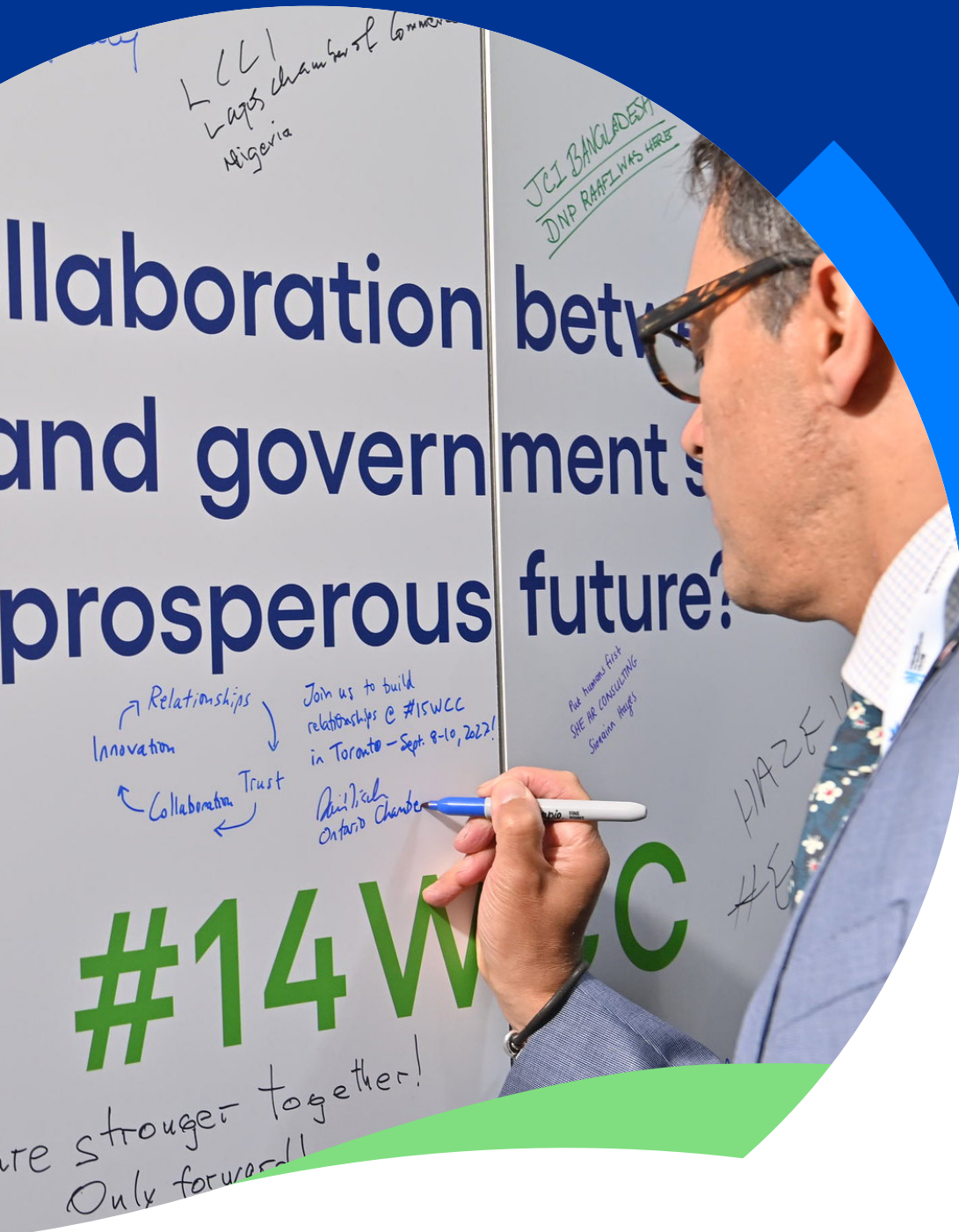


“Everyone contributes. Everyone benefits.  
Together, we guide towards prosperity.”

