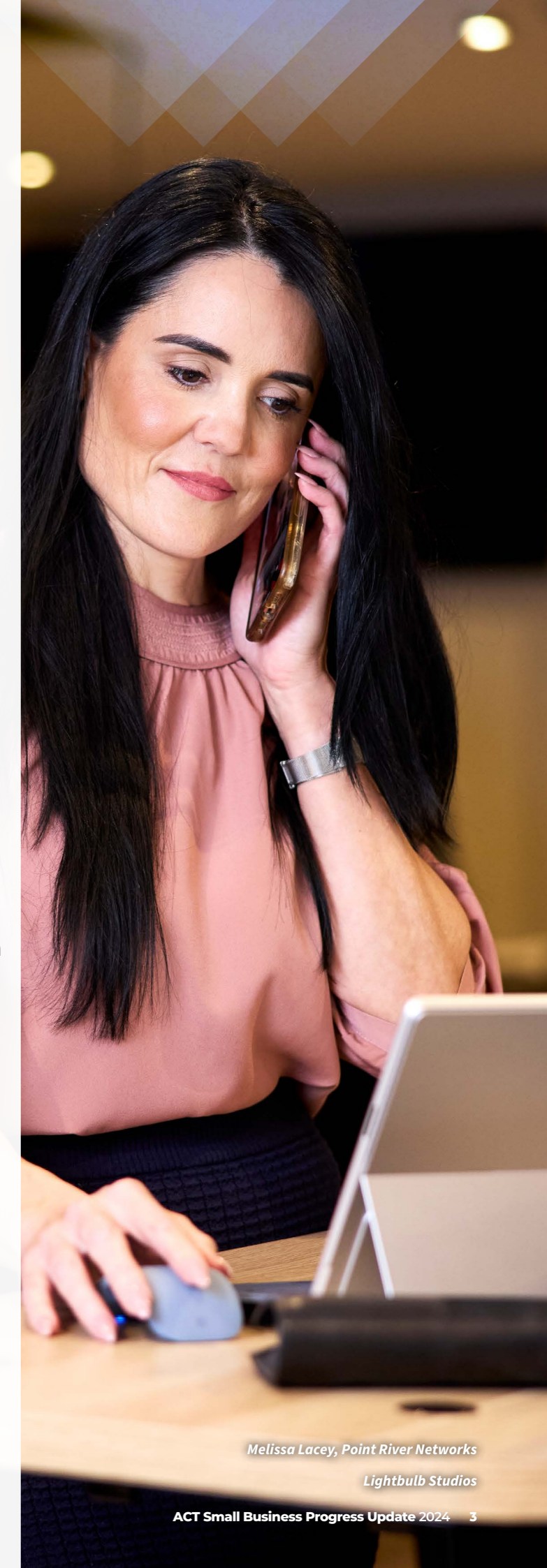
28

priority actions under the Strategy have been commenced by the ACT Government and are progressing well



3

priority actions under the Strategy are yet to commence.



Melissa Lacey, Point River Networks

Lightbulb Studios

1 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 5220.0 Australian National Accounts: State Accounts, 2022-23, latest available.

2 ABS, 6202.0, Labour Force, Australia, May 2024 (seasonally adjusted), latest available.

3 ABS, 8165.0, Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, June 2019 to June 2023, Latest available.

Some of the key achievements under the Strategy in 2023-24, its first year, include the following.

