



ANNUAL REPORT

2006/2007

Chamber of Commerce NT

NT Chamber of Commerce and Industry Trading as Chamber of Commerce Northern Territory
ABN 36160572513

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ABOUT THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE NT

We are the leading Northern Territory business organisation influencing the economic environment and maximising business opportunities for our members.

Mission

Our mission is to maximise our members' business success.

Core Values

The core values of the Chamber are:

- Placing members first.
- Quality and excellence in our dealings with members and stakeholders.
- Adopting professional and ethical principles.
- The pursuit of business development.

Corporate Slogan and Logo

"The Voice of Territory Business"

Goals

- ☐ Ensure that the Chamber of Commerce NT is managed effectively and efficiently;
- ☐ Ensure that the Chamber of Commerce NT is able to identify, analyse and lead public discussion and debate on those issues which influence the business environment within the Northern Territory;
- ☐ Provide a range of tailored and responsive services to assist members meet their business objectives; and
- ☐ Ensure that the Chamber of Commerce NT remains credible and relevant within the Northern Territory business community.

STRUCTURE

The operations of Chamber of Commerce NT are governed by articles of association, which are administered by our Board of Directors.

The Chamber Board has oversight of policy strategy and policy implementation. Members of the Board are a collection of industry leaders from a wide base of businesses and across all regions and together offer a strong base of knowledge and expertise.

Mr Rick Paul, the President of the Chamber of Commerce NT is the Regional Manager of Europcar, a business in Darwin. Rick was elected President in 2004.

The 2006/2007 Chamber Board of Directors included:
President - Rick Paul, *Europcar*

Vice President Finance- Rosemary Campbell, *Merit Partners (Departed March 07)*

Vice President Michele Hogan - *Upstream Petroleum Pty Ltd*

Vice President Finance Tom Ganley - *NT Airports (Commenced as VP Finance March 07)*

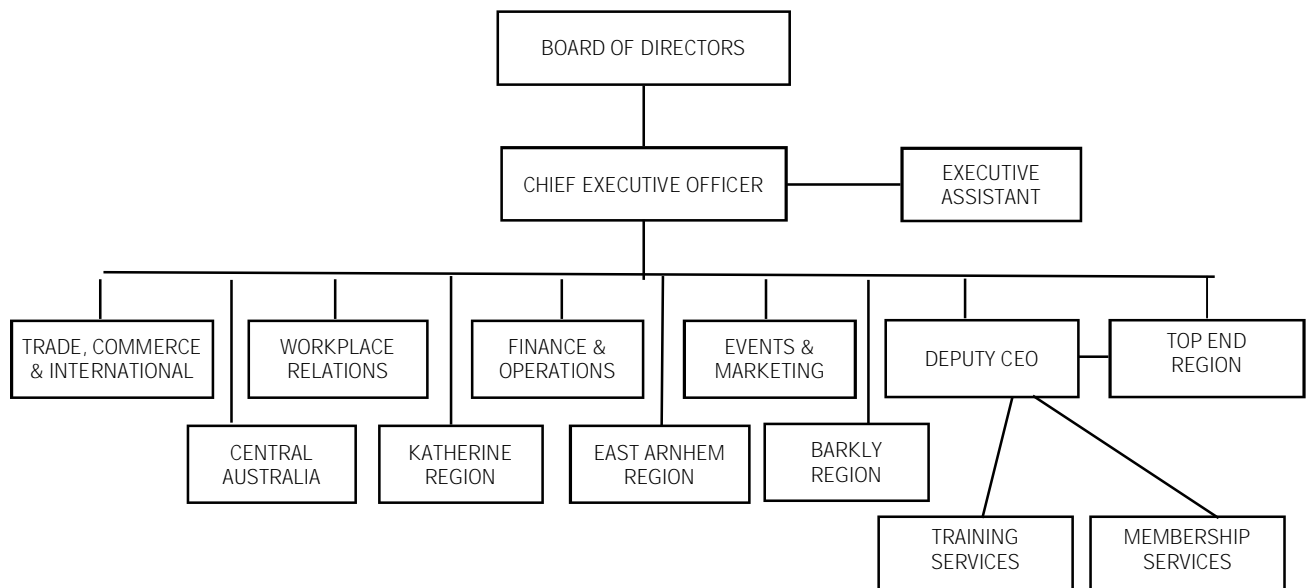
Andrew Wilson - *SKYCITY Darwin*

Damien Ryan - *Alice Springs Camera Shop*

Bruce Fadelli AM—*Bromavic Pty. Ltd.*

Stewart Cox - *OAMPS pty Ltd (commenced September 07)*

ORGANISATIONAL CHART





The Chamber of Commerce NT has had another challenging but exciting year. Unlike other Industry Associations the Chamber has offices across the Territory and is not an industry specific organisation. Whilst these

factors certainly bring strength for the Chamber they also provide a unique set of challenges. The Chamber is no different from any other business in that skill and labour shortages are a prominent and real issue so for the Chamber to successfully run five regional Chamber offices and two Industry Councils is a fantastic effort.

The Chamber recorded a small loss in the last financial year which was disappointing but was more of a timing issue than anything. The Chamber had revenue of just over \$3.0 million, of which 43% was derived from membership. Other main contributors to income were our Training division, the Workplace Relations and Events and Marketing. Whilst the Chamber does not receive any direct funding from the NT Government the Chamber does receive income through successfully tendering for the running of Government programs and the like, the International Business Council and the Manufacturers Council are also funded by Government. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the NT Government for their support of these two vitally important industry councils. As stated above the majority of the Chambers revenue is derived from membership fees however for the Chamber to move forward and be more relevant to members we need to continue to look at other streams of income. It is interesting to note that most other Chambers in Australia have strong membership bases as we do but it accounts for less than 30% of their revenue income. To this end Chamber NT has joined all other State and Territory Chambers under the Australian Chamber Alliance banner so that they can bid as one to deliver Government programs Australia wide or enter into other revenue producing commercial arrangements on a national level.

In March this year the Chamber Board and the Chamber General Council met for the first time outside Darwin, the meeting was held in Alice Springs and coincided with the Alice Springs Expo which is run by the Chamber. The Board consists of seven elected members and the General Council is made up of the seven Board members, the Chairperson of the five regional Chambers and the two industry councils. This gave members of both the Board and General Council a great opportunity to hear and see first hand what is happening within the business community in Alice Springs.

A significant part of the Chamber's charter is to lobby and take to task political parties and in particular the Government of the day, on issues affecting business. This is one of the influencing reasons businesses take up membership of the Chamber. It is important to

remember the Chamber of Commerce NT is a-political, the comments we make or the issues we pursue are always based on member feedback and what the Chamber believes is best for business. Whilst I would consider the Chamber has a good relationship with the current Government, I believe continued work from both parties is needed to improve communications. At a federal level the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) play a significant role in influencing the environment under which business operates in Australia. All members of the Chamber should be aware that the work done at a federal level by ACCI could not be achieved without your support in both a monetary (part of your membership fees go to ACCI) and an information sense. The NT being a relatively small jurisdiction on a National basis punches above its weight at ACCI with former Chamber President Bruce Fadelli a board member. Bruce also is the Chair of the ACCI Small Business Committee, the Vice Chair of the International Trade and Affairs Committee as well as being the Chair of the Small Business National Forum and the Small Business Coalition.

By far the most important issue for Chambers Australia wide in the last 12 months has been work place reform. The introduction of Work Choices by the Federal Government was another major step forward in the reform process Prime Minister Keating commenced in 1993. The Chamber is very concerned that the ALP's proposed Industrial Relations policy, which has very much been orchestrated by the union movement, will turn back the clock to the pre 1993 days.

Business associations including the Chamber oppose the reversal of workplace reforms. In the face of a concerted union campaign in favour of the reversal of WorkChoices have come out publicly with facts to support continuing the reform process. The Chamber along with other national Industry Associations joined forces and commissioned Econtech to conduct economic research and modeling so that we could assess two important criteria;

- Economic benefits gained from the past workplace reforms.
- Cost to the economy and business if the reforms are reversed.

The interest for Chamber NT was the effect that any reversal of workplace reform would have on the Northern Territory, the research suggests the following:

- Over the next four years employment will fall by 6%, which is over 6,000 jobs.
- Currently our CPI is increasing at around 4% per annum; it could increase to 5.3% per year.
- The NT Government has now tied Power/Water prices to CPI, so high energy costs will make the NT a less attractive place to live and invest.
- Higher CPI means higher inflation and higher interest rates.

President's Report cont...

- Gross Territory Product will contract by 7.4%, especially in the trade exposed industries, such as mining and agriculture. This is a loss of over \$900m from the Territory.

The impact of these outcomes on our small and fragile economy is a real concern for the Chamber and may see many of our smaller members struggle to survive. To the Chamber this is not about political parties but about ensuring that the reform process in place is beneficial to the NT and Australia in general and is not destroyed.

The Chamber once again sought feedback from the Regional Chambers and Industry Councils on issues affecting business that can be addressed in the Territory Budget, this process happens in October and November with a submission going to Government in December.

Over the last 12 months there have been many issues discussed at Board and General Council level but the five main areas identified by the Regional Chambers as issues affecting business, in no particular order, are.

