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15/10/03

**Hon Tom Barton MP**  
**Minister for State Development**

**Ministerial Statement (3 minutes)**

**Fashion industry**



Mr Speaker

Queensland's textile and fashion industries are achieving notable growth for the best of reasons.

Foremost among them are local companies' ability to exploit their natural advantages and their markets in very innovative ways – as this month's **Queensland Fashion Festival** again highlights.

Mr Speaker, tonight I'll be speaking at the Festival's showpiece event here in Brisbane – the Australian Fashion Design Awards, which receive significant sponsorship from the Department of State Development.

This backing is just one of the many ways the Department gets behind the industry, which according to most recent figures employs around 11,700 Queenslanders.

Brisbane, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast in particular are nurturing these thriving textile, clothing, footwear and leather industries.

Although these businesses benefit from our natural advantages in cotton and leather production, their successes spring from their ability to exploit market opportunities created by our casual, sporting and outdoor lifestyles. They're smart companies creating significant national and global niche opportunities.

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Mr Speaker, ~~my~~ Department's ~~a~~ program of assistance has many facets which also include facilitating Commonwealth financial assistance – totalling more than \$600,000 in recent years.

The Department has itself provided industry development assistance to 52 companies totalling \$700,000 and provides a dedicated industry officer working within the sector. It also co-ordinates a market development project that funds industry cluster activities and helps companies participate in international industry events.

And – of course – the Department supports the Fashion Festival in two important ways. Firstly, it helps run a big industry forum during the festival and second, it sponsors the Manufacturers' Award at tonight's Awards celebration.

For the first time this year, the Manufacturers' Award will also have a category for small business – giving smaller innovative companies a chance to gain recognition.

As a “bonus”, there's also financial help for all finalists in the Manufacturers' Award to participate in the annual Hong Kong Fashion Week.

The principle sponsor for the Awards is of course the international telecommunications company – “3”

Mr Speaker, the Queensland Government will continue to support the textile and fashion industries in Queensland to expand and prosper.

State Development has a Memorandum of Understanding to co-operate with the National Retail Association in key areas of industry activity, and we look forward to working with the Association to fashion more Queensland successes in the future.

381 words