

Canberra Region Tourism Leaders Forum Chair's Report: 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023

The **Canberra Region Tourism Leaders Forum** (Leaders Forum) is the Canberra Region's peak tourism body. Our Advisory Board comprises the heads of associations and organisations representing the tourism and wider industry sectors in the ACT and Canberra Region, all focussed on facilitating the growth of the visitor economy and working with Government on policy development and providing expert advice on matters that directly impact our industry sectors.

Our 2022-2023 Board Membership.

Member	Position
Ritchie Allan	Representing the Traditional Owners
Dot Barclay	President SKAL ACT & Proprietor Forrest Hotel & Apartments
Sally Barnes	CEO National Capital Authority
Vanessa Brettell	Proprietor Café Stepping Up representing Social Enterprises
James Hawketts	General Manager Australian Hotels Association ACT
Graham Catt	CEO Canberra Business Chamber
Rachael Coghlan	Assist Sec Parliamentary Engagement Parliament House
Richard Everson	General Manager Destination Southern NSW
Russell Jackson	President National Capital Attractions Association
Jonathan Kobus	Director Visit Canberra
Noel Langdon	Tourism Australia Cultural Signature Series and Sec. CRTLF
David Marshall	Chair Canberra Region Tourism Leaders Forum
Michael Matthews	CEO Canberra Convention Bureau
Gordon Ramsay	CEO Cultural Facilities Corporation
Dash Rumble	Owner Pilot Restaurant representing the restaurant/cafe sector
Katie Russell	CEO Australian Museum and Galleries Association
Emma Shaw	Piquenique Wine representing Canberra District Wine Industry
Gary Stewart	General Manager The Canberra Centre
Rob Stefanic	Secretary Parliamentary Services Parliament House/NCETP
Michael Thomson	Head of Aviation Canberra Airport
Olivia Thornton	CEO Cricket ACT representing sporting associations
Marg Wade	Head Canberra Tour Operators Alliance & ATEC Chair
Brian Weir	Lecturer, UC Tourism Program, representing education sector
Stephen Wood	General Manager National Convention Centre Canberra

The Leaders Forum met at the National Convention Centre Canberra. These Forums attracted up to 250 of Canberra and the Region's most senior business leaders, tourism and hospitality executives and heads of both ACT and national associations. Speakers were all high-level ACT and National leaders from a range industry sectors.

Canberra Region Tourism Advisory Forum and Leaders Forum dates 2022-2023

2022

- Friday 1 July
- Friday 5 August
- Friday 2 September
- Tuesday 11 October
- Tuesday 1 November
- Monday 5 December

2023

- Friday 3 February
- Tuesday 9 March
- Thursday 6 April
- Monday 5 May
- Thursday 1 June

Once again, this year a number of executives from the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate attended our Tourism Leaders Forum Board meetings. These meetings directly follow our Tourism Advisory Forums each month. ACT Government executives included Kareena Arthy, Deputy Director-General, along with Kate Starick, Executive Group Manager, Economic Development Division, Daniel Bailey, Executive Group Manager, Operations, Economic Development, Karen Stewart-Moore Executive Branch Manager, Communications & Engagement and Daniel Riley, Senior Director, Strategic Policy, Economic Development.

This liaison with the most senior ACT Government personnel is greatly appreciated and added significantly to the Board's deliberations.