- Antisocial Behaviour
- Youth Issues
- Land Availability
- Police Numbers
- Skill Shortages

It would be fair to say all these issues are intertwined in one way or another. The Government has been working hard to attract workers and their families to the Territory which would help address point five, Skill Shortages, but if we do not address the other four points the chances of attracting workers are limited. The Northern Territory is one of eight jurisdictions in Australia (plus overseas locations) competing for labour. To be successful we need to make sure what we are offering stands out from our competitors.

From an information point of view the Chamber of Commerce NT is a shareholder in the NT Industry Capability Network, Contractor Accreditation Ltd and the Australian Technical College all of these organizations have a significant impact on business in the Territory.

The two industry councils continue to be important cogs in the International Business and Manufacturing sectors, it never ceases to amaze me how enthusiastic the executive committees of these councils are. The IBC has headed up several overseas delegations all of which have been successful. The Manufacturers Council has always got a fair bit on their plate but the big ticket item at the moment is the Common User Facility. Given all the activity in this region in oil and gas and associated projects it is vitally important for NT manufacturing and associated businesses that this project is progressed quickly.

President's Report cont...

Business at Sunsets are a Chamber event hosted by a Chamber member, these functions benefit the host through exposure of their business to the business community and the business community use the forum as a great networking event. Business at Sunsets this year have been very successful.

In closing I would like to thank all the people that make the Chamber work.

To Chamber CEO Chris Young and his team thank you for all the hard work, innovation and enthusiasm you have put into the Chamber this year.

I would like to thank the 80 plus members that volunteer their time at no cost to be on one of the Chambers Board, Regional Executives, Industry Councils or simply represent the Chamber in other forums. What happens at this level does influence policy on a local and national level so the continued support by members joining these committees is much appreciated.

Lastly I would like to thank our 1200 plus members for the continued support and commitment you have given the Chamber over the last 12 months. As noted earlier your membership of the Chamber not only benefits what happens in the NT but reaches all the way to the federal arena. With the new web site now up and running the Chamber will be working very hard over the next 12 months to further enhance your membership value. The Chambers success is the some of many parts but by far the most important is participation and feedback from our members.

Rick Paul
President

Chief Executive Officer's Report



A warm and sincere welcome to all of our Chamber Members, where ever you may be across the Territory, and I hope that you have all had a busy and prosperous year

in 2006 / 2007. Irrespective of where you are located, the last twelve months have brought considerable challenge to the process of doing business in the Northern Territory and the Chamber, as always, stands ready to assist and act on your behalf.

As Chief Executive of the Chamber I am pleased to report that the last year has been a very busy one with many issues being raised by the membership, from all regions, and we have continued to act as the "Voice of Territory Business". With issues as disparate as residential land availability in Tennant Creek to unit construction in Nhulunbuy, vehicle testing in Alice Springs to Industrial Relations reform across the Territory, the Chamber has been a proactive participant in ensuring that members view and concerns were brought to the attention of the relevant authorities.

During the past year there have been a number of changes of key personnel and the resultant outcomes have been prepared in such a way as to increase the level of service and amenability for the membership in a number of very important areas. The Training Division has undergone considerable change and the appointment of the new Training Manager, Steve Saint, has resulted in some significant changes to the way the Chamber delivers training to our membership right across the Territory. Working closely with Steve is the Chamber's Business Development and Quality Manager, Paul Rousham, who is working tirelessly to ensure that the products offered meet the needs of the membership.

The Training Division is currently developing their strategy for the 2008 calendar year and looking to deliver training options into all of the regions as well as the major centres of Darwin and Alice Springs. The loss of the Alice Springs trainer has been a blow to our operations but we are currently utilising the expertise of our Darwin office while we review the situation to determine the best available outcome. The training staff of Jessica Snowden, Rea Bundock, Collette Murphy, Chelsea Chisholm-Espie, Danielle Prior and Jenni Jones out at Casuarina, continue to deliver a quality service to members and strong support for the trainees.

For Darwin members, the appointment of Meredith Saunders to Membership Services will usher in a change in the way that the Chamber interacts with its Top End members while Claire Ashard continues the sterling efforts of our Alice Springs office and Barkly region in membership interaction. The appointment of new Regional Executive Officers in Katherine and Nhulunbuy has also lifted the profile of the Chamber with Justine Webber starting to rebuild the Chamber presence in East Arnhem and Marilyn McPherson continuing and building on the work of her predecessor in the Katherine region.

Towards the end of 2006, the Northern Territory Government announced changes to the open speed limit rules in an attempt to curb the rising road toll across the Territory. An unforeseen consequence of this action was the impact that it had on the vehicle testing industry, which used the open highways of the Territory to test new vehicle prototypes under various heat and speed conditions. The Chamber supported the introduction of the speed limits, although we did have some doubts concerning their effectiveness. The established road safety taskforce, however, made a very strong recommendation that limits be imposed and they were in possession of far more statistical data. The Chamber focus was on ways and means of preserving the vehicle testing industry, which was a significant contributor to the Central Australian economy over the period from November to March each year. Months of lobbying and a proposal to operate the industry under special licence was rejected by the Minister. As a result, we do not believe that any testing will occur this year or into the future in the region and

this will have an impact on the economy as a result.

A first for the Chamber this year was the decision of the Board to hold one of the Chamber General Council meetings outside Darwin. In March 2007, the council met in Alice Springs during the time of the Central Australian Expo, an annual chamber event in that town. Minister Kon Vatskalis was the special guest of the Chamber and a guest speaker at both our council meeting and a business forum lunch. The success of this event will hopefully mean that there will be a regular General Council meeting held each year at a venue, other than Darwin.

Having provided the Government with a series of concerns that the Chamber would like to see addressed in the budget process, General Council also determined that Chamber activity should be concentrated around a number of key issues, identified and reviewed at each General Council meeting. The five issues currently being supported by the Chamber are:

- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Police Numbers
- Skill Shortages
- Youth Issues

Land Availability, both Commercial and Residential. Through both general contact and specific correspondence, the Government has been advised that these issues are considered to be important to the Chamber and subsequent Council meeting have continued to endorse the Chambers handling of these as key to business opportunities in the Territory.

The Chamber has been heavily involved during the year in the issue of Workplace Reform. Firstly as an important issue which is driving a considerable amount of the economic activity in the market place and secondly through our Workplace Relations team, who have won a series of contracts to inform and educate both employers and employees as to the latest developments in this arena. Aply led by Michael Maloney, Workplace Relations Manager, the team of Sonia Mahoney, Simone McInerney, Katrina Halse and Sara Amdahl (short term contract) have travelled widely and assisted greatly a considerable number of members and non-members alike to come to terms with the current workplace regime.

The Chamber has strongly lobbied government and the opposition at both Territory and Federal level to maintain the momentum of workplace reform for the benefit of business right across the Territory. Given that the Federal Election has now been called, we will continue to support a regime that expands and continues to provide impetus for business growth.

The Chamber has continued to be involved in the delivery of services through a number of contracts held with various government agencies. Our Education and Training Adviser, John Emslie and his dedicated team of Regional Industry Careers Advisors, Roger Pocock, Jenny Mostran and Nathan Frick have been hard at work

assisting schools and employers to identify job opportunities for school leavers and career paths for trainees from the various schemes available. They have also developed and expanded to a degree our interaction with the indigenous employment network and we are continuing to develop and grow this area further through strategic alliances and partnerships with both employers and indigenous organisations.

Our ever popular Business at Sunset business networking functions continue to occur right across the Territory on a regular basis. The Marketing and Events team of Kim Williams and Kylie Salisbury, ably assisted by regional staff and head office personnel are kept busy all year round with these and other chamber functions, from Celebration dinners to information breakfasts. The Business at Sunset format works well for our membership as a way of promoting their business to the business community and is an ideal networking opportunity for all who attend. Our quarterly magazine "The Voice" has been another success this year, with much of the credit going to Michelle Menzies for all her hard work and efforts. We have also managed to complete the web site upgrade after a number of false starts and considerable technical difficulty, and a number of staff gave unstintingly for this project.

The Industry Councils team have had another busy year with both the Manufacturers Council and International Business Council working on fostering and developing their industry sectors in the Territory. Manager Greg Bicknell and Support Officer Purdey Eades have organised and run functions, such as the Chief Ministers Export Awards, coordinated delegate trips to places as disparate as Karratha in WA to Guangzhou (Canton) in China and lobbied government on relevant issues such as a Common User Facility in the Port of Darwin and Waste Management systems for industry. TradeStart Export Adviser, Brooke Hammet, has also been working hard to identify and assist businesses interested in entering the export markets. The Chamber continues to lobby on behalf of our members, right across the Territory, on issues they believe we should be involved in. Be it local government reform, changes to legislation or rewriting the Work Health Act, the Chamber is there to espouse and support the views of the business community in the necessary forum. From our Manager in Alice Springs Beth Mildred and her team through to the offices in Nhulunbuy and Katherine, the Chamber is involved in issues that affect business, wherever it may occur in the Territory.

Last, but by no means least, none of the above could occur if not for the unflinching support and hard work of the membership support team, who know all of our failings and still lend the essential hand whenever things get tough. To Julie Beaumont, Rachel Banyard, Kareen Veneman and Andrea Santos in Darwin, Annielle Schmidt in Alice Springs and Sally Courtney in Katherine, our sincere thanks for all of your tireless work and continued good humour.