# Guide to Prosperity



Input from #14WCC

# Foreword



## **Rifat Hisarcıklođlu**

Chair, ICC World Chambers Federation

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Chambers of commerce stand at the heart of prosperous communities – as connectors, conveners and catalysts for innovation. The 14th World Chambers Congress in Melbourne reaffirmed that when chambers collaborate across borders, they unlock opportunities that transcend economic growth, driving inclusion, sustainability and shared progress.

Looking ahead, our collective mission is to empower chambers to lead with purpose and creativity, embracing digital transformation and new partnerships that respond to the evolving needs of businesses and society. The ICC World Chambers Federation will continue to serve as the global platform where ideas become action – amplifying the voice of chambers in shaping resilient and forward-looking economies.

Prosperity is not built in isolation. It flourishes through trust, collaboration and the courage to innovate together. The spirit of Melbourne reminds us that every chamber, regardless of size or geography, can be a force for positive change – translating local impact into global progress.

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# Welcome to the Guide to Prosperity



## **Julian Kassum**

Director, World Chambers Federation  
and ICC Deputy Secretary General – Network

Too often, even the most inspiring flagship events conclude as soon as the closing gala dinner ends. ICC events aim to go further. They are designed to spark conversations that extend well beyond the Congress halls and to generate value that endures. This Guide reflects that ambition and the shared commitment of the World Chambers Federation (WCF) to empower chambers worldwide.

Throughout the Congress, participants were invited to share their insights, reflections and questions related to the theme. These contributions were gathered in two ways: via the Congress app and through our Impact Wall – a board placed along the passageway between the Congress hall and the exhibition area. Together, they offer a rich collection of thoughts about the Congress itself, its central theme and its wider implications.

At the heart of these reflections lies a shared set of questions:

- What can and should we do to create as much prosperity as possible, for as many people as possible, in a sustainable way?

- What role can chambers of commerce play in this endeavour and how can they work more effectively with businesses, governments and other stakeholders around the world?

We hope this Guide serves as a useful resource for chambers of commerce, businesses and policymakers worldwide. Read it at your own pace, allow the quotes to guide your thinking and let them inform your plans. We are confident that each reader will find at least one idea that sparks action – an insight that offers inspiration, practical direction or a new perspective on collaboration across sectors and stakeholders.

If that happens, this Guide will have fulfilled its purpose: helping to advance our shared search for prosperity, together with the partners who matter most.



“Love being with  
all chambers in the  
world.”

Lifting our eyes up to what is possible and  
having the optimism and willingness to  
achieve it.



# Engagement



**Ali Saeed Bu Sharbak Al Mansouri**  
Acting General Manager,  
Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Engagement is a strategic pillar of the global chamber movement and a core priority for Qatar Chamber in advancing sustainable economic growth. Our approach is guided by a shared vision with ICC and the global chamber network, grounded in openness, collaboration and a strong commitment to serving the private sector.

At a practical level, Qatar Chamber places strong emphasis on building close relationships with businesses, particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to support their growth, internationalisation and resilience. Through continuous dialogue, targeted services and cooperation with government entities, we work to ensure that business needs are reflected in policy frameworks and market access initiatives.

Qatar Chamber's long-standing commitment to global engagement was exemplified by its hosting of the 8th World Chambers Congress in Doha in 2013, a landmark event that successfully brought together chambers from around the world. Building on this legacy, Qatar Chamber supported and participated as a partner in several editions of the Congress the

most recent being at the 14th World Chambers Congress, in Melbourne in 2025, underscoring a continued commitment to and further strengthening our collaboration with the global chamber network and contributing to knowledge exchange, collective initiatives and international business cooperation.

Platforms such as the World Chambers Congress remain vital catalysts for collaboration, enabling chambers to transform dialogue into concrete initiatives that support trade, investment and innovation.

Qatar Chamber remains committed to fostering inclusive engagement at local, regional and global levels, contributing to a connected and forward-looking global chamber community.



Forums like these are vital to local and global collaboration. Thanks for the long history of bringing us together! Love.”

Fabulous to be a part of the #14WCC and hear from global business chambers and governments about how we can work together to remain relevant in these uncertain times.”





Really valued the chance to connect with chamber leaders from around the world – great to meet new people and reconnect with familiar faces. The conversations were insightful and opened doors for future collaboration.

