

# ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008

## Chamber of Commerce NT

**NT Chamber of Commerce and Industry, trading as Chamber of Commerce Northern Territory**  
ABN 36160572513

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About Chamber of Commerce NT, Structure and Organisational Chart	3
President's Report	4
CEO's Report	7
Finance Report	9
Trade Commerce and International Division	10
Training Services	13
Education, Employment & Training	14
Workplace Relations	16
Marketing and Events	17
Top End Region	18
East Arnhem Region	20
Katherine Region	21
Central Australian Region	22
Barkly Region	24
Financial Statements	25

## 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 promote an economic environment for the establishment and development of trade, commerce and industry.

### **Corporate Values**

The corporate values of the Chamber are:

- Placing members first.
- Quality and excellence in our dealings with all stakeholders.
- Fair and ethical business practices.
- Promoting sustainability.

### **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 across all regions of the NT and together offer a strong base of knowledge and expertise.

Mr George Roussos, President of the Chamber of Commerce NT is a partner in the law firm Cridlands MB. Geroqe was elected President in 2007.

The 2007/2008 Chamber Board of Directors comprised:

**President George Roussos, Cridlands MB**

**Vice President Finance Tom Ganley, NT Airports**

**Vice President Damien Ryan, Alice Springs Camera Shop**

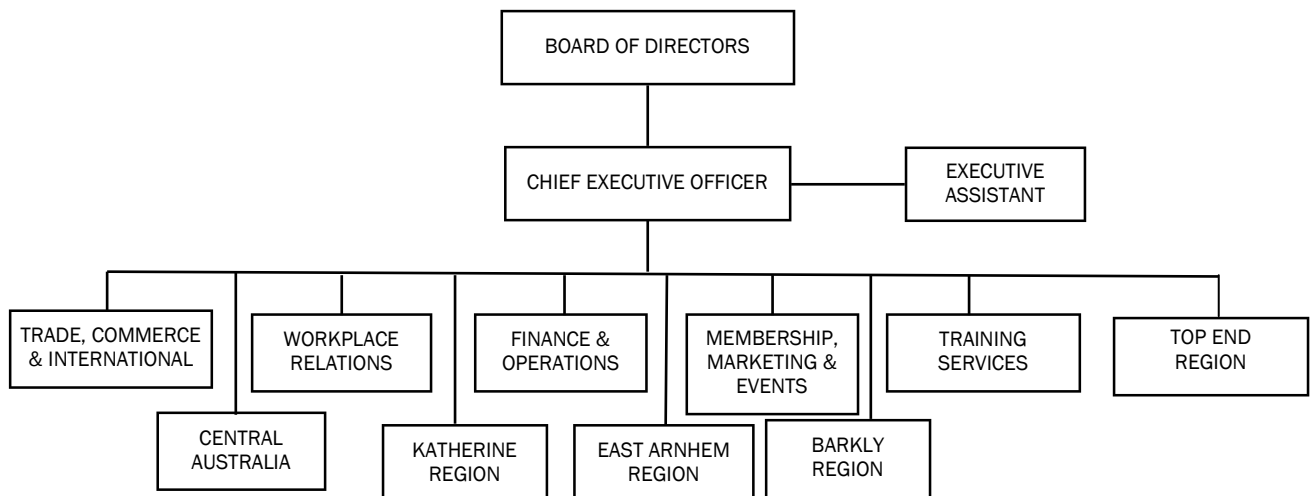
**Andrew Wilson, SKYCITY Darwin**

**Bruce Fadelli AM, Bromavic Pty. Ltd.**

**Ben Pace, Stantons International**

**Paul Toussaint-Jackson, Perkins Shipping**

## ORGANISATIONAL CHART





### Acknowledgements

The Chamber of Commerce Northern Territory covers the breadth and depth of the NT and the Northern Territory economy.

I thank our Members for their contribution to the Chamber's strong voice for Northern Territory business.

We are proud of our Regional Executives and Industry Council members and I thank the Chairs, Committee Members and Executive Officers of the Barkly, Central Australian, East Arnhem, Katherine and Top End Regional Committees; the International Business and Manufacturers Councils, and the Manager of the Councils.

### Northern Territory business

I also acknowledge the Chief Executive and the Chamber's people in the departments of Operations; Education, Employment and Training; Marketing, Events and Membership; Trade, Commerce and International Division; Training Services; and Workplace Relations.

Across the Territory, business is getting on with the job. Whilst we have a diverse economic base, there are business issues common to all geographic areas of the Northern Territory. These issues include: skills and labour shortage; law and order; super shires; housing and land availability. Opportunities for growth include more skilled staff and land releases.

Your Chamber communicates these issues to Government, on a regular basis.

According to the Alice Springs Economic Profile developed by the Department of Business, the top

seven industries (led by government administration, property and business services, health and community services, construction, mining, education and manufacturing) contributed approximately 52% of the regional output to Alice Springs. Twenty four percent of the businesses have a turnover of \$2,000,000 or more; and over 58% of the businesses are affected by seasonality. There are more than 1800 businesses in Alice Springs. Several of those businesses are members, including Ross Engineering, Fluid Power (NT) and Deloitte who have been members since 1971. Our member Neil Ross is the Chairman of the Alice Springs Economic Development Committee.

The Barkly region, with Tennant Creek as its economic centre, makes an important contribution to the Northern Territory economy in a number of industries, particularly the pastoral and mining industry.

The Katherine region also makes an important contribution to the Northern Territory economy in mining, defence, tourism, pastoral, horticulture and transport. Many of our members live or work in this region offering goods and services to these industries. In July this year, the NT Government announced a Katherine business survey to pinpoint growth problems. The Government planned to survey 900 businesses in Katherine to try and identify the issues hampering the region.

In the Top End, economic activity is progressing strongly, raising capacity constraints in terms of labour and infrastructure. The location of heavy industry and Creating Darwin's Future is on the agenda.

### **What can I report on developments over the last 12 months?**

#### Strategic Plan 2008 – 2013

The General Council meeting of 21 February 2008 was devoted to articulating the issues that matter to our members and the way we could approach solving them.

The immediate issues included anti-social behaviour the shortage of skilled employees and training and development. However, we required a plan, a structure that could guide us over the next 5 years addressing the myriad of challenges to business within the confines of our resources.

Relying on the results of a survey and the matters discussed at General Council, the Directors of the Chamber met on 19th March 2008 to review and revise the Chamber's strategic direction.

A Strategic Plan was developed which was approved at the Directors' April meeting. The plan was subsequently disseminated to the Regional Committees.

Your Directors affirmed the Chamber of Commerce NT is not merely the leading Northern Territory business organisation but the peak organisation influencing the economic environment and maximising business opportunities for our members through establishment and development of trade, commerce and industry in the NT.

The Strategic Plan includes matters such as:

Ensuring the Chamber's Governance Framework reflects the expectations of the Constitution and members.

Strengthening the Chamber's policy and research function to allow more informed responses to our members on key issues.

Ensuring a consistently high level of articulated and timely responses to members on key issues, through improved governance and established KPIs on responses to members.

Growing our services in key areas such as Workplace Relations and OH&S.

Strengthening our services in training.

Ensuring our members have access to knowledge and resources on sustainability and carbon trading.

Continuing to provide networking functions and events, which are in the interests of our members.

On a monthly basis, the Chief Executive reports to the Board of Directors on each of the four goals. Key Performance Indicators have been developed against which the CEO's performance is assessed and the remuneration will be linked to delivering on the strategy.

**What are some of the issues the Chamber has already addressed?**

**Occupational Health & Safety**

Workplace Health and Safety Act.

Representations regarding Union Right of Entry.

Offence by officers of companies – if a company commits an offence, an officer is deemed to commit it if the offence is attributable to the act or omission of the officer; or the officer could have prevented the commission of the principal offence by exercising reasonable care.

Abrogation of privilege against self-incrimination. It is not an excuse for refusing or failing to answer a question, or for refusing or failing to provide information, as required under this Act that the answer to the question, or the information, would tend to incriminate the person subject to the requirement of an offence.

