



Speech by

Hon. STEVE BREDHAUER

MEMBER FOR COOK

Hansard 19 November 1998

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Main Roads Trade Mission to Sichuan, China

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (9.52 a.m.), by leave: I rise on this occasion to inform the members of Parliament that the Director-General of the Department of Main Roads has successfully led a high-level trade mission to the Province of Sichuan in China. Following a second visit to Queensland by the Sichuan Department of Transport in May of this year, an invitation was extended to the Department of Main Roads to visit Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan, and to Leshan, a city in the south-east of the Province. In response to this invitation, Main Roads proactively organised a trade mission comprised of delegates from both the department and Queensland private sector companies that have skills and expertise in the identified areas of need, including highway technology, pavement technology, traffic management, plant hire, civil engineering, road building supplies and highway management.

The principal reason for the invitation was for my director-general, on my behalf, to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Sichuan Department of Transport and to participate in the hand-over ceremony for the management rights of three road projects in Leshan city to an Australian owned firm, Gang Feng Group Corp. Main Roads was instrumental in facilitating Austream, Gang Feng Group's Brisbane-based subsidiary, to source Queensland products and services to the value of \$25m for installation in its Leshan highway projects. On 4 November, the MOU was signed in Sichuan and this bilateral agreement now paves the way for further trade initiatives between Queensland and Sichuan.

My director-general has advised me that transport and tourism are two priority areas for development in Sichuan and that Sichuan's infrastructure projects have the potential to offer enormous trade opportunities to Queensland under the agreement. Armed with the MOU, Main Roads is now in a position to broaden trade opportunities available to Queensland by assisting the Sichuan Department of Transport to source additional products and services from both the Department of Main Roads and Queensland's transport-related private sector for the construction, management and maintenance of 1,000 kilometres of new highways in Sichuan. Mr Liu, the Sichuan Minister for Transport, has indicated that trade negotiations are expected to start immediately. As an indication of the strength of the MOU, in December he is sending a third delegation comprised of senior officers from the construction arm of the Sichuan Department of Transport to Main Roads.

The trade mission to Sichuan and the signing of the MOU represents the significant first steps towards building a relationship between Main Roads and the Sichuan Department of Transport and, indeed, adds significantly to the growing relationship between Queensland and Sichuan. The MOU and the flourishing relationship between Queensland and Sichuan has the support of the China Secretariat, Department of State Development, which was represented in Sichuan by a Shanghai-based senior trade officer. This MOU is being treated as a significant breakthrough by the Chinese Provincial Government in terms of opening up to the outside world. The signing ceremony was covered on Sichuan TV and was broadcast to over 100 million viewers. It was reported in newspapers in Hong Kong and Beijing, as well as Sichuan. Sichuan is also of importance to several cities in Queensland, notably Maroochydore, which has a sister city agreement with Chengdu, and Hervey Bay, which is soon to sign a sister city agreement with Leshan.

In addition to the MOU signing ceremony, my director-general participated in the hand-over ceremony of the Leshan Bridge, Le Wu Road and Jia E Road to Gang Feng Group. This represents a \$60m investment by an Australian firm in China's highway network. This is a first for Queensland and is

welcomed openly by the Sichuan Provincial Government and the Sichuan Department of Transport. David Qing, the chairman of the Gang Feng Group, has received the prestigious Friendship Award from the Chinese Central Government for his role in developing closer ties between Australia and China. This is also a first for Queensland.

In light of increasing globalisation, proactively building relationships with our close overseas neighbours is indeed important for Queensland's private sector. The success of this trade mission provides ample evidence that the Queensland Government has an integral role to play in initiating and building these relationships. I am proud of the forward-looking trade initiatives that have been implemented by my department. I am certain that they will both enhance Queensland's economy and create jobs for Queenslanders.
