



**SMALLER GOVERNMENT | LOWER TAXES | PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Tuesday, 13 September 2016

**FEE HIKES THREATEN MORE CANBERRA BUSINESSES - WHO WOULD START A BUSINESS IN CANBERRA?**

News in the *Canberra Times* that high fees are threatening boat operators on Lake Burley Griffin should come as no surprise to any business in Canberra, Liberal Democrats candidate for Brindabella, Jacob Gowor, said today. Further news that the ACT Auditor-General is examining payments to former owners of Lake Burley Griffin paddleboat business also cast doubt on how the ACT government goes about dealing with the commercial sector.

The ACT has the lowest business survival rate in Australia. This should be a concern to all Canberrans, especially as we face the reality of a declining Federal public service and threats to GST revenues. “The ACT Government’s incessant rate increases, new taxes and charges, anti-competitive practices and over-regulation make life too hard for business. If Canberra had the same business survival rate as Victoria, there’d be about a thousand more businesses operating in the ACT, offering more choice and services to the people of Canberra”, Mr Gowor said.

Whether it is the government’s green bin scheme showing no regard for the survival of existing green waste recycling businesses, or running a laundry service that is better off in the private sector, or the urge to always want to regulate—for example, the farce over charity sausage sizzles—Canberrans deserve better policy making based on sound evidence.

The Liberal Democrats promise to do something about the ACT’s anti-business, anti-fun, pro-regulation attitude.

The Liberal Democrats will hold a Commission of Audit into the business of government to determine whether efficiencies can be realised and the appropriate role of the government and the private sector.

We will also appoint a Red Tape Reduction Commissioner to review the burden on businesses and reduce the cost of government. The Commissioner would also examine how to make the ACT’s regulation impact system more rigorous, transparent and as consistent with leading practice outlined by the Productivity Commission and the OECD.

The Liberal Democrats also believe that new regulatory proposals should be tested to see whether new technology- such as rating systems used by Uber - will allow more flexible or community-based responses to emerging problems rather than applying the slow moving hand of government regulation.

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The LDP will also help reduce costs by guaranteeing to immediately halt any rise in rates for residential properties across the ACT funded by reducing ACT government expenses.

The ACT Liberal Democrats believe it is now time to radically improve business regulation so that we can help create a thriving local economy and meet the needs of Canberrans.

**ACT Liberal Democrats**

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