Costs of complying with additional OHS obligations. Increase in penalties and obligations.

**Commercial property task force**

Reform of Unit Titles Act.

Reform of Business Tenancies legislation.

Costs imposed on business.

**Government relations**

Our policy is to maintain a close, constructive and productive relationship with government; but not so close as to compromise the interests of our members.

It is important to our members that the Chamber of Commerce NT is respected and held in high regard by government.

### President's Report cont...

We do this by maintaining communication at all levels of government and working with government in the interests of our members.

If we disagree, we do so in an articulate and principled manner.

Since November 2007, we have met and regularly communicated with Chief Minister Paul Henderson. We have also had discussions with other Ministers and we will continue this, including meeting the new Members of Cabinet.

We are a Member of Business Agenda NT and we sit on several committees, including the Climate Change Focus Group and the Commercial Property Taskforce.

### **What are some of the things the Board is working on?**

#### **Government procurement**

Government's core focus is the provision of Health, Education and Public Safety.

The private sector is most capable of delivering goods and services, including to Government.

#### **Indigenous affairs**

The concept of Indigenous Economic Self Sustainability is gaining momentum both at the regional level and nationally. The Chamber is leading the debate within the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and has the support of other State Chambers. There are a number of issues that are being addressed such as the policy and regulatory frameworks, business incentives, cultural and local aspects.

There are a large number of indigenous Territorians who want to be entrepreneurs. The viability of indigenous business could be improved if more attention was devoted to training. The Chamber is an important source of business training. The Chamber can assist in equipping indigenous business with the skills and knowledge to maintain and grow their business and give them the confidence to excel in a competitive business environment.

#### **Economic Forum**

Modelled on the Victoria Summit of the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI), your Chamber is planning a forum focusing on four issues. The inaugural forum is

### President's Report cont...

proposed for March 2009.

#### **Australian Chamber Alliance**

The Chamber is a founding Member of the Australian Chamber Alliance (ACA), a federation of the leading State and Territory Chambers of Commerce and Industry, comprising Commerce Queensland, New South Wales Business Chamber, Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Business SA, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Western Australia and the Chamber of Commerce Northern Territory.

Over the past year, the Chamber has worked with the ACA to deliver nationally consistent programs to members and clients using the strength of the State and Territory Chamber of Commerce and Industry network. ACA member Chambers provide advice support and services to over 100,000 businesses in most industry sectors.

#### **Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) is the peak council of Australian business associations. Its member network has over 350,000 businesses represented through Chambers of Commerce in each State and Territory, and a nationwide network of industry associations.

The role of ACCI is to represent the interests of business at a national level as well as internationally, making sure the concerns of business are represented to government at the federal level, and to the community at large.

Through the year, ACCI has produced policy to assist business, including in the Northern Territory, deal with the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, Award Modernisation and indigenous affairs.

We are very proud that our Director, Bruce Fadelli AM, is a Director of ACCI.

#### **Development of policy**

Over the next year, the Chamber will be promoting your business environment with sensible policies relating to land release, the carbon pollution reduction scheme, native title, occupational health and safety and the development of Darwin Harbour.

*George Roussos*  
*President*

## Chief Executive Officer's Report



I would like to take this opportunity to offer a very warm welcome to all of the Chamber membership, right across the Northern Territory. As members of the largest, truly independent, business representative organisation in the Territory you have enjoyed the benefits that accrue from belonging to an entity which is able to make a difference, represent impartially and carry your concerns to all levels of government. The strength of the Chamber lies in the diversity of the membership it represents and the coverage that comes from being the only truly Territory wide business organisation.

The last twelve months have been a very busy period in the Territory and this has been reflected in the activity within the business community and at the Chamber. As before, we have attempted to remain proactive in our engagement with the Territory Government and carry out our role as “The Voice of Territory Business” on a whole range of issues from amendments to the Taxation Administration Act to the introduction of the new Occupational Health and Safety legislation. At the same time we have cooperated with government to conduct skilled worker campaigns at specific centres both within Australia and overseas and organised delegations to a number of trade specific expos both in Darwin and in South East Asian locations.

As in previous years the Chamber has had a level of staff turnover at all levels of the organisation and the sourcing and recruitment of replacements can be a long and, at times, difficult process. As I write this report there are still a number of vacancies within the organisation which are proving difficult to fill. Our Alice Springs office has seen a complete turnover of staff in the last twelve months and we have been very lucky in recruiting Diana MacMullin to head up that important regional office. Diana came on board in April this year and then set about the recruitment of a whole team for that office. Our Executive Officer in Katherine is Marilyn McPherson who continues to provide an outstanding service to that region while we have also been lucky enough to recruit

## Chief Executive Officer's Report cont...

Stacey Hart for our East Arnhem Regional office. A touch of déjà-vu, given that her mother, Aileen Hart, filled that role for a number of years some time ago.

To remain effective and capable of representing the membership it is necessary for the Chamber to be managed and run as a partially commercial organisation. A major source of funding for us comes from the fees charged to members but they are insufficient to meet all of our needs, so a number of commercial activities are undertaken to fill the shortfall in funding. Some assistance is also derived from the Territory Government in the form of various funding grants to permit the operation of our two industry councils, the Manufacturers Council and the International Business Council. This level of grant funding, however, comprises less than ten percent of the Chamber's operating budget, hence our ability to remain completely independent, unlike some other Regional and Business organisations.

Without a doubt there have been a number of significant events that have driven much of the work and effort in the last twelve months. Firstly the Federal Intervention program has had a considerable impact on many of the more remote regions of the Territory and this has engendered a considerable amount of work for our members right across the Territory. The impact of some of the intervention initiatives, such as income quarantining and compulsory school attendance, has had both good and bad outcomes for the business community and the Chamber has necessarily been involved at all levels in voicing the concerns that some of these changes have brought. Chamber agitation at Territory and Federal level saw the eventual introduction of the “Basics Card” in late September 2008 to allow for an equal level of participation by all of the business community in providing goods and services to the welfare recipients. The impact on many schools of increased attendance has required considerable adjustments by the Education Department and a significant shortfall of resources which we are still struggling to complete. The fallout from these and other initiatives will be felt for some time and there is still a need to fine tune a number of the programs to ensure that they are working smoothly.

The second significant event was the Federal election, which saw a change of government and ushered in a whole range of new initiatives as well as spelling the end of a number of the previous government's programs. From a business point of view the new Workplace Relations legislation which is still undergoing fine tuning and consultation at a number of levels is creating a degree of uncertainty and concern.

Coupled with the award modernisation process, the eventual framework under which business operates has changed and will continue to do so for a number of years. This is not necessarily bad for business, but change generates uncertainty until it is finally bedded down. The new federalism and the revitalisation of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) is set to usher in a truly national scheme of arrangement on a number of fronts, which will hopefully allow business to operate smoothly across multiple jurisdictions without having to change hats to meet local needs.

Closer to home the Territory election has been fought and won and the fallout is likely to be felt for some time to come. To have a truly effective government you need an effective opposition and the Territory election made sure of that. The Labor Government saw their majority reduced to the thinnest of margins and then committed to fixed terms of four years, which will see the next Territory election being contested at the time of the Darwin Cup in 2012 and during the lead up to the London Olympics of that year, symptomatic I suspect of a number of decisions made both before and since the campaign. The Government chose a commercial venture as the reason for calling the election. The Chamber was forced to respond to protect the interests of the business community and our members in particular. The fact that we were accused of meddling in politics shows a complete lack of understanding of the role of the Chamber as well as a strong disregard for our independent status. Only a couple of months earlier the Northern Territory Government had been urging the Chamber to support the same program by attacking the opposition leader for his stance in the debate. A stance, I might add, that he had since changed and which meant that there was complete bipartisan support for the program well before the election was called.