Canberra Region Tourism Advisory Forum Guest Speakers July 2022 to June 2023

- Andrew Barr MLA: ACT Chief Minister and Minister for Tourism
- Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher: Senator for the ACT
- Hon Kristy McBain MP: Federal Member for Eden-Monaro and Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories
- Senator David Pocock: Independent Senator for the ACT
- Hon Alicia Payne MP: Federal Member for Canberra
- Tara Cheyne MLA: ACT Minister for the Arts, Business and Better Regulation
- Mr Anil Kumar Nayar: His Excellency the Singaporean High Commissioner
- John Hart OAM: Executive Chair Australian Chamber – Tourism and Board Member Tourism Australia
- Phillipa Harrison: Managing Director Tourism Australia
- Leonard Hill: Deputy CEO AIATSIS
- Sally Barnes: CEO National Capital Authority
- Jonathan Kobus: Director Visit Canberra
- Kieren Perkins OAM: CEO Australian Sports Commission
- Malcolm Snow: Chief Executive City Renewal Authority
- Michael Thomson: Head of Aviation Canberra Airport
- Rob Stefanic: Secretary Parliamentary Services Parliament House
- James Goodwin: CEO Australian Airports Association
- Michael Rodrigues: NSW 24-Hour Economy Commissioner
- Neil Gaughan: ACT Chief Police Officer
- Ashley Cahif: Major Projects Canberra
- Geoffrey Davidson: Transport Canberra and City Services
- Tim Rampton: Roads ACT
- Sam Palmer: GM Austrade's Visitor Economy and Client Programs Division
- Jo White: Director Questacon
- Bree Pickering: Director National Portrait Gallery
- Richard Beere: Chair Destination Southern New South Wales
- Craig Wagstaff: General Manager amplifyCBR
- Sarah Collingwood: Owner and Business Manager Four Winds Vineyard
- Brodie Fleming: Director Brand Canberra
- Ivan Slavich: CEO Capital Football

Appreciation is extended to the General Manager of the National Convention Centre Stephen Wood and his team, including Encore, for hosting these meetings. I would also sincerely thank Visit Canberra and Jonathan Kobus for sponsoring these very important Advisory Forums.

Tourism Advisory Forum Supporting Partners

In addition to Visit Canberra, the NCCC and Encore, I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to our Supporting Partners who make a significant contribution to the success of the Advisory Forums and the important work undertaken by the Leaders Forum Board.

- The University of Canberra
- Enterprise Rent-a-Car
- The Canberra Centre
- Parbery Consulting
- MIXFM
- The Canberra Business Chamber
- SPA Accounting

In June we also welcomed Department of Parliamentary Services, Gow-Gates and Hostplus as new Supporting Partners for the next 12 months.

Issues Addressed by the Leaders Forum: July 2022-June 2023

ACT Government related matters

ACT MLA Meetings

- Leaders Forum members met with ACT Chief Minister's staff throughout the year on matters impacting on the tourism and hospitality sectors the Leaders Forum represents
- On an ongoing basis, the Chair briefed members of the ACT Labor Government, Greens and ACT Liberals on the Leaders Forum activities, policy development and related matters impacting our industry sectors
- Many Leaders Forum Board members also met with ACT MLA's representing their respective memberships.

Economic Development

2030 Tourism Strategy

- On 2 September 2022 the Leaders Forum submitted a comprehensive submission in response to calls to comment on the ACT Government's 2030 Tourism Strategy Discussion Paper.
- The Leaders Forum was represented at the industry consultation session on the Strategy at the National Gallery on Wednesday 26 October.
- The final 2030 Tourism Strategy was launched by the Chief Minister at the Monday 4 December Tourism Advisory Forum.

2023-2024 ACT Budget

- The Leaders Forum prepared a comprehensive submission to the ACT Government budget. Some Forum Board members met with ACT Treasury officials as part of their consultation process on 6 March, and met with the Under Treasurer in March to outline the issues facing the tourism and hospitality sectors.
- On 28 June 2023 Members of the Leaders Forum Board attended the Canberra Business Chamber's post budget lunch with Chief Minister Andrew Barr.

Commissioner for International Engagement

- International Engagement Commissioner Brendan Smyth addressed the Leaders Forum Board on trade missions to Singapore and New Zealand. Brendan expressed his thanks for the support shown by the Leaders Forum in planning to attend the Wellington tourism and trade mission in early December. This visit was unfortunately postponed as HMAS Canberra was no longer able to be docked in the city over that period. It expected to be rescheduled for late 2023.

International and Domestic Flights

- Director of Aviation at the Canberra Airport Michael Thomson, a Leaders Forum Board member, kept the Board apprised of the negotiations with airline carriers during the year. He advised passenger numbers were boosted by Jetstar commencing a Canberra-Melbourne service on 1 July 2022. Singapore Airlines are keen to resume flights to Canberra but are cautious about timing, and Qatar is to potentially resume their services to Canberra via Melbourne but there is no assurance this will occur.
- The Chair had discussions with Qatar Sales Executive Zeid Al-Basheer OMRI on the potential return of Qatar Flights to the ACT.
- Fiji Airways have announced direct flights would commence in July 2023.

