

Fiji strengthens ties with Queensland

Written by Jinita Prasad

In a move to build a more resilient economic partnership with Queensland, the Fijian Prime Minister, Frank Bainimarama opened the Fiji-Queensland Trade and Investment Symposium in Brisbane on Thursday 20 July 2017. He was accompanied by the Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism, Faiyaz Koya and Minister for Agriculture, Inia Seruiratu along with a number of other senior officials from the government and private sector in Fiji. The Australian Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment, Curtis Pitt was also amongst the invited guests with a total of 150 delegates attending the half day workshop.



For Fiji, bolstering the partnership with Queensland extends beyond the similar weather, the large Fijian community and of course the love for the Maroons when it comes to State of Origin. Queensland continues to play a crucial role in delivering critical social and economic infrastructure projects to Fiji.

The symposium was aimed at strengthening the trade and investment ties between the Fijian Government and Queensland with focus on ICT, Agro-based and mining industries. There were some interesting insights shared by the guest speaker, Shaineel Deo, who founded Half Brick Studios and developed Fruit Ninja one of the most downloaded apps in history. Given his Fijian origin, he spoke about not only his business success but also the resilience and lessons learnt earlier in life when growing up in Fiji. Other speakers included Saud Minam, CEO of ANZ Fiji, who talked about ANZ's successful experience in offshoring to Fiji, sharing some tips with prospective investors considering Fiji as a place of investment. Mike Spencer, the General Manager for Paradise Beverages, highlighted the use of local produce in Fiji for their latest rum products and we also got to hear from Mr Roger Masters, CEO of Buderim Ginger, one of the largest agricultural businesses in Queensland.

The potential for the outsourcing services sector was reiterated at the event, highlighting Fiji's young, English speaking labour market and a reliable technology infrastructure, offering good quality internet at high speed and low costs. In addition to that is the competitive wage levels and a robust private sector. The symposium also shed light on various opportunities in terms of value adding to pristine resources and turning them into high value products.

Australia was the second largest investor in Fiji with investments worth A\$1.87 billion mainly in tourism sector and this symposium aims to pave way for Australian investors to consider Fiji as more than just a tourist destination. With the National Budget for the coming year having no major surprises, the Government is focussed on enhancing Fiji's position as the hub of the region and as the ideal place of investment.

If you are considering Fiji as a place of business, feel free to contact us at [PLN Advisory](http://plnadvisory.com) and find out how we can be of assistance.

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