



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **QUEANBEYAN BUSINESS COUNCIL QUARTERLY NETWORK MEETING QUEANBEYAN GOLF CLUB 10 MAY 2005**

The Queanbeyan Business Council appears to be going from strength to strength following a strong turnout for its first Quarterly Network Meeting.

About 90 people filled Queanbeyan Golf Club's dining room to hear about the Business Council's first three months, to learn more about regional tourism and get the latest update regarding the new Defence HQ.

Australian Capital Tourism Corporation's Chief Executive, Mr. Ross MacDiarmid stressed that tourism is a regional issue that is deserving of strong support from all levels of Government. The ACT is working closely with Capital Country and Snowy Mountains tourism organisations which together provide some of the finest tourism product in Australia.

Queanbeyan is an important part of Capital Country and stands to gain considerable tourism revenue as the eastern gateway to the national attractions located in Canberra.

Air Commodore Brian (Jack) Plenty AM, Director General of the Defence HQ Joint Operations Command Project near Bungendore, told the audience that the project was on track for completion and occupation during 2007/2008.

Three private consortia are vying for the construction tender and the recommendation of the successful tenderer would be taken to the Government in early August, with contract negotiations and financial close in September and October 2005 respectively. Each consortium had been asked how they would engage local SMEs in the project.

Not only will the construction cost of \$318 million be a boon to the regional economy, but also an annual \$60 million in additional salaries would have a significant effect.

Air Commodore Plenty noted that the water supply for the facility had been addressed and the balance of the site beyond the built portion would be natural bushland with the objective of bush restoration and enhancement.

Queanbeyan Business Council executive members stressed that the Council was open to all businesses large and small, including sporting, social, environmental and cultural associations. As such it truly represented "The Voice of Queanbeyan".

Whilst noting that the Council had attracted more than \$37,000 in membership fees in the first three months of operations, both President Ian McNamee and Vice President Jeremy Wyatt expressed disappointment at the level of support shown to date by CBD retailers.

“We can help with all manner of issues, however these businesses must expect to play a role”, they said.

In the first three months, the Business Council has had dialogue with Federal, State and ACT government agencies as well as Queanbeyan City Council, ActewAGL and others on a range of matters including water supply, roads, the siting of the State Office Block, the proposed Queanbeyan Cultural Centre, Queanbeyan Master Plan, the proposed Australian Technical College and the proposed Fyshwick bulky goods facility.

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