The announcement that Inpex has chosen the Northern Territory as the preferred site for the construction of their LNG plant was a most pleasing outcome for all concerned. It is interesting to note that credit is being claimed and taken in many quarters within Government, although they are all forgetting the basis upon which the Inpex decision was made possible came from an initiative that the Chamber movement conducted a number of years previously. In 2001 when the current government came to power, the development of the Bayu-Udan gas fields had progressed to a stage where the participants were examining a number of alternatives in relation to the processing of the gas to LNG. The preferred option was a floating facility and the new

government was asked to and did lend a measure of support to this proposal. Recognising the impact that such a facility would have on the continuing development of the Territory economy, the Chamber of Commerce Northern Territory in concert with other business organisations and calling upon the resources of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other business organisations conducted the extremely effective "Gas on Shore" campaign to urge the Bayu-Udan proponents to build a facility in Darwin Harbour.

This campaign was waged at both a Territory and Federal level and was eventually successful in convincing ConocoPhillips to construct the plant on Wickham Point. As such, the Territory Government was able to establish the gas precinct on Middle Arm which they would eventually be able to use as a strong argument in attracting Inpex to come to the Territory.

At the beginning of 2008 the Territory Government brought into law the new Occupational Health and Safety Act, with effect from 1 July. What had originally commenced as a review of the existing Act ended up as a complete rewrite of the legislation with considerable emphasis being placed on the enforcement procedures and the role of the union movement in the policing of the Act. Despite a number of misgivings within the Chamber, the Act came into law with a variety of clauses which are going to make it difficult for business to operate in a cost effective manner. We have already seen a level of concern expressed by the building industry as to the cost impost the introduction of the new legislation is going to have in an already expensive market. There was a general consensus that the old Territory Worksafe was not a particularly effective vehicle. Unfortunately, it would appear that the changes to the legislation have not had much effect on that process and the transfer of Worksafe from the Department of Education and Training to Justice would suggest that the NTG is more interested in prosecutions than effective training and guidance. There are considerable cost imposts on the business community as a result of this legislation and we are only now starting to see how that impacts on future operations.

The old adage of "better late than never" can be very aptly applied to the recent announcements by the Treasurer and Planning and Infrastructure Minister of new land releases in Darwin and Palmerston to meet the increasing needs of the community. Since joining the Chamber in early 2006 I have personally been advocating for the release of sufficient land to meet the growing needs of the community as a whole and the business community in particular. At every

Chief Executive Officer's report Cont'd

opportunity I have urged the government to act swiftly to alleviate the very conditions that now apply. In almost every case I was told that the Government did not wish to upset the market or the current ownership base and would make only measured releases as and when required. An erroneous supposition it would now appear, given the scale of the releases they are themselves undertaking.

It is a real pity, however, that the market had to be put under such massive pressure before the Government eventually got around to taking decisive action and claiming all of the credit for reaching a decision that should have been taken some two years ago, before Darwin priced itself out of the affordable home market. They will claim that the decision was made because of the Inpex announcement but it should be remembered that the land release came out before the Inpex decision and that Inpex is unlikely to have a major impact on the housing market in the Territory for at least the next few years. Given the level of economic growth that is expected to be seen in the Territory over the next few years, other such late decisions could dampen effective growth instead of stimulating it.

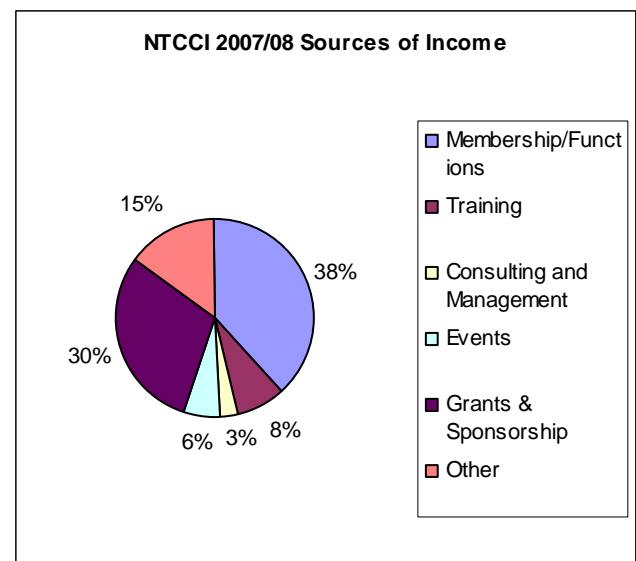
There is little doubt that the international financial crisis is going to have an effect on the forward economic growth of the Territory, with many businesses likely to find it much harder to raise capital for expansion and more costly to maintain their current loan environments. Although the situation is looking particularly grim in some areas, we are still likely to enjoy a level of quarantining from the general malady within Australia and even more so within the Territory. Of major concern going forward is the level of infrastructure currently in place and what is being planned over the coming years to ensure that we offer a viable environment for business to establish and thrive in the Territory. To ensure a strong economy we need to have more large businesses operating in this environment and they need a certainty that the infrastructure is available to them and in working order. Power delivery and cost must be efficient and effective. Water availability must be assured and properly supported. Road, rail, air and sea links must be robust and adaptable. These are the challenges faced by the Territory and the business community and the Chamber stands ready and willing to maintain our presence as "The Voice of Territory Business".

*Chris Young  
Chief Executive.*

Finance Report

The "Voice of Territory Business" has had another rewarding year as the largest and most representative business organisation representing over 1300 businesses across our great Territory posting a surplus of \$111K (2006/2007: \$30K deficit).

Financially the Chamber Team is to be congratulated for the strong 2007/2008 results. Cost base growth was contained to a rate less than inflation with costs totalling \$3.2M (2006/2007: \$3.1M). Revenues were in excess of \$3.3M (2006/2007:\$3.1M). Revenue from membership was in line with the prior year and accounted for 35% (2006/2007: 39%) of the Chambers revenue base. Other Revenue increased on account of the provision of Work Choices Education Programs to the value of \$253K. The one off transfer of assets to the Chamber in respect of the acquisition of the Darwin TRAC Association also increased revenue for 2007/2008 by \$78K.



Looking forward the Chamber is well placed to capitalize on the growth and strength of the Territory Economy. The Chamber's Balance Sheet is robust and the Chamber will pay down the debt owed on the Darwin premises during 2008/2009 reducing interest expense. The Chamber looks forward to seeing continued growth in Membership, Workplace Relations and Training and the achievement of the 2008/2009 Business Plan.

*Tom Ganley  
Vice President Finance*

### INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COUNCIL

#### Executive Committee

The recent election at the IBC Annual General Meeting saw all positions filled and the membership of the Executive Committee is as follows;

**Chair Sean Mahoney**, *International College of Advanced Education*

**Vice-chair Peter Dummett**, *Swire Shipping*

**Mark Norman**, *Norman Marine Services*

**Monica Turvey**, *Charles Darwin University*

**Bob Tormey**, *Auslink*

**Daryl Guppy**, *Guppytraders*

**Carrie Altamura**, *Darwin Convention Centre*

**Dave Gyles**, *Safaritrekk International*

**Natalie Chiplin**, *Morgan Buckley*

**Kym Handberg**, *ETS Australia*

**Richard Teo**, *SMIT*

#### Achievements 2007 –2008

##### Trade 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 April 2008. This delegation consisted of 15 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 conduct business there, which is consistent with the IBC strategy of facilitating business contacts and then letting business talk to business.

##### NT Export Awards

The 2007 NT Export Awards were very successful, having been formally reviewed by an IBC sub-committee comprising industry, government and IBC staff in 2006. The Chief Minister continued as patron of the awards and the focus remained on building the number and quality of entries.

There was also a focus on lifting the awareness of indigenous companies in the awards through regional involvement and targeted invitations to participate. The Awards presentation ceremony was held at Parliament House in early October and there was an excellent standard of entrants. The winners were-

Perkins Shipping - NT Exporter of the Year.

Porosus - Agribusiness

Safaritrekk -SME Manufacturer

Pensyl - Emerging exporter

Maningrida Arts and Culture - Arts and Entertainment

CDU - Education

Perkins Shipping - Services

Guppytraders -Micro business

The IBC was also successful in negotiating with the Department of the Chief Minister for the provision of additional funding for winners to attend national awards. This resulted in a group of 22 people representing the NT at the awards, our strongest presence for several years.