True prosperity demands bold, united action. When business, chambers and governments align around innovation, digital trade and inclusive growth, we unlock opportunities that transcend borders. By fostering trust, sustainability and equitable partnerships, we can transform today's challenges into pathways for shared success. The 14th World Chambers Congress provides not just dialogue but direction – fuelling a global agenda where collaboration drives competitiveness, resilience and a lasting legacy of prosperity for communities and economies worldwide.



So important to recognise the strength of the Asian economies and the active role of the young entrepreneurs within the Asia-Pacific to achieve their future leadership.

Prosperity is multifaceted, including business success, continuity, reliability and sustainability. Within that, it's also important to not only be environmentally conscious (as we only have one planet) but also human conscious, to ensure people around the world have the support, care and resources available to them in difficult and challenging times. Sharing the love and identifying how each of us can contribute to a better world can start with a simple act of kindness to a friend, neighbour or someone you don't know. The world needs to act as one and stand together for each other.

Keep this incredible opportunity open for small business to participate and take inspiration from the biggest and most prosperous businesses around the world.



Chambers are a force for peace, prosperity and global trade.

Melbourne's history reminds us that prosperity is never static – from the gold rush era of "Marvellous Melbourne" to today's standing as one of the world's most liveable cities. True prosperity means more than wealth; it is about creating communities where people want to live, work and belong, enriched by diversity and innovation.

# Focus



## Daniel Tisch

President & CEO, Ontario Chamber of Commerce (Canada)

### Aligning a network with its nodes.

Two years ago, when I became CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce in Canada's largest province, I found that almost all my friends were aware of the organisation, but very few understood its role in society.

Such branding challenges are more difficult to solve in networks such as ours: we all share a brand, but no one entity controls it. Success requires collaboration and alignment.

That is what made the World Chamber Congress dialogue on 'focus' so important – it invited participants to define the role of our global network. Whom do we serve? How do we work together?

A few themes emerged: a focus on serving the needs of business operating internationally; the ICC World Chambers Federation as the

'central nervous system' of a vast, unique global network; and the interdependence of the centre and its thousands of regional and local nodes.

While engaging and aligning this complex community is challenging, I have come to see each chamber's sovereignty as one of our greatest strengths. It empowers local business; it guarantees diverse thinking; it enhances credibility with governments everywhere; and it mandates humility, mutual respect and collaboration. These are assets the world needs now.

The lesson it leaves is simple but compelling: the strength of a network is in its nodes. And when the nodes are aligned with the centre, we can achieve so much more than any of us could alone.



“Collaboration in city logistics.”

“Open, free, rules-based, inclusive and sustainable trade, commerce and business with integrity.”

“Align policies with real business needs, creating a more supportive regulatory environment.”

“Economically driven with a social conscience.”



This is a continuous journey where we all have to accept the realities of the current state without the usual emotive responses and partner together – with open minds and hearts, without judgement and ties to what was to co-create a path to what will help us today and tomorrow, being prepared to constantly pivot and innovate to ensure the next steps on the journey remain relevant for all whilst ensuring we leave no one behind. Only then can true consistent prosperity be achieved, for all! United with a common outcome, determined to bring the action plan to life, we can. Learning from each other, we can. Onward – forward we go!

Relentless focus on programmes that will build business confidence to trade, invest and create jobs.

At the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), we believe that sustainable prosperity is best achieved through strong partnerships between business, chambers and government. Our experience in Bahrain demonstrates how collaboration can transform challenges into opportunities, while ensuring that economic growth is inclusive and future focused to achieve the 2030 vision.

If we focus on the smallest of SMEs and work with them to thrive, this will create the foundation for prosperity for everyone. No one is left behind.



# Impact



## **Melanie Veness**

Chief Executive Officer, Pietermaritzburg  
and Midlands Chamber of Business

Throughout the 14th World Chambers Congress, the concept of cooperation emerged not as an aspiration, but as a precondition for impact. Across discussions, sessions and exchanges between peers, participants consistently reinforced a shared understanding: that meaningful and lasting impact is achieved only through collective action.

