

Tokyo, Japan. Monday 20 June 2005

## MINISTER LEADS LARGEST EVER GAMES MISSION TO JAPAN

The Minister for Information and Communications Technology, Marsha Thomson, has arrived in Tokyo to lead a trade mission of Victorian ICT and computer games companies to promote them as an internationally competitive source for innovative products and services.

This will be the largest ever Victorian ICT trade mission to Japan, with 32 companies and around 50 individuals making the trip. It is also the first time Victorian games companies have participated in a Bracks Government trade mission to Japan.

“The mission aims to grow the local ICT industry through building business relationships with Japanese counterparts and attracting new ICT investments to Victoria by showcasing local companies, including leading Victorian games companies,” Ms Thomson said.

“This is a wonderful opportunity to promote the creative talents and diverse offerings of our local games industry to Japan – a world leader in the field.

“It also fits well with the Bracks Government’s innovative industry development initiative, *Game Plan*, designed to grow Victoria’s computer games industry through specific initiatives in the areas of infrastructure, business growth and skills.

“The Bracks Government’s support of the Victorian computer game industry has helped it grow in value and size to become a significant player in the multi-billion dollar global industry.

“The computer game industry is also creating new opportunities for other Victorian companies that are developing multimedia products and visual content. The computer game sector dovetails perfectly with Victoria’s other creative industries and I’m proud to have a significant games contingent joining me on this trade mission.”

The Victorian delegation will visit the Aichi World Expo, as well as travel to Tokyo, Kyoto and Nagoya, for a series of meetings with important players in the Japanese games industry.

Games companies travelling to Japan with Ms Thomson are aiming to build relationships and investigate potential business opportunities.

One of the participants, ENESS, will have its product *Virvisual – The Digital Rocking Horse* featured on stage at the opening of the Expo’s Victoria Week, to be launched by the Victorian Premier, Steve Bracks.

ENESS Technical Director, Steven Mieszewicz, said *Virvisual* is the ultimate toy for the playroom of the future.

“From a design perspective we feel that *Virssual's* cute aesthetic is well suited to the Japanese market. The ICT visit to Japan presents a valuable opportunity to partner up with a Japanese company that is able to provide the knowledge and infrastructure to develop and distribute *Virssual* specifically for the Japanese market,” Mr Mieszewicz said.

“We hope to be able to bring back to Australia valuable knowledge and experience from our meetings with Japanese companies.”

Tantalus Interactive CEO, Tom Crago, also joining the mission, said his company had worked with Japanese publishers in the past.

“We’ve enjoyed success in the Japanese market. Our big hits include *Manx TT Superbike* and *The House of the Dead* with Sega, and the huge hit *Top Gear Rally* with Nintendo. *Top Gear Rally*, received a high award from the prestigious Japanese games magazine Famitsu,” Mr Crago said.

“Ultimately, we're trying to do more business in Japan with our new game for Nintendo DS - *Anaka* -which we think is a good fit with that market.”

*Anaka* was developed with assistance from Multimedia Victoria’s Digital Media Fund and also drew on the talents of another of the mission delegates, Act3animation.

MediaNet is another Melbourne-based company taking its innovations to Japan as part of the trade mission. MediaNet Director, Christopher Coe, sees the trip as a perfect opportunity to expand the market for their latest product *Melodie Mars*, a music game with a focus on playing music as a DJ.

“It’s aimed at youth with a passion for music and adventure and is available as a mobile phone game. It is also in development for PC and console. I was a DJ myself and had the idea to make a game about this culture,” Mr Coe said.

Mr Coe is going to Japan not only as part of the ICT mission but he has also been booked to play (DJ) at one of Tokyo’s premier clubs ‘WOMB’.

The Games companies travelling to Japan with Minister Thomson include:

### **Act3animation Pty Ltd**

Act3animation's services include a full-fledged CG movie pipeline, storyboarding, direction and editing, modelling and digital painting as well as CG cinematography and lighting.

### **Blaze International Limited**

Among Blaze's products is Face Messenger, which allows mobile users to key in a text message and choose an animated character which is then delivered to the recipient as a fully animated spoken video message.

### **ENESS Pty Ltd**

Eness has developed Virssual, a wireless, ride-on rocking horse equipped with its own motion sensor device, allows riders to saddle up and ‘ride’ a 3D game, which is activated and displayed on screen. The game interaction has been designed to mimic the ‘true life’ motion of a rocking horse so that by rocking faster, the rider increases their speed across the terrain.

Virssual is the ultimate toy for the playroom of the future.

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### **MediaNet Productions**

Having won the award for 'Best Unsigned Game' at the Australian Game Developers' Conference in December 2002 with their first title Melodie Mars: The DJ Battles, MediaNet is now under way with the development of a number of different branches of this game for future release.

The Java version of the game for mobile phones has been released around the world and is selling extremely well. Currently, the game is available on J2ME and BREW platforms.

### **Tantalus Interactive**

Tantalus has developed more than 20 games, including Top Gear Rally (GBA), Unreal 2 (Xbox), Manx TT Superbike (Saturn, PC), Monster Truck Madness (GBA), and Space Race (PS2).

### **Torus Games Pty Ltd**

Torus has developed many games using high profile licences on a wide range of game consoles and genres including racing, puzzle, sports, action shooter, adventure, platform, and children's education. To date, products have been developed under contract to large publishers in Europe and the USA. Recently, Torus has begun to explore the creation and development of its own games, the most recent being Legion for Sony PSP. A number of future game and digital content projects are planned for the near future.

### **The Game Developers Association of Australia (GDAA)**

The GDAA was established in December 1999 and comprises corporate members from game development companies and educational institutions, and associate corporate members (in service sectors that support the industry), individuals and students.