The IBC has since been working hard towards the 2008 awards and these look to be a success, with the number of entries rising to the levels of previous years and some competitive entrants from among the local international business community.

##### 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 Trade as part of his 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 enterprises' export capability and the importance of maintaining links in the region. Representatives of the council have continued to lobby the new Chief Minister on international trade matters, however the focus on the larger resource developments has made it hard to be heard. We had significant contribution to the upcoming development of an International Trade Strategy for the NT.

##### BIMP-EAGA

The Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and 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 will undertake a delegation to the Sabah International Expo in Kota Kinabalu and will hold an executive meeting at that time.

##### Functions and Events

The IBC holds regular functions and events for members, including the monthly Business Club lunches featuring speakers on international trade topics. In recent months these have included an Indonesia market briefing and a Darwin Port strategy presentation.

**Skilled Migration**

The Council continues to build its focus on skilled migration, as most Northern Territory companies list skills shortages as the most critical factor affecting business at present. Through input to the NT Skilled Migration Strategy, policy direction from the IBC Executive Committee, involvement in Skilled Migration Expos in South Africa, Europe and Asia, professional advice through the Manager's Migration Agent role and the support of the Federal Government's Industry Outreach Officer, Pat Illidge, the Council has picked up a significant additional workload.

**Training**

The IBC participated in a range of export related training for members both internally and in conjunction with other parties such as Austrade and Department of the Chief Minister. These included the short sessions on importing conducted before the delegation to Southern China and several export coaching events. The IBC also ran occasional instalments on steps to becoming a successful importer in the monthly NT Business Review

**Certificates of Origin**

The IBC processed 56 certificates of origin for Northern Territory exporters over the past 12 months.

**TRADESTART PROGRAMS**

The TradeStart program 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 emerging, new and established 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 last 12 months have included 16 clients undertaking overseas visits to a diverse range of markets including SE Asia (Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia), China, India, UK, France, Eastern Europe and the USA, with quite a number of these securing export sales outcomes from their visits.

15 new clients were enrolled and supported under the TradeStart Program in 2007/2008, including 6 in the Top End and 9 in Central Australia. TradeStart services were delivered in the Top End through a full time Export Adviser in Darwin and a part time Export Adviser in Alice Springs who provided assistance to exporters in Central Australia, including Tennant Creek and other regional areas. A total of 27 companies completed their time in TradeStart and exited the Program in 2007/2008.

**MANUFACTURERS COUNCIL**

The recent election at the MC Annual General Meeting saw most positions filled and the membership of the Executive Committee is as follows;

**Chair Greg Haigh, RANMS**

**Vice-chair Tony Roach, Northern Cement**

**Ken Cohalan, Northern Beverages**

**Sandy Kirsopp, Darwin Galvanising**

**Tim Proctor, Territory Diving Services**

**Mark Taylor, Fingers Aluminium**

**Darren Colbert, Northern Stainless**

**Richard Teo, SMIT**

**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. We applaud his foresight in facilitating the launch of the Common User Area at East Arm.

The Manufacturers Council, through Chairman Greg Haigh and Manager Greg Bicknell, has representation on the Manufacturing Consultative Group, which is the body charged with implementing the Manufacturing Industry Strategy. There has been little action from this group during the past 12 months and the Council sees no value in pushing it, due to the Government's lack of interest. Indicative of this is the non-attendance at any Council meetings by the Business Department representative during that period.

**Common User Facility**

The Council was successful in building an industry fund to enable a feasibility study to be undertaken by ACIL Tasman to assess the best model for a Common User Facility in Darwin. This study was the catalyst for the Government to set aside a prime piece of waterfront land at East Arm and the launch was carried out in May this year. The Council is represented on the Advisory Group which considers applications to utilize the Common User Area.

**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 grass roots 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 broader school community through activities that

### Trade Commerce and International Cont'd

will increase knowledge and opportunity for careers and further education, specifically in the manufacturing sector. 10 of the 29 work placements in 2008 were from the manufacturing sector, with the Council and the NTICN sponsoring students' work clothing. The Council is working closely with Natasha Angelo of YouthWorx NT in expanding future arrangements with other schools across the Territory.

#### **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 second time in October 2007 and again sponsored by the NTICN. The Award recognizes a process, product or design and the award was won by Thamarrur Regional Council, for their manufacture of pre-fabricated remote area housing. Executive Committee member Ken Cohalan kindly donated a perpetual trophy for the award and this was presented for the first time in 2007. The Council is once again sponsoring the "Small to Medium Manufacturer" category of the 2008 NT Export Awards. The SME Manufacturer Award was won last year by Safaritrek International for their manufacture of semi permanent safari tent lodges.

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.

#### **Member business support**

Members have 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 issues and capabilities.

After three unsuccessful attempts to access Commonwealth Government funding for business diagnostics and mentoring under the SBEP and BESB programs, the Council now has a Business Advisor position funded under the Australian Industry Productivity Centres program. David Hunt commenced in the position 12 months ago and is working with seven companies from the manufacturing and services sectors on formal business reviews and recommendations on accessing up to \$20,000 matched funding to support business growth.

### Trade Commerce and International Cont'd

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. Samantha Bacon commenced as our Waste Management Advisor (WMA) in August to conduct Waste Management audits and provide advice on managing the issues identified. Samantha will also help identify opportunities for recycling within business operations.

#### **Service, Suppliers and Manufacturers Directory**

The 2008 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.

#### **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

#### **Future strategies**

The MC undertook its annual member survey recently, 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 development of the Common User Area at East Arm. We will also be lobbying the government on the development of a second bulk ore wharf at Channel Island to overcome the lack of capacity to handle forecast demand and to take advantage of the work done previously in preparing a site there for bulk minerals.

## Training Services

As reported in the 2007 edition, Training Services needed to implement a number of changes both in the recording of training data and the training courses being offered by the Chamber. We identified that a number of courses on offer were out dated and not meeting member needs. As a result of that review some existing courses were deleted and a number added after consultation with members. Interestingly, not all of the courses requested by members have been well subscribed.

In August of this year an additional needs analysis on training was discussed and that will be completed by the end of October. One issue raised was the lack of supervisor / manager courses on offer, and as a result a number of departments across the Chamber are in collaboration to develop a comprehensive program addressing all areas identified in the training needs analysis.

In August the Chamber submitted a tender for a Worksafe contract to train Health & Safety Representatives needed after the changes made in OH&S Legislation. At the time of writing this report no decision had been made by Worksafe.

In the second half of 2007 Training Services implemented policies on continuous improvement in all areas of the Training Services Unit. As a result of this we have seen changes made in the following areas:

- Risk analysis and risk management upgraded.
- Improved services to student clients such as assessment tasks being evaluated within a two week period.
- Validation processes on course material such as assessment tasks, delivery plans and course resources and facilitation learner guides have been completed.
- All training environment resources have been updated.
- Restructuring of training calendars to meet the needs of our members is an ongoing process with changes being made as new courses are identified.
- An audit on training needs in the regions will be undertaken on the completion of Darwin's audit.
- Policies and procedures in Training services have been reviewed in relation to student management and OH&S
- Two reviews of all data in VETTRAK and AVETMISS reporting programs were undertaken to eradicate errors and to ensure future accuracy of reporting to DET.
- The transferring of management control of the

## Training Services cont...

Darwin TRAC Association in compliance with DET regulations and statutory requirements evolving into the new retail and business training centre that was opened in August 2008. Student numbers are now on the increase with possible additional Prevocational courses being run in fourth term of school subject to funding availability.

**AQTF Management**

We continue to work towards achieving a Low Risk quality risk indicator which, when achieved, will result in minimal auditing requirements and demonstrates that high quality services are provided to clients and DET. It should be noted that no RTO in the Northern Territory has a low risk status.