The ACT Workforce Attraction Strategy

- In July 2022 a number of the Leaders Forum board members were participants in the Federal Government's 'Local Jobs and Skills Program'. The Canberra Region was one of the 51 employment regions across Australia to establish a 'Capital Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce', driven by facilitator Janine Linklater. The aim was to develop employment solutions at a local level, and support Australians back into work.

The ACT Workforce Attraction Strategy (cont.)

- On 20 July Kareena Arthy convened a group of industry heads, including the Leaders Forum, to discuss ideas for an *ACT Workforce Attraction* campaign initiative.
- This Stakeholder Group met regularly to also discuss investment attraction and developing the ACT business ecosystem. The Leaders Forum prepared a document reflecting on the successful 'Live in Canberra' campaign in the 1990's for consideration.
- The University of Canberra was commissioned to undertake research into the specific needs of ACT business. The Leaders Forum was part of this ongoing consultation process.
- The ACT Government's 'Skilled to Succeed' discussion paper was tabled at the Leaders Forum on 1 November and Board members had the opportunity to have input into this important document. The Economic Development Directorate updated the Board on 'what they heard' at the 9 December Leaders Forum and provided monthly updates thereafter.
- In May 2023 the ACT Government's Business Partnership Plan was outlined to the Board with calls for businesses to reach out to be involved in a partnership arrangement.

Business and Economic Development Consultative Forum

- The ACT Economic Development Directorate established a 'Consultative Forum' that first met on 28 February as the Government commenced work on developing a 'small business strategy/agenda'. The Leaders Forum is part of this group that met again on 15 June to review the ACT Small Business Strategy, the Night Time Economy Strategy and the Workforce Attraction Strategy.

ACT Arts Forum

- On 6 December representatives of cultural, arts and tourism bodies gathered together for a round table discussion, focused on how they could collaborate more effectively and enhance the visitor experience to their respective galleries and facilities.
- The meeting was coordinated by CMAG and supported by the Leaders Forum, Visit Canberra and the Childers Group. Liaison also took place with Canberra's National Cultural Institutions on the opportunities of cross promotions and cross programming, including leveraging national blockbusters with local exhibitions.

ACT Sport

- The Board was briefed on Economic Impact of Community Sports by Olivia Thornton, who is a Leaders Forum member, CEO of Cricket ACT and serves on the Coalition of Major Participation Sports (COMPS). There was discussion about potential missed opportunities to connect people attending these events to the ACT's major attractions.
- The issue of the lack of sporting facilities across the Territory was explored, and upgrades to changeroom facilities to many are required to accommodate female participation.

Review of Floriade and Enlighten Festival

- During October 2022 Events ACT engaged a consultant to conduct individual interviews and workshops with key industry players seeking views on the running for the 2023 to 2028 Floriade event. A number of Forum Board members attended these sessions.
- A similar exercise was undertaken to review the Enlighten Festival in March.

ACT Inclusion Survey Discussions

- On 29 August a survey discussion with RD-Consulting was conducted with Leaders Forum Board members on assisting the Inclusion Council and the ACT Government to create a more economically and socially inclusive community.

Planning Matters

ACT Territory Plan Review

- Leaders Forum Board member Noel Langdon has attended the consultation meetings initiated by the ACT Planning Directorate for the past two years. In June laws were passed to overhaul the way developments are approved in Canberra.

City Renewal Authority

- The Chair met on an ongoing basis with the CEO of the City Renewal Authority on their Precinct Renewal Programs.

CRA Garma Place Redesign and the ACT Government's Draft City Plan

- The Leaders Forum provided feedback to the ACT Government's Draft City Plan in February 2023 and submitted a response to the future development of the City Centre on 10 March 2023.
- The Leaders Forum participated in the consultation process on the redevelopment of Garema Place. The Forum also worked with restaurant owners experiencing difficulties dealing with ACT Directorates over regulatory requirements.
- The Leaders Forum submitted a detailed response to the City Renewal Authority's (CRA) design plans in May 2023. The Forum highlighted the antisocial issues on display in the city centre and the importance of upgrading this rundown precinct in the heart of the National Capital.