As one year comes to a close, the next one opens up with untold optimism and opportunity and it is the intention of the Chamber that we stay at the forefront of our members' issues and concerns and provide strong leadership and a firm "Voice of Territory Business".

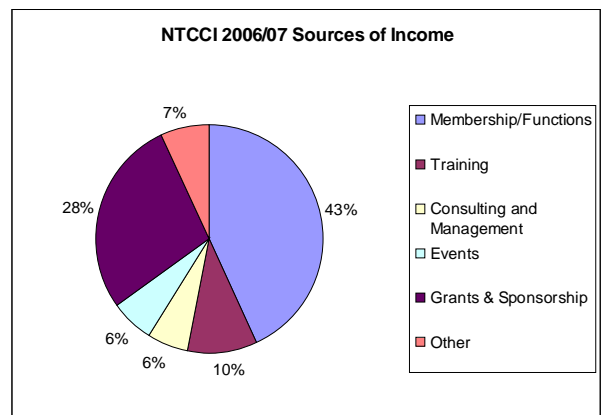
Chris Young
Chief Executive.

Finance Report



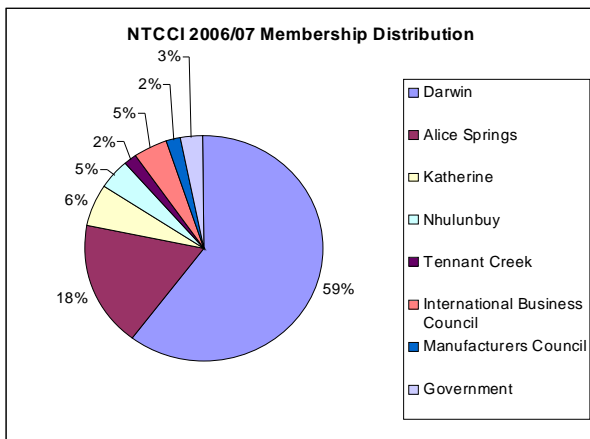
I am delighted to present my first report to Members as Vice President Finance. Rosemary Campbell retired from the position of Vice President Finance during the year after an extensive, enthusiastic and extraordinary association with the Northern Territory Chamber of Commerce and Industry (the Chamber).

The Chamber has had a very rewarding year with revenues from new membership and total membership increasing on the prior year. The Chamber did not conduct NT Expo and was no longer responsible for the Brolga Awards. Consequently Other Revenue and Total Income were lower than the prior year at \$3.1M (2005/2006: \$3.4M).



Proactive cost management for which the Chamber Team is to be congratulated resulted in costs falling to \$3.1M (2005/2006: \$3.4M). Overall the Chamber broke even with a small \$30K deficit bringing net assets to \$555K (2005/2006: \$585K).

The Chamber remains the largest and most representative business organisation, representing over 1,300 businesses Territory wide. Alice Springs, Katherine, Nhulunbuy and Tennant Creek represent nearly one third of the diverse membership, the International Business and Manufacturers Councils nearly 10% and Darwin the remaining 60%. The Chamber truly is "The Voice of Territory Business".



The Chamber is strategically placed for an exciting and successful year ahead with a dedicated and committed team led by Chris Young, strong membership base, specific knowledge and experience in Workplace and Industrial Relations and a focus on communication, growth and innovation.

Tom Ganley
Vice President Finance



Trade Commerce and International



INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COUNCIL

The membership of the International Business Council remains strong at just over 250 companies with an interest in the international sector. The executive committee continues to be representative of a wide cross section of NT industry

involved in overseas trade and provides good representation on behalf of the membership.

Achievements 2006/2007

Lobbying

The IBC has continued in its key role of lobbying government on behalf of members, an important service given the Chief Minister has the portfolio of Asian Relations and Trade as part of her busy workload. We continue to work with the Chief Minister to present the views of the business council, in particular our continued emphasis on the development of small to medium sized enterprise's export capability and the importance of maintaining links in the region.

BIMP-EAGA

The Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia & Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area continues to be a key partner in the region, with many of the mining interests being targeted by NT business being located in this region. The IBC continues its participation as a development partner in the BIMP-EAGA Business Council, to ensure that the views of the private sector continue to be heard.

As part of this role, the IBC worked closely with Dept Chief Minister on a BIMP-EAGA project called the BIMP-EAGA Business Portal. This web-based SME tool was designed to create a 'borderless' trading environment exclusively for BIMP-EAGA and NT companies to list on with the intention of opening trade for them to and from Australia - not just limited to the NT as it will use the facilities of the Australian Chamber of Commerce network to publicise opportunities - and for NT firms into the BIMP-EAGA region. The Portal will be exclusively for the use of SME's and through the contact points which will be BEBC and Chamber's in the BIMP-EAGA and NT, we can ensure that we enhance opportunities for trade within the region.

NT Export Awards

The Chief Minister's Northern Territory Export and Industry Awards attracted 16 applicants (up on 14 last year) and the presentation ceremony was held at Parliament House on 4 October with Chief Minister Clare Martin as patron. Perkins Shipping were awarded the NT Exporter of the Year. Other winners were -

Guppytraders.com
Charles Darwin University
Pensyl P/L
Porosus P/L
Maningrida Arts & Culture
Safaritrek International

There is discussion about returning to a presentation dinner format, due to the length of the ceremony.

Trade Fairs/Delegations

The IBC membership participated in several regional trade events during the past year, the highlight of which was the keen interest in the importer delegation to Southern China to attend the biannual Canton Fair in October 2006. This delegation consisted of 20 participants and has led to several local companies importing goods direct from China into Darwin, cutting out Southern middlemen and increasing usage of existing shipping services into Darwin port. Many of these businesses have continued to visit China under their own steam and

Trade Commerce and International Cont'd

conduct business there, which is consistent with the IBC strategy of facilitating business contacts and then letting business talk to business.

Other export focused events included participation in OSEA in Singapore in December 2006, Australian Oil & Gas in February 2007, Asia Pacific Mining Exhibition, Manila in June and supporting the Dept Chief Minister's delegations to Vietnam in March and Balikpapan in June.

The IBC Manager also travelled to Cebu for BIMP-EAGA Business Council meetings in January and to Sydney for the international mining show AIMEX with a DBERD delegation in March.

Representation

The International Business Council continued to represent members at the Australian Chamber of Commerce & Industry - Trade and International Affairs Committee quarterly meetings. These meetings bring together all State & Territory Chambers to give a national perspective to international business of members. Membership is also maintained with a range of related organisations including Darwin City Council Sister Cities Management Committee, Australia-Indonesia Business Council, Australia-China Business Council, Australian Malaysian Business Council and the Hong Kong Australia Business Association.

Links are maintained with the NT Horticultural Association, NT Cattlemen's Association, NT Livestock Exporters Association and the NT Agricultural Association. The IBC also has a seat on the NT Business Council and details of IBC events/briefings are promoted through these networks. The IBC maintains a close and productive relationship with the TradeStart Export Advisor at the Chamber in Darwin and the TradeStart officer in Alice Springs, utilising the synergies of the roles to mutual benefit.

Information

Seminars and functions run independently or co-hosted by the IBC were attended by over 500 members during the past year and included:

- Export Hub Business at Sunset, Darwin
- Top Exporters Round Table luncheon
- International Project Network workshops
- Importing for Profit
- Doing Business in Indonesia
- Skilled Migration – 457 visas
- Business at Sunset, Katherine
- Business Round Tables on US FTA and Indonesian Trade & Investment Framework
- Philippines Mining briefing
- Export Awards launch, Central Australia
- Centralian Mining Expo info booth
- EMDG information seminar

Trade Commerce and International Cont'd

The IBC has continued its monthly international business club lunches in Darwin after they stalled for a while and several of the presentations mentioned were delivered through this forum.

The IBC has continued to offer regular information bulletins through the IBC Update and Trade Ops, which are disseminated to members on a monthly basis.

Staffing

The IBC has had Greg Bicknell and Purdey Eades continue in their positions for the past year and my thanks to them for their efforts. We welcome Brooke Hammett as the TradeStart Export Advisor, after she took over from Jennifer Xi in April this year.

Training

The IBC participated in a range of export related training for members both internally and in conjunction with other parties such as Austrade & Dept of Chief Minister. These included the services exports workshop, e-commerce workshops and short sessions on importing conducted before the delegation to Southern China. The IBC also ran occasional installments on steps to becoming a successful importer in the monthly NT Business Review

Relationships

The IBC's strong relationship with the Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MICCI) – Sabah continues and we have worked closely with them to continue their Northern Territory Desk.

Other relationships formalised by documentation include the Malay CCI (Labuan, Malaysia), Davao City CCI, (Mindanao), Philippines-Australia Business Council (Philippines), Kupang Kadinda, Mataram CCI (Lombok), East Kalimantan CCI (Indonesia). The IBC is currently negotiating with AustCham offices in South East Asia to establish formal links and reciprocal rights for members at functions and with in-market business introductions.