**Training program review**

As a result of our internal training needs analysis it was decided that more emphasis would be put on block training programs such as the new supervisor / manager course. The courses listed below however will remain on our training calendar

- Team Building
- Managing Workplace Conflict
- Customer Service
- Presenting with impact
- Receptionist / Administration
- Business Writing Skills

**Training Services Direction**

The following review areas are in the process of change or have been implemented:

- New focus on non-accredited courses as requested by our existing member base. New courses added to calendar.
- Development of a team work and training culture in the workplace. High priority has been placed on this and Training Services now has a team focused unit.
- Undertake regular flexible training programs for our regional members.
- Review all advertising, course and promotional materials. This review has been completed.
- Implement practices that encourage Training Services staff to actively participate in the growth of the department. A fortnightly training services meeting facilitates this participation.

*Steve Saint,  
Training Manager*

This report summarises the wide range and variety of activities undertaken in 2007-2008 by the members of the Employment Education and Training (EET) team.

At the close of the year, the EET team 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 Daly River;

Robert Trott, RICA responsible for East Arnhem; Cathy Clemow, RICA responsible for Barkly and Central regions.

The past year has seen a turnover of both the Central Australian and the East Arnhem RICAs.

These positions are funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) through Funding Agreements with the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI). The RICAs are funded through the Career Advice Australia (CAA) initiative and the ETA via the Industry Training Strategies Program. 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 have been extended until 31 October 2009 and the current ETA contract ends 30 June 2011.

Members of the EET team provide advice on current Australian and NT Government initiatives in:

- the employment and training areas;
- employment and training of apprentices and trainees, including courses available and training organisations;
- specific programs such as *Adopt a School*, *Career Transition Support* and *Structured Workplace Learning*;
- the new NT Certificate of Education;
- matters relating to skill shortages, including recruitment and retention strategies, and government initiatives and incentives.

The EET team members participate in a range of committees and networks, including:

- Northern Territory Board of Studies;
- ACCI's *EET Committee* which meets

quarterly to recommend ACCI's position on a range of policy issues, such as the future of Australian Technical Colleges;

- NT Government *Appeals and Review Tribunal for Apprentices*;
- *Career Educators Association NT*;
- Management Committees for Local Community Partnerships;
- Top End and Central Australian Education and Training Networks.

Activities undertaken in the reporting year included:

A series of breakfast seminars were held for employers in Darwin on recruitment and retention strategies for facing the skill shortage crisis. In addition a number of breakfast seminars for parents, teachers, students and employers have been conducted in the regional centres, including Alice Springs, Katherine, Jabiru, Nhulunbuy and Maningrida.

Many businesses, covering a cross section of industry in all regional centres, 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.

Several short surveys have been conducted on various EET topics, such as Mutual Recognition of Licences and Employers' Level of Satisfaction with VET in Schools. Members have also been given the opportunity, through the fortnightly *Roundup*, to access several ACCI and Australian Government surveys. Results of these surveys are used to assist in the development or reform of Government policies and strategies.

The work of the EET team continues to contribute to the growth of the number of apprenticeships and traineeships in the Territory, especially through collaboration with other organisations such as Local Community Partnerships, Group Training Organisations, Youth Pathways Providers, the Australian Apprenticeship Centre NT, and Job Network members such as Mission Australia. The team continues to enjoy solid working relationships with these organisations, and all of the stakeholders work collaboratively towards a common goal.

Another priority is the take-up of VET in schools programs, including School Based Apprenticeships, by both employers and students. In November 2007, the ETA and the Top End RICA worked with these stakeholders to promote VET in schools through a *Grow Your Own* project which was aimed at employers. The success of this program is still to be measured, but the readiness of all parties to become

## Education, Employment & Training cont...

involved is reflected in the statistics, as published in the August edition of *The Voice*. Included in these statistics was an 150% increase in participation by Year 12 students from 2005 to 2006.

The ETA has consistently promoted the participation of business and industry in the development of policies and strategies through membership of the NT Board of Studies (NTBOS), responsible for advising the Minister on curriculum matters. Most recently, this has covered completion requirements for the new NTCE and the place of VET in the NT Curriculum Framework. RICAs have also been active in this role through their participation across the Territory (including remote communities, eg, Jilkminggan and Yuendumu) in the planning and delivery of Career Expos and Try-a-Trade activities; *School and Industry Leaders Forums*; and Career Education Week.

Dissemination of information on employment and training to members involved a number of platforms, such as the *Voice*, *Chamber Roundup*, and other media outlets in Darwin and regional centres; and participation in Disability Awareness Week, Business at Sunsets, Central Australian Expo, the NT Money Expo, the ADF Transition Seminar (an opportunity to promote job opportunities in the Territory to members of the Defence Force about to leave the service), and Career Education Week.



## Education, Employment & Training cont...

Members of the EET team have attended three conferences this year:

- the national ETA Forum in Canberra,
- the Territory CAA conference in Darwin, and
- the National CAA Conference in Perth.

These conferences are a contractual requirement and provide opportunities to network with counterparts in other jurisdictions, obtain information about new and pending government initiatives, and provide feedback to government about the progress of the programs.

The ETA and the Top End RICA have this year developed three proposals to improve the employment prospects for Indigenous people. The first was the development of a pilot training and mentoring program in Alice Springs for employers of Indigenous people. This project was funded by (then) DBERD and the Chamber has now been approached to facilitate the program.

The second proposal involved an application for funding from the Australian Government to work in partnership with the Northern Land Council to increase training and employment opportunities in hospitality and tourism sectors for Indigenous people in the Top End. However, the proposal was not approved and a further proposal to seek funding from the NT Government is being prepared.

The RICA has identified an opportunity in Jilkminggan to involve the people in the community in developing and managing a business. Several meetings have been held with the community leaders and a proposal for funding has been submitted. At the time of writing, no response has been received.

The introduction of the NT *Workplace Health and Safety Act* and the supporting Regulations will see several changes to the requirements of employers. Subsequently, the ETA has been working with the Chamber's Training Division on the development of training programs for workers, and for supervisors/managers/employers. It is proposed the training activities will be supplemented by provision of advice and consultation to members. The training and associated activities will commence as soon as NT WorkSafe approves the training program for workers.

Further information on any of these activities can be obtained by contacting the relevant Chamber office.

*John Emslie*  
Education and Training Advisor

### **Forward with Fairness**

The Federal government is rolling out its workplace relations reforms in a staged format.

Stage #1 – Essentially ended the use of AWAs and the application of the Fairness Test and introduced the No Disadvantage Test (NDT).

Stage #2 – In train now it involves award modernisation, individual flexibility clauses and National Employment Standards (NES).

The first tranche of modernised awards has been released as exposure drafts and the rest will follow suit over the next 15 months. The content and coverage of these have major implications for business.

Each of these modernised awards will have an individual flexibility clause. We expect these to be well used in the workplace.

With the exception of the redundancy provisions the NES has attracted little discussion. The extension of redundancy provisions to small business is of concern.

The substantive bill to give effect to stage #2 from January 1, 2010 will shortly be introduced into federal parliament. Importantly the government has announced its intention to bring forward the operation of the proposed legislation as it relates to alleged unfair dismissals and bargaining in good faith to July 1, 2009. In addition further legislation will be introduced early in 2009 to provide for transitioning to the new system. Members should not rule out the possibility of, for example, moving from an award free workplace to one that has an award in place overnight on December 31, 2009.

The Chamber's response to the roll out has been a series of member seminars covering much of the NT as well as information circulars and timely reminders.

One of our major concerns in all this is the effect award modernisation will have on remote Indigenous organisations that operate several business streams. It would appear that they are going to be saddled with several awards.

### **Australian Fair Pay Commission (AFPC)**

The latest decision of the AFPC will apply in October 08. The Chamber has updated all the awards that are subscribed to by members and will similarly update award based allowances as they progress through the AIRC.

### **The Chamber's Full Suite of HR Services**

The Chamber continues to build this capability with the major addition this year being the HR software "HR Advance". It has been well received by members and will shortly be joined by a similar service for OH&S.

