

QJCCI's Japan business mission opens new frontiers

Brisbane, Queensland, July 11, 2014: Queensland's potential for further gains from the newly signed trade pact with Japan have been enhanced following another successful business mission launched by the Queensland Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (QJCCI).

New relationships with various Japanese chambers of commerce along with a number of individual partnerships were developed during the June 7-14 mission to Osaka, Kyoto and Tokyo. These are set to extend bilateral ties into new areas such as services, facilitated by the newly developed Australia-Japan Business Matching (AJBM) website, supported by the Australia-Japan Foundation.

Ten QJCCI member businesses joined the mission, which similar to the Chamber's 25th anniversary mission in 2012 benefitted from outstanding support from Trade & Investment Queensland's (TIQ's) Tokyo office, led by Commissioner-Japan, Tak Adachi.

Invaluable government support was also shown by the participation of Anthony Shorten MP, State Member for Algeester, travelling in a private capacity, as well as Derek Brown, State Director, Queensland, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Key to the mission's success was the work of QJCCI management committee members and organisers Jumpei Morita and Anthony Fensom, as well as Hideto Horiguchi, who personally undertook mission preparations for Osaka and Kyoto.

The QJCCI has approximately 120 members across a range of industries and the mission delegation reflected this, comprising largely services-oriented businesses as well as government representatives:

- Jewellery specialist **Bruce Robinson Diamonds** (Victoria Tosh)
- Communication consultancy **BWH Communication** (Anthony Fensom, Senior Client Manager)
- Event management consultancy **CH Entertainment** (Vanessa Devine, Managing Director)
- Education provider **Charlton Brown** (Kay and Trevor Ganley, Directors and Rina Achiwa)
- Derek Brown, State Director, Queensland, **Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**
- Architectural model maker **Geomodels & Design** (Hideto Horiguchi, Managing Director)
- Legal services provider **Goodman Lawyers** (Anthony Lin, Principal)
- Education and travel consultant **Huckleberry Australia** (Hiroyuki Hidaka, Managing Director)
- Trade consultants **Ingram International** (Phil Ingram, Managing Director), representing Fraser Coast Opportunities, Fine Foods Australia, Language Discovery and Shumi Stay Australia

- Legal services provider **Mills Oakley Lawyers** (Levi Smouha, Senior Associate)
- **Anthony Shorten MP**, State Member for Algeester
- Accounting firm **Williams Hall Chadwick** (Michael Cameron, Director and Jumpei Morita, Japanese Business Services Manager).

The mission officially began on Sunday afternoon, June 8 at the impressive Knowledge Capital's Knowledge Salon at Grand Front Osaka. A members-only facility, the centre aims to "create new values through encounters and interactions by business persons, researchers...creators, artists, and others," and offers a variety of facilities, including showrooms and shared office facilities.

At Knowledge Salon, the QJCCI delegation was welcomed by Yutaka Mabuchi, Senior Director, Knowledge Capital Association, who noted the centre's goal of fostering innovative culture, ideas, products and services as part of its "Omosiroi" knowledge innovation. Syuzou Sekimoto, coordinator of the Osaka Manufacture & Agricultural cooperation support office, also pointed to Osaka's strong agricultural and manufacturing base and its latest advances across various fields, including a potential space farm on the Moon!

On Monday morning, June 9, Osaka formally extended its welcome to the delegation with a reception hosted by Tadakazu Konishi, Vice Governor, Osaka Prefecture. Mr Konishi discussed the Kansai region's economic potential with its established manufacturing base and proximity to Asian markets, as well as the prefecture's special economic zone offering various subsidies, targeting life sciences and environmental businesses.

Osaka Prefectural Assembly lawmaker Hideki Nagafuji also welcomed the delegation, speaking in English about his desire for stronger ties. Both states have previously signed memoranda of understanding on friendship (1988) and economic cooperation (1998).

The next stop was a visit to Yomiuri TV's Osaka broadcasting centre, where producer Ken Ikeda told participants he was keen to consider future tie-ups with Queensland TV networks.

Following lunch with The Japan Times' Osaka bureau chief, Eric Johnston, the delegation's next meeting was at MOBIO, a facility established by the Osaka prefectural government to promote small and mid-sized manufacturing businesses, hosted by Susumu Mizumoto, Chief Coordinator Business Matching Centre. A range of leading-edge 'monozukuri' products were showcased, from a Japanese satellite to high-tech sports sunglasses.

The delegation then travelled to Kyoto, highlighted by a meeting on the morning of June 10 with the Kyoto Chamber of Commerce and Industry, led by Yoshio Tateisi, honorary chairman of the Kyoto electronics giant, Omron Corporation.

