



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

## **AUSTRALIA CHINA YOUTH DIALOGUE**

**Friday 2 November, 2018**

**Mr Zhao Jian**, Chinese Consul-General to Melbourne

**Ms Natalie Cope**, Chair, Australia China Youth Dialogue and **Directors of the Australia China Youth Dialogue**

**Delegates**

**Distinguished guests**

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we are gathering and pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to any Elders here with us this afternoon.

My husband, Tony, and I are delighted to join you today to welcome many of you to Victoria. Each year, since 2010, the Australia China Youth Dialogue has brought together young delegates – emerging leaders from across many disciplines – to discuss the bilateral relationship between our two nations.

I would like to start by congratulating the 30 delegates here today. Each of you has been chosen as amongst the best and brightest of your country. And there is no doubt that you will play an important role supporting the long-term relationship between Australia and China.

I am conscious that I am talking not only to some of the most promising young stars on our shared horizon, but also to those who understand the importance of two fundamentals for a prosperous future: a global outlook and strong relationships.

In today's globalised world, relationships and ideas so often transcend geographical borders and boundaries.

You are growing as leaders in a time that views international collaboration as the norm for almost any important business, government or community enterprise. Indeed, not only the norm, but crucial to the success of individuals, organisations and nations.

That said, you are also growing as leaders in uncertain times. For some nations, such uncertainty causes them to withdraw inwards, to narrow their outward outlook. In Australia – and in Victoria – experience tells us that we have always been at our most prosperous when we have maintained our international engagement.

But the very best of international relationships are undoubtedly fostered by strong people to people connections. By meeting with each other. Talking. Sharing experiences. Celebrating the difference and diversity between one another. Recognising common interests. Building understanding, respect and trust. Being able, when necessary, to talk frankly with each other when a tough issue arises – as is inevitable in any long-term relationship.

Australia certainly has a long history with China: a long relationship.

This year is the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival in Australia of the first Chinese migrant.

In 1818, Mak Sai Ying, a young man from Guangdong Province arrived in Port Jackson, Sydney. He purchased land in Parramatta, and later opened a hotel there.

And closer to my own home, the first Chinese migrants came here to Victoria in the 1850s, hoping to strike gold. These entrepreneurs, and their descendants, have made a long and lasting mark on our State and our vibrant multicultural community.

Now, there are some 1.2 million people in Australia with Chinese ancestry.

And each year, around 70,000 Chinese students study here in Victoria.

Victoria has enjoyed an active and close sister state relationship with Jiangsu Province for almost four decades. And more recently, in 2016, Victoria and Sichuan also became sister

states. Sharing educational experiences is one of the key features of these sister state relationships.

Today, China is Australia's (and also Victoria's) largest trading partner.

We recognise the importance of China in our international outlook.

In 2016, the Victorian Government launched its China Strategy, 'Partnerships for Prosperity', which laid out a blueprint to support economic growth, while also deepening the understanding of one another's people and culture.

Australia and China are working together across opportunities spanning education, science, business and cultural exchange. These collaborations bring significant economic and social benefits to both countries.

As the Governor of Victoria since July 2015, I have been able to see and experience many aspects of the relationship between Victoria and China.

I have welcomed many of your leaders here, and been graciously welcomed across several visits to China.

Together, we have discussed – amongst other things – international engagement, infrastructure investment and joint ventures, biomed and biotechnology, urban planning, water management and significant cultural and sporting exchanges.

As to sports, our indigenous game of Australian football is now played in China. I wonder if you have ever seen it? Unfortunately, it is not the season right now, but it is worth watching on TV if you can. It's exciting, physical and fast. I admit I am biased. I used to be on its governing body and I like it very much!

I am impressed to see how well the Australia China Youth Dialogue echoes what is considered 'best-practice' in terms of international engagement.

Your discussions will be guided by four main themes: diplomacy, trade and innovation, culture and education and sports.

Through the conversations that will take place across the next four days, I am confident that you will forge a deeper understanding between our nations and cultures, and will pave the way for greater connections into the future.

This is a wonderful program that is an important platform for early career leaders to advance and promote Australia-China relations. You are the generation who will hone, refine and nurture those connections.

I'd like to commend everyone involved with this initiative.

For those of you visiting Victoria for the first time, please ensure that you enjoy the offerings around you during your stay: from the coffee culture, restaurants and charming laneways, to our renowned parks, sports and the arts.

Or, perhaps you will have an opportunity to venture further afield to our wineries in the Yarra Valley or on the Mornington Peninsula, the breathtaking Great Ocean Road or our world famous fairy penguins at Philip Island.

May I wish you all the very best for your discussions and debate in this important dialogue between our nations.