Tuggeranong Homestead

- The Leaders Forum met with ACT Government Minister's, the ACT Property Group and the lessees of the Tuggeranong Homestead relating to the fear ACT Planning could approve a housing development encroaching on land adjoining this heritage-listed precinct.

University of Canberra Course Advisory Group Meeting

- The faculty of Business, Government & Law at UC formed an Advisory Group to assist in the University's review of their Bachelor of Event and Tourism Management Program. The Group consists of a number of Leaders Forum members and is anchored by Associate Professor Dr Tracey Dickson, Program Director, Event and Tourism Management, and Dr Naomi Dale Associate Professor of Management and Program Director for the Bachelor of Business and the Bachelor of Event and Tourism Management. The Advisory Group met again on 13 December.

Regulatory Reform Taskforce

Better Regulation Agenda

- Sam Engele, Coordinator-General for Climate Action and Head of the Better Regulation Taskforce regularly provided the Leaders Forum with updates on the implementation of the ACT Government's Better Regulation Agenda.
- The Better Regulation Taskforce announced a review of the regulations around short-term rental accommodation, such as AirBnB and Stayz.
- The Leaders Forum coordinated industry member briefings with Sam Engele on issue they have experienced in doing business in Canberra.

- **Better Regulation Agenda (cont.)**

- Issues explored included the frustration with Directorates delays in issuing licences, slow response to queries, confusing regulations, Directorates working in silos, obstructive regulators, and their lack of understanding of business operations.
- The Better Regulation Taskforce were excellent in their response to these issues.

The night time economy progress.

- At the end of June 2022 fifteen live music and performance venues across Canberra benefited from a second round of the ACT Government's 'Amp It Up!' funding to support small to medium sized live venues to recover after the impacts of COVID-19. They were able to offset some of the costs associated with performance programming and promotion.
- Michael Rodrigues the NSW 24-Hour Economy Commissioner addressed the Tourism Advisory Forum in October to outline the success Sydney has achieved in stimulating the night-time economy in the city.

ACT Music Events and Music Festivals

- Members of this industry sector launched a campaign to raise awareness of encroaching residential development close to EPIC and Stage 88. Their concern related to potential noise complaints from residents. The Leaders Forum members raised this issue with the ACT Government.

The Future of ACT Music and the night time scene

- ACT Arts Minister Cheyne opened a '*State of the Territory: shaping the future of ACT Music and the night time economy scene*' on 4 June 2023. Tourism Leaders Forum Board members attended to hear the discussions on the state of today's ACT music industry, its planning challenges, and the vast opportunities of building Canberra's night-time economy.

City Services

Raising of London Circuit

- On 5 August executives from Transport Canberra and Major Projects Canberra addressed the Leaders Forum on the raising of London Circuit. They also addressed the Tourism Advisory Forum on Tuesday 1 November, outlining the impacts on traffic and parking for the next two years from early 2023 in and around Commonwealth Ave Bridge and London Circuit.

The Look of the City and Territory

- In early February 2023 members of the Leaders Forum Board met with executives from Transport Canberra and City Services to express serious concern over the general deteriorating look of the ACT and the city centre. Issues outlined included:
 - the proliferation of rubbish accumulating on the sides of Canberra approach roads and main thoroughfares across the Territory,
 - the multitude of directional and wayfinding signs fading and peeling, some graffitied and many requiring replacement.
 - the growth of weeds along roadway verges and gutters.
 - the significant increase in graffiti across all suburbs of Canberra.
 - The TCCS executives agreed there was a problem and resources and financial impediments were to blame. The Chair also wrote to Minister Steel to express our dismay at the overall look of the Territory. The Minister wrote to the Chair on 31 March acknowledging the issues and outlined the Directorate's response.
 - The Leaders Forum wrote to the Directorate urging them to review the non-existence of parking places, except Loading Zones and Disabled Parking spots, adjacent to the GPO in Civic, which they addressed.

