

## Queensland strengthens ties with powerhouse Chinese Province



*The Honourable John Mickel - Minister for Trade*



*The Honourable Ou Guangyuan - Chairman, Standing Committee of the Guangdong People's Congress*

A new agreement will help to build stronger partnerships and assist in opening doors for Queensland exporters in China's fastest-growing regional economy.

Premier Anna Bligh today signed a Friendship State Agreement with China's Guangdong Province.

"On behalf of the Queensland Government, I welcome the Honourable Ou Guangyuan, Chairman, Standing Committee of the Guangdong People's Congress and his official party to Queensland for the signing of the agreement on behalf of the Guangdong Government," Ms Bligh said.

"Queensland and Guangdong have enjoyed a close and productive relationship since an Economic Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with the Governor of Guangdong Province in 2004.

"Now, in 2008, following the expiry of the earlier MoU, Queensland is very pleased to formalise our relationship with the signing of a Friendship State Agreement today.

"The Queensland Government looks forward to continuing our strong friendship, and to build on the trade, investment and research ties in areas of mutual interest," Ms Bligh said.

Minister for Trade John Mickel welcomed the new, more formal agreement and predicted that Guangdong, a home to major cities including Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Foshan, would become an increasingly valuable trading destination for Queensland companies.

"The Friendship State Agreement signed today covers areas of mutual interest including trade and investment in infrastructure, building materials and professional services; medical biotechnology and clinical trials; education and training; agribusiness; and energy, climate change and water resource management," Mr Mickel said.

"Guangdong Province is well known as a major production centre in China, with its economic heart in the Pearl River Delta. Its GDP for 2007 was 3.07 trillion yuan (US\$422 billion), an increase of 14.5% on the previous year. This is the highest GDP of all Chinese provinces.

"Southern China's regional economy is one of the most dynamic major economies in the world. In 2007, the Southern China economy was worth US\$1.69 trillion, equal to the world's 11th largest economy.

"To help build new friendships and trading relationships with China, Trade Queensland has initiated the Bridge to China initiative to provide opportunities for Queensland businesses to share experiences with other successful exporters to the Greater China Region.

"The first Bridge to China networking event will be held this afternoon (21 August) at Parliament House and will feature Mr Ou and Trade Queensland Special Representative to China, the Honourable Steve Bredhauer as inaugural speakers," Mr Mickel said.