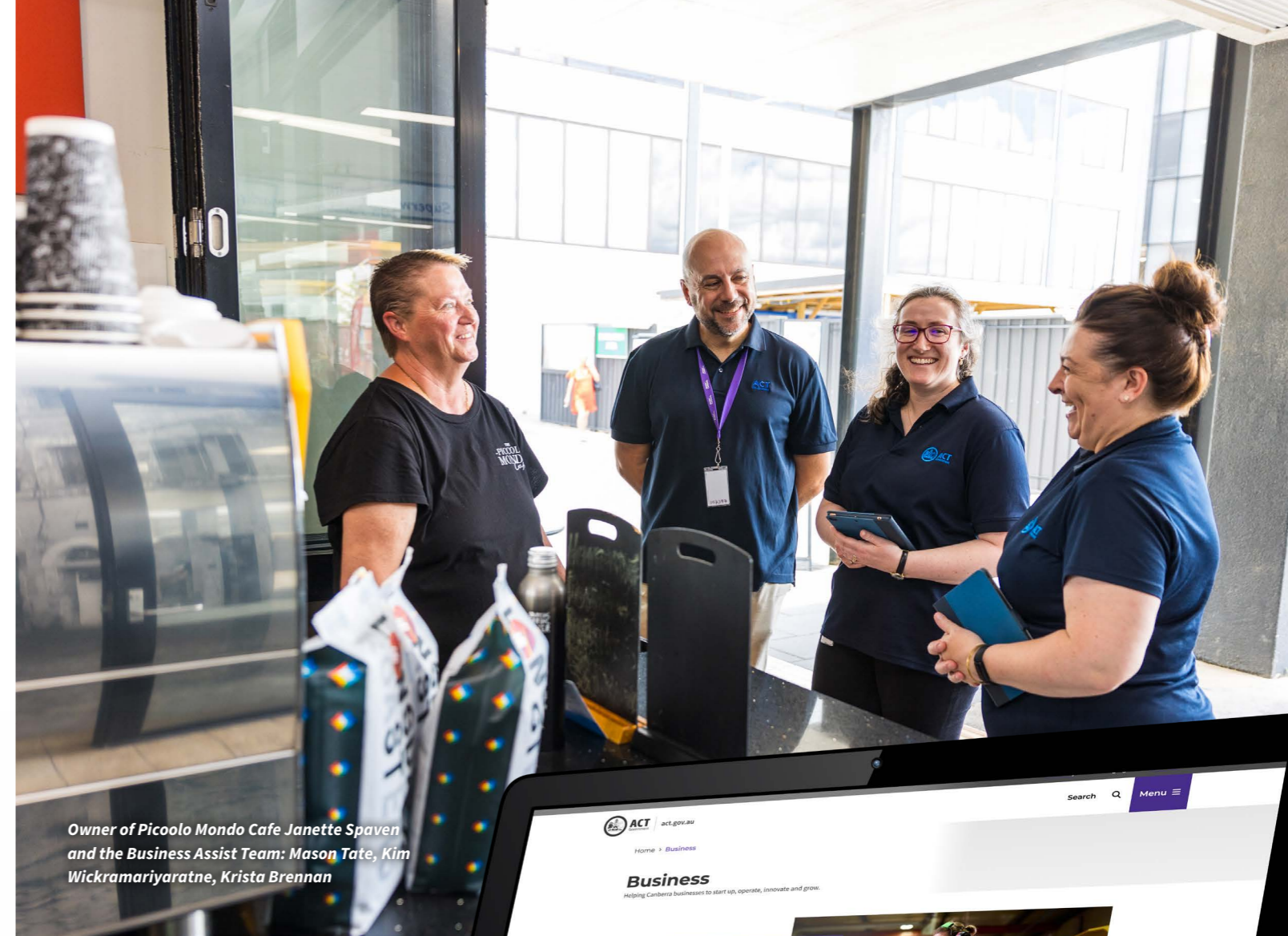


Access Canberra Event Coordination and Business Assist (ECBA)

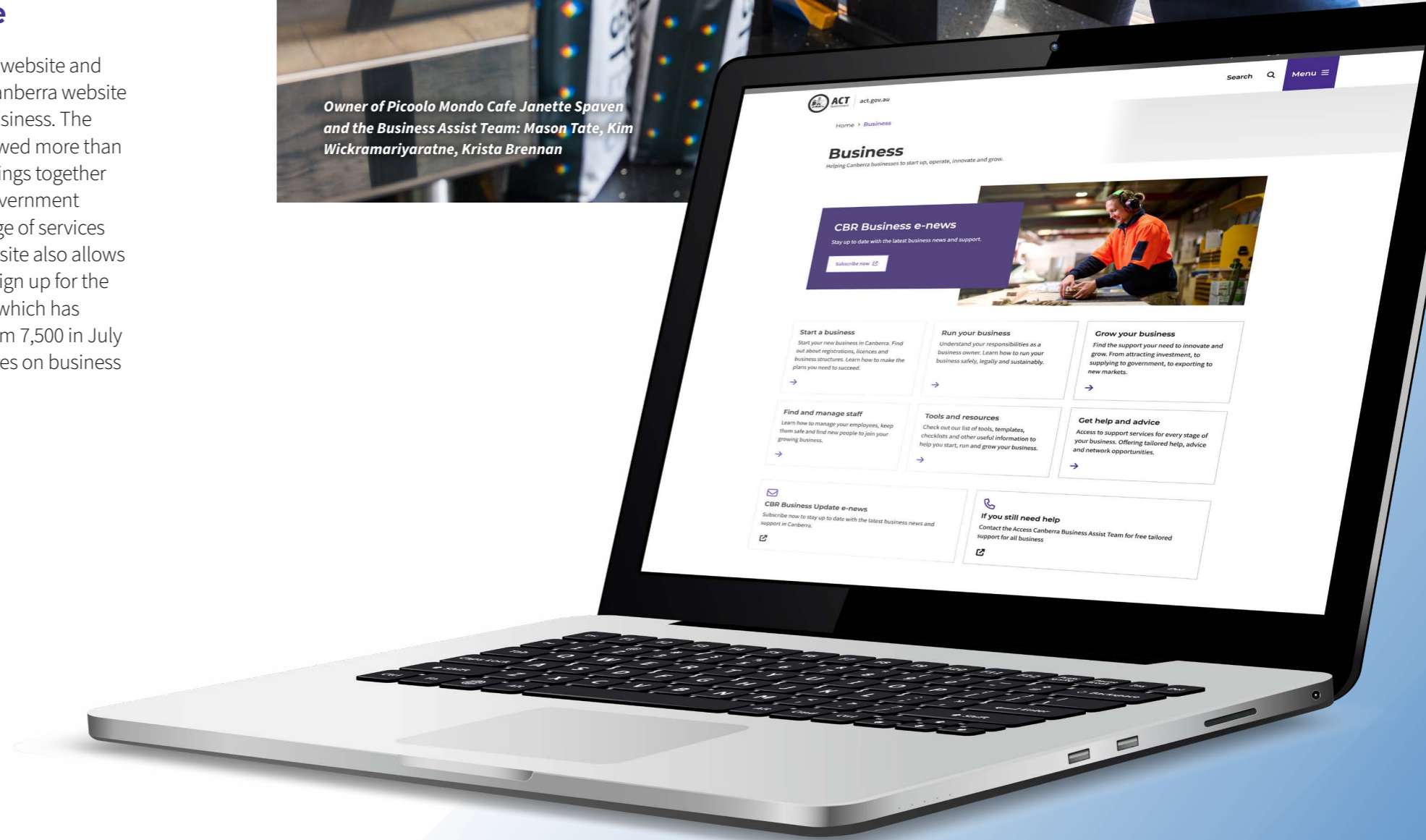
The establishment and successful operations of the Access Canberra Event Coordination and Business Assist (ECBA) team which is now the front door for business owners and operators to do business with government. The team offers tailored advice and support for businesses. The team has a commitment to respond to enquiries within five working days and is continually working with businesses to resolve their enquiries.

Business Hub website

The expansion of the Business Hub website and the redevelopment of the Access Canberra website as key sources of information for business. The Business Hub website has been viewed more than 40,000 times since July 2023 and brings together ACT Government and Australian Government information. It also sets out the range of services and supports for business. The website also allows business owners and operators to sign up for the CBR Business Update e-newsletter which has more than 8,000 subscribers (up from 7,500 in July 2023) and delivers fortnightly updates on business programs, services and events.