Future strategies

The IBC undertook a review of its strategic plan early last year, with members being surveyed on their needs and expectations. The coming year will see emphasis placed on achieving measurable outcomes. Areas of interest include:

- Responsibility for Chamber policy on skilled migration, a key area in the current climate of skills shortages in the NT.
- Participation and leadership of trade delegations to relevant markets, with delegations to Southern China, Indonesia and Philippines
- Complement the NT Government's Asian Relations & Trade policies by conducting servicing contacts to each of the related industry organisations in the region;
- Continuing to facilitate and review the annual Northern Territory Export Awards;

Trade Commerce and International Cont'd

- Facilitate an increase in delivery of international trade education programs, both through direct delivery by the Chamber of Commerce NT and via other providers;
- Provide members with latest information on oil/gas, mining and agribusiness sectors through newsletters;
- A range of international business seminars/briefings for industry;
- Increase the number of indigenous businesses who are members of the IBC.

MANUFACTURER'S COUNCIL

The Manufacturers Council membership has enjoyed a good year, with the local economy performing well and industry generally in a stronger position than in years past. Membership has remained steady at 110 members.

Achievements 2006/2007

Lobbying

The Council has enjoyed an excellent relationship with the Minister for Business and Regional Development, Kon Vatskalis, and has met with him several times over the past 12 months to lobby on behalf of members.

The Manufacturers Council, through Chairman Greg Haigh and Manager Greg Bicknell, has representation on the Manufacturing Consultative Group, which is the group charged with implementing the Manufacturing Industry Strategy.

NT Government Procurement remains an area of considerable concern to the manufacturing sector and the Council has repeatedly lobbied on the need for improvements and the vexed question of what represents "value for money".

Common User Facility

The Council has worked hard on building an industry fund to enable a feasibility study to be undertaken to assess the best model for a Common User Facility in Darwin. I am pleased to announce that we received the final contribution required recently to enable the study to go ahead. The industry funding of \$20,000 will be supplemented by funding from the Dept of Business, Economic and Regional Development to enable a professional consultants to be used for the project.

Adopt A School Project

The Adopt-a-School partnership between Kormilda College and the Manufacturers Council has progressed well over the past 24 months, expanding to incorporate O'Loughlin College. The Adopt-a-School program seeks to develop effective grassroots partnerships between schools and local businesses for the benefit of schools, industry and business. The aim of the program is to build links between businesses, students, teachers and the

Trade Commerce and International Cont'd

broader school community through activities that will increase knowledge and opportunity for careers and further education, specifically in the manufacturing sector. 10 of the 29 work placements in 2007 were from the manufacturing sector, with the Council and the NTICN sponsoring student's work clothing. The Council is working closely with Natasha Angelo of YouthWorx NT in expanding future arrangements with other schools across the Territory. The Council has also worked closely with Group Training NT [GTNT] in an attempt to find suitable employers for structured work placements in the manufacturing sector for students in the Pathways Program

NT Export and Industry Awards

The Council worked closely with the International Business Council to develop a Northern Territory Manufacturers Award, which was presented for the first time in October 2006. The Award recognizes a process, product or design and the inaugural award was won by TAAU, the spirulina manufacturer in Berry Springs. The Council is once again sponsoring the "Small to Medium Manufacturer" category of the 2007 NT Export Awards. The SM Manufacturer Award was won last year by Australian Crocodile Products.

These awards are run by the International Business Council of the Chamber of Commerce, and the Manufacturers Council has endeavoured to work more closely with the IBC to develop offshore markets for locally manufactured products

Information dissemination

The Council conducted a range of seminars, workshops and networking functions, either independently or co-hosted with other organisations, on issues such as:

- Arafura Resources briefing
- SSMD launch with Minister Vatskalis at Perkins Shipping
- Philippines Mining Briefing, Dawsons Diesels
- Manufacturing Award Launch with Minister Vatskalis at NTICN
- 457 Visas briefing at Aerosail
- NT Electricity Market breakfast briefing
- Regional Defence + Industry Briefing: Help Desk

Members have also been kept abreast of latest industry developments through the distribution of the regular Manufacts newsletter. The Council also continues its monthly column in the NT Business Review highlighting member's capabilities.

Member business support

After 3 unsuccessful attempts to access Commonwealth Government funding for business diagnostics and mentoring under the SBEP and BESB programs, the Council has had a Business Advisor position funded under the Australian Industry Productivity Centres program. Mr David Hunt commenced in the position early October and

Trade Commerce and International Cont'd

will be working with 40 companies from the manufacturing and services sectors per year on formal business reviews and recommendations on accessing up to \$20,000 matched funding to support business growth.

The Council has also been successful in obtaining funding from the Packaging Stewardship Forum and NT Government to conduct a pilot project in Darwin to improve the understanding of waste management issues within the local businesses sector and provide greater access to information and resources. This will include a Waste Management Advisor (WMA) employed part time to conduct Waste Management audits and provide advice on managing the issues identified. The WMA will also help identify opportunities for recycling within business operations.

Service, Suppliers and Manufacturers Directory

The 2007 Service, Suppliers and Manufacturers Directory was released in March and provides a comprehensive source of NT industry capability. Around 300 NT companies are showcased in the Directory and copies are distributed both nationally and internationally. It provides a handy ready reference for buyers sourcing goods and services from the NT. The directory is produced in co-operation with the Chamber of Commerce and the NT Industry Capability Network and is fully self-funding through advertising revenue. The directory has been distributed at several domestic and international events, particularly in the resources sector.

An on-line version, which has resulted from feedback from our members, is again an added feature and advertisers also received complementary listing on the BIMP-EAGA Business Portal. The online directory take a similar shape to that of the yellow and white pages online websites. This also enables both hosts (MC and NTICN) to change and update the online directory with new inclusions. Each respective hosts website 'has a link to the online directory site.

Representation

The Manufacturers Council was represented on a number of industry and Government committees / working groups / steering groups, such as:

- Chief Minister's Business Round Table
- AIDN-NT (Australian Industry Defence Network, NT)
- Industry Participation Plan Steering Group
- Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee
- NT Business Council
- Manufacturing Industry Strategy Steering Group
- NTICN Board of Directors

Staffing

The Council maintained a stable staff during the year, with Greg Bicknell as Manager and Purdey Eades as Research/Admin Officer. Our thanks to both for their efforts during the year.

Trade Commerce and International Cont'd

Future strategies

The MC undertook a review of its strategic plan early last year, with members being surveyed on their needs and expectations. The coming year will see emphasis placed on achieving measurable outcomes in areas such as member networking and information seminars, building the manufacturing capability through industry support, highlighting manufacturing capability through the annual NT Manufacturers Award and continue the push for Common User infrastructure at East Arm:

TRADESTART PROGRAMS

The TradeStart program within the International, Trade and Commerce Division of the NTCCI is responsible for delivering advisory services to business on export related matters. The program is funded by the Australian Trade Commission (Austrade) and is aimed specifically at assisting new and emerging exporters to achieve international sales on a sustainable basis. Companies from across the Territory and industry sectors are being assisted under the TradeStart program.

Specific achievements of the TradeStart Program over the past year have included;

- 15 clients undertaking overseas market visits as new exporters, to a range of diverse markets including South Africa, Middle East, USA, Europe, China and S-E Asia;
- 12 companies exiting the program with successful export sales; and
- 15 companies enrolled and supported under the TradeStart program, 10 in the Top End and 5 in Central Australia

TradeStart, through the Chamber continues to deliver Austrade export assistance services to new and potential exporters in regional and rural Australia. The service is delivered through a full time staff member in Darwin and a part time TradeStart officer in Central Australia, to provide support for exporters in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and outlying areas.

Greg Bicknell
Manager Industry Councils

Events and Marketing



2007 was a busy and eventful year for the Events and Marketing Division. Long time events co-ordinator, Tamra Caruana left the Chamber in October 2006, Kylie Salisbury joined us in mid November and

has proven to be a great asset to the Division, having taken over the reigns with enthusiasm and energy.

2007 saw the Central Australian Expo celebrating 20 years, the event was a great success with over 7,000 visitors over the two day event.

The second annual NT Money Expo was held at the Holiday Inn Esplanade in April. Plans are underway to further progress this initiative and we look forward to growing the event in future years.

Business at Sunset continues to be the flagship networking function, regularly attracting over 100 members with interest from businesses wishing to host a function ensuring the Business at Sunset calendar is booked until early 2009.

In addition to regular events such as the Budget briefings in both Darwin and Alice Springs, the Annual Cyclone Briefing, the Chamber hosted numerous successful business breakfast and luncheon events throughout the year.

Corporate Golf days were held in Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine during the year— all events were highly successful events. The Darwin Golf day was fortunate to have had Merv Hughes as special guest. Merv proved to be a popular guest, with his wit and knockabout charm entertaining everyone throughout the day.

The Gala Dinner has established itself as a regular event on the Chamber's calendar with tickets to the second annual Dinner being sold out well in advance of the evening, we are confident this event will grow in the future to be a highlight of the Darwin social calendar.

Marketing

The much anticipated Chamber website was finally switched "live" on 21 September.

It was hoped the site would have been up and running much sooner, however, serious issues arose with the membership access database being transferred to the new website. This crucial function enables members to access awards on line and further down the track, members only areas of the site, including the under development member to member benefits and other value adding features.

Events and Marketing Cont'd

With the site now running however, these areas of the site will now be progressed.

The weekly Chamber Round Up electronic newsletter has been further refined over the past few months, providing a much easier to read and more informative newsletter.

