

The Agenda

JUNE 2026

GEBC
GOSFORD ERINA BUSINESS CHAMBER
growing local business



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Federal Budget a concern for small business



DAVID EVERS

environment for small business.

The proposed taxation of trusts is particularly concerning. Trust structures have long been a legitimate and effective tool for family businesses providing flexibility, succession planning opportunities and protection against business risk. Moving towards an effective tax rate of 30 per cent or more reduces that flexibility and further narrows the options available to business owners navigating uncertain economic conditions.

Equally troubling are changes to Capital Gains Tax concessions. For many small business owners, their business is their retirement plan. Unlike salaried employees, many have spent decades reinvesting profits, taking personal risks and foregoing income to build value in their enterprise. Reducing these concessions means many owners will ultimately retain less of the wealth they have spent a lifetime creating. At the same time, the tax system continues to grow more complicated. Rather than simplifying compliance, each new measure adds layers of administration, cost and uncertainty. Small businesses are increasingly required to seek professional advice simply to understand their obligations, diverting valuable time and

resources away from customers, staff and growth.

These changes come at a difficult time. Businesses continue to grapple with elevated interest rates, rising wages, increasing insurance premiums, higher energy costs and softer consumer spending. Business insolvencies remain well above pre-pandemic levels, while many operators report that margins have never been tighter. Small business needs flexibility to adapt, invest and respond to changing market conditions. Instead, many owners feel they are being asked to absorb more costs, more regulation and more complexity.

The Chamber supports responsible budget management and sensible tax reform. However, policy settings should encourage investment, reward entrepreneurship and support business succession. Small business is not simply another taxpayer—it is the engine room of the economy, creating jobs, driving local investment and underpinning communities such as ours across the Central Coast.

Despite these concerns, there are reasons for optimism locally. The Chamber welcomes the State Government funding secured by Central Coast Council to progress the Special Entertainment Precinct for the Gosford CBD. This is a significant milestone and one we have advocated for over many years. Every step forward brings us closer to a more vibrant, activated city centre and a stronger night-time economy. Gosford continues to build momentum. While there is still much work to do, we are steadily moving closer to the vision of a thriving regional capital where people choose to live, work, study, invest and do business. That is a future worth pursuing together.

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GEBC STRATEGY PLAN 2026

The vision of the GEBC is to create a vibrant regional capital that will support business and the community through facilitating appropriate engagement with and between all stakeholders.

OUR 5 PILLARS

Better Business – Make Gosford and Erina a better place to do business:

- Advocate improvements to the Gosford CBD
- Advocate for the improvement to the process of lodging and having approved Development Applications
- Understand what GEBC members want

Infrastructure – Better infrastructure for Gosford and Erina

- Work with Central Coast Council on progressing the Waterfront Development
- Improve promotion of options and access to parking in the CBD and surrounding areas
- Promote the benefits of high-speed internet availability in Gosford and surrounding areas.
- Advocate for an improvement plan for the Gosford Cenotaph and other key attractions.

Industry – Attract industry to improve employment and opportunities for the business community

- Be actively involved in supporting and establishing affordable housing
- Provide information on training and employment opportunities for business to attract and retain skilled staff
- Work with Central Coast Council on the Regional Transport Plan to improve transport hubs in the local area

Tourism – To develop and promote tourism on the Central Coast through advocacy and events

- Activate the GEBC Regional Tourism sub-committee
- Work with Central Coast on regional tourism infrastructure
- Become part of the Central Coast Visitor Economy working group.

Education – Make Gosford a University town

- Actively pursue a link with the University of Newcastle in the development of the Gosford Campus
- Advocate for the redevelopment of the present TAFE site and development of the former Gosford Council Chambers.

Gosford Traffic Plan remains focus of Chamber

Chamber President David Evers and Director Edgar Adams met with Minister for the Central Coast The Hon. David Harris MP in early April to inform him of the Chamber's continuing focus on traffic issues in the CBD, with particular emphasis on the urgent need to widen the Donnison Street and Etna Street Railway Bridges, both of which were built when trains first came to Gosford in 1887.

Apart from peak time traffic chaos that has been occurring over many years making it difficult for ambulances to get to Gosford Hospital, solving the traffic congestion issue is now seen as a top priority.

Accordingly the Chamber now expects the State Government to take early action to widen both these bridges.



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Bendigo Bank Chief Economist predicts further interest rate increases



Some 120 guests attended an Economic Outlook Business Breakfast hosted by Chamber Platinum Sponsor Bendigo Bank with Guest Speaker David Robertson, Chief Economist and Head of Economic and Markets Research at Bendigo and Adelaide Bank in late May. Commenting on the Reserve Bank's rate hike U-Turn Mr Robertson said that the RBA's aggressive series of three consecutive interest rate hikes in 2026, that fully reversed the easing cycle of 2025 and brought the cash rate back up to 4.35%.

He warned local businesses to prepare for a likely further rate increase to 4.6% later in 2026 due to persistent inflationary pressures. He noted that Australia is facing a prolonged tightening period that could stretch into 2027.