Owner of Piccolo Mondo Cafe Janette Spaven and the Business Assist Team: Mason Tate, Kim Wickramariyaratne, Krista Brennan





Beth Tully, Smiths Alternative
Pew Pew Studios



Cam Sullings and keynote speaker Greg Jennings,
Beyond Blue Chief Engagement Officer
Lightbulb Studios



Night-time economy

The delivery of Night-time economy reforms that will support a thriving night-time economy that benefits businesses, the community, and the city's economic well-being, without compromising on safety. The reforms deliver a more flexible and responsive regulatory environment and are designed to support small and medium-sized venues to diversify their business models and attract new clientele. The reforms have also reduced the costs of liquor licenses, particularly for smaller venues who showcase artists, musicians and other cultural activities. The reforms support live music and performance and enable businesses to extend their trading hours or change their floor plans for licensee and special events. The reforms have also introduced interim liquor licences which can be issued by the Commissioner for Fair Trading, where there is a delay regarding suitability of premises preventing the licence from being issued but the Commissioner is satisfied from a risk and safety perspective that the premises can still provide alcohol, allowing new businesses to open their doors faster.



Social Enterprise Grant Program

Delivery of the first Social Enterprise Grant Program to support the increase in the number of social enterprises in the ACT. Delivered by The Mill House Ventures, in its first year, 14 successful grant recipients were awarded \$340,000 in matched funding. Recipients include the Easy Read Toolbox, the Women's Shed and Accessilife.



CBR Small Business EXPO

CBR Small Business Expo

The delivery of the pilot 'CBR Small Business Expo' which attracted more than 110 exhibitors from government, industry and business (including 91 private sector organisations) and around 1000 participants and attendees. The Expo offered the opportunity for businesses to connect, learn and network with each other and the services and programs that can support them. The Expo offered the opportunity for business people to learn about cyber security, AI, marketing and social media, starting a business, and electrification. The ACT Government had a strong presence across a range of areas including Access Canberra, the Sustainable Business Program and Procurement ACT demonstrating a one-government approach and improving access to ACT Government staff.



PRIORITY ONE

Improve the business experience when dealing with government

Action	How this will help business	Timeframe	Status	Progress Update
1.1	Provide dedicated individual business support through the Access Canberra Event Coordination and Business Assist (ECBA) team	2023 ongoing	Completed and Ongoing	<p>Access Canberra's ECBA team provides services for new businesses to connect with relevant areas across government. The ECBA team also supports event promoters and organisers in the ACT obtain the approvals they require for safe and vibrant events.</p> <p>The ECBA team has received and assisted with 223 unique business enquiries since 1 July 2023 (as at 31 May 2024). Approximately 40 per cent of enquiries received pertain to hospitality businesses, including restaurants, cafes, home-based food businesses and mobile food businesses, such as food trucks. Other enquiries relate to varied business types, including industries such as education, retail, beauty, hairdressing, entertainment, fashion, technology, and logistics.</p> <p>The ECBA team participated in the CBR Small Business Expo to connect with businesses.</p>
1.2	Deliver an expanded Business Hub website connecting business owners and operators with the information they need to start, run, and grow their business	2023	Completed and Ongoing	<p>The ACT Business Hub is a central portal bringing together a range of government information for businesses. A vital communication tool during the COVID-19 pandemic, it has since been revitalised to provide clear and easily accessible information.</p> <p>The Business Hub website has been expanded to include information to start, run and grow a business, manage employees and a range of tools, resources and services.</p> <p>Improvements to the website are continuing to further improve the user experience even further.</p> <p>Since July 2023 the Hub has received more than 27,000 unique visits to the website with nearly 40,000 views of content on the site. The top five viewed pages are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CBR Small Business Expo – 9,337 page views; Get help and advice – 6,123 page views; Apply for grants and funding – 2,668 page views; Start a food business in Canberra – 2,281 page views; and Start a business in Canberra – 2,103 page views.
1.3	Provide plain English information to inform diverse audiences of business owners and operators including culturally and linguistically diverse businesses and those with lived experience of disability	2023 ongoing	Completed and Ongoing	<p>As the key channel for business, the Business Hub website content was re-written to meet accessibility standards. The website meets accessibility standards and, in most cases, exceeds these standards.</p> <p>Accessibility score of 94.7 out of 100.</p> <p>The industry government benchmark is 83.8 out of 100.</p> <p>Level AA conformance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1.</p> <p>The Google Translate function is available on the Business Hub website to assist businesses with languages other than English. Further engagement will be conducted to better understand these audience groups.</p>
1.4	Explore enhancements to the supplier procurement portal, Supplying to ACT Government, to provide a one-stop-shop to allow businesses to create their business profile, access training and guidance material, communicate with the ACT Government and apply for procurement opportunities	2023 ongoing	In progress	<p>The ACT Government continues to develop content and guidance for the Procurement ACT website to support suppliers to understand how to work with the ACT Government.</p> <p>Enhancements to create a one-stop-shop to allow businesses to create their business profile, access training and guidance material, communicate with the ACT Government and apply for procurement opportunities will be part of the broader roadmap for a modernised procurement solution, currently scheduled to be delivered under the Procurement Reform Program by 30 June 2025.</p>
1.5	Review and streamline the ACT Government's procurement legislation, policies, processes, and templates to ensure they are efficient, easy to understand and easy to engage with	2023-24	In progress	<p>The Government Procurement Amendment Act 2024 will take effect on 1 July 2024. The Act supports greater efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of procurement and otherwise enhances the ACT Government's Procurement Framework.</p> <p>Similarly, the ACT Government is progressing work to streamline and enhance our procurement related policies, processes and templates to ensure that they support the ACT Government's updated Procurement Framework and that they are efficient, and easy to understand and use.</p>