With more than 12,000 member companies, predominantly SMEs, Mr Tateisi spoke of Kyoto's history of innovation and culture and its new focus on the

“Wisdom Industry” based on the fusion of old learnings with new technologies. Kyoto’s cultural and spiritual attractions have seen it attract up to 50 million domestic and international visitors a year, and Kyoto chamber representatives expressed their intention to strengthen ties with Queensland in tourism and other sectors.

After travelling to Tokyo, June 11 was dedicated to Saitama Prefecture, which in October 2014 proudly celebrates the 30th anniversary of sister-state relations with Queensland. Accompanied by TIQ’s Iori Forsyth, who acted as official interpreter, the QJCCI delegation was hosted by Saitama Prefecture Governor Kiyoshi Ueda, who later in July will lead a delegation of Saitama businesses to Queensland.

Governor Ueda noted that Saitama is located in the heart of a 43 million-strong Tokyo metropolis just 30 minutes from the Tokyo CBD, with the most extensive transportation network in eastern Japan and a concentration of leading manufacturers and research institutions. He said Saitama started importing Queensland beef following a previous Queensland trade mission, and he aimed to further strengthen business ties as well as in cultural and education exchanges, helped by the prefecture’s special education fund.

The QJCCI delegation next paid a courtesy visit to members of the Saitama Prefectural Assembly, with a number of representatives led by Vice Speaker Hiroyasu Kato set to join Governor Ueda’s Queensland mission.

Following a visit to the unique Omiya Bonsai Art Museum, the world’s first public bonsai art museum, the next appointment was a networking seminar organised by the Saitama Prefectural Government’s International Division. This included presentations by Toshio Kaneko, Chairman of the Saitama International Association, and Atsushi Akiyama, Senior Manager, International Division of the Saitama Prefectural Government.

Featuring Saitama businesses ranging from banks to water, food and NPOs, the seminar provided the opportunity to develop new contacts between the two sister states, including via the Global Talent Network Saitama (represented in Queensland by QJCCI Vice President, Robert Day).

Proving that “Womenomics” is no myth, a number of female Japanese business leaders from Saitama joined the QJCCI delegation for dinner, keen to learn more about opportunities in Queensland ahead of their forthcoming visit in July.

On June 12, it was back to the centre of Tokyo for the delegation, with the first event being a seminar at TIQ’s office in Kamiyacho. Mr Adachi gave the delegation a guide to the prospects for “Abenomics” and stronger Japan-Queensland economic ties, followed by fascinating briefings on Japan’s media and public relations landscape by invited guests, Kyodo PR’s Anthony Blick and Total Communications’ Daniel Fath.

Next was a seminar at Global Sky's nearby Queensland Business Centre, established to support Queensland SMEs in Japan. Global Sky's Ko Nagata highlighted the complementary nature of Japan-Australia economic ties and the benefit of the new Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement (JAEPA), announcing plans for new e-commerce facilities at his centre aimed at helping Queensland and other SMEs expand internationally.

Other speakers included Ms Akemi Sunaga of Marunouchi Business Consulting, who highlighted the potential for further merger and acquisition deals among SMEs in Japan, particularly given that two-thirds of Japanese SME chief executives have no identified successor.

Following the speeches, a networking event was held involving around 90 participants, with leading Queensland winery Sirromet Wines showcasing its quality export wines.

Friday, June 13 was the last official day of the mission and it was devoted to Kawasaki City, an industrial city of 1.4 million people located between Tokyo and Yokohama. In 2011, the Queensland Government signed a memorandum of understanding with the city concerning clean technology, waste and water resource management, a key attribute of the city as shown by the strength of the Kawasaki Water Business Network.

The day's first meeting was with Kawasaki Mayor Norihiko Fukuda, who noted that the eco-city would be the first recipient of Queensland's gas exports to Japan, planned for later in 2014. This was followed by a meeting with Naohisa Suzuki, Vice Chairman of the Kawasaki Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), who stressed the city's openness to international trade and its new focus on environmental technology.

The QJCCI delegation then undertook its final official event of the 2014 mission, a seminar and networking event hosted by Kawasaki City and the KCCI. This featured presentations by a range of Kawasaki businesses from the water, sportswear, legal and other fields.

Summing up the trip, QJCCI President Ling Raines said the Chamber's mission had proven successful in paving the way for further growth with Queensland's second-largest trading partner.

"The Chamber's services-focused delegation has helped identify new opportunities for Queensland businesses and for Japanese investment into Queensland. We were delighted by the generous welcome extended by our Japanese hosts, and I wish to extend my thanks to Trade & Investment Queensland, and all our other supporters from Queensland and Japan for the mission's success," Mrs Raines said.

The QJCCI also wishes to thank Plum Design for their graphic design services, and official mission gift providers Mojocreations and Seb Messina Photographics.

With the Chamber now focused on promoting its newly launched AJBM trade portal, prospects for even stronger ties between Queensland and Japan appear excellent, Ms Raines concluded.