In a wide ranging review, he spoke on the geopolitical impacts of the Middle East conflict, stagflation and tariffs and

financial market volatility.

In terms of the local business environment, he said that these issues would see Central Coast business owners navigating low consumer confidence and provided strategic advice on how regional operators can future-proof their operations against rising energy and overhead costs.

In respect to the national economy and market trends, he predicted Australian GDP growth to hover around 2.5% for the year, though subject to downside risks from shifting consumer patterns.

He shared his predictions on how AI and technology will shape productivity and disrupt the national labour market over the next three years.

The presentation was hosted jointly by the Central Coast Branches of Bendigo Bank including the East Gosford branch and Community Bank Berowra and District.

Indie Education expands in Gosford

Indie Education a provider of alternative, accredited high schools and colleges throughout Australia, for students aged 15 to 18 who struggle in traditional mainstream classrooms, has expanded its operations in Gosford leasing a 550sqm ground floor space on the corner of Mann and Donnison Streets, Gosford.

The new campus is for an Indie College that works in tandem with the schools, offering Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools programs.

A division of Indie Education, Indie School operates out of premises in Watt Street, Gosford established in 2025. It currently has 90 students enrolled along with teaching staff.

New luxury fitness and wellness centre opens in Gosford

HOUSED, a rapidly growing premium fitness and wellness brand in Australia has opened fitness centre in William Plaza, Gosford.

Corporate-owned and operated directly by Housed Australia Pty Ltd, with business operations launched in Sydney in November 2024 and operates nine fitness centres in Sydney.

Rather than functioning as a traditional standalone weight gym, each location is designed as a design-led hub that merges high-performance training with luxury wellness

An advertisement for the Lexus Plug-in Hybrid Range. It features two Lexus SUVs, a dark blue one on the left and a silver one on the right, parked in front of a modern building. A woman in a green top and blue skirt is walking between the two cars. The text 'THE LUXURY OF CHOICE' is at the top left, followed by 'LEXUS PLUG-IN' and 'HYBRID RANGE' in large, bold letters. Below this, there are two columns of text describing the benefits of the hybrid technology. The Lexus logo and 'CENTRAL COAST' are at the bottom right.

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LEXUS | CENTRAL COAST

June Breakfast Meeting a Must Attend



Prof. Alex Zelinsky AO

Our June Members' Meeting will feature Guest Speaker, Professor Alex Zelinsky AO who will speak on University of Newcastle's Vision for Gosford as a Global University Town.

This will be a Breakfast Meeting

Where: Gosford RSL Club, West Gosford

When: Monday, 22 June 2026

Time: 7.00am for 7.30 start to 9.00am

Cost: \$70.00 Members, \$90 Non-Members

Book online at: info@gebc.com.au

July Breakfast Meeting

Guest Speaker for July will be Stephen Crowe, recently appointed Hunter Central Coast Regional Director, Property Council of Australia.

He will be asking; "What will Gosford look like in 2040?"

Stephen brings with him a wealth of

experience through senior corporate affairs and government relations roles in both public and private sectors. These include senior roles in the NRL, local government, aviation and maritime industries.

August Breakfast Meeting

Our Guest Speaker will be Superintendent Darryl Jobson, District Commander Brisbane Water Police District, along with Crime Manager Detective Inspector Matthew Stingmore.

They will give us an update on crime and safety issues as they affect Gosford and East Gosford.

Members Networking Evenings

Commencing June 10 your Chamber has introduced exclusive Members Only Networking Evenings.

This will provide members with an opportunity to connect, network and enjoy a friendly conversation.

This is a great opportunity to connect with local business leaders, strengthen relationships within our Chamber community and enjoy a relaxed social atmosphere.

Our June event was at South End Social and July and August evenings will be at Tommy's on the Gosford Waterfront.

Chamber welcomes new members

Frame Today Gosford

Business: Picture Framing

Contact: Karina Olen

Location: West Gosford

Erina Leagues Club

Business: Registered Club

Contact: Stuart Mitchell

Location: Erina

Glow Sky Media Pty Ltd

Business: Light Driven Visual Displays

Contact: Michael Scarrott

Location: Umina Beach

Carbon Zero Australia – ACE Solutions

Business: Measure, reduce and report their carbon emissions

Contact: Paul Brasch

Location: Umina

Commbank

Business: Bank

Contact: Pei Sze Chambers

Location: Gosford

Become a member of GEBC today!

The GEBC is inviting business owners in Gosford and Erina to join their community and enjoy a range of resources and support, including networking events, workshops and advocacy for the local business community. Membership offers discounts on events and workshops, access to exclusive member-only resources, and the opportunity to connect with like-minded business owners to build a stronger local economy.

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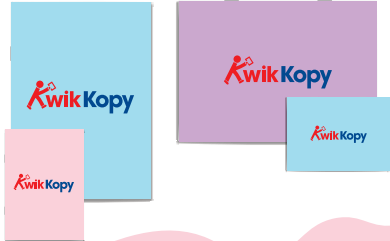


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