Action	How this will help business	Timeframe	Status	Progress Update
1.6	Provide guidance to ACT Government Buyers to assist in determining the appropriate level of insurance requirements in accordance with the risk profile of the procurement	2023	In progress	The ACT Government is finalising the guidance to Government Buyers to assist in determining the appropriate level of insurance requirements in accordance with the risk profile of the procurement. This guidance is expected to be released by the end of 2024.
1.7	Reform standard ACT Government contract terms to require contractors to extend the same payment terms to their subcontractors	2023	In progress	Changes to contract templates are currently under consideration. This is expected to be finalised in the first half of 2024.
1.8	Strengthen the Local Industry Participation Policy (LIPP)	2023-24	In progress	Work to strengthen the LIPP is progressing under the auspices of the policy streamlining work under the Procurement Reform Program. Timelines and deliverables will be settled within the broader forward Procurement Policy Agenda.
1.9	Review the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy (ATSIPP) to ensure it continues to meet its objectives	2023-24	In progress	The review of the ATSIPP is progressing as part of the policy streamlining work under the Procurement Reform Program. Timelines and deliverables will be settled within the broader forward Procurement Policy Agenda.
1.10	Establish the Business Sentiment survey in collaboration with Canberra Business Chamber	2023-24	Completed	The ACT Business Survey was conducted from 17 October - 5 November 2023 and 244 responses were received from businesses. The ACT Government is considering the results and evaluating both the process and outcomes of this pilot survey to inform future survey rounds.
1.11	Establish a Measure of Regulatory Burden and Value in particular sectors	2023-24	In progress	The Australian National University (ANU) has been engaged to undertake this nation-leading project to establish a measure of value and burden of existing regulation for certain business types in the hospitality and health and fitness sectors. The project is taking place between November 2023 and June 2024 and will involve surveys and interviews with businesses in these sectors.
1.12	Explore a digital account for business that would allow businesses to manage their transactions with government through a single account	Future consideration	Yet to commence	For future consideration by government.



Thor's Hammer
Pew Pew Studios

2 PRIORITY TWO

Support for business to start, operate, grow and innovate

Action	How this will help business	Time frame	Status		
2.1	Continuing the Canberra Business Advice and Support Service (CBASS) to deliver tailored small business advice, including business planning	Professional and tailored support for businesses at all stages of the business lifecycle	2023-25	Completed and Ongoing	<p>From July 2023 to March 2024, CBASS has assisted more than 250 businesses with client numbers increasing each quarter. The service, delivered by Lighthouse Business Innovation Centre (Lighthouse), has achieved a 9.4 out of 10 satisfaction rating. Just under half of all enquires to CBASS in this time have been from women business owners or intenders.</p> <p>The ACT Government also delivered a dedicated marketing campaign to drive CBASS awareness and usage from December 2023 to January 2024. Lighthouse reported strong client enquiries in the typically quieter January to March quarter as a result of the campaign.</p> <p>Since program commencement, CBASS has provided a wide range of advice and referrals to clients on: marketing and digital marketing; business structuring and closure; insurance requirements; HR matters; business expansion; writing business cases and tenders for government; business finance and negotiation; target market and audience identification; and compliance, regulatory and legal matters.</p>
2.2	Deliver and evaluate the Badji Program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses	Culturally appropriate and tailored advice and support for businesses	2023-25	Completed and Ongoing	<p>Coolamon Advisors was appointed as the provider for the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Business Support Program in May 2022. The Program was gifted the name 'Badji', a Ngunnawal word meaning 'arise', by the Winanggaay Ngunnawal Language Corporation.</p> <p>The Badji Program delivers a range of culturally appropriate and tailored services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a concierge service to connect First Nations businesses with a range of service providers; mentoring and coaching services; access to co-working office space; and access to incubator and accelerator programs for businesses looking to grow. <p>The Badji Program supported 19 businesses in its first year of operation, and an additional 31 businesses have been supported so far in its second year.</p> <p>Businesses supported are from a range of industries and have been referred to a range of mainstream and First Nations eco-system support providers. The service has ongoing ACT Government budget funding.</p>
2.3	Investigate barriers to more women, LGBTIQ, people with a disability and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people becoming business owners	Support the development of targeted actions to break down barriers to business ownership	2023-24	In progress	<p>Further engagement will be done during 2024 with business owners and entrepreneurs from CALD backgrounds to further understand barriers to entry and information needs.</p> <p>Connections have been made between the ACT Government and SiTara's Story, a community-based organisation which aims to empower women from CALD backgrounds. The Government expects to provide information support and promote SiTara's Story Talkshops for women from CALD or Culturally and Racially Marginalised women.</p> <p>The ACT Government also participated in the 'Colour in Canberra' business expo delivered by SiTara's Story and the ANU Women Alumni Network on 25 February 2024.</p>
2.4	Increase participation of women in Canberra Innovation Network (CBRIN) programs	Support more women to become entrepreneurs	Ongoing	Completed and Ongoing	<p>CBRIN continues to deliver programs targeting women entrepreneurs such as its Female Founders program and tracks participation of women across their programs and support for founders and entrepreneurs. Notably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 76 women co-working members are utilising CBRIN's co-working space 40 per cent of participants in CBRIN's Idea to Impact program were women; CBRIN's Female Founders event series has witnessed an increase in participation during 2023-24 through promotion; 4 out of 9 startups funded through the first Innovation Connect (ICON) Grant round for 2023-24 had women founders.
2.5	Through the ACT Arts Fund, invest in programs to enhance outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and arts businesses	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and creatives are supported to start and grow	2023-24	Completed and Ongoing	<p>The objective of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts program is to enhance outcomes that reflect Canberra's unique culture and identity, by funding self-determined programs that support and enhance arts and cultural outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and build cultural leadership.</p> <p>The inaugural round was delivered in 2022-23, with 11 arts activities supported across a range of artforms and cultural practices with funding totalling \$127,565. Outcomes of the second round were announced in May 2024, with 8 projects totalling \$100,451 supported across various art forms from a diverse representation of Canberra's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.</p>

