

Speech by Mrs Jenny Wallis,
Director of the Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office,
at the HKSAR 10th Anniversary Dinner jointly organised by the
Australian Council for the Promotion of Peaceful Reunification of China
&
the Australian Council of Chinese Organisations, NSW
on Sunday, 17 June 2007

Distinguished guests,

It gives me great pleasure to be here today for this special event which marks a significant milestone in the history of Hong Kong. And I would like to offer my government's sincerest appreciation to the Australian Council for the Promotion of Peaceful Reunification of China and the Australian Council of Chinese Organisations for organising this dinner.

At mid-night on 1st July ten years ago, the small, vibrant and densely populated territory of Hong Kong reverted to Chinese sovereignty, after more than 150 years of British colonial rule. Hong Kong was promised a high degree of autonomy and the emphasis was on Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong. The notion that two systems could co-exist within one country was undoubtedly a bold one, and in the run-up to 1997, there were many questions raised about Hong Kong's future. But I believe that what has happened in the past ten years have cleared those doubts. The transition from a colony to a Special Administrative Region has been remarkably smooth. With the firm support of the Central Government, and the commitment of the Hong Kong people, we have turned the concept of 'One Country, Two Systems' into a successful working reality and Hong Kong has continued to flourish because of its free, open and competitive society.

And closer ties with the Mainland have opened up enormous opportunities for Hong Kong. CEPA, our free trade arrangement with the Mainland; the Individual Visits Scheme; the liberalisation of Renminbi business in Hong Kong and the greater co-operation with the Pan Pearl River Delta Region etc. are but some of the important measures that have propelled our economy to new highs. They have also strengthened our position as a major international financial centre and a vibrant cosmopolitan city that thrives on the success of 'One Country, Two Systems'. So today Hong Kong is in pretty good shape whichever way you look at it. The generation of wealth over the past few years has continued to build greater stability and prosperity for our seven million residents, including the many Australians and people from all over the world who have chosen to make Hong Kong their home.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me, in closing, to thank Dr Goh, Dr Tan and their colleagues again for the dinner and I wish you all an enjoyable evening.