

Townsville business has China in its sights

DANIEL BATEMAN

January 21st, 2009

THEY'VE conquered Korea, now a Townsville business is taking on the big boys to compete for the attention of one of the world's largest consumers of cosmetics.

Larissa Bright Australia, formerly known as Diva Cosmetics, is planning an all out assault on the Chinese market, fresh from negotiating with distributors at a trade mission in Hong Kong last November.

Cosmetic sales in China are expected to build to about \$80 billion within the next two years, with about 3700 manufacturers from the US, France, Germany, Japan and Korea competing in what has been described as a 'fierce' market.

Larissa Bright Australia last year snared a major deal with Korea's third largest cosmetics company, Skincare 5000, which will launch the company's products in 160 stores.

Business owner Larissa Bright said they were currently in negotiations with more Asian distributors.

"We've had a lot of interest from the Asian region because we're focusing on development throughout the China region, internationally," Ms Bright said.

"In cosmetics, the China region turns over \$30 billion every year.

"It actually grew by 13 per cent last year and with the middle class in China, we can see a good opportunity in the market for our product range."

The business, which is operated out of a small two-storey building in Aitkenvale and employs nine people, sells its own range of natural skin and body care, mineral-based cosmetics and aromatherapy products.

Ms Bright said the Chinese were interested in any beauty products with natural Australian ingredients.

"They're interested in the natural products with natural Australian ingredients, like the products with aloe vera and the products with therapeutic value that we have been developing in conjunction with our chemists," she said.

"We have a great market niche over there because we are based on the Great Barrier Reef, so through our organisation we actually do manage to bring the message hopefully to the Asian people that we are on the reef, which is a pristine environment."

Ms Bright unveiled a top-secret new product line to Trade Minister John Mickel during his Townsville visit yesterday, only hinting that the product could reverse the ageing process.

An extremely impressed Mr Mickel said the company was setting a great example for other Queensland small businesses looking to increase their sales and expand.

"This innovative North Queensland company now has Asia firmly in its sights as a target export market for its Queensland-produced beauty and wellbeing products, and represented Townsville on a recent trade mission," he said.

Ms Bright said no matter how much the company grew, she hoped it would always be based in Townsville.

"We love Townsville, we love the natural environment," she said.

"It's my hometown now. We've been here 10 years. I have children in Townsville, and for us, we don't see it as an impediment in reaching the international market.

"Simply by being regional, it doesn't mean you can't have an international focus, and we really want to show the regional community that we can progress to that without being in a major capital city."