The Chamber's quarterly magazine "The Voice" has also undergone a revamp over the past few months, providing us with a great platform to keep members informed on Chamber activities.

Moving forward, we are looking forward to another great year with planning well underway on 2008 major events such as the Central Australian Expo and the NT Money Expo.

Kim Williams
Manager, Events and Marketing

Training Services



In 2007 Training Services found a need to implement a number of changes both in the reporting of training data and the training courses being offered by the Chamber. It was clearly identified that a number of courses on offer were out

dated and not meeting member needs. Additionally the Chamber was not flexible in its approach to delivery of courses outside normal working hours.

AQTF Management

As the Chamber's Training Services had a Quality Risk Indicator (QRI) of "High Risk" rated by DEET, which means we were under close scrutiny and subject to extensive auditing, it was imperative we implement policy, as a matter of urgency, on continuous improvement in all areas of Training Services. AQTF improvement strategies commenced with the employment of the Business Development Quality Manager, Paul Rousham and have been progressing at a steady rate.

Through developing a working relationship with DEET and the Quality Regulatory Unit and demonstrating a continuous improvement pathway, we have achieved positive results. We are delighted to advise that DEET Quality & Regulatory Unit have now issued Training Services with a new QRI rating as MEDIUM RISK. This basically means that DEET have lifted the close scrutiny and scale of auditing requirements on Chamber Services

Training Services cont...



The areas of continuous improvement worked on and significantly improved are:

- Risk analysis and risk management upgraded
- Improving current services to student clients

such as Assessment tasks being evaluated within a two week period

- Conducting validation processes on course material such as assessment tasks, delivery plans and course resources and facilitation learner guides
- Improving training environment resources
- Restructuring of training calendars to meet the needs of our members
- Conduct a self audit in Alice Springs and Katherine to identify regional training issues
- Review policies and procedures in Training services in relation to staff management, student management and OH&S
- Review all data in VETTRAC and AVETMISS reporting programs to eradicate errors and to ensure future accuracy of reporting requirements to DEET
- Review the quality standards of Trainers and Assessors and seek to identify more training contractors in regions and Darwin
- Ensure the transferring of management control of TRAC complies with DEET regulations and statutory requirements

We are now working towards achieving a Low Risk ORI rating which, when achieved, will result in no auditing providing we continue to demonstrate that quality services are provided to clients and that our reporting to DEET is accurate and complete.

Training program review

The review of training programs in Darwin and the Regional areas found a number of issues raised by members that needed addressing, namely the types of programs on offer to members. The review identified the following non accredited courses that have now been added to the 2008 calendar:

- Introduction to Hospitality
- Introduction to Retail
- Food and Personal Hygiene in the workplace
- Introduction to Call Centres
- OH&S Basics

Additionally some of the existing courses have been reviewed and made more informative and user friendly, based on member needs, these include:

- Team Building
- Managing Workplace Conflict
- Selling for Success
- Presenting with impact
- Customer Service

Training Services cont...

Training Services Direction

- Review the Chamber image and position in the community through changing marketing strategies.
- Aim at a 20% budget growth in 2008. This should be achievable based on the new training programs and reviews we have identified.
- New focus on non-accredited courses as requested by our existing member base.
- Implementation of developing a team work and training culture in the workplace.
- Providing sustainable competitive advantage services through quality management.
- Undertake regular flexible training programs for our regional members
- Review all advertising, course and promotional materials.
- Develop a pool of contract accredited trainer assessors so as to continue the projected growth in Training Services.
- Implement practices that encourage Training Service staff to actively participate in the growth of Training Services.

The diligence of the training team in both the Chamber and at TRAC needs to be noted. Without their commitment and hard work the strategies we have, and are putting in place would not be possible.

Regional Training

An internal audit of Alice Springs training services was conducted in July - August and it was found that Chamber members in this region are seeking non accredited courses, however they need to be flexible in terms of when they are organised. It became clear that there was a demand for evening or Saturday morning courses and that the ideal solution was to conduct courses for a block period and identify the most appropriate time. There was interest in tailored courses for specific companies and that it was preferred to facilitate these on site. Record management

Katherine have identified a pre vocational program requirement and Training Services have planned for this to happen in 2008.

Steve Saint
Training Services Manager

Paul Rousham
Business Development & Quality Manager



Employment, Education and Training Section

This report summarises the wide range and variety of activities undertaken in 2006/2007 by the dedicated members of the Employment

Education and Training (EET) team.

At the close of the year, the EET comprised four personnel:

John Emslie, Education and Training Advisor (ETA) and Manager

Roger Pocock, Regional Industry Career Adviser (RICA), whose area of responsibility was Darwin/Palmerston/Tiwi Islands, Jabiru, Katherine, and Daley River

Donna Owen, RICA responsible for East Arnhem

Jenny Mostran, RICA responsible for Barkly and Central regions

All of these positions are funded by the Australian Government: the RICAs through the Career Advice Australia initiative and the ETA via a contract with the Department of Education, Science and Training. Their roles are similar: the provision of advice on career options and skill shortages, and the involvement of employers in vocational education and training (VET) programmes and initiatives. The major difference in roles is that the ETA works with employers on a wide range of matters while the RICAs specifically target the engagement of employers in three programmes associated with school to work transition of 13 – 19 year old people. The RICA contracts are for three years, due for completion in December 2008. The ETA contract is annual, from July to June, but DEST advises they are seeking approval to change to three year contracts.

During 2006 – 2007, the EET team has consolidated on the start made in the previous year, particularly in the area of developing networks. Each member developed an annual Business Plan and set a number of goals which were achieved. Activities in the reporting year included:

An Industry Breakfast was conducted in Darwin on 19 April 2007 to provide information on the Australian Government's *Skills for the Future* initiative.

Many businesses, covering a cross section of industry in all regional centers, have been visited/contacted to discuss a range of training and employment matters, including employment of apprentices/trainees and the government incentives available for employers and employees.

A series of leaflets promoting apprenticeships/traineeships, including incentives available for employers and apprentices/trainees, was distributed to regional offices. There has been a lot of interest in the Indigenous employee incentive brochure.

In February 2007, the ETA surveyed members on additional skill shortages and received returns from

over 50 members which is considered a good return. Many additional occupations were identified as being in short supply and a consolidated return of the responses was forwarded to DEET for inclusion in the 2007 *NT Occupational Shortage List*. This list was published in June 2007.

The Work and Business Skills vouchers are being strongly promoted, with articles and advertising in the local newspapers. The Chamber has also been accepted by DEST as a provider of the Work Skills Vouchers services.

In a media release dated 1 May 2007, the Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Paul Henderson, announced that there were over 3,300 Territorians in training, an increase of 50 per cent since 2001. We believe that the work of the EET team contributed to this growth. However, it is not possible to quantify that contribution, because of the other organisations and programs which also actively promote the take-up of apprenticeships/traineeships. In the NT, these organisations/programs include: Career Advice Australia (RICAs and LCPs); Group Training Organisations, Youth Pathways Providers; the Australian Apprenticeship Centre NT; and Job Network members such as Mission Australia. What we can say though is that the team has developed and continues to enjoy solid working relationships with these organisations, and all of the stakeholders work collaboratively towards a common goal.

The ETA has consistently promoted the participation of business and industry in the development of policies and strategies through membership of a number of committees, including:

NT Board of Studies (NTBOS) (responsible for advising the Minister on curriculum matters);

Careers Expo planning committee; and

NT Apprenticeship Appeals and Review Tribunal.

The ETA was also invited to participate in the Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education's Course Development Committee to review the development of a Bachelor of Business for Indigenous people.

The aims of distributing employment and training information to employers and gathering information on skills shortages and difficulties with training from employers are key activities of all members of the EET team. These aims were achieved using a number of activities, including:

Focus groups in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine, Jabiru and Nhulunbuy

Workforce Tomorrow breakfasts held in Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs

Surveys of employers in Darwin, Alice Springs and Nhulunbuy

Dissemination of information through *The Voice*, *Territory Roundup*, and other media outlets in regional centers

Participation in Minister's Round Tables on Employment Education and Training

Visits to individual businesses

Education, Employment & Training cont...

The aim of providing career advice to young people has been met through:

Developing relationships with schools, particularly School-Based Career Advisors and Vet In Schools Coordinators, throughout the Territory
Involvement of the RICAs in the planning and involvement of employers in Career Expos in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Jabiru, Maningrida, and Nhulunbuy

Organising breakfasts at secondary schools in Darwin and Katherine with students, teachers, parents and employers to provide advice on selected industries
Participating in planning of Try-A-Trade in several remote communities

Some specific activities of note undertaken by the team:

In Darwin, the RICA and the ETA took part in a DEET organised development program for School-Based Career Advisors. Their involvement was aimed at providing advice on programs, activities and options available for gathering information on industry skill shortages and career options.

The Alice Springs based RICA has focused on the needs of Indigenous young people and has formed strong relationships with organisations such as *Deadly Mob* and *Footprints Forward*, organisations that are assisting with Indigenous youth.

And in East Arnhem, the RICA successfully organised and scheduled work experience for 5 days in Nhulunbuy for 10 Indigenous boys from Milingimbi.

Further information on any of these activities can be obtained from individual members who are located in Chamber offices.