### **Specialist Training Services**

The Chamber has negotiated specialist training services with our sister Chamber in WA (CCIWA). Focused on the oil and gas industry they will be open for business by the end of the year.

### **Major Projects**

The Chamber continues to encourage the location of major projects in NT and to this end has entered into arrangements with CCIWA for the provision of workplace relations advice on large construction projects.

The first tangible benefit will be the Inpex plant. The Workplace Relations team, expects to provide a range of workplace relations and HR advice to contractors.

### **Agreement making in the Workplace**

Agreement making in the workplace continues at a cracking pace, however the inability of the Workplace Authority to process workplace agreements in a timely manner is of concern.

*Michael Maloney  
Workplace Relations Manager*



## Marketing and Events

There were many changes throughout the department during the year. Having only been here for the final third of the year, please excuse my omitting any important events, dates or votes of thanks.

### Events

One of the highlights of the year was the annual gala dinner held in honour of the Chamber's 50<sup>th</sup> year of operation. The dinner, held in SKYCITY's Grand Ballroom was attended by 290 guests who were treated to great entertainment from local band Silverback and the Swinging Martinis.

Some of the many other events held throughout the year were; the ACCC Breakfast, the annual Chamber Golf Day, Cyclone Briefing lunch, Government Procurement breakfast, the annual Budget Briefing and the successful Central Australian Expo held in late February in Alice Springs.

The third NT Money Expo was held in May 2008 with disappointing results. With numbers declining annually, the very low numbers of people through the door have resulted in the Chamber re-examining the financial viability of expo events. The Chamber cannot continue to run such events at significant financial loss and is looking at strategies to be involved in expos in a more financially sound manner in the future.

The Business at Sunset series continues to be one of the Chamber's flagship event concepts with numbers of attendees averaging around the 150 mark. Highlights for this year included launching the new Darwin Convention Centre and a packed house at the Telstra Country Wide event held in April. The 2009 series is already booked out until September.

### Staffing

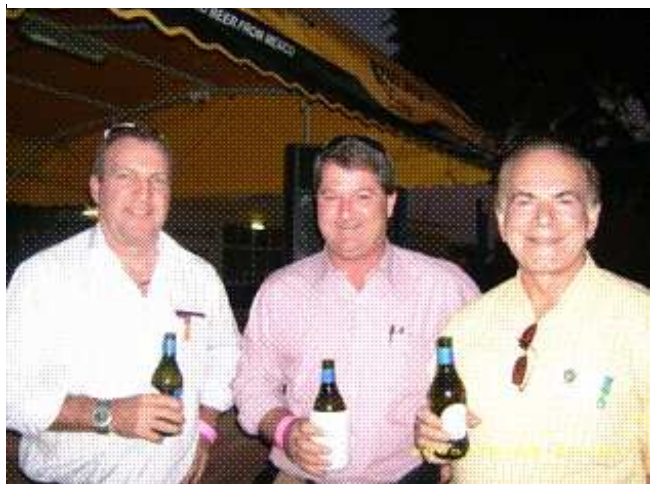
With the departure of Kim Williams and Kylie Salisbury, the end of FYE 08 saw a new team settle into the department. With membership being placed within the marketing and events department, the Chamber welcomed Membership Liaison Officer Cindy Johnstone in early 2008. With a background in human resources and a previous role as Executive Officer, Cindy has settled in to her new position and has been with the Chamber for almost twelve months.

Helena Bott joined the team as Events & Marketing Coordinator in May. Helena's previous role was as Resource Management Planner with Price Waterhouse Coopers in Brisbane and her step into event management has proved to be very appropriate and utilising a natural skill set.

## Marketing and Events cont...



2008 Golf Day



2008 Export Awards Launch

### Membership

Late in the year saw the development of the Chamber Customer Relationship Management program. The aim of the program is to ensure all Chamber staff are proactive in engaging with members therefore making sure we are abreast of members' issues and implementing a higher rate of contact with our valued stakeholders. Traditionally this has been left to only the Membership Liaison Officer.

Raising the profile of Chamber products and services is key in retaining current members and securing new memberships. It is important we not only promote services to potential new members but also remind members why they are with us and what opportunities there are with being an associate of the Chamber.

### Marketing

An exciting development late in the year was securing the support to produce the Chamber's first ever television commercial. Shot in Darwin, Katherine, Alice Springs and Nhulunbuy, the commercial is a true reflection of the Territory wide nature of the Chamber of Commerce.

During the shoot, we were also able to utilise the skills of a still photographer in capturing the same imagery which will roll out through Chamber marketing and promotional collateral over the next twelve months. Many thanks to Ian Redfern and Monica Napper for their patience and expertise during the shoot.

### Thank you

The Chamber has many long-time and loyal members without whom, many of our events and activities would not be possible. Sincere thanks to the following for your high level of support during the 2007/2008 financial year:

Insurance Advisernet Australia, Southern Cross Television, Australian Financial Advisers, Merit Partners, SKYCITY Darwin, 104.1 Territory FM, Colemans Printing, Optus and Mix 104.9.

### The Future

FYE 09 is set to be a very busy year for the department. With the implementation of the now formulated marketing plan, goals are clear and there is much to be done. The major aim will be to raise the profile of the Chamber of Commerce Northern Territory, and create increased awareness of its products and services therefore increasing revenue utilising current resources.

We will also focus on creating the best possible product and delivering a strong and viable Chamber of Commerce Northern Territory.

*Tianee Dohnt, Marketing and Events Manager*

The Top End Region Committee (*TERC*) has been, as always, working towards participating in and assisting discussion about the issues that affect and impact on local companies' ability to do business productively in the community.

Over the year TERC nominated members to champion key issues as identified by the Board. Progress is detailed below.

### Hot issues raised in the last year include:

- Sustainability
- Land Availability
- Tobacco Control Act
- Revitalising Darwin's (Great) CBD
- Government Procurement
- Youth Engagement

### Sustainability

*Champion - Peter Saunders*

### Background

Much is being made in the media and through various organisations, including community organisations about actions that can be taken by homeowners to improve their environmental sustainability. These include tips on reducing water and energy consumption, waste management, recycling and so on. However, the picture has been less clear for businesses and in 2007 the Top End Region Executive Committee identified an opportunity to raise environmental awareness of Top End businesses and provide information to help them improve their sustainability.

### Actions

The committee prepared a short series of brief articles for the Chamber's electronic newspaper, "Round Up" aimed at Top End businesses in order to:

- Explain what is meant by environmental sustainability and its relevance to Top End businesses,
- Provide practical tips to help businesses reduce their environmental footprints, and most importantly,
- explain how improving environmental sustainability can also improve a company's bottom line; for example by reducing power and water bills and consumption of resources such as inputs to production and office stationery.

**Proposed actions**

Awareness concerning areas of sustainability and climate change has increased. During 2008, the Chamber has supported the “Lean and Green Small Business Sustainability Training” course being offered by the Australian Institute of Management and AusIndustry. Most recently the Chamber’s roundup newsletter advertised the “Retooling for Climate Change” grants available from the Federal Government Clean Business Program and an offer to members in the construction and hospitality industries to take part in a free consultation on Waste Minimisation in their workplace.

It is proposed that the Committee continue to talk to members and monitor developments in the areas of sustainability and climate change and review what role it should adopt in the next 12 months.

**Land availability project**

*Champion - Peter Saunders*

**Background**

Early in 2008 it became apparent that the lack of affordable accommodation for employees and potential employees was emerging as one of the key constraints on businesses in the Top End. There appear to be a number of reasons for this including the time taken to release land for housing and the related issues of planning for development and provision of infrastructure headworks.

**Actions**

In order to raise awareness of this issue, TERC decided to organise a panel discussion/presentation at its 2008 Annual General Meeting and adopted land availability and planning as the theme.

**Proposed actions**

It is proposed that the outcome of the AGM panel discussion will be presented to Government and depending on the outcomes TERC will continue to monitor developments in this area, which has become even more important with the advent of the Inpex Project.