Action	How this will help business	Time frame	Status		
2.6	Deliver social enterprise grants to support start-ups in this sector	Provide more opportunities to start a social enterprise	2023-24	In progress	<p>The ACT Government has engaged The Mill House Ventures to deliver a two-year pilot Social Enterprise Grant Program on behalf of the government. The Program offers matched funding grants between \$10,000 and \$30,000.</p> <p>The first grants round under the Program was open for applications from 8 December 2023 to 19 January 2024. During this round, 48 applications were received, and 14 successful grant recipients were awarded \$340,000 in matched funding.</p> <p>Grant recipients come from a range of sectors including the environment, creative industries, high tech solutions, disability and youth focussed businesses. Of the successful applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 have female founders; and 10 or more have a focus on inclusion and/or social issues.
2.7	With the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions, explore the challenges facing business of accessing affordable and appropriate insurance	Support the understanding of businesses across a range of insurance issues	2023-24	In progress	<p>The issue of public liability and workers compensation insurance has been raised by state and territory governments through the Small Business Ministers Meeting forum.</p> <p>The ACT will continue to advocate for further work to be done at a national level on the issues affecting insurance for businesses.</p>
2.8	Provide information to support small businesses with Portable Long Service Leave	Improve access to clear information to support employees	2023-25	In progress	<p>Economic Development and ACT Long Service Leave Authority (ACT Leave) continue to collaborate to promote the new Services Scheme and all current Portable Long Service Leave schemes in the ACT.</p> <p>ACT Leave exhibited at the 2024 CBR Small Business Expo.</p> <p>Services Industry Scheme information is included on the ACT Leave website.</p>
2.9	Provide information to support small businesses as changes are progressively introduced to the Disability Discrimination Act 1992	Improve access to clear information to support business owners	2023-26	In progress	<p>Information on the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 has been included on the ACT Business Hub website.</p> <p>This will be updated as changes are implemented and further work with the Justice and Community Safety Directorate is undertaken to communicate changes to business.</p>
2.10	Deliver a vision for Canberra's Night-time economy and a comprehensive and coordinated approach to making the night-time experience in Canberra better for everyone	Night-time businesses are supported through regulatory and non-regulatory actions and have clear information and opportunity to operate in the night-time	2023-24	In progress	<p>The ACT Government has engaged with a range of stakeholders in the night-time economy including residents, peak industry organisations, core and non-core night-time businesses and other government stakeholders.</p> <p>The ACT Government announced a package of reforms to support the Night-time economy on 6 December 2023.</p> <p>Initial reforms were introduced on 1 January 2024 which aim to support smaller venues to start up and stay open longer; encourage new business to Canberra at night; and reduce administrative burden on businesses.</p> <p>The Liquor (Night-Time Economy) Amendment Bill 2024 was passed in April 2024 to remove regulatory barriers and assist licensed businesses to increase their participation in Canberra's Night-time economy. Reforms commenced in April 2024.</p> <p>These changes aim to deliver a more flexible and responsive regulatory environment to support businesses operating in the night-time economy and support vibrancy of Canberra's night-time activity and artistic and cultural expression. Some changes commenced in April 2024 and others are planned for July 2024.</p> <p>The ACT Government is also undertaking consultation on noise reforms to inform settings in the city's entertainment precincts in Gungahlin and Civic.</p> <p>Information on the night-time economy reform package is available here.</p>
2.11	Deliver an ACT Venture Capital Fund to support pre-seed, seed, and Series A business in the ACT	Support for early-stage commercialisation	2023-24	In progress	<p>The ACT Venture Capital Fund (the Fund) will invest in ACT-based start-ups with the intent to create broader economic benefits including employment opportunities, economic diversification, and boosting the commercialisation ecosystem.</p> <p>The ACT Government is currently conducting a procurement process to appoint a fund manager to establish and manage the Fund. The procurement process is expected to be completed in July 2024.</p> <p>Following the conclusion of the procurement process, the Government will announce the process outcome and communicate further news on the Fund to stakeholders through channels such as government websites, innovation eco-system networks and the media, as appropriate.</p>
2.12	Expansion of the CBRIN premises	Improve access to CBRIN's programs and spaces for businesses	2023-24	In progress	<p>The ACT Government has agreed to provide Level 4, 1 Moore Street in addition to CBRIN's existing accommodation at Level 5, 1 Moore Street. The ACT Government and CBRIN have entered a sub-lease agreement covering both floors.</p> <p>Construction work has commenced recently and is expected to be completed by October 2024.</p> <p>The 2023-24 ACT Government Budget provided CBRIN with \$2.7 million to refurbish Level 4, 1 Moore Street to be a fit-for-purpose space for co-working and scale-ups. This funding support has been operationalised through the execution of a deed of grant agreement.</p>
2.13	Explore opportunities to allow businesses to access maker spaces	Businesses can prototype their products	2023-24	Yet to commence	<p>Delivery of this action is subject to future program decisions of the ACT Government.</p>

3 PRIORITY THREE

Showcase and promote local small businesses



Dr Yasmine Gray, GetAboutAble at the National Bonsai & Penjing Collection of Australia

