

Brunei bound



Consumers in Brunei are likely to be enjoying more 'tastes of Victoria' as a result of a recent showcase tour organised by Regional Development Victoria (RDV).

Mr Kuan Yew Lim, General Manager of Ben Foods Brunei, one of the country's largest supermarkets, spent a week visiting food manufacturers in Ballarat, Bendigo, Whittlesea and Melbourne.

He was so impressed by the quality and professionalism of the companies he visited that he is arranging for a promotion of Victorian food in Brunei in February 2006.

Ben Foods Brunei has traditionally catered to the western expatriate market, but with many of these positions now being filled by local workers, Mr Lim is searching for products suitable for both expatriates and local residents.

Ben Foods Brunei has long-standing agreements with a number of Victorian companies. As a result of Mr Lim's visit, the company plans to import more frozen products and start importing fresh produce.

In 2004, Victoria exported \$2.4 million worth of food to Brunei.

The Hume/Whittlesea Food Manufacturing Cluster facilitated a day of on-site visits for Mr Lim. John Francis, Director of Economic Development for the City of Whittlesea, says the cluster members were very enthusiastic.

"We had more companies wanting to participate than we had vacancies so we could have easily booked out at least another half day," he says.

John says a number of businesses have had follow-up requests for product samples to be sent to Brunei.

Jennifer McDougall, Managing Director of Australian Fresh Juices, is excited by the success of Mr Lim's visit and the resulting negotiations.

"We were absolutely delighted to be involved. It was a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere where we were able to talk about what his needs were and how we could meet those needs," she says.

For more information, contact Eddie Sullivan, RDV, phone (03) 5320 5915.

e-mail eddie.sullivan@rdv.vic.gov.au



Mr Kuan Yew Lim with Jennifer McDougall (centre) and Mireille Morgan from Australian Fresh Juices.