ACT Policing Crime Related Matters

- On 19 September 2022 the AHA and Leaders Forum brought representatives of the hotel sector together along with the ACT Chief Police Officer and police executives to discuss the series of car break ins since January 2022 (estimated at over 200) at a handful of hotel carparks across the city. A number of initiatives flowed from the discussions.
- Deputy Commissioner Gaughan updated an industry meeting again on 28 March 2023.

ACT Parks and Conservation

- In April 2023 the Leaders Forum raised issues relating to the new 'Nature Based Commercial Tourism Framework' released by ACT Parks and Conservation. Leaders Forum member Marg Wade drove the discussion on this issue on behalf of the 'Tourism Operators Collective' and the Leaders Forum.

The Canberra Region

Destination Southern NSW

- Destination Southern NSW released a new tourism strategy, and discussion took place on how the Leaders Forum could work more closely with their Board and Regional Councils.
- Chair Richard Beere addressed the Tourism Advisory Forum and attended the Leaders Forum Board meeting on Thursday 6 April 2023.
- There was a focussed effort by Board member Brian Weir to examine strategies to forge closer ties between the Leaders Forum and industry leaders in the Canberra Region.
- On 5 May 2023 Jonathan Kobus and the Chair met with Richard Beere, Chair Destination Southern NSW, and the new General Manager Richard Everson.

Strategic Planning for Canberra Region Wineries

- Directors Brian Weir and Emma Shaw commenced work on a strategy to enhance connectivity between the ACT and the region's wine industry.
- A proposal for the wine sector to again employ an 'Executive Officer' is being explored.

Meetings, Functions and Addresses

July-December 2022

- Members of the Leaders Forum Board attended the Canberra-on-Show exhibition at Albert Hall arranged by the Canberra Convention Bureau on Wednesday 27 July 2022.
- Westpac's Head of Public Sector & Institutional Banking – ACT Jason Duarte had his data team briefed Leaders Forum members in July on the bank's analysis of visitor expenditure in the ACT.
- The Chair addressed the executive of the Australian War Memorial on 1 August on the state of the tourism industry and recommendations on enhancing the brand as the construction limiting visitor numbers was impacting on visitor satisfaction.
- In August the Chair and Visit Canberra Director Jonathan Kobus participated in the Australian Electric Vehicle Association Conference and joined a panel session on 'Making EV Friendly Destinations'.
- Leaders Forum Board members attended the Diwali Gala Dinner on 29 October as a guest of the University of Canberra.

January-July 2023

- During the year Leaders Forum members, including Michael Matthews CEO of the Convention Bureau, met with the ACT Property Group and Arts ACT on the availability of venues to host convention dinners and functions under their control.
- Leaders Forum Board members attended the Canberra Business Chamber's Diplomatic Business Connections Gala 2023 dinner on 31 March.
- Members of the Leaders Forum attended the Canberra Region Tourism Awards launch on Thursday 4 May 2023.
- On 31 May Leaders Forum Board members attended a luncheon with the AHA and members of the hotel industry hosted by the Hyatt Hotel.
- Leaders Forum Board members attended the launch of the ACT Government's new '*Unchartered Territory*' winter festival on 5 June 2023.
- Leaders Forum members attended Visit Canberra's 'Destination ACT' Conference on Thursday 22 June.
- Members of the Leaders Forum were attendees at industry functions, launches and openings during the year, but in particular:
 - SKAL monthly industry lunches
 - Mini Tourism Expo meetings at King O'Malley's arranged by Dot Barclay and Marg Wade
 - AHA Awards Dinner
 - Canberra Museum and Gallery Exhibition Openings
 - Craft ACT functions
 - National Attractions exhibition openings
 - Canberra Convention Bureau membership networking nights
 - Canberra Business Chamber Monthly Business after Business functions, Business Roundtables and Kindred Organisation meetings

Tourism Leaders Forum Website: <https://www.tlforum.com.au/>

- During the year Supporting Partner Parbery Consulting greatly enhanced the Forum's website, and in doing so now produces summaries of the monthly Tourism Advisory Forums. This has become a very valuable resource for industry members.
- Parbery also streamlined and simplified the database enabling people to easily subscribe and our 600 members to quickly RSVP to Advisory Forum invitations.
- Parbery also facilitates strategic reviews for organisations and will also do so for the Tourism Leaders Forum.

