Ambassadors and High Commissioners from nine of the Northern Territory’s closest neighbouring countries will visit Darwin early next month during the inaugural Open Territory Program of events.

The Canberra-based Heads of Mission (HOMs) of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) will meet with Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Asian Engagement and Trade Peter Styles as well as departmental, business and community representatives.

Mr Styles said the three-day visit from 3 – 6 April would include representatives from Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, the Philippines and Indonesia.

“The Northern Territory Government is committed to broadening its engagement with our neighbours,” Mr Styles said.

“This visit aligns with our Asian Engagement, Trade and Investment Strategic Plan to strengthen ties within our region.

“It will help shape our relationships with the ASEAN countries face-to-face through personal introductions to political, community and business leaders in the NT.

“This is an opportunity to discuss and promote the Territory’s political, economic and cultural engagement within our region and to explore trade prospects as well as promote Territory business, education, research collaboration, tourism and investment opportunities.

“The ASEAN countries represent a significant market for the Northern Territory’s exports and we can expect them to become a more significant source of investment, of international students and of visitors to NT tourism destinations.”

ASEAN is a political and economic organisation of 10 Southeast Asian Countries. It was formed in 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand and since then the membership has expanded to include Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.

The visit comes during the early stages of the Country Liberals Government’s inaugural Open Territory program of events which aims to showcase trade and investment in the Territory as well as profile locally, nationally and internationally what NT businesses, suppliers and industries have to offer.
“The ASEAN representatives will use this opportunity to preview arrangements for some of the major events to be attended by companies from their countries during Open Territory,” Mr Styles said.

“These include; the Red Carpet Investment Forum, the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) Ministerial meeting, The Australia-Asia Regional Chambers Forum and the Territory Expo.

“The NT Government is also looking for opportunities that may arise from the recently-signed Trans-Pacific Partnership Free Trade Agreement which includes some ASEAN members.

“The Country Liberals Government is committed to capitalising on our close proximity to Asia to generate opportunities for Territorians, create jobs and deliver on our plan for a prosperous Territory economy for years to come.”

For more information on the Open Territory program visit www.openterritory.nt.gov.au.

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