John Emslie
Education and Training Advisor



**Chamber of
Commerce**
NORTHERN TERRITORY

Workplace Relations Division



Federal Government tenders
The WRD has just begun the role out of the Employer Advisory Program on behalf of DEWR. We are delivering four streams and tailored sessions across the Territory. Originally planned to cover nearly 6 months they are now

cramped into 10 weeks. We will be looking for new business opportunities as we deliver these

Workplace Agreements

These have been recommenced now that the Fairness Test is in operation. It appears that the more complex the work environment is (24/7 and a multiplicity of awards) the greater the difficulty will be in satisfying the test. Waiting time for pre-testing is up to 9-10 weeks and final tick up to another 13 weeks. Where we can we are advising employers to wait until after the election so that clearer picture can be given

Fair Pay Commission (FPC)

The October 2007 decision of the FPC has been decided and will take place on October 1, 2007. We are in the process of preparing pay scales. The FPC has also begun creating new pay scales. The first of these introduces commissions as an allowable means of payment in the real estate world. We can expect similar outcomes in areas such as vehicle sales

The Fair Pay Commission has embarked on a range of reforms as provided for in the legislation. With the election so close and a change of government likely and given that the alternate government opposes the reforms including the very existence of the FPC the WRD sees no value in preparing the workplace for these changes

Alternate Government WR Policy – Mediation

At an Industrial Relations Dispute Resolution conference held in Melbourne on October 3, 07 the Shadow Minister for Workplace Relations reiterated the Alternate Government's policy on mediation. It is clear there will be a number of senior appointments made in capital cities and regional centres. International experience indicates that the mediation service will be active in both mediation and dispute prevention training.

The Workplace Relations Department has concerns about the Alternate Government's "one stop shop" for handling workplace matters. It has the capacity to cut through our core WR business

Workplace Relations Cont'd

Full Suite of HR Services

We have added salary sacrifice and mediation to our suite of services. Discussions are now in train with a Chamber member to form strategic reliance for the provision of governance training, a range of OH&S services, and business development for Indigenous organisations, payroll and submission writing.

Partial Engagements

The Workplace Relations Department will in future resist entering into any partial contracts to supply WR advice. Partial carriage of matters is proving difficult and potentially dangerous

New Business Opportunity

Now that the compliancy division for workplace relations has been heavily resourced we are experiencing an increasing need from employers to audit their pay records to ensure compliancy and access underpayments claimed by employees through the Workplace Ombudsman.

Demise of CDEP

Even though there are a number of business opportunities arising out of the demise of CDEP the Alternate Government has announced it will reverse the decision if it gains office. For reasons identified at above the Workplace Relations Department will put the issue on hold.

Michael Maloney

Workplace Relations Manager

Top End Region



Katrina Halse - TERC Exec Officer

Concerns that have been highlighted with the Top End Regional Committee as those most pressing to Top End Businesses, over the last year have been detailed below.

The Top End Regional Committee has been, as always, working towards resolving and assisting with issues that affect and impact on local company's ability to do business productively in the community.

Charles Darwin University

Charles Darwin University was highlighted to the committee as failing in some of their areas of focus, to business. The committee released a survey to ascertain specifics from members and was then assisted by the Chamber board that organised a meeting with CDU to establish how we could assist with their business to ensure our members were receiving the services they needed.

In light of the current skill shortage being witnessed nationally and locally we are also troubled by advice that CDU are reducing English as a second language courses (ESL), which in turn reduces opportunities to employ people not fluent in English into the workforce. The matter was resolved with some research advising the course names had changed and a relocation had occurred but the services still existed.

Following the meeting with the board and CDU the committee is happy to maintain a watchful eye on CDU. By ensuring additional concerns are not being raised by members and that CDU is working to minimise their shortcomings plus are maintaining open communication lines with the Chamber and TERC to certify they are meeting the needs of business and the community.

Tobacco Control Act

Smoking Laws are also being looked at by the committee in an effort to make ensure the government is revisiting these with all stakeholders' best interests in mind. Over the year we removed our focus as local organisations had pulled together to run a "Ban smoking in pubs campaign" however we have not heard that government is revisiting this legislation so will look to putting it back on the agenda

Concerns with Tenders

The TERC committee recently undertook their own research with NTICN so they could understand the importance of appropriately articulating their abilities and work history in their database, as it is heavily utilized by industry and NTG and can only provide recommendations based on what is supplied by business.

Top End Region Cont'd

In conjunction with the above committee members released helpful tips via The Voice and hosted a successful procurement breakfast with members, DBERD, NTICN, Catalyst Consulting, Jane Munday and DCIS. The response from those that attended advised the event added value to their business.

Darwin City Promotions & Northern Territory visions, Mall developments and the future of the CBD

Our discussion continued for most of the year regarding the Mall, Darwin City and the 2 visions put forth by the Council and separately the Northern Territory Government. The committee volunteered their time and assistance to anyone seeking committee our help on Mall developments and the future of the CBD however the committees forming to address these issues keep disbanding before they really got legs.

The Chamber board also maintains an interest in these issues so they committee will continue to offer our assistance via the board.

Youth Issues & their impact upon NT Business,

We have had issues raised by members with regard to youth, their vandalism and criminal behavior and what can be enacted to reduce such activities.

We have delved in to get a better understanding as to what programs are available to alleviate youth boredom, what programs worked in the past and how can we assist with ensuring best outcomes for all stakeholders. Bridging gaps with childcare, youth, indigenous youth and business, and how they relate to Skill/Labour Shortages.

The committee has also broadened our scope to work on further issues relating to youth and incorporated indigenous youth and childcare and how they relate to the current skill/labour shortage. This discussion will continue for the upcoming year for TERC.

Environmental Initiatives

Corporate responsibility is on everyone's agenda these days. Significant climate change and the many implications of that have brought it to the forefront of people's minds. There are benefits not only to the environment with being sustainable but consumers are now more often looking for businesses that behave responsibly.

TERC member Peter Sanders has been providing business with regular sustainable initiatives via the Chamber voice and the TERC is very pleased with the pieces submitted and will be endeavoring to ramp up our initiatives over the coming year.

Letchimi Balasubramaniam

TERC Chairperson

Central Australia Region



Beth Mildred - Manager Central Australia

The 2006-2007 financial year has again seen a range of challenges for Manager, Ms Beth Mildred and staff in the Central Australian region. The year began with staff changes and an interim period of vacancies whilst positions were filled. The team continued to focus on

the benefits of membership through networking functions, industrial relations advice, export opportunities and training. Training services have expanded to include the provision of Diploma level qualifications in business through flexible learning options. More recently, we have again seen team changes with the Trainer/Assessor and Administrative Officer leaving. The Administrative position has been filled – the Trainer/Assessor position remains vacant at this time. In the interim, provision of training services is being maintained through local and Darwin staff.

Member numbers for the region have shown a steady increase by maintaining existing members whilst attracting new members. A number of new members have been gained though the discounts offered to our members for training.

Business at Sunset networking functions have continued to be a very effective vehicle for the promotion of the Chamber and the host business itself. The frequency of these functions has been increased to a monthly event to cater for the level of interest experienced.

The 20th Central Australian Expo was held at the Alice Springs Convention Centre with the theme "Bigger, Brighter and Better than ever".

Parliament sat in Alice Springs from 16th, 17th and 18th April at the Alice Springs Convention Centre. On the morning of 17th April, a delegation of business people and others from the community demonstrated outside the Convention Centre to present their concerns in relation to social order issues in Alice Springs. They sought assurances that action would be taken immediately to address the issues raised. The Chief Minister met with a small delegation from the group. One result from the meeting was the promise of additional monies to assist fund the CCTV project under consideration for the Todd Mall and CBD.

Announcements were made in relation to the extension of the City Safe program currently being undertaken by Police and additional Police numbers were allocated, bringing Alice Springs numbers up to their full complement.

On 17th April, the Chief Minister announced "Moving Alice Ahead", a suite of programs which build on the previous work of "Alice Springs in Ten Years" plus the addition of some new concepts which concentrate on local approaches and solutions. Already under way are "Standardising Town Camps" – through the Town Camps Implementation Steering Committee; "Alice

Central Australia Region Cont.

Springs International Charter Airport Status"- continuing the work of the Central Australian Aviation Committee; "Responsible Alcohol Management Framework" – the Chief Minister's Alcohol Reference Panel; and "Workforce Development". The Chamber has representation on all of these projects. Additionally, work continues in developing Alice Springs as a regional service centre – i.e. the preferred centre for sourcing and supplying goods and services to industries in the Region (e.g. mining) and continuing work surrounding Desert Knowledge, aimed at positioning Alice Springs as the centre of smart and sustainable desert living.

A Business Breakfast, co-hosted by the Chamber and CATIA was held on Wednesday 18th April with 100 people attending (and most sitting Members), giving business people attending the opportunity to talk through issues with elected members.

In June a decision was made to declare Alice Springs a "dry town" from 1st August. An education campaign is in place to educate visitors and residents of the town's status and the implications. Police have also been given further authority to tip out alcohol, issue on the spot fines and take intoxicated persons to sobering up shelters.

Short term managed accommodation for visitors to town have stalled with the declaration of a sacred site on the land proposed at the northern end of town.