Lightbulb Studios

Action	How this will help business	Timeframe	Status	
3.1 Pilot hosting a Small Business Expo codesigned with business and industry groups	Strengthen the small business eco-system by supporting opportunities for showcasing and networking	2023-24	Completed	<p>The pilot CBR Small Business Expo was held on 9 May 2024 at the Budawang Pavilion at Exhibition Park in Canberra (EPIC). The Expo included more than 110 exhibitors from government, industry and the private sector.</p> <p>This included the Access Canberra ECBA team, CBASS, the Badji Program, CBRIN, Healthier Work program, WorkSafe ACT, Sustainable Business Program, ACT Leave, Procurement ACT and the Secure Local Jobs Code team. Australian Government agencies included AusIndustry, the Australian Tax Office, IP Australia and the Department of Finance, Department of Workplace and Employee Relations.</p> <p>The program included guest speaker, Mr Greg Jennings from Beyond Blue, panel sessions on starting a business, attracting a diverse workforce, cyber safety for small business and marketing. Workshops included AI for small business, social media tips and tricks, Australian Government wayfinding and electrification for small business. The program was informed through engagement with stakeholders.</p> <p>Early estimates indicate that the Expo attracted nearly 1000 participants and attendees. The ACT Government undertook substantial promotion of the Expo through a range of channels including paid advertising on social, digital and radio, internal and external stakeholders, direct mail and roadside signage.</p> <p>In addition, an ACT Government Small Business Support Hub was delivered at the Sustainable Canberra Expo on 13 October 2023 with participation from the Access Canberra ECBA team, the Badji Program, CBRIN, CBASS, WorkSafe, Every Day Climate Choices and Procurement ACT.</p>
3.2 Through our promotion, reflect the diversity of business owners including those living with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse owners, women and LGBTQ+ business operators	Seeing the diversity of business owners will encourage more people to consider starting a business	2023 onwards	Completed and Ongoing	<p>Since July 2023, the ACT Government has developed case studies on 11 female owned businesses including Lifa Lab, Future Swirl, Healthy Eating Clinic, Point River Network, Wildlife Drones, Jazida Productions, Your Season, Hosking Bikes, Car Mechanical Services, Canberra Women's Shed and Pupoon. All these businesses have a connection with ACT Government delivered or supported programs and encourage action from other women in business to access support or programs.</p> <p>A promotional video celebrating the contribution of women in business and promoting ACT Government support services, represented a diversity of women and was released for International Women's Day 2024.</p> <p>The ACT Government reflected the diversity of business owners in the Strategy and further work will be done in 2024; in particular, to reflect business owners with a disability. This includes ongoing updates to the Canberra Toolkit photo library.</p> <p>The ACT Government also sponsored the Diversity in Space conference and supporting gender diversity in the space industry is a key priority of the ACT's Space Update 2023.</p>
3.3 Team Canberra events – industry showcases and major conferences and business events	Opportunities to connect with new customers and showcase capabilities	2023 onwards	Completed and Ongoing	<p>An ACT Government facilitated Team Canberra stand will feature at the Land Forces 2024 International Land Defence Exposition (Land Forces) to be held in Melbourne, from 11 to 13 September 2024. The Team Canberra stand at Land Forces will be shared and co-located with UNSW Canberra, with approximately 15 co-exhibitors in total from the defence, cyber and quantum sectors.</p> <p>A Team Canberra stand will also feature at the Military Communications and Information Systems (MilCIS) conference to be held in Canberra in November 2024. An Expression of Interest to participate as part of Team Canberra at MilCIS was recently circulated and confirmation of co-exhibitors will be finalised by August 2024.</p> <p>The Team Canberra stands enable businesses to connect with new customers and showcase the capabilities of the ACT's advanced technology sectors.</p>

Action	How this will help business	Timeframe	Status	
<p>3.4 Support and feature small businesses through ACT festivals and events including the Multicultural Festival, Enlighten and Floriade</p>	<p>Opportunities for small businesses to showcase their products and services to local and interstate audiences</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Completed and Ongoing</p>	<p>Floriade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 72 per cent local food vendors (engaged directly by Events ACT) 54 per cent local contractors 82 per cent individual local performers <p>Enlighten Illuminations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 85 per cent local food vendors (engaged directly by Events ACT) 17 per cent local food vendors (engaged by partners) 81 per cent local contractors 89 per cent individual local performers <p>Lights! Canberra! Action!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 per cent local food vendors (engaged directly by Events ACT) 83 per cent local contractors 100 per cent individual local performers <p>Symphony in the Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 96 per cent local food vendors (engaged by partners) 94 per cent local market stall holders (engaged by partners) 89 per cent local contractors 86 per cent individual local performers <p>Canberra Day celebrations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 96 per cent local food vendors (engaged by partners) 94 per cent local market stall holders (engaged by partners) 89 per cent local contractors 88 per cent individual local performers <p>Canberra Balloon Spectacular</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 per cent local food vendors (engaged directly by Events ACT) 92 per cent local contractors 100 per cent individual local performers <p>National Multicultural Festival 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 91 per cent (approx.) local food vendors/market stall holders 76 per cent (approx.) local performers/artists/community groups (not including Showcase performances programmed by community) 85 per cent (approx.) local contractors/suppliers (or with local branches)
<p>3.5 Enable small businesses to connect to Brand Canberra resources via an online toolkit and reflect their Canberra connections</p>	<p>Small businesses will have tools to help them express the unique Canberran qualities of their business</p>	<p>2023-24 onwards</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>The Canberra Toolkit has been developed which includes 'The Canberra Story' which captures the distinct qualities of Canberra and Canberrans. It is used by those promoting Canberra and who wish to align with Canberrans' unique story.</p> <p>The Toolkit provides access to royalty free imagery, video, 'how to' guides and the 'WeAreCBR' logo kit for use by businesses to connect with Brand Canberra.</p> <p>The ACT Government is currently undertaking work with the tourism industry on more specific brand messaging for that industry and there will be a 'how to' resource to help tourism businesses utilise the Brand research and key messages for their businesses and audiences. This work is expected to be completed in 2024.</p>

Action	How this will help business	Timeframe	Status		
3.6	'After Dark' events listing – enhancing the Events ACT and VisitCanberra websites to better highlight Canberra's nightlife along with industry resources	Provides an opportunity for small and large night-time venues to advertise performances and events to Canberrans and visitors	2023	Completed and Ongoing	<p>An After Dark section of both the VisitCanberra and Events ACT websites has been created that highlights the range of events and performances available in Canberra in the evenings.</p> <p>The Canberra Region Visitors Centre (CRVC) is actively supporting businesses to list their events in the 'What's On' guide and 'After Dark' section to ensure there is a good diversity of activity. Volunteers at the CRVC have been proactively calling businesses they know are running night time events.</p> <p>The After Dark guide has been promoted through ACT Government channels.</p> <p>To date the After Dark pages have had more than 7,000 views since launch, and the "What's On" section has been viewed more than 40,000 times.</p>
3.7	Sponsor a range of awards programs including the Canberra Women in Business Awards	Local small businesses are celebrated and recognised	2023	Completed and Ongoing	<p>The ACT Government sponsored the Canberra Women in Business Awards for the first time in 2023 and sponsored the 2023 Canberra Businesswoman of the Year Award, which was awarded to Debbie Saunders from Wildlife Drones. The sponsorship was valued at \$10,000. The ACT Government supported the nomination process via promotion through Economic Development business communication channels (for example, the CBR Business Update e-newsletter). The ACT Government has committed to support the 2024 Awards as a Gold Sponsor.</p> <p>Other industry event sponsorships delivered through the ACT Government in 2023-24 includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023 Canberra International Riesling Challenge; • 2023 National Science Week; • 2023 Percy Awards; and • 2023 ACT Chief Minister's Export Awards.
3.8	Deliver Arts and Cultural Tourism Capability workshops to the arts sector on storytelling, marketing and providing a quality tourism experience	Increase capability to attract visitors	2023	Completed and Ongoing	<p>In collaboration, artsACT and Visit Canberra engaged the Tourism Collective to present a series of three tourism workshops directed at the arts sector engaging with new audiences.</p> <p>The attendees were encouraged to submit listings on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse and this resulted in 45 new listings to 31 July 2023.</p>
3.9	Develop a future arts precinct in Kingston as a destination for Canberra's visual arts and culture. This will include working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Network and community on the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Space in the precinct	Artists and arts businesses will showcase their work as part of a premier arts precinct	2023-2027	In progress	<p>In March 2023, the Principle Design Consultant was engaged and work on the design commenced, under management by the Suburban Land Agency (SLA).</p> <p>artsACT engaged MurriMatters (consultancy firm) which has developed Terms of Reference for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group to determine the governance model and shape the strategic direction and objectives of the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Space at the Kingston Arts Precinct. Following an open expression of Interest process, the inaugural membership of the Reference Group was announced in May 2024.</p> <p>artsACT has engaged Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (consultancy firm) to consult the Ngunnawal community on language and stories to be reflected in the Kingston Arts Precinct site.</p>