National Matters: Tourism Leaders Forum Activities

National Attractions

- Meetings were convened throughout the year with some of the National Institution Directors to explore the many issues facing these organisations.

National Attractions and the Cultural Policy 'Revive'

- The policy was released by Federal Arts Minister Tony Burke on 30 January 2023. The policy had little relief for the National attractions who had suffered from continued reduced operational funding for years. On 5 April the Federal Government announced a financial boost to seven of Canberra's National Institutions totalling \$535m.

Realising the National Capital Plan

- A group of businesspeople initiated a study driven by David Lamont to develop a case to build a new sports stadium and convention centre on the Civic pool site.
- A number of Leaders Forum members were invited to attend the ten meetings convened over the October-December period to discuss this proposal, each member representing their own constituency.
- On Thursday 9 December the report was released, calling on the Chief Minister and Prime Minister to 'facilitate much needed renewal of Infrastructure for the Sporting, Entertainment and Convention and Visitors markets in the National Capital'.
- The Leaders Forum agreed not to support any individual proposal recommending a preferred location for a stadium and/or new convention centre, but to back any decision made by the ACT Government on where these facilities should be located. It also requested the Government immediately commence progressing these projects.

National Capital Authority

- The Leaders Forum wrote supporting letters on the commencement of seaplane operations into Canberra. The Chair met with pilots during trial flights of the seaplane operations from 16 to 19 March.
- Meetings were held with the NCA over the past 12 months to canvass a number of matters pertaining to the Parliamentary precinct.

Australian Chamber – Tourism

- The Chair represents the Canberra Business Chamber on the Australian Chamber – Tourism Board chaired by John Hart. The Board met several times over the year. The Leaders Forum participated in the Tourism Workforce Roundtable on 26 August as the Australian Chamber prepared to attend the National Skills Summit the following week.
- The Chamber arranged a meeting with the Federal Tourism Minister following the Federal Budget in October, and the Leaders Forum participated in an online Forum on the budget outcomes on Wednesday 2 November.
- The Chamber met with the Federal Tourism Minister Don Farrell at Parliament House on 21 March.
- On 14 June the Leaders Forum was represented at an Australian Chamber - Tourism meeting and then a forum with Federal Tourism Minister Don Farrell. A dinner hosted by Tourism Australia's Chair followed.

Meetings with Federal Politicians and Government Departments July-December 2022

- The Leaders Forum continued to lobby Federal Minister's and the wider Commonwealth bureaucracy on the financial issues facing the National Institutions in Canberra.
- Leaders Forum Board members attended Prime Minister Albanese's address to the National Press Club marking his 100 days in office on 29 August 2022.
- On 14 November the Leaders Forum met with Austrade's General Manager of Austrade's Visitor Economy and Client Programs Division to discuss a variety of matters.
- On 15 November Leaders Forum board members met with the Hon Alicia Payne MP Member for Canberra to explore a number of matters impacting on the tourism and hospitality sectors.
- On 23 November Leaders Forum members attended a dinner at Parliament House arranged by the NCETP, the NCAA and supported by the Department of Parliamentary Services. Attendees included all National Attraction Directors, the Federal Tourism Minister and ACT Chief Minister. The dinner highlighted the importance of these Institutions to Canberra and the wider Australian community, and the importance of collaboration.

- The Canberra Region Tourism Awards were held on Friday 25 November, attended by a number of Leaders Forum Board members.
- Leaders Forum Board members were also present at the Chief Minister's Christmas Drinks with the Diplomatic community at Hotel Realm on Thursday 8 December.
- The Leaders Forum was represented at the Big Bash League cricket match at Manuka Oval on Tuesday 13 December.

