

- Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen and welcome to Sydney and New South Wales.
- I am delighted and honoured to welcome His Excellency Dr. Surapong Tovichakchaikul, Thailand's Minister of Foreign Affairs to our beautiful harbour City.
- I would like also to welcome Dr Porametee Vimolsiri, Deputy Secretary General of the National Economic and Social Development Board.
- I also offer my congratulations to Dr Atchaka Sibunruang, Secretary General of the Thailand Board of Investment for creating this important opportunity to build stronger trade relationships between Thailand and New South Wales.
- Thailand's relationship with Australia and New South Wales is built on strong and lasting foundations.
- Our two nations co-operate in a broad range of areas of mutual interest, including trade and investment, law enforcement, counter-terrorism, education, security, migration and tourism.
- Formal diplomatic relations were established between Australia and Thailand in 1952 and this year (2012) marks the 60th anniversary of relations.
- The strong bilateral trade links between Thailand and New South Wales – worth more than AUD\$3.7 billion in 2010-11 – are further reinforced by the cultural linkages between our two peoples.
- New South Wales continues to be a leading destination for Thai students, while Thailand attracts large numbers of Australians for tourism and business.
- I am excited to hear about the opportunities being discussed here today at this important forum.

- Thailand's export sector, which accounts for around 70 per cent of the country's GDP, is growing rapidly.
- So it is also encouraging to see the new Thai Government's efforts to stimulate the domestic economy with a series of large-scale infrastructure projects, some of which will be detailed here today.
- I am pleased to see two New South Wales companies, Bluescope and Futuris, here to provide details on their experience of investment in Thailand.
- They are among a wide range of New South Wales companies and organisations with strong interests in Thailand, including the University of New South Wales, Servcorp, Kingsgate, Boral and Blackmores.
- Thailand's economy is the second largest in South East Asia, and as such is an important market for New South Wales companies considering investment or expansion in the region.
- Likewise, NSW is Australia's largest economy, and as a Government we are pursuing a determined strategy to improve the business environment and encourage more investment in our State.
- I look forward to a future opportunity to reflect on the benefits New South Wales offers to Thai companies, and to examine other opportunities to strengthen the links between our economies and our people.
- Once again I want to thank our honoured and distinguished guests and the organisers and participants in today's forum for their efforts.
- Thank you.