

Delegate Report on Launch of Brunei Halal Brand

August 2007

Hume City Council decided to send a delegation to the Brunei Halal Expo to be held in Brunei from August 14 to 16 August 2007. It was resolved at the Council meeting held Monday 23 July 2007 that the Mayor, Councillor Gary Jungwirth, Councillor Adem Atmaca, David Keenan, Director City Sustainability and Vicki Renner, Marketing and Communications Officer, would attend the conference.

Other attendees at the conference included Brian Norwood from Elders, representatives from the Sunraysia Mallee Economic Development Board, Baw Baw Shire Council, Ararat Rural City and Mildura City Council.

In addition there were also representatives from the Victorian Government and a number of businesses from across metropolitan and regional Victoria. These businesses included one business from Hume and also a representative from the Plenty Food Group, which represents over 100 food related businesses from the municipalities of Hume and Whittlesea.

Hume City Council representatives attended the conference and the launch of the Brunei Halal Brand to achieve a number of objectives:

1. To confirm the establishment of a Distribution and Certification Centre at a site within the Melbourne Airport to be constructed by the Brunei Government.
2. To persuade the Brunei Government to commence flights by Royal Brunei Airlines in and out of Melbourne Airport.
3. To introduce and facilitate an agreement between the Government of Brunei and Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE.
4. To further strengthen the relationship between Hume City Council and the Government of Brunei.
5. To make the Government of Brunei aware of some of the businesses that exist in Hume that may contribute to the Brunei Halal Brand through packaging or transport and logistics.

Tuesday 14 August 2007

Hume City Council representatives met with other members of the trade mission. The trade mission totalled 52 persons representing local government, state government, food clusters and the private sector.

In these meetings, the Hume Council representatives discussed not only the opportunities that exist within Brunei, but also the opportunity for some of those businesses located in regional areas to establish a presence in Hume.

On the Tuesday, there was also a briefing held by Mr Brian Norwood of Elders in relation to the program. It was highlighted that due to the complexities surrounding the launch of the Brunei Halal Brand—and the impromptu visit by the Prime Minister

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of Malaysia and the Premier of Vietnam—there may be significant changes to the program.

Mr Norwood outlined the meeting schedule, including a number working breakfasts and dinner functions. In between these functions, Mr Norwood outlined a schedule of meetings between members of the delegation and Brunei Government officials, which included Permanent Secretaries from the departments, meetings with Ministers, and meetings with Deputy Ministers.

Wednesday 15 August 2007

A number of meetings were held with Brunei officials. These included discussions with representatives from the Ministry of Primary Industries and representatives from the Finance Department. The day commenced with a briefing from Dr Ruth Adler, the Australian High Commissioner for Brunei, on how the Australian Government sees business progressing in Brunei. Dr Adler outlined the various activities in which the Australian Federal Government is currently involved. These include defence, training international students, anti-terrorism arrangements, and bilateral trade agreements.

Dr Adler outlined that the Australian High Commission in Brunei was involved in the construction of a War Memorial, which would commemorate the involvement of Australian soldiers in World War II in Brunei. Dr Adler also highlighted the fact that Brunei is the lead negotiator in discussions between Australia and the ASEAN countries; therefore there is already a very strong link between Australia and Brunei.

Dr Adler highlighted several challenges in doing business in Brunei. These include dealing with the large bureaucracy and constraints around the capacity of the Brunei Government to deal with specific issues.

Dr Alder's presentation was followed by a presentation by Suresh Marimuthu, Senior Partner, Pricewaterhouse Coopers. Mr Marimuthu outlined the opportunities in Brunei, providing an overview of both the common law system and the tax implications for companies seeking to establish in Brunei. The presentations were most informative and provided a good background to the meetings that were held later that day with senior Brunei officials.

The next meeting the delegation attended was with the Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Dato Hamdillah. This involved each of the representatives from organisations on the trade mission providing a short one-minute overview on what their organisation was seeking to achieve in Brunei. It should be noted that prior to this meeting, Cr Gary Jungwirth and the other Mayors together with the Victorian State Government representative attended a separate meeting with the Minister of Agriculture and the Deputy Minister, in which the Minister discussed at a high level some of the issues he had in relation to the Brunei Halal Brand Project.

At the larger meeting, it was announced informally that the Brunei Premium Halal Brand would be now known as the Brunei Halal Brand. It was suggested that the word 'premium' be removed given that Brunei already represents a premium. It was also suggested that in the future there maybe some premium lines that are actually

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developed under the brand. Feedback was sought on the changing of the name by the Minister but it was agreed by that the change to Brunei Halal Brand was a good step forward.

At the meeting, the Deputy Minister indicated that that Sultan would not be available to launch the new Brunei Halal Brand at the opening of the conference and Halal Expo on Thursday 16 August 2007. It was indicated that, rather than the Sultan launching the Brunei Halal Brand at the expo, the Minister for Agriculture would officially open the expo and conference. It was also indicated that at the opening of the conference, there would be approximately 20 Memorandum of Understandings signed between Brunei Government authorities and the different participants on the trade mission.

That night, the delegation was invited to an open air reception held within Brunei's capital. An address was made by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Dato Hamdillah, who welcomed the group and thanked them for their participation in the halal exhibition.