Chloe Lim, Giggly Wiggly
Lightbulb Studios

4 PRIORITY FOUR

Futureproofing small businesses

Action	How this will help business	Timeframe	Status	Progress Update	
4.1	Commission research to better understand the survival rates of businesses in Canberra including the success factors and the range of reasons businesses close	Provide an evidence base for government decision making to help improve survival rates for business	2024-25	In progress	The ACT Government is currently undertaking the scoping work required to commence this research project. The research will be undertaken during 2024-25.
4.2	Explore the development of micro-credentials for small business owners in areas such as business administration and digital skills	Opportunities for professional development for business-people delivered in a way that meets their needs	2023-24	In progress	Industry feedback received during the Skilled to Succeed Industry Action Plan roundtables identified a need for micro-credentials to support small business owners. These Industry Action Plans are expected to be released in 2024. Investigation of how to deliver micro-credentials will continue in 2024. ACT businesses can leverage an Australian Government program to upskill small businesses in their digital capability. The ACT Government is working with Realise Business to promote its service to ACT businesses. The CBR Small Business Expo also served to connect small business owners with support services such as the Canberra Business Advice and Support Service.
4.3	Create opportunities for businesses to increase awareness and knowledge about cyber security and data security and how to protect their business and their customers	Information and support for businesses	2023 ongoing	Completed and ongoing	Cyber security information is frequently featured in the CBR Business Update e-newsletter, including an article during Cyber Awareness month. A panel session on Cyber Security was part of the CBR Small Business Expo in May 2024. The Canberra Cyber Hub also participated in the CBR Small Business Expo to raise awareness and support businesses. The ACT Government is supporting the promotion of the Australian Government funded Digital Solutions Program which supports businesses to upskill in the area of cyber awareness.
4.4	Developing more free resources for businesses to learn, including webinars, workshops, and case studies	Professional development and support for people in business to access at a time that suits them	2023 ongoing	In progress	The 'Tools and Resources' page of the Business hub website is frequently updated with new tools and resources. Case studies on CBASS and CBRIN's ICON Grants have been developed and promoted via social media, <i>Our Canberra</i> and the CBR Business Update e-newsletter. Online webinars are being explored for the Business Hub website that cover a variety of topics on starting and running a business, which our business eco-system is showing us we need. CBASS delivered a webinar on Unfair Contract Terms in April 2024. A full program of panel sessions and workshops was delivered as part of the CBR Small Business Expo and included topics such as marketing, social media, cyber security, electrification, recruitment and starting and growing a business. More than 30 people representing ACT and the Commonwealth Government agencies, along with private sector subject matter experts, delivered these sessions, open to all Expo attendees and exhibitors.
4.5	Under the Arts Action Plan, partner with Creative Australia to increase the capacity of local artists, arts organisations and creative businesses to engage with philanthropy, develop private sector partnerships and make connections	Professional development to support arts and creative businesses to learn and grow	2023-2024	Completed	Two workshops have been delivered. Creative Partnerships Australia delivered a workshop on introduction to fundraising on 25 May 2023, attended by 14 artists and participants from a range of arts organisations. The workshop increased knowledge in Canberra's arts and creative sector of fundraising and the concept and impact of fundraising and support services and tools such as the Australian Cultural Fund. Creative Partnerships Australia presented a one-day workshop on fundraising fundamentals on 16 November 2023.
4.6	Work with the Australian Government to ensure our skilled migration needs are met	Businesses are supported to build, attract, and retain the right workforce	Ongoing	In progress	The Australian Government took the decision to reduce the numbers of skilled migrants in 2023-24 by 70 per cent compared to 2022-23. The ACT Government nominated 4,050 skilled migrants to come to (or stay in) Canberra in 2022-23. The Australian Government recently released its Migration Strategy which aims to develop a flexible, measurable, and responsive migration system that delivers effective and clear outcomes for migrants while enhancing the benefits of migration for Australia. The ACT Government is engaging with the Australian Government on implementation, so it meets the needs of the ACT business community and will seek to align its migration program with these national developments.

