

Hong Kong awards celebrate successes

CHRISTOPHER RUSSELL
BUSINESS EDITOR

FASHION has joined the growing range of trade links between South Australia and Hong Kong.

The sector's potential was highlighted with a fashion parade last night as the Hong Kong Australia Business Association celebrated the achievements of leading entrepreneurs at the presentation of its 2009 business awards.

SA businesses were continuing to find new trade opportunities despite the downturn, HKABA's SA president Patrick Ho said.

The association has sponsored three successful trade missions this year - including last month to Hong Kong Fashion Week - and was now gathering delegates for a wine fair in November and the Hong Kong Forum in December.

"Some of our members are taking this as an opportunity to find new niches," Mr Ho said. "Numbers at the trade fairs have been down a bit but the quality of participants has been better. These are really serious people and our members have found it very useful."

The Fashion Week delegation included a group of Marlestone TAFE students whose designs were showcased during the awards ceremony at the National Wine Centre.

The HKABA 2009 awards recognised two-way trade.

The export of services award was won by accounting and consulting firm mhm, which opened a Hong Kong office in 2007.

mhm's Asian operations are headed by partner Roger McNicholas from the Hong Kong office. Mr McNicholas, an MBA and mechanical engineering graduate from the University of SA, uses Hong Kong as a springboard for the region, especially mainland China.

"There is a demand for expertise across a very wide range of industries and we're trying to be the bridge to help Australian companies do business there," he said.

The export of goods award was won by educational producer Era Publications.

Era Publications exports to more than 30 countries with products



ON THE WAY UP: mhm Hong Kong partner Roger McNicholas and, top, a Marlestone TAFE student design. **Picture: CHRIS MANGAN**

developed in SA and printed in China via Hong Kong.

Managing director Rod Martin thanked his Hong Kong partners, Prolong Press.

"The trust Era Publications has established with its Hong Kong colleagues allows them to license companies to print works knowing they will protect copyright from piracy," the award citation said.

The import of goods award went

to Design Initial, which brings in furniture under exclusive contracts.

Entrepreneur of the Year was awarded to Michael Higgs Jnr, whose company World Wide Wearables specialises in promotional products, corporate apparel and business gifts.

Mr Higgs was acknowledged for raising the profile of Hong Kong trade.