**NT Government smoking legislation**

*Champion - Jan Saunders*

The Top End Region Executive Committee recognised that the Territory was at least 10 years behind other Australian jurisdictions in the implementation of smoke-free legislation and supported the Good Health Alliance in its push for smoke-free workplaces. The NT Tobacco Control Act 2002 was introduced on 1 January 2003 and was due for review in January 2004. This did not occur nor did public consultation occur as previously promised. TERC kept a watching brief on this issue due to occupational health and safety implications for workers in pubs and clubs.

On July 18, 2008 Dr. Chris Burns, the Minister for Racing, Gaming and Licensing, announced the banning of smoking in pubs and clubs effective from 2 January 2010. This will give pubs and clubs some lead up time in which to implement measures to become smoke-free. Other measures to be introduced include a \$200 tobacco retailers’ fee and a ban on the display and promotion of tobacco products at point of sale.

**Revitalising Darwin’s (greater) CBD**

*Champion - Adam Gordon*

Due to the change in ministries after the election this seems to have dropped off the Government’s radar completely. There appears to be some interest from the Darwin City Council (DCC) but without NTG this won’t go far. Our job is to keep it on the agenda.

**Government procurement**

*Champion - Adam Gordon*

This is an area of continued interest and one in which the Chamber can assist its members, particularly smaller businesses. Given the response in 2007, it was decided to organise a follow-up seminar in May. Nearly 40 people attended a breakfast seminar at Palm City Resort on 30th May. TERC organised a team of expert speakers from the private sector and Government to explore the vagaries of Value for Money in Government procurement. TERC has been looking at how local businesses can improve their response to Government procurement requests for some time. An initial seminar on this issue was held in July 2007.

### Youth Engagement

*Champion - Letchimi Balasubramaniam*

During the year TERC held a meeting at the Red Cross youth facility, The Shak. During the meeting the committee was updated as to the opportunities and limitations of the service and what the young people do during their time there, as well as some insight into the problems that some of the kids are faced with.

During the meeting TERC offered their services as mentors to The Shak's Youth committee known as the SWAT group to help them think big when it comes to creating strategies to fundraise for The Shak.

The Chairman undertook to keep the TERC briefed on opportunities to add value to this important group of Territorians.

### Conclusion:

The TERC has continued to contribute to the Chamber's activities and will ensure work remains relevant by gathering feedback from members and remaining appraised of key events and opportunities within our region. As always we encourage feedback from members and offer our service to you where we can be of aid.

*Letchimi Balasubramaniam*

*Top End Region Executive Committee Chair*

## East Arnhem Region

Well, what a year it's been! We had a number of major issues facing us including the federal intervention, both Federal and Northern Territory elections and the continuing areas of concern for the region i.e. lack of housing, retaining a skilled workforce, freight and transportation costs, fuel costs, all of which hamper the bottom line of all our businesses. While at the same time it could be said that thankfully we are better off than others in the country with a stable mining company and a good economic outlook for the region.

Other arising issues from members and the community include:

- The implementation of the new shire and an increase in essential services personnel is taking an obvious toll on the already overstretched housing market and therefore decreasing housing availability

for smaller businesses to employ and retain skilled/unskilled staff.

- The uncertainty of the change in ownership of the mine operation and the town.
- Home trading continues to be a major concern to members and a full briefing of the practice and its regulation has been requested by the Executive Committee from Rio Tinto Alcan representatives.
- Retail trading in the Industrial Estate is a recent issue of concern with questions of breaching the lease terms. Would this in turn lead to a breach in the overall lease for the Industrial Estate and subsequently put all leases in jeopardy?

We have recruited a new Executive Officer, Stacey Hart (her mother was a past regional manager and the back bone of this regional chamber branch). Stacey replaced Justine Webber who left for a job at Rio Tinto. Justine put a good effort into her role but felt she needed a change. The position has been reduced to part time.

Future issues and projects:

- 2009/10 business directory will be started in October with printing in December for distribution in January 2009.
- Business of the Year Awards. It seems that the impetus on this was lost for various reasons. I believe it would be good for business as it would inject pride back into the business community; it has worked for us in the past and works throughout regional Australia now. I hope the new committee gives it some consideration.

In regard to future directions we as a Chamber must have strong views on issues and we must be able to communicate these strong views whenever required. What has been lacking over the past years is our regional profile. We need to amend this.

The Committee needs to voice its concerns over aspects of all members' problems, land, staff, stamp duty, fuel, freight, training and the overall high cost of doing business in this region.

In closing let me say, now is the time to reflect on membership issues and how we can maximise our membership by providing quality service to members whilst increasing our membership base.

*David Suter*

*East Arnhem Region Executive Committee Chair*

**Katherine Region**

2008 has again been a busy year for the Katherine Office and Katherine Executive Committee. The committee and staff have been outstanding in their commitment to the Katherine business and the whole community and especially to our members. We have seen the election of the new member for Katherine Mr Willem Westra van Hothe and the Mayor Mrs Anne Shepherd was re-elected early this year. We continue to work closely with all levels of Government for the best outcomes for Katherine

The Federal intervention into Aboriginal communities has been received with mixed opinions. However there is no doubt it has brought an economic boost for the whole of the Katherine region, along with the establishment of the two new super shires based in Katherine, Victoria River Daly Shire and Roper Gulf Shire.

Many of the Chamber staff from the Darwin office have travelled to the Katherine region over the past 12 months:

*Katrina Halse*, Workplace Relations Advisor – two visits to work with members on their specific issues and to conduct educational forums for members.

*Michael Maloney*, Workplace Relations Manager – two visits, one being for an extended stay to assist a member and also for arranged meetings with senior staff of the two new shires.

*Roger Pocock*, Regional Industry Careers Adviser travelled to Katherine on a number of occasions this year.

*Steve Saint*, Training Manager delivered training in the Katherine office.

*Chris Young*, CEO on two occasions to attend functions and meet with members

*George Rousoss*, President of the Board of Directors to attend functions and meet with members.

We thank all the Chamber staff for their assistance and look forward to seeing them in our region over the next 12 months.

**Katherine Staffing**

Executive Officer Marilyn McPherson

Administration Assistant:

Sally Courtney July07-Jan08

Tracey Reinke Mar08-Jun08

Currently vacant

**Executive Committee**

At the recent Katherine Annual General Meeting all members of the 2007/2008 committee remain for 2008/2009 with some valuable additions to the committee. We welcomed Wayne Nayda from LJ Hooker, Dennis Rebbeck OAMPS Insurance Brokers and Brian Heim from Charles Darwin University.

**Katherine Region Cont'd**

The Executive Committee over the past 12 months continued focus on five Territory wide issues:

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

Other Issues facing Katherine:

- Income Management (new debit card now in use)
- Outback stores
- Fuel cost for business
- Aero medical service still not flying out of Katherine
- New shires
- Closure of GBS Gold
- (effect unknown at this stage)

The Chamber has been represented in the following forums/committees over the past 12 months

Katherine Economic Development Committee - Kevin Grey

Alcohol Reference Group-Marilyn McPherson

Katherine water advisory committee- Peter Sinott

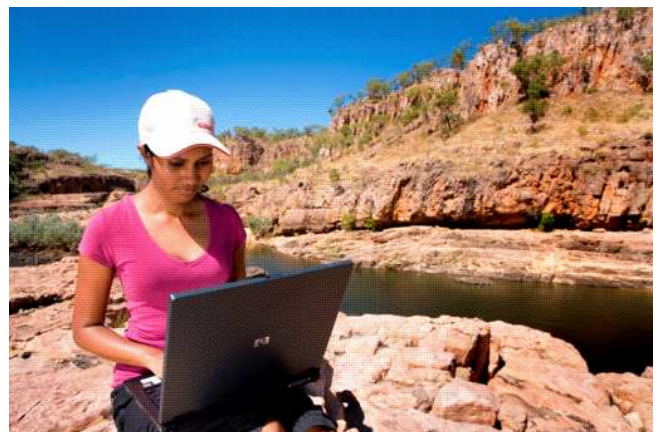
KTC tourism committee- Werner Sarny

KTC climate committee- Petrena Ariston

Main street committee-Marilyn McPherson & Werner Sarny

Rivers Region Youth Development Services Inc.- Marilyn McPherson board member

Monthly meetings with Mayor, Chief Minister's office, CCNT-Marilyn McPherson and Kevin Grey



### Events

Over the past 12 months the Katherine office has greatly increased the number of events conducted for members. Below is the list of events successfully held for the year:

- 3 Business at Sunsets
- Inaugural Golf Day October 2007 - 8 Teams
- Income Management session -Centrelink
- 2 Joint venture RRYDS/Chamber Industry breakfasts
- Careers Expo
- Christmas in Katherine 2007
- Christmas member drinks 2007

Membership has increased approximately 10% in the past 12 months. Enquiries continue.

