



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

SHANGHAI SHARKS vs SOUTH EAST MELBOURNE PHOENIX BASKETBALL MATCH

Friday 31st May 2019

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr Zhao, President of Shanghai International Cultural Exchange Association

Mr Zhu, Chairman of Grand Shanghai Federation in Melbourne

Mr Xu, Head Coach of Shanghai Jiao Tong University

The Honourable Martin Pakula MP, Minister for Racing, Minister for Innovation and Trade,
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

The Honourable John Brumby AO, Former Premier of Victoria and National President,
Australia China Business Council and Dr Rosemary McKenzie

Mr Jeremy Loeliger, CEO National Basketball League of Australia

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

And a special acknowledgement to the students with us this evening, who are all studying the Victorian Certificate of Education here in Shanghai.

Tony and I are so pleased to be here.

We came here first some forty years ago now and have visited over the years. Your's is a wonderful, dynamic city.

Victoria and Shanghai have much in common. This evening it is our shared love of sport that brings us together. We are excited to watch the Shanghai Sharks meet our National Basketball League's newest team, South East Melbourne Phoenix.

It is no surprise that the south-east of Melbourne has been chosen as the home for this new franchise.

The Phoenix come from one of the fastest growing parts of Victoria, which is itself the fastest growing State in Australia. This team will not be short of fans and supporters'.

We know how much basketball is appreciated – and loved – in China. It is certainly popular in Australia too. But then again, we are sports-crazy in Australia, and particularly in Victoria.

Many of you here are alumni of Australian Universities. You know that.

Hopefully you enjoyed our very busy calendar of sports and major events when you were studying there. And saw how we love to participate in sport and physical activity of all kinds.

Melbourne has of course hosted Olympic and Commonwealth Games. It hosts some of the world's most sought-after annual sporting events, such as the Australian Open Tennis Grand Slam and the Australian Formula One Grand Prix. In addition this year, we will host the President's Cup Golf. Next year, the World Cup of Cricket.

And our own sporting events attract enormous crowds. Last season, our game of Australian football alone attracted attendances of more than 7.5 million spectators.

I am, naturally, proud that within the last few years, Melbourne has been named as the SportBusiness Ultimate Sport City of the decade at awards in Switzerland. And last year, we won awards for Best Venues and Best Events Strategy.

Can I say that we not only love our sport and major events, but we know they are important too.

They are important for their inspiration to our health and well-being, with 3.9 million Victorians (well over half our population) engaged in sport or active recreation. Important too as a part of Victoria's strong growth economy. And integral to Victoria's consistent growth as a centre of innovation generally, and specifically when it comes to sports technology.

Sixty-five per cent of Australian sports technology industries are based in Victoria. They cover every aspect of sports and events, including high performance, sports analytics, facility and event management and professional and educational services.

In fact, coinciding with this game, we have a Sports and Sports Technology Trade Mission and Australia-China Sports Summit. I am sure that some of those involved are here this evening. No doubt there will be much animated discussion to be had about some of the exciting developments in both China and in Victoria, and emerging partnerships and collaborations.

It is of course a particular pleasure that Minister Pakula is here in Shanghai for the Summit, the AFL game on Sunday and this game this evening.

The Minister's mixed portfolios covering Jobs, Innovation and Trade, and Tourism, Sport and Major Events no doubt ensure his enthusiastic engagement in every aspect of the discussions here this week.

I expect that the Minister will be a keen supporter this evening and, like me, an especially keen supporter of our team based in Victoria. Within the bounds of diplomacy of course!

Seriously, we are so very pleased that this game brings us all together.

That our South East Melbourne Phoenix has chosen to play its first games here in China is a testament to the strong relationship between Victoria and China. And I genuinely believe that sport provides a universal language through which relationships can be built and strengthened.

Now, to finish, I am forced to admit that I am not an expert when it comes to basketball. I do have an expert though in my party.

Jeremi Moule, the Deputy Secretary of our Premier's Department, is not only one of the State's most senior officials, he is also an accomplished basketball coach and a former Commissioner of the Women's National Basketball League.

May I suggest that you seek him out. He can discuss both the basketball AND all the exciting growth in Victoria. Useful!

Please also seek out Tim Dillon, the Victorian Government Trade and Investment Commissioner, and his team, here in Shanghai. I can't vouch for their basketball knowledge, but I can vouch for the fact that they will be very willing to help you in any way that they can.

You are important to us. Those of you who have come from Victoria. Those of you who have spent time in Victoria. And any of you who would like to spend time in Victoria or have interests that you would like to pursue there or with Victorian companies or organisations.

In a global environment, the connections are what count. You have them, and I have no doubt that you can engage with them to your advantage, and to the mutual benefit of China and Victoria.