January-June 2023

- Board Members met with the Federal Member for Canberra David Smith in February 2023.
- The Leaders Forum was represented at the National Press Club address of the Federal Arts Minister Tony Burke on 1 February
- The members of the Leaders Forum attended Tourism Australia's Destination Australia Conference in Sydney on Thursday March 16 and the National Tourism Awards dinner run by the Australian Tourism Industry Council on 17 March.
- Members of the Leaders Forum and other business heads met at Parliament House at the invitation of ACT Senator Pocock on 31 March 2023 to discuss the Federal Government's 'City Partnerships' scheme, one which other States have negotiated in the past.
- The Leaders Forum hosted a lunch with Senator David Pocock in late April. Key issues, among others, explored included:
 - Senator Pocock's letter to the Prime Minister and Chief Minister on developing a City Partnership with the Commonwealth
 - Developing a vision of the city
 - The status of discussions on rebuilding a new Canberra Stadium and Convention Centre
 - The upgrade of the AIS Arena
 - Cultural Institutions funding
 - Indigenous 'Ngurru' precinct development and other museums planned for the National Capital
 - The funding of the PACER program for visiting school students
 - Seaplanes landing in Canberra
 - Rail transport options for upgrading the current network
 - Majura Valley tourism potential
 - Inquiry by The Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories

January-June 2023 (cont)

- On 2 May members of the Leaders Forum attended a Canberra Small Business Forum with Federal Minister Julie Collins at Parliament House. This function was chaired by Member for Bean David Smith and Member for Canberra Alicia Payne. Senator Gallagher was in attendance.
- The National Capital Attractions Association arranged a luncheon and briefing with Senator Pocock and Hon David Smith MP on 4 May, as co-chairs of the Parliamentary Friends of the National Capital at Parliament House.
- Board Members attended Federal Tourism Minister Don Farrell's address to the National Press Club on 1 June 2023.

Inquiry by The Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories

- Hon Alicia Payne MP, chair of the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories and Member for Canberra, launched an inquiry on 24 March 2023 on ways to foster and promote the significance of Australia's National Capital. The Leaders Forum developed a detailed response to this inquiry and addressed the key points below:
 - Requirements for the National Institutions to convey a dynamic, representative national story; and
 - Maintaining the currency and vibrancy of Australia's national capital as a source of pride and international recognition; and
 - Raising the profile of Australia's national capital and its symbolic importance in reflecting the character, values and identity of Australia; and
 - Consider the importance of Australia's national capital in highlighting our sporting, cultural and tourism potential; and
 - The needs of existing infrastructure and identifying future infrastructure needs to facilitate a), b), c) and d) above.

Telstra Tower

- Telstra Tower closed to the public in 2021 and a major submission prepared and presented by Leaders Forum member Noel Langdon to Telstra in early 2022 on concepts for the future use of the Tower. Members of the Leaders Forum attended a consultation on the Tower initiated by Telstra in March 2023 and Jonathan Kobus and the Forum are both continuing to seek clarification on Telstra's plans for its reopening.

Leaders Forum Board tours

- Members of the Board attended briefings and onsite tours throughout the year including with executives from the Dairy Road precinct, and on 29 June members were hosted to a behind-the-scenes tour of the National Zoo and Aquarium.

Letters of Support

- The Leaders Forum wrote a letter to support for the establishment of a Diploma of Hospitality initiated by Novotel and Mercure hotels Canberra in collaboration with CIT.
- The Leaders Forum supported the nomination of Mark Sarah to receive the ACT Individual Contribution to Tourism Award.
- The Leaders Forum provided a supporting letter to the NCA on the introduction of seaplanes operations into Canberra.

Media interviews and activities

- Comments on Radio 2CC by Joe Hildebrand's program from 2GB denigrated Canberra on several occasions in late September. The Leaders Forum wrote to 2CC management requesting this barrage of criticism cease.
- Since 1 July 2022, the Chair conducted 60 media interviews on a variety of tourism related issues on Radio 2CC, ABC Radio, MIXFM and 104.7, and articles in the Canberra Times, the Riot ACT, and appearances on ABC and WIN Television news.

Finally

My sincere appreciation to the 24 members of the Canberra Region Tourism Leaders Forum who provide their time freely for the benefit of our industry sectors.

Dr David Marshall AM

Chair Canberra Region Tourism Leaders Forum

30 June 2023