Thursday 16 August

A working breakfast was hosted by three Ministers at the International Conference Centre. These included the Minister for Agriculture, the Minister of Health and the Minister for Religious Affairs. The working breakfast allowed businesses and local government representatives to directly raise issues with representatives of the Brunei government regarding the Brunei Halal Brand.

Following the breakfast, Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) were signed by the 20 different companies. From a Hume perspective, a MOU between Hume City Council and the Government of Brunei was signed by Councillor Gary Jungwirth and witnessed by Councillor Adem Atmaca.

A MOU was signed between the Government of Brunei and Kangan Batman TAFE by John Barnes, witnessed by Councillor Gary Jungwirth.

A MOU between the Government of Brunei and the Naturally Good Food Company was signed by company representative, Carmelo Montalto, and witnessed by Councillor Adem Atmaca.

A MOU between the Plenty Food Group was signed by Marshall Dwyer, witnessed by David Keenan.

At the end of the MOU signings, stands at the exhibition centre promoting Australian produce and business opportunities in Australia were opened to the public. Hume participated in the stand established by the Plenty Food Group, which proved to be quite successful, with large numbers of people and Brunei businesses coming through. In the afternoon of the Thursday, further meetings were held with Brunei officials and in addition to this; business matching between Brunei and Australian businesses was facilitated by AusTrade.

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Following the conference, a debriefing was held with Brian Norwood, where Brian indicated the Sultan had now agreed to launch the Brunei Halal Brand and that this would occur on Saturday 18 August 2007. As a result of this, Councillor Jungwirth and Councillor Atmaca were required to stay an additional night in Brunei.

A separate meeting was held with representatives of Regional Development Victoria and the CEOs of Baw Baw, Ararat, Mildura Councils and David Keenan, Director City Sustainability, Hume City Council.

At this meeting, an evaluation of the trip and the objectives of the trade mission were undertaken. It was agreed that within a two-month period, this same group would meet again to evaluate the outcomes.

That night a dinner was hosted by Dato Hamdillah, where he expressed his gratitude for the presence of the Australian Trade Mission and his optimism in moving forward with the launch of the Brunei Halal Brand.

Friday 17 August 2007

The morning commenced with a working breakfast hosted by the Department of Industry and Primary Resources. Hume City Council representatives held discussions with Haji Normah, the Director of the Ministry of Agriculture. Also present was Brian Norwood from Elders. At this meeting, Hume City Council representatives spoke of several initiatives.

These include the establishment of a Distribution Centre incorporating a Certification Facility and the establishment of direct flights from Melbourne to Brunei through the relocating of Royal Brunei Airlines into Melbourne. This offered a cargo solution to Halal produce, and could also encourage tourism links and providing a valuable link for Brunei students into Victoria's high quality education system.

Other initiatives discussed include the facilitation of a training partner, identified as Kangan Batman TAFE. It was also outlined by Hume City Council representatives that accommodation options had been identified for Brunei citizens wishing to move as residents to Victoria immediately.

Haji Normah indicated the Brunei Government is establishing a privatised company to coordinate the Distribution Centre in Hume. She also indicated that discussions are now taking place with Royal Brunei Airlines to redirect flights from Sydney to Melbourne to facilitate the produce and the branding exercise. Haji Normah indicated she will convene a meeting between representatives of Hume City Council, the State Government and Melbourne Airport with a view to finalising the Distribution Centre and the Royal Brunei Airlines having a presence at Melbourne Airport.

Following these morning meetings, a number of other meetings took place with Councillor Jungwirth and Councillor Atmaca with Brunei officials. Mr Keenan and Ms Renner left Brunei on Friday 17 August.

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On the Friday night, along with the other delegates, Councillor Jungwirth and Councillor Atmaca attended an informal reception at the Australian High Commission at the invitation of Dr Ruth Adler.

On Saturday 18 August, the Sultan agreed to open and formally launch the Brunei Halal Brand. As part of this launch, Councillor Jungwirth and Councillor Atmaca were able to meet the Sultan to discuss Hume's involvement at a morning tea and then formally welcome him to the Plenty Food Group stand and further discuss with him the opportunities for Hume City Council. Cr Jungwirth also invited the Sultan to Hume to open the Distribution Centre if it proceeded.

There are a number of key outcomes for Hume City Council as a result of the trade mission to Brunei.

They can be summarised as follows:

1. Hume City Council has signed a Memorandum of Understanding that commits the parties to the establishment of a Distribution Centre within Hume, most likely at Melbourne Airport.
2. Hume City Council now has the support from representatives of the Board of Royal Brunei Airlines for the relocation of Royal Brunei flights from Sydney to Brunei to Melbourne to Brunei.
3. Hume City Council has facilitated a Memorandum of Understanding to be signed between Kangan Batman TAFE and the Government of Brunei that may open up a significant number of opportunities, not just in Brunei and not just relating to the Brunei Halal Brand project.
4. Hume City Council has facilitated the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Plenty Food Group and the Government of Brunei that may allow Hume and Whittlesea businesses to have direct access to a highly lucrative market with an associated brand.
5. Hume City Council has strengthened their relationship with the Government of Brunei, which may result in additional funding for major projects in Hume and Brunei in the long term.