



**Australian Consulate-General
Hong Kong
澳洲駐香港總領事館**

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Australia Day 2017

**Grand Hyatt Hong Kong
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Hong Kong

1. Hello everyone, thank you all for joining us.
2. I acknowledge all the distinguished guests with us tonight, particularly Madam Tong Xiaoling, Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and I am pleased to have Hong Kong's newly-appointed Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, with us to mark Australia's National Day.
3. Australia Day is actually Thursday – a date we share as national day with India.
4. In the spirit of fellowship and good diplomatic relations, it's our Indian friends' turn to celebrate on the 26th.

5. The theme of our Australia Day reception this year is “Innovative Creative Australia”, and you will see around you evidence of the innovation and creativity of our events team.
6. We take pride in the fact that international partnerships enable people the world over to enjoy on a daily basis the benefits of Australia’s creative thinking, often without them realising.
7. You will shortly enjoy quality, fresh Australian produce, brought here thanks to the Australian invention of refrigeration.

8. Ultrasound, life-saving pacemakers, a vaccine that protects against cervical cancer, and the real-life “bionic ear” – a cochlear implant - are examples of the work of Australian scientists.
9. And, by the way, we’re now well advanced on the development of a bionic eye.
10. If you enjoy the convenience of high-speed WiFi, use Google Maps to navigate, or enjoy safe air travel, thanks to the cockpit voice recorder or aircraft inflatable slides, then it’s Australian innovation on which you rely.

11. Australia produces excellent research, but it's the partnerships I mentioned earlier that help translate such ideas into commercial realities.
12. This is something Hong Kong does well.
13. Australia's wool industry for example, represented by our award-winning event partner Woolmark, is the world's most innovative but around this room tonight, it's Hong Kong designers that have brought this fibre to life.
14. The Octopus Card, based on technology developed by a small company in Perth, is ubiquitous thanks to Hong Kong commercial acumen.

15. We welcome the priority given by the Hong Kong government to innovation in last week's Policy Address, and look forward to further partnerships in this area.
16. Australia's experience shows that Governments cannot buy innovation, although start-up funds are always welcomed.
17. Rather, Governments foster innovation by being open to goods and services, capital, people and most of all ideas from around the world.
18. After a year in which the world's media have proclaimed the death of globalisation, Australian Ministers have been loudly championing the benefits of openness.

19. As a demonstration of Australia's continuing openness to foreign investment, the Attorney-General and Treasurer yesterday announced reforms to the way we manage investment in Australia's critical infrastructure to provide investors early advice on any potential issues.
20. We have also, with New Zealand, launched the Australia New Zealand Infrastructure Pipeline, a one-stop web portal of major infrastructure investment opportunities.
21. We work closely with Hong Kong to promote economic liberalisation through the WTO and APEC.

22. At a bilateral level, we continue to explore further strengthening through possible free trade and double taxation agreements and a truly liberalising air-services agreement.
23. And we welcome here our fourth cohort of New Colombo Plan Scholars thanks to the support of the Hong Kong government.
24. But our relationship is not built primarily on government agreements.
25. Its real strength relies on the connections between Australian and Hong Kong people.
26. Hong Kong is home to the second largest concentration of Australians overseas – we think around 100,000.

27. It will be no surprise to you that Hong Kong also hosts the largest offshore Australian business community.
28. Australians are drawn to Hong Kong for the warmth with which your administration and the people of Hong Kong extend the hand of friendship.
29. Fantastic food and world-class public transport also help.
30. Australian businesses base themselves in Hong Kong to take advantage of its efficient and transparent regulatory environment and rule of law, backed by an independent judiciary and the freedoms of an open civil society.

31. These indispensable elements of “One Country, Two Systems” are what allow Hong Kong to play the role the Chief Executive likes to call a “super-connector” to mainland China: a role that brings great benefits both to Hong Kong and the mainland.

32. “One Country, Two Systems” has been much discussed in Hong Kong recently. I would like to assure everyone here tonight that Australia will play its part to support and protect this precious, essential element of what makes Hong Kong unique as a global city.

33. Gavin mentioned our event sponsors earlier and I too want to acknowledge their support, as well as the contribution of the broader Australian community in Hong Kong and Macau to Australia's presence in the region.

34. Of course none of this would be possible without the friendship and support of the Hong Kong Administration and our Hong Kong partners, for which we are enormously grateful.

35. In that spirit, Mr Secretary, I would like to thank you again and to propose a toast:

To the people of the People's Republic of China and of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.