



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

## **LAUNCH OF 2019 AFL CHINA MATCH**

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2019**

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

**The Honourable John Brumby**, Former Premier of Victoria, and National President, Australia China Business Council and CEO, **Ms Helen Sawczak AM**

**Mr Jianhua ZENG**, Deputy Consul-General of the People's Republic of China

**Mr Richard Goyder**, Chairman, **Mr Gillon McLachlan**, CEO, and other AFL Commissioners.

**Mr David Koch**, President, Port Adelaide Football Club and CEO, **Mr Keith Thomas**

**Mr Andrew Bassat**, Chair, St Kilda Football Club and CEO, **Mr Matt Finnis**

**All distinguished guests**

**Ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys**

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 morning.

It is always a pleasure for me and for Tony to welcome our guests to Government House, especially when it is to celebrate and to launch something dear to our hearts.

The AFL China Match combines several of our interests and convictions.

My interest in AFL – footy – is not new news. My seven years on the AFL Commission is a public manifestation of that. Tony and I were in fact in Shanghai in 2010 when the first Exhibition match was played at Jiangwan Stadium.

That was the game in which Liam Jurrah starred.

He played so magnificently, particularly with a string of soaring and flamboyant marks and the winning goal towards the end.

When I say 'towards the end'.... I am still not entirely convinced that, with everybody loving Jurrah's display, the end of that game was not somewhat delayed. Just saying! Remember, it was only a game for fun!!

As an AFL Commissioner, I was also fortunate to be present to see our first game for points on foreign soil - in Wellington in 2013.

Now, for the third consecutive year, a game for points will be played in Shanghai.

Port Adelaide of course will continue its commitment to this fixture, and this year it will be joined by the St Kilda Football Club.

Even though another pre-eminent Victorian team, (in red and black, without the white...just to give you a hint), will not be playing, I will of course be supporting our Victorian team.

Kochie, forgive me.

I have great respect for the Port Adelaide Football Club. I have great respect for what you do. And I have great respect for the genuine relationships that you have forged in China and with Chinese Australians but, I **am** the Governor of Victoria. Once the siren blows, supporting a non-Victorian team is simply not an option for me.

The great delight for us is that this year we shall be in China for the game. We will be able to see first-hand how the seeds of that Exhibition Game, almost a decade ago, have been nurtured into this important fixture.

That brings me to my conviction as to the importance of this game.

Australia and China share a long and strong relationship, with the first Chinese settler arriving here some 200 years ago.

Of course, the Gold Rush of the 1850's brought to Victoria many Chinese who settled here, bringing family and culture that have forged an important part of our history.

It is how we can boast the oldest Chinatown in Australia and we say that too, illustrated by Bendigo's famous dragons Loong and Sun Loong, and the pending arrival of Dai Gum Loong.

But the relationship between Australia and China is not just a relationship steeped in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

On this upcoming trip we shall visit Nanjing, (our second official visit there in this role), to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sister State relationship between Victoria and Jiangsu Province.

It is a relationship that has seen meaningful collaborations in international education, business, investment, medical research, tourism and government exchanges.

On this trip too, we shall visit southern China, in particular the Greater Bay Area of the Pearl River Delta, which is seeing unprecedented growth and innovation for its 65 million residents. Already, we know that we share many exciting opportunities with each other.

Sports diplomacy has long been recognised as a fruitful aspect of Australia's global connections. Never more so than when it involves our indigenous game.

And so, on 2 June 2019, not only will there again be thousands of Australian fans that will travel to the game – and, through broadcasting rights, the game could be the most watched AFL game in history - but also, once gathered in Shanghai, people to people, business to business and government to government relationships will be enhanced.

I am pleased that a series of business events has been scheduled to coincide with the 2019 game.

I thank the AFL for its leadership, the Port Adelaide Football Club for its vision and commitment to the game and to our relationship with China and Australian Chinese. I thank the St Kilda

Football Club for its enthusiasm in joining this historic game. And, of course, I thank the ACBC for so successfully bringing Chinese and Australian businesses together.

And finally, may I thank the community football clubs and the AusKick kids who have joined us here today.

You remind us why footy matters, why we embrace our diversity and why international relationships matter. It is all about our future. In the words of our State motto, our future 'peace and prosperity'.

Now it is my pleasure to introduce the Minister to address us.