

Queensland forges ties with British Columbia

Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations - The Honourable John Mickel

Friday, June 13, 2008

The growing economic links between Queensland and the Canadian Province of British Columbia were today reinforced with the signing of a Statement of Intent between the two Governments.

Minister for Trade John Mickel said British Columbia and Queensland share a rich history.

"We've both experienced the exhilaration of a gold rush and have a strong Indigenous culture. And we each have a vibrant tourism industry and a passion for sport," Mr Mickel said.

"Moreover, British Columbia is currently celebrating its 150th anniversary and Queensland marks 150 years of existence in 2009.

"It is also pleasing to note the economic links between our two regions. Queensland companies that have already established offices in Vancouver or nearby, include Flight Centre, Ausenco, Australian Maritime Systems, Michael Hill Jewellers and Runge.

"Looking to the future, we are both committed to developing our knowledge-intensive industries and assisting them in becoming globally competitive, particularly in the Asia Pacific region," Mr Mickel said.

The Statement of Intent was co-signed by Queensland Trade Commissioner Peter Beattie and John van Dongen, British Columbia's Minister for Intergovernmental Relations, Acting Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General.

"Under the agreement, collaboration between our knowledge-intensive sectors will lead to opportunities for increased international commercialisation, particularly in the fields of biotechnology, life sciences, health and medical research, information and communications technologies and mining services like safety and environmental management," Mr Mickel said.

The Statement of Intent would also promote bilateral education opportunities and improve market access for Queensland and British Columbian businesses in the Asia Pacific region.

"British Columbia and Queensland are fortunate to already have a number of mutual friends in the Asia Pacific region, including formal relationships with the provinces of Guangdong in China and Gyeonggi in Korea," he said.

"The agreement provides an opportunity to further capitalise on such important links.

"Finally, to reinforce these trade and industry links, British Columbia and Queensland have agreed to share information on a wide range of important issues such as climate change, energy and resource management, and regional economic development.

"I think today will mark the beginning of a period of even greater ties between Queensland and British Columbia."

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