### Training

- Tourism is Everyone's Business Training - 68 participants
- Two workplace relations training sessions
- Pre-vocational Vet in Schools Certificate 1 in Retail

### Katherine Business and Community Directory

The Katherine Business and Community Directory consumes the Katherine office for 2-3 months each year. The 2008 Directory was distributed in February this year and was received well by the community. An additional 500 copies were printed which brought the distribution total to 7000 copies. The Directory also attracted additional listings totalling over 500. The success of the Directory has enabled some administration assistance in the office and additional events for our members.

In closing the Katherine team has been actively meeting with new business within the town and opening discussions for local purchasing. Boeing Australia, Roper Gulf Shire, Victoria River Daly, Australian Peanut Company and the various mining companies are some of these. This has been a positive experience for the Chamber and we have been well received.

*Kevin Grey*

*Katherine Region Committee Chair*

It has been an interesting year in Central Australia – both within the Chamber and more broadly in the region.

The Central Australian office, located in Alice Springs, has seen many changes. After 11 years as Manager, Beth Mildred resigned from her role in March 2008. Beth and her husband have decided to retire and re-locate to regional Victoria to be closer to family. The Executive Committee thanks Beth for her contribution to the Chamber and the business community in Central Australian over her long tenure with the organisation.

The new Executive Officer, Diana MacMullin, commenced in the position in April 2008, relocating to Alice Springs from South Australia. In the past six months Diana has been working hard to become familiar with the region and her new role. She has also had to recruit and develop a new team, in light of the previous staff resigning about the same time as Beth. Recruitment can be difficult in Alice Springs and the Membership Officer role is yet to be filled. Currently working with Diana are Cathy Clemow in the Regional Industry Careers Advice role and Julie Lechleitner as Administration Officer.

Despite the staffing changes and challenges, the Chamber continued to provide a range of services to its members last year.

In October 2007, Beth and her team held a very successful Golf Day and in March 2008, the Central Australian Expo was staged, attracting approximately 6000 visitors over the two days.

Other Chamber events over the year have included regular Business at Sunset functions and several special functions to provide information on topics of interest including a cocktail Budget Briefing, a Uranium Breakfast Briefing and a sunset Mining Information Evening in Tennant Creek. Just prior to the NT Government election in 2008, the Chamber organised, in partnership with NT Council of Social Service and NT Shelter, the well-received Pre-election Forum which featured most of the candidates for Alice Springs electorates facing questions posed by members and other stakeholders. The evening's proceedings were moderated by Stewart Brash from 783 ABC Radio.

Several information seminars and forums were also hosted by the Chamber's Workplace Relations division (on changes to Work Choices and the introduction of Forward with Fairness) and the International Business Council (on the Export Awards and export opportunities in NT), as well as by external agencies on significant issues for members such as the Centrelink seminars on the introduction of Income Management and forums by the NT Anti-Discrimination Commission following an incident in the accommodation sector.

Central Australian Region cont...

Training services continued to be delivered out of the Darwin office, including traineeships in Retail and Business by distance delivery and Certificates IV in Training and Assessment and Front Line Management, supported with workshops and training sessions conducted in Alice Springs.



The Chamber continues to work with networks and agencies in the region, representing members on several prominent committees and taskforces. In particular, it continues with its role as consortium member in the Alice Solar City project; and hopes to play an active role in the Desert Knowledge Australia's Cross Border Business Networks project, which was recently successful in attracting the necessary federal funding to complement the significant cash and in-kind contributions of the many corporate bodies, government agencies and other organisations involved. It is expected that this exciting project will mean two new staff members, one of whom will be located in Tennant Creek.

More broadly, the past year has seen many issues arise that have had a significant effect on the region, not least of which has been the federal government's Intervention. The resultant influx into Alice Springs of people involved has put an almost unbearable pressure on the already difficult accommodation situation, with housing shortages now in a critical state.

The Intervention has also seen big changes in the management of alcohol in Central Australia which have resulted in a dramatic decrease in alcohol purchases. This has had an effect on social order issues; together with the introduction of the CCTV cameras in Todd Mall, increased numbers of police in the region and the re-introduction of mounted police, there has been a noted improvement. The Chamber was active in its involvements to introduce many of these local measures.

In May 2008, the NT Government held a full day Planning Forum in Alice Springs which resulted in over 100 participants coming together and working hard to discuss and submit a range of responses to planning issues such as land release and the CBD revitalisation projects. The Chamber eagerly awaits the final report which has yet to be released by the Government.

Central Australian Region cont...

The recent NT election and subsequent changes to Government have heralded interesting changes in Central Australia – most notably a renewed focus on the region with the projected re-location of the Department for Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources to Alice Springs and the appointment of two local MLA, Alison Anderson and Karl Hampton, as Ministers – holding responsibility for Central Australia and Regional Development respectively, along with several other areas of responsibility within their portfolios.

Looking ahead – accommodation and workforce shortages continue to be pressing issues, potential opportunities are arising resulting from mining and possible construction activities, and tourism remains an important area of economic activity.

After spending seven years on the Executive Committee, most of those as Chairman, this is my last in that role. I have enjoyed my time with the Chamber and the interaction it has allowed me to have with all the many groups the Chamber has connections with including government, council, tourism, desert knowledge, solar cities.

Now I have reached retirement age, going forward it is time for younger blood and new ideas to chair the Chamber forward. In leaving I guess I am disappointed at having not achieved a couple of my objectives in my time as Chairman, but hopefully my successors are able to achieve those goals and many more.

*Terry Lillis*  
*Central Australian Region Committee, Chair*



**Chamber of  
 Commerce**  
 NORTHERN TERRITORY

With the resignation of Ben Campbell, I took over the position of Chairman. I'd like to thank him for his service over the past 18 months. We also started the year with Beth Mildred as the Manager of the Alice Springs office. Beth has now retired and Diana MacMullin has taken on the role of Executive Officer.

Over the year we've been meeting every 6 – 8 weeks and at times the local members have been outnumbered by guests and staff, so it's encouraging to see that we have many nominations for the committee in 2008-09.

Over the past year, despite the small numbers on our committee, the Chamber has been active in providing a voice for the concerns of local business and the region.

We continue to be represented on both the Alcohol Management Plan and the Economic Development Committee; and I was present at the NT Treasurer's annual budget presentation. Through Wayne Green,

we were part of the submission for a new prison (and thanks to Steve Baldwin for pushing this through). We (amongst a few locals) lobbied the Electoral Commission about the proposed redistribution of Barkly becoming Buchanan.

As a longer term prospect, we have been looking at possibilities for an annual event for Tennant Creek.

In September, we were asked to attend the Mt Isa to Tennant Creek rail link forum. With some very good phosphate deposits being discovered in the Barkly region and the NT Government giving special status to the development of a \$50 million freight depot in Tennant Creek, it looks like this link becomes more viable.

At the recent AGM, a real sense of resurgence was apparent and we look forward to the coming year.

*Greg Marlow*  
*Barkly Region Executive Committee Chair*



***Wherever you do business... Whenever you do business...***

***Do it with us.***