Action	How this will help business	Timeframe	Status	Progress Update
4.7 Under the Skilled to Succeed: Workforce and Skills Agenda for the ACT , implement specific industry skills and workforce action plans for priority industries, Building and Construction, Technology, Experience (hospitality, tourism, recreation and creative industries), Renewable and Sustainable energy and Caring industries	Specific and tailored actions to support businesses with workforce challenges	2023	In progress	Industry Action Plans have been drafted and consultation with industry and key stakeholders is due to commence soon. The progress of these has been delayed while the ACT Government undertook negotiations with the Australian Government for the National Skills Agreement. The Industry Skills Plans will be finalised and released in 2024.
4.8 Expand the workforce attraction online Toolkit and provide resources to promote the distinct benefits of working and living in Canberra	Businesses will have tools and resources to help them market Canberra to help attract potential employees	2023 onwards	In progress	In 2023 a range of resources were developed for business including a 'How to' Guide on selling Canberra as part of recruitment efforts, associated photography and video. Further work will occur in 2024 to develop industry specific stories of people who have moved to Canberra to live and work. A full revision of the canberra.com.au/live website is taking place in mid-2024 to better inform prospective residents. In addition, since July 2023, the ACT Government has delivered three phases of a lifestyle-based workforce attraction campaign into the Sydney market. Funded by the Australian Government's Choose Tourism program, VisitCanberra undertook a marketing campaign targeted at young people in Canberra to promote careers and jobs in the tourism and hospitality industries.
4.9 Engaging with businesses on greenhouse gas reduction and natural gas transition	Businesses can contribute to the government's policy and actions	2023-24	In progress	The Integrated Energy Plan is currently being considered by the ACT Government and is expected to be released in 2024. The Sustainable Business Program provides support to the business sector to make sustainable choices, with a focus on energy, transport, waste and water. Support includes financial rebates, technical advice, equipment, staff training and educational materials. Over 2,500 businesses have engaged with the program over the last 15 years with approximately 400 currently actively involved. The program also runs the annual Climate Choices Business Awards to recognise sustainability leadership, achievements and innovation in the business community.
4.10 Develop an action plan for the Circular Economy with stakeholders and the community, including business and industry	Businesses can influence actions to achieve a circular economy	2023-24	Completed	The <i>ACT Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan 2023 – 2030</i> was released in August 2023. It includes actions to support businesses to transition to a more circular economy. In addition, the <i>Circular Economy Act 2023</i> has commenced and contains powers to create waste reduction and waste processing requirements for businesses. These powers have not yet been exercised. However, consultation has been undertaken with businesses on a draft regulation containing requirements related to recycling collections, food organics collections, and food waste reduction plans. This Act also contains the provisions for the single-use plastic ban.
4.11 Releasing updates to the ACT Infrastructure Plan, setting the vision for the short, medium, and long term, and outlining a pipeline of infrastructure projects to support the building and construction industry	Businesses have visibility of and can respond to government's future infrastructure plans	2023 onwards	In progress	Updates to the ACT Infrastructure Plan are being released progressively for seven sectors. Sectors published to date include: Entertainment, Arts and Sports – released in June 2023; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health – released in July 2023; • Education – released in November 2023; and • City Services, Recreation and Community Facilities – released in February 2024. Updates for the Climate Action, Energy and Environment sector, Housing, Land Release and City Planning sector and Transport sector are expected to be released in 2024.

5 PRIORITY FIVE

A one-government approach to business

Action	How this will help business	Timeframe	Status	Progress Update
5.1 Support an Economic Development Business and Industry Consultative Forum for consultation and engagement with business leaders	Provides a regular forum to discuss and inform issues of importance to all small businesses	2023 onwards	Completed and Ongoing	Established in early 2023, the membership of this Forum comprises representatives from the Canberra Business Chamber, Master Builders Association of the ACT, Canberra Region Leaders Tourism Forum, CPA Australia, Australian Hotels Association, Canberra Women in Business and the Property Council of Australia. The Forum convenes on a quarterly basis. The Forum has advised the government on a range of economic development matters, including workforce attraction, the CBR Small Business Expo, development of Small Business Awareness Training for public servants and sentiment in the local business community. Key advice and insights from the Forum are fed into the Inter-Directorate Committee (Action 5.2) to better support a 'One Government' approach to businesses.
5.2 Support an Inter-Directorate Committee of senior ACT Public Servants to lead and coordinate initiatives for business and Canberra's economic development	Supports coordination of strategy and policy across government	2023 onwards	Completed and Ongoing	This Inter-Directorate Committee convenes on a quarterly basis. The Committee is supporting the ACT Government's 'One Government' approach to business and economic development of the ACT. To date, the Committee has considered a range of matters including the Night-time economy, investment potential for the ACT, workforce attraction and retention opportunities and challenges, and initiatives to support the ACT small business community.
5.3 Explore a government to business secondment program	More ACT Government employees understanding the business context and experience	2024-25	Yet to commence	The ACT Government will explore how best it can support government secondments to businesses, within the existing ACT Government secondment policy framework.
5.4 Co-design a 'small business awareness' training module with business and industry stakeholders for the ACT Public Service and guidance material for engaging with business	More ACT Government employees understanding the small business experience	2024 onwards	In progress	This project is underway and is expected to be delivered in 2024.
5.5 Improve the understanding of business within government by further mapping the business user-experience for priority regulated industries	Supports the creation of user-centred programs and information	2024	In progress	Phase 1 of this action has been completed. User-experience mapping has been completed for the hospitality industry. This research has informed key work such as the expansion of the Business Hub website and the Access Canberra ECBA team and new hospitality approvals coordination service.
5.6 Host an annual 'Women in Business meets Women in Government' speaker and networking event	Will create an opportunity to build connections and awareness between government and business	2023-24 onwards	In progress	The inaugural event was held on 17 April 2024 and was co-hosted by the ACT Government and Canberra Women in Business. The purpose of this event is to contribute to a better understanding between business and government through networking and information provision. Approximately 60 people attended the first event with very high levels of satisfaction with the event with positive feedback on the opportunity to connect with ACT Government officials. Consideration is now being given to future events.
5.7 Establish stronger connections with the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments	Will support more consistency and opportunities for improvement – this includes sharing resources, data where appropriate, and insights to better service business.	2023 onwards	Completed and Ongoing	Small Business Ministers Meetings occurred during 2023 (October) and 2024 (June). A number of Senior Officials Group meetings have supported the Minister's Meeting organisation. Economic Development has joined the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman-led business communications network and is accessing Commonwealth information and sharing this through ACT Government channels including the CBR Business Update e-newsletter and Business Hub website. The Australian Government had a strong presence at the CBR Small Business Expo including AusIndustry, Department of Finance, the Australian Tax Office and IP Australia. This included delivering a wayfinding workshop. This is helping to foster stronger connections between the ACT Government and relevant Australian Government agencies.

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