



## **Media Report for The Tasmanian Department of Economic Development 5 - 11 January 2008**

### *Politics/Economy/Social*

Monday 7 January, 2008

#### **Japan, Vietnam Confirm Cooperation to Facilitate Investment**

Japan and Vietnam confirmed on 7 January that they will work together to facilitate investment by Japanese firms in the Southeast Asian country, Japanese officials said.

Visiting Japanese Finance Minister Fukushiro Nukaga met with his Vietnamese counterpart Vu Van Ninh and Planning and Investment Minister Vo Hong Phuc, and discussed the importance of building expressways and railways in Vietnam to attract more investment.

Nukaga also talked with Ninh about plans to promote financial cooperation in Asia, ahead of a meeting of finance ministers from the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Japan, China and South Korea in Madrid in May.

The ministerial meeting in Spain will be co-chaired by Japan and Vietnam.

The Madrid gathering is expected to take up regional cooperation measures such as creating a multilateral currency swap scheme to avert a crisis, a regional bond market denominated in local currencies, and a common Asian currency like the euro.

(Summary from Nikkei Net Interactive)

### *Industry/Market – Australia*

Thursday 10 January, 2008

#### **Australia's Beef Exports to Japan Falls by 6.9%**

The volume of Australian beef exports to Japan for 2007 dropped by 6.9% from the previous year to 378,000 tons. The volume of lamb exports also dropped by 28.3% to 8,500 tons.

(Summary translation from Nihon Keizai Shimbun morning edition, Page 7)

## *Industry/Market/Trend – Japan*

Monday 7 January, 2008

### **Aeon's Group Net Profit Rises to 31.9 Billion Yen**

Aeon announced on 7 January that its group net profit rose 25% on year for the nine-month period ended 20 November, thanks partly to a lower tax burden. Aeon reported a group net profit of 31.92 billion yen for March – November 07, up from 25.55 billion yen a year earlier. It posted group revenue of 3.777 trillion yen, a 6.9% gain from the year-earlier 3.534 trillion yen.

The rise was attributed to the inclusion of earnings from Aeon Hokkaido, formerly Posful Corporation, after Aeon boosted its stake in the former affiliate. However, its mainline business was hurt by slump business at its US clothing unit Talbot's on sluggish personal consumption. Weak results at its credit card company Aeon Credit Service also cut into group results. As a result, Aeon's group operating profit fell 24% from a year earlier to 80.67 billion yen.

(Summary from Nikkei Net Interactive)

Monday 7 January, 2008

### **JFE, IHI in Talks to Merge Shipbuilding Operations**

JFE Holdings and IHI Corporation are holding discussions to integrate their shipbuilding operations as early as this year, a move that would create the largest shipbuilder in Japan.

The two firms are looking to consolidate their shipbuilding businesses via Universal Shipbuilding Corporation, a 50-50 joint venture of JFE and Hitachi Zosen. As a first step, JFE recently reached a basic agreement with Hitachi Zosen to increase its stake in Universal Shipbuilding to around 80%. Should JFE and IHI conclude their negotiations successfully, Universal Shipbuilding would be merged with IHI shipbuilding unit IHI Marine United. Hitachi Zosen is expected to hold an interest in the resulting entity as a minority shareholder.

Based on fiscal 2007 sales projections, the merged firm would have sales of roughly 345 billion yen. With its total annual production reaching about 3 million tons, it would have a domestic market share slightly above 18%.

The joint venture would have a total of seven shipyards and plants in Japan and be able to build a wide range of ships, from its mainstay commercial vessels to military ships.

(Summary translation from Nihon Keizai Shimbun morning edition, Page 1)

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