The deadline set by Federal Minister Mal Brough in relation to monies allocated for upgrading of housing in the Town Camps passed without decision by the Town Camp residents (through their representative Tangentyere Council) and was extended to the middle of the following week. The proposal was that the money would be used to upgrade Town Camp housing in return for the granting of 99 year leases to the NT Government who would then take over management of the housing. Residents were not prepared to do this and decided not to accept the money. The Minister has said that without this agreement, the money would not be available and that is where the matter rests. The decision represents a lost opportunity to improve living conditions for Town Camp residents and means that opportunities for participation of Indigenous people in the work that would have been created, plus the gaining of skills through training, have been lost. More importantly, local industry and the local economy is the big loser through this decision. The economic boost created through this project would have taken Alice Springs forward through creation of jobs with a welcome injection of dollars into the Town. There appeared no apparent recognition of the "bigger picture" in coming to the decision that was made.

Alice Springs was successful in its bid to be named a Solar City – one of 11 Solar Cities across Australia, and work continues to achieve the required outcomes for the project. The Chamber is a member of the consortium.

Central Australia Region Cont.

The Finke Desert Race was run 9th – 11th June 2007. The event attracts competitors and visitors from across Australia and from overseas. A strong publicity campaign run prior to the event was successful in raising the number of competitors (and interest) in the race and resulted in a substantial boost to the local economy.

We look forward to the Masters Games in 2008 (held every two years in Alice Springs), another event of national and international standing held in Central Australia. The Chamber is represented on the steering committee for this event – work is well under way for the 2008 Masters.

Terry Lillis
Chairman Central Australian Region

East Arnhem Region



Justine Webber—Executive Officer
East Arnhem Region

This has been an interesting year for the Chamber East Arnhem. A few of the projects that we have either completed or are still working through have been highly emotive and we have lost a couple of members and gained a couple of members through our involvement with those projects. This has been

unfortunate, but you can't make omelettes without breaking a few eggs. The business directory has been a slow project that has finally come together, and the end result looks great. There has been some staff turnover in the RICA position, but that is to be expected in a town that has so many issues with remote location, accommodation and wage competition. The new committee has yet to meet with a quorum. As is standard in the region, everyone on the committee is tied up with their own full time running of businesses as well as a large number of other committee representations. As usual, a small group of people bear the brunt of the workload, so attendance at committee meetings is quite often difficult.

For myself personally, I now see some of the reasons that Executive Officer has been difficult to keep filled in this region.

- Our member base is small and many of those are too busy with their own businesses to be interested in external activities. Even arranging member meetings can sometimes be quite frustrating, and some members have made it quite clear that they are not interested in contact unless they initiate it. We have had some success with networking functions, and have decided that is the best forum for addressing the largest number of members in one location.

- Training has been sporadic in the region, and there have been several failed attempts at Workplace Relations sessions. Several members have been waiting since the first quarter of 2007 to have the time with Chamber Workplace Relations Advisors that they need. Some training has been undertaken in the region that has been focused on our largest member, without opportunity given to negotiate attendance by other members.
- Communication between different areas of the Chamber can be confusing and there seems to be at times, lack of communication within the Darwin office about who is responsible for providing information. This is being addressed, particularly within the training division, so hopefully there will be more open communication with the regions in the future.
- Members have felt that they are not gaining anything from their membership. Functions and information sessions are held in Darwin that are relevant to the businesses there, and there are many training opportunities that we just don't get here. While we understand that our location and business demographics mean that the same level of service can not be offered here, I am regularly asked "what can the Chamber do for me" or worse "What has the Chamber done for me for the last XX number of years?" I have had trouble answering this on many occasions as some of the businesses with membership in the region can not make use of many of the services offered by the Chamber. I am reassured though that many of those that ask still maintain their membership, just in case they need to call on the IR services at some stage, which I also consider to be the largest selling point of a membership.
- The limited amount of training that I have had myself in Workplace Relations has at times left me feeling that I am not in a position to accurately advise members, so I have to refer on to Darwin. Funnily enough, this seems to reassure members, as they have felt in the past that they have been fed lines of bull, instead of just being told "I am not sure of the answer to that, but let me find someone who will know". The previous Exec Officers in this position seem to have done some damage to the credibility of the Chamber, by passing on information that is not accurate. As the rules for Workplace relations change so frequently, I understand the difficulty and cost involved in keeping the region trained with current information.
- Many of the issues of this region are not ones that can be solved by the Chamber. In the cases of land release, wage competition, cost of living, staff accommodation and staff retention, the Chamber can be a voice, but can not change legislation or lessen the difficulty of operating a business in the region.

All of these points have brought to my attention that for most of the time, there is not a lot of job satisfaction or visible outcomes for those issues that affect this region.

To some of the points of interest for the year:

Staffing: The position of RICA (Regional Industry Career Advisor) has been filled twice in the past 12 months, after the resignation of Roanna Hall. Donna Owen sat in the position short term until finding employment more suited to her family needs. Nathan Frick was recently appointed to the position. Nathan has previous, and current associations with other committees focused on the development of youth in the NT, so the role of career advisor to youths aged 13-19 sits well with Nathan's area of interest. We wish Nathan the best and hope he sticks around long enough to give and gain the best outcomes for that position.

Industry Housing: After a couple of unsuccessful starts, this year the Industry Housing really came together. A tender was successfully let to a local business for the construction of the units. The plans for those units met all legal building and cyclone code requirements, and construction is underway. The first 15 of those units will be ready for occupancy by the end of December and the remainder by the end of March 2008. There have been some disappointments and points of contention for members both with the tender for construction/ownership as well as for the allocation of units to local businesses. An unbiased, no conflict of interest or personal gain selection committee was put together, but still we had some members who felt that their membership should have guaranteed them a unit, even though they either did not meet the criteria or were already successful in being allocated one unit for another business that they own. Understandably, not all the businesses that applied for a unit were successful and it has to be said again that these units are not the solution to the critical housing shortage in the region, but were a band aid for some smaller businesses who were bleeding out from the cost of housing their key staff. Those 27 businesses that were successfully allocated a unit have been very positive about their association with the process.

It has been noted that the Chief Minister has announced the release of land in Berrimah as well as Bellamack, opening up over 1400 land lots for residential development. The Chamber needs to continue to lobby Government and ALCAN/Rio Tinto to support the release of land for residential purposes in the East Arnhem Region. This is necessary for the long term sustainability of small/medium, non indigenous enterprise in the region.

Alcan/G3 Expansion: The G3 expansion is winding down. Many local recruits have found themselves finishing up with G3 earlier than expected, due to budgetary constraints. This should, in a perfect world, have improved staffing for local businesses, however, the high wages and conditions offered by G3 have made those employees over rate their own value, and many of them are not prepared to go back to the lower paid positions they previously filled. In saying that, it needs to be noted that those previous employments were still paid well above the award conditions, and offered many employment incentives that are just not seen elsewhere around Australia. In many cases,

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employers are not able to pay the higher wages that these previous employees are now demanding, and are having to own/operate/multitask many of the positions within their companies themselves. It will be interesting in the next 12 months to see how the final stages of G3 finishing up affect the local economy and population.

Business and Community Directory: The Directory is now complete and printed. It is being launched on Oct 12 at a networking function. If the number of phone calls taken about availability of the directory is an indication, they will become hot property around town. We are going to have decide mid 2008 if it is viable to do the directory annually, based on changes in the community, sales of the current directory and business advertising interest. I personally feel that if anyone ever asks me to 'make a phone book' again, I will be forced to tear out what hair I have left after completing this one!!

Expo 2007: This event has been cancelled due to lack of interest from exhibitors. Over 60 businesses were contacted, as well as those that exhibited in previous expos, with about 10 businesses expressing interest in exhibiting this year. Due to the high cost of running an Expo in the region, it has been decided that the event would run at a loss, and was therefore not viable.

October Business Month: There is nothing being done in the Region. Due to my own lack of involvement in the business world prior to commencement with the Chamber, and my naive belief that the region would not just be 'forgotten' or put aside, I have left it too late to make waves about doing anything for October this year, but it needs to be noted that there are nearly 200 registered businesses in the region and for future years, this region needs to have some sort of involvement with the October business month, and some recognition for the achievements of businesses in the region. It has been very disappointing for many businesses in the region that we have not been included in the October Business Month activities.

Alcohol Management Plan: The East Arnhem Harmony Māwaya Mala Committee recently submitted its Alcohol Management Plan, including proposed permit system, to the Licensing Commission. At this stage, the committee is waiting for a response from the commission. While it is agreed that there may be some early teething problems with the system, as there is with any untried system, there is also strong support in the region for a system that targets the alcohol issues of a small minority, with minimum imposition on the majority. All residents of the region will have to apply for a permit to purchase take away alcohol, and produce this permit at the point of sale, however, there will be no restriction on sales to those that use alcohol in a responsible, sensible manner that complies with the law. I would like to think that if the Licensing Commission is not able to approve the system due to the Federal Government alcohol restrictions, that the Chamber, and every business and resident in the region voice their concerns at the highest level to ensure that the alcohol consumption, and life

East Arnhem Region Cont'd

style of those of us who are able to manage our behaviour while partaking of a drink is not destroyed by the Federal Government's heavy handed blanket ban on alcohol in certain areas.