At the Congress, cooperation was expressed in practical terms. It meant chambers working together across borders, partnering with business organisations and other stakeholders, engaging constructively with governments and strengthening collaboration within the ICC network itself. Central to this cooperation was the willingness to share experience openly. Ideas, lessons and workable solutions were exchanged generously, reflecting a collective commitment to learning from one another rather than working in parallel.

One of the most compelling expressions of this approach was the way chambers challenged and inspired each other. Successful initiatives and proven projects were presented not as finished models, but as sources of insight for adaptation and replication. This dynamic reinforced a clear objective: strengthening the capacity of chambers to support business effectively and to help shape economic conditions that encourage investment, entrepreneurship and sustainable growth.

A clear lesson emerged from these discussions. Cooperation does not happen automatically. It is the result of choice, sustained by trust. Trust, in turn, is built deliberately over time, through long-term relationships, credibility and consistent engagement. Without these foundations, collaboration remains superficial and its impact limited.

The 14th World Chambers Congress created valuable space to build and renew relationships across the global chamber network. At the same time, many reflections captured in this Guide highlight that impact depends on what follows. Cooperation must be maintained beyond the event itself if it is to translate into action and results.

The message is unambiguous. When ICC and chambers work together with clarity of purpose and mutual trust, they can play a decisive role in enabling business to thrive and in advancing shared prosperity. To do so effectively, their focus must remain anchored where impact is created in the first place: with people.

Chambers' ability to support business shifts to meaningfully embrace AI and technology proactively and not reactively.

Forging a Commonwealth Coalition of Chambers of Commerce in a volatile world through a strategic framework built on (a) amplifying connectivity and market intelligence through digital platforms and coordinated networking; (b) enhancing trade facilitation and harmonisation; (c) mobilising investment and empowering SMEs through targeted capacity building, with a specific focus on unleashing women entrepreneurs and youth innovators; and (d) fostering resilience and mitigating risk by sharing supply chain intelligence and facilitating diversification within the Commonwealth to navigate global volatility.



Prosperity depends on strong, trust-based collaboration between business, chambers and government. Chambers play a vital role as neutral connectors, translating business needs into actionable policy and creating platforms for dialogue. Governments must go beyond regulation and act as enablers, investing in infrastructure, skills and innovation while working hand in hand with the private sector. Businesses, in turn, must lead with purpose, embracing sustainability, digital transformation and inclusive growth. A practical step forward: create National Prosperity Councils where all three sectors co-design policies and solutions, ensuring long-term, inclusive development. Real prosperity is built together.

ICC is providing policy leadership globally. Let's all work together to bring the global thought leadership into our own national contexts so we can make real progress and make business work better for everyone and everywhere.



True prosperity emerges when business, chambers and governments partner on the foundation of trust. At this Congress, I witnessed leaders from across cultures and even conflict zones engage openly – not as competitors or adversaries, but as collaborators. SMEs show us what's possible: they are already risk-takers, innovators and bridge-builders. When supported by chambers and connected into a global ecosystem, their individual 'power of small' combines into the 'power of all.' That is how we turn intention into action and create prosperity that is shared, inclusive and enduring. Our collective success depends on this long-term vision – one built on empathy, fairness and collaboration across borders.

Advocate for clear, consistent rules and transparent governance to unlock sustainable investment. Prosperity is achieved when dialogue is real, rules are fair and governments, businesses and chambers act together with vision and responsibility.

When your vision becomes more powerful than your memory, your future becomes more powerful than your past. Chambers give you that power.

Business needs courage and the essential human skills to counter some of the uncertainty in the business world and beyond. There is an opportunity to be a part of significant impact, to amplify our collective success. Peace and prosperity are key themes to consider.



A multi-sector collaboration including chambers, government and business with a single goal target will achieve far more than doing things in independently.

Prosperity depends on harnessing the economic power and participation of the female workforce by implementing universal childcare, embracing flexible work (including proactive support for effective work from home policies), wage transparency and effective mentoring of young women to set them up for lifelong professional success.

