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Media Release

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ACT EMPLOYER CONFIDENCE RISES AS BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS STABILISE: HUDSON REPORT

Canberra, Australia – Wednesday 20 January 2010 – ACT employers' sentiment, the nation's strongest throughout 2009, has fallen to third place behind WA and Qld, according to the latest *Hudson Report: Employment Expectations* survey released today.

Though sentiment has risen by a further 1.7pp on last quarter, ACT employers have reported the smallest quarterly increase across the States and Territories, as sentiment in other parts of the country begins to pick up on the back of strong business confidence and a rapidly improving economic outlook.

After having been the most confident of all the States and Territories throughout the whole of 2009, the ACT is now reporting a net sentiment of 30.1 percent for the January–March 2010 period – the third highest level of sentiment after WA and QLD.

"Whilst the ACT has dropped back from first place this is still a very positive result," said John Henderson, General Manager, Hudson ACT. "There is an ongoing need for talent in the labour market across both the public and private sectors and ACT sentiment now appears to have stabilised."

This follows a period of instability, where sentiment first dropped around the election in November 2008 and then increased in mid-2009 in response to the release of the Federal Budget. "With the Federal Government's Economic Stimulus Plan well underway, there is a continued need for policy and program staff to develop and embed policies, particularly those related to the major infrastructure, health and education programmes," said Henderson.

"Consequently, departments with infrastructure, education and defence spending requirements, are under particular pressure to have resources in place in order to ensure infrastructure programs get underway as quickly as possible. There is also still a need to identify key individuals at senior executive level within some Federal Government departments," he added.

Driven largely by these factors within the Federal Government, employer sentiment amongst government employers increased a further 5.7pp this quarter, representing the fourth consecutive quarter of increasing confidence. Sentiment is now at its highest in 12 months

with a net 27.3 percent of employers planning to increase their permanent staff levels over the coming three months. This result remains above the national industry average (20.2 percent).

"Departments are becoming more strategic in their workforce planning, ensuring they have workable and enforceable talent management strategies which balance the real need for staff to get work done under the efficiency gains demanded by the Government," said Henderson.

"Some employers are starting to request 'Talent Portfolios' of candidates so they can plan ahead and then move when the opportunity arises, and some of the larger departments are looking for mechanisms to support large recruitment processes, such as response handling plans and recruitment process delivery projects.

"The Australian economy has undoubtedly outperformed expectations in recent months. Consistent net employment growth is expected to be well underway during 2010, once spare capacity in the number of average hours worked has been eroded.

"We're already feeling the pinch of skills shortages and this will certainly tighten as the economy continues to gain strength. It's imperative that ACT employers turn their attention to effective talent acquisition and succession management activities to preserve healthy, viable, profitable business while positioning themselves for future growth."

- ENDS -

Editor Note

Please contact us for more information and print-ready graphs.

The Hudson Report

The *Hudson Report* is an established and highly reputable publication, based on in-depth and nationwide research. Released quarterly, the report uncovers and analyses the hiring expectations of Australian employers over the forthcoming quarter and provides insights into a range of human resource issues currently impacting business and the broader Australian economy.

In its ninth year of quarterly publication, the *Hudson Report* combines robust data on employment expectations with economic commentary and extensive market insights gleaned from Hudson's conversations with employers nationwide. *Hudson Report: HR Insights* is used by employers throughout Australia to stay abreast of contemporary human resources issues and best practice. *Hudson Report: Employment Expectations* is a leading economic indicator and a trusted source of information on issues and trends affecting the Australian labour market. It is used by Australia's wider business community to assist in long-term strategic planning.

Results for this issue *Hudson Report* were gathered through interviews with 4,470 employers across Australia, conducted by Hudson recruitment, talent management and managed services professionals. Participants are surveyed from 19 core industry groups, aligned with the Australian Bureau of Statistics industry classifications. Copies of the *Hudson Report* are available at www.au.hudson.com

About Hudson

Hudson is a leading provider of permanent recruitment, contract professionals and talent management services worldwide. From single placements to total outsourced solutions, Hudson helps clients achieve greater organisational performance by assessing, recruiting, developing, engaging and retaining the best and brightest people for their businesses. The company employs nearly 2,500 professionals serving clients and candidates in more than 20 countries. More information is available at www.hudson.com

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