

Speech by Mrs Jenny Wallis,  
Director of the Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office,  
at the Opening Reception of the Photo Exhibition  
“Hong Kong – A Fascinating City”  
organised by the Chinese Embassy in Canberra  
on Wednesday, 27 June 2007

Ambassador Zhang Junsai, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be here today for this special event which marks a significant milestone in the history of Hong Kong – a place we like to call Asia’s world city. And I would like to offer my government’s sincerest appreciation to the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in Australia for staging this exhibition, which portrays the remarkable progress of our city in the decade since the resumption of sovereignty on 1 July 1997.

Of course the significance of today’s event goes much deeper: it goes to the very existence of Hong Kong as an integral – but special – part of the People’s Republic of China. I say special because that is what we are – a Special Administrative Region of China with unique international characteristics, a high degree of autonomy, the rule of law, as well as freedoms of all kinds, all of which are embodied in Mr Deng Xiaoping’s ingenious ‘One Country, Two Systems’ formula and enshrined by our mini-constitution, the Basic Law. Many had doubted the notion that two separate systems could co-exist within one country, and in the run-up to 1997, there were many questions raised about Hong Kong’s future. Fortune Magazine even famously, or infamously, predicted the “Death of Hong Kong”. But I believe that what has happened in the past ten years have cleared those doubts, and the

doomsayers' predictions became nothing more than dust in the wind. Yes, we did go through some difficult and challenging times in that period, but none has been as a result of our change of sovereignty. With the firm support of the Central Government, and the commitment of the Hong Kong people, 'One Country, Two Systems' is a successful working reality and Hong Kong has continued to flourish because of its free, open and competitive society.

The ever closer ties with the Mainland have also 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 are but some of the important measures that have propelled our economy to new highs. They have strengthened our position as a major international financial centre, tourist destination and logistics hub. 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.

This evening's photographic exhibition encompasses all that I have said – and more – and I commend it to you. So let me once again thank the Chinese Embassy for making it all possible. Thank you.