Three pillars for prosperity partnerships research translation excellence: Chambers must evolve into innovation bridges, connecting local businesses with research institutions to lower the risk among innovation pathways. When I co-founded the world's first Food Innovation Centre at Monash University, we proved that collaborative hubs can deliver 30% operational efficiency improvements while driving sustainable growth across entire sectors. Cross-border innovation networks: Government trade facilitation agencies working through chambers can create exponential prosperity by connecting domestic innovations with global markets. My experience across Japan, China, Thailand, New Zealand and Australia demonstrates that prosperity multiplies when we understand cultural nuances while scaling breakthrough technologies across borders. Future forward policy frameworks: Governments partnerships with chambers and business need anticipatory policy that enables tomorrow's solutions today. Whether addressing climate resilience, skills transformation, or circular economy implementation, we must create regulatory environments that reward innovation rather than resist change.



Creating impact and environmental sustainability is not separate to making money. We must move away from the dualistic thinking of making money on one side and then giving it away through philanthropy on the other.

I propose a new section for the Guide to Prosperity: Trade development and standards cooperation: Building BSO–SDO synergies for inclusive prosperity standards are the common language of global trade. They reduce technical barriers, build trust across borders and provide a foundation for sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Business Support Organisations (BSOs), such as chambers of commerce and Standards Development Organisations (SDOs) both play vital but complementary roles in shaping the trade environment. Yet their collaboration has often been limited or ad hoc. To foster prosperity through stronger partnerships, I recommend the creation of a BSO–SDO synergy mechanism. Such a mechanism would:

1. Enhance dialogue and coordination by establishing regular channels for BSOs and SDOs to exchange information on emerging trade needs, regulatory challenges and market trends.
2. Support joint initiatives such as co-developing practical guidelines, training modules and awareness campaigns that help SMEs understand and apply international standards.
3. Facilitate co-creation of standards by channelling the experiences of businesses, especially SMEs, through BSOs into the formal standardisation process led by SDOs.
4. Link trade and standards policy by integrating standardisation more effectively into trade agreements, investment frameworks and government–business dialogue.
5. Strengthen capacity building so that chambers and BSOs can act as multipliers in disseminating standards knowledge and fostering compliance readiness.

By aligning the market reach of BSOs with the technical expertise of SDOs, this collaboration can unlock new opportunities for businesses of all sizes to participate in global value chains, meet sustainability expectations and compete fairly in international markets. A BSO–SDO partnership model will not only advance trade development but also ensure that prosperity is inclusive, sustainable and built on shared rules.



“

For a better world.

Lifting communities through business and economic collaboration.

More equality = more stability = more business = more prosperity.

”

# Conclusion



**Sally Curtin**

Chief Executive, Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Australia)

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There was a clear theme that permeated throughout #14WCC – from the plenary to the exhibition stage to the social events to the side activations – prosperity is achieved through the collective.

This Guide to Prosperity is a tangible legacy of the insights shared, challenged and shaped during the Congress. It captures the thinking of chambers, businesses and governments from across the world – voices united by a common purpose: to create global prosperity in a responsible and sustainable way.

This Guide will remain available on the Congress website, carrying forward the spirit of cooperation that defined our time together in Melbourne and ensuring the ideas, partnerships and ambition sparked here continue to ripple outward.

In 2027, the worldwide chamber movement will reunite in Toronto, Ontario, Canada – once again committed to creating prosperity responsibly and hopefully with the opportunity to revive that same spirit of collaboration, while adding new chapters, new ideas and new contributors.

Until then, I encourage you to cogitate over the insights in these pages and give careful consideration to how you can help to progress the ambition. Because the work of prosperity does not end when the Congress closes. It begins anew, wherever we lead, serve and build.



## About the International Chamber of Commerce

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) is the institutional representative of more than 45 million companies in over 170 countries. ICC's core mission is to make business work for everyone, every day, everywhere. Through a unique mix of advocacy, solutions and standard setting, we promote international trade, responsible business conduct and a global approach to regulation, in addition to providing market-leading dispute resolution services. Our members include many of the world's leading companies, SMEs, business associations and local chambers of commerce.

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## About the World Chambers Federation

The ICC World Chambers Federation (WCF) is the forum that connects chambers across borders, creating a better environment for business and micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), and driving prosperity and opportunity for all. WCF is ICC's unique and truly global forum connecting, leading and inspiring the global network of chambers and their respective business communities.

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