Focus: I believe that the focus for the next 12 months still has to remain on raising the profile of the Chamber. We also need to get more lobbying happening here at a local level for some of the issues that affect local members. This is an issue that will be raised with the new committee, and we will select some issues that we can raise in the correct forum to try to see some outcomes for the region, rather than just sitting on issues that have raised constant 'talk fests' but no results over the years.

Dave Suter
East Arnhem Regional Executive Committee Chair

Katherine Region



Marilyn McPherson Executive Officer
Katherine Region

2007 has been an extremely productive year for the Katherine Office. Business confidence is increasing week by week. The ever-changing business community of Katherine has seen some troughs and peaks, thankfully more peaks for 2007.

We begin the 2007/2008-year with all current Executive Committee members continuing for the next 12 months. The Executive Committee of Katherine should be commended for their efforts over the past 12 months. 2007/2008 will be no doubt full of passion and commitment to their town Katherine.

The Executive Committee for 2007/2008.

- Kevin Grey- Chairperson
- Trina Dwyer- Vice Chairperson
- Frank Dalton
- Petrena Ariston
- Robyn Smith
- Jim King
- Peter Sinnott
- Werner Sarny

Marilyn McPherson was appointed the Executive Officer Katherine in November 2007. Taking over the reins from Katrina Halse, who has been appointed to the Industrial Relations Department of the Chamber of Commerce NT. Successfully holding onto the corporate knowledge has been instrumental to the continued success of the Katherine Office in the past 12 months.

The Executive Committee over the past 12 months have been focused on the 5 Territory wide issues which incorporate almost all the Katherine issues that impact our members in this region.

Katherine Region Cont'd

- **Antisocial Behaviour**
The Chamber continued its role as a major stakeholder with Katherine Region Harmony Group throughout 2006/2007. Until recently when the NT Government made the decision to move its focus and re distribute the funding and support the KRHG had been receiving. The stakeholder group agreed Harmony had run its course. Proudly waiving the Alcohol Management Plan for Katherine (AMP) the stakeholders have now closed this chapter. Moving immediately into the next chapter the endless task of holding all Government agencies, Community organisations and groups accountable meet the outcomes of the AMP and the Katherine Community.

- **Youth Issues**
Engaging youth that have slipped outside the school system and youth at risk of disengaging from school, work or structured learning is challenging for the Katherine Community. The Chamber of Commerce participates in many forums and programs to ensure we do not leave any group of this generation behind. Participating in the careers expo, round tables, liaising with educators alike. We will continue to liaise with parents, business, educators, communities, Governments and youth to ensure young people have the recourses and choice to transition from youth to adulthood as beneficial community members.

- **Police Numbers**
Police numbers in the Katherine Region still remain a concern for the Chamber of Commerce. Our Crime rates continue to rise and antisocial behaviour is still the primary issue. We continue to lose experienced police from our streets everyday. The Current Federal Government Intervention will only stretch our barely coping Police Force even further possibly to breaking point. Continued pressure on the NTG to develop workable strategies to increase police numbers is paramount.

- **Skill Shortages NT**
Of no surprise is that the skill shortage across Australia is impacting Katherine hugely. Every business in the tourist season was able and willing to employ more employees. The Challenge is for the Chamber of Commerce to develop strategies to assist our members to attract and retain suitably qualified staff for their needs.

- **Land Availability (Residential)**

Other issues Katherine Executive have been actively perusing include:

- **Katherine Water Advisory Committee (KWAC)**
Peter Sinnott has been appointed to the Katherine Water Advisory Committee by the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts as the representative for the Chamber of Commerce Katherine. This advisory group has been and still is very active the main focus of this group is the sustainability and allocation of the water located in the Tindal Limestone Aquifer with the Katherine Water Control District. All existing and pending licenses in this Aquifer are under review. This process is reaching its completion with all decisions to be completed by January-February 2008.

The Katherine

Katherine Region Cont'd

Water Advisory Committee feeds all its information into the Daily River Management Advisory Committee.

- **Cultural Precinct**

- **NT Government Spending**

- **Katherine Economic and Development Committee**
Kevin Grey represents the Chamber of Commerce NT on the Katherine Economic and Development Committee. This group is the third incarnation of the original Regional Economic Development Committees. The primary function is to identify and pursue Three projects for the advancement of the Katherine Region. At present the pursuit of a Correctional Facility for Katherine has some promise.

- **Shop Local Campaign**
An initiative of Imparja Television, the Chamber of Commerce Katherine has proudly supported this campaign. Distributing free of charge the buy local promotional material purchased from Imparja Television. This campaign has re highlighted the importance of Business-to-Business purchasing within our regional towns. Every opportunity we have to talk buy local we do.

Events have been strong in Katherine over the past 12 months. 2007 Katherine Business Expo attracted 27 Business, held in conjunction with the Katherine show for the second year. Exhibitors gave the expo their vote on confidence in the event. Organisation for Katherine Business Expo 2008 is well underway. The Chamber staff will look to hold a networking function on Thursday evening at the expo site. We were fortunate that the Hon Minister Vatskalis, Minister for Business, launch the Katherine region profile at the Chamber Expo site on Friday. This document is a live document available on the Northern Territory Governments website.

Business at Sunset is growing in popularity in Katherine. 2007 has seen Nitmiluk Tours, Ausindustry/Export Hub and TIO hold Business at Sunsets in Katherine.

2007 has seen the launch of a Corporate Golf Day. Held on Saturday 6th October 2007 we saw 10 teams strut their golfing talent at Katherine Golf Club. The highlight of the day being good golf, good company and many business friendships made. This event is now permanently on the Chamber of Commerce Katherine Calendar as an annual event.

As we lean to the end of 2007 calendar year the Katherine Office will gear up for the production of the Katherine Business and Community Directory and Christmas in Katherine Promotion. Both projects were highly successful in 2006. The 2007 Katherine Community and Business Directory listed over 400 business total 80 pages it is still the most sort after book in Katherine even as late as October. This Directory is delivered free to all residential premises in Katherine, all business and private Postal Boxes in

Katherine Region Cont'd

Katherine, Tindal, Pine Creek and Mataranka. And available from the Katherine Town Council, Tourist Information Centre, Department of Business and Region Economic Development and of course the Chamber Office Katherine and Darwin.

Federal Government Industrial Relation Seminars presented by the Katherine Chamber of Commerce have been held over 2007, five in total with 20 plus tailored one on ones for individual businesses. The seminars have been well received by the businesses that have attended. Many businesses seem undeterred by the impending Federal Election.

Tourism 2007

Katherine has been fortunate to see a strong tourist season for 2007. Official tourist numbers are not available until later in the year.

Our ability to market our region however has come under severe threat with the release of an NTG report on the 4th October recommending the withdrawal of funding for the Katherine Region Tourist Association, and Barkly Region Tourist Association, with the intention of servicing our interests centrally from Darwin.

Katherine Regional Executive Committee Chair
Kevin Grey

Barkly Region



Claire Ashard - Exec officer Barkly Regional Committee

This year's Barkly Region AGM was held at Goldfields Hotel on Wednesday 19 September 2007. Chamber CEO Chris Young welcomed the group. Then the outgoing Chair Ben Campbell gave his report outlining the committee key issues for

the year such as developments with Economic Regional Development Committee, the street beatification project, lack of commercial air service and the housing/land market.

In accordance with the Chamber constitution, two nominations to the Barkly Region Executive Committee for 2007-2009 were received and these were Kay Eade of Telstra Countrywide and Wayne Green of Mend-a-Bathroom. The remaining committee members completing their second year term are Ben Campbell of ANZ, Greg Marlow of Marlow Canete & Associates and filling casual vacancy is Stewart Naylor of BRADAAG. Ben Campbell was nominated again as Chair having done a great job during the past year. Greg Marlow was also elected as Deputy Chair and both nominations were duly elected.

Barkly Region Cont'd

Our guest speaker Mr. John Gibb – Regional Manager Barkly of DBERD, used the opportunity to 'brainstorm' with the group on the regional issues the committee had raised through the year and which tie in with the Economic Development Framework and a draft "Tennant Creek Plan on a Page" was developed.

During our July 07 EC meeting, our Executive Office compiled a list, from our discussions, of issues to be raised with federal candidates:

- Would like to know each side's view on the nuclear waste site. Is it going ahead? Where? Capacity etc?
- Raising Child Care cost – better subsidies for working families. Example given was of disparity of cost for child-care for working families against non-working families.
- With the recent Mal Brough announcement re community interventions. What does the Labour candidate propose? How much of previous party commitments will they honour?
- What is Federal Gov doing to encourage and foster regional dispersion. Of people? Of development and infrastructure?
- With scrapping of CDEP what will happen now and what will come in its place?
- 457 Visa – difference between Australian industry standards and overseas industry standards (i.e. electrical safety standards, OH&S standards) To make process easier suggest a bridging program to bring candidates up to Aust industry standards?
- Private health care 1% Medicare surcharge – with no private facilities in T/C wouldn't this be better going to RFD?
- Commercial airline to Tennant - cost to Tennant from not having airline and what can be done at federal level.

No replies to date on these, but more focus will be given to following these up over the coming months.

Also looking at getting some ideas on an annual event that will make the Barkly region stand out again (previously had the Aust Wide Go-cart Races)

Ben Campbell

Barkly Regional Executive Committee Chair

