

SE News
HD **Touching the face of the dragon**
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China has come knocking at Tasmania's door, writes Premier Will Hodgman THE week ahead promises to be an exciting and historic time for our state. The visit tomorrow by **Chinese** President Xi Jinping will be a significant milestone in Tasmania's history.

It presents a great opportunity for our state, and for our future prosperity. It will provide an unparalleled opportunity to raise Tasmania's profile to the most populous country in the world. Literally tens of **millions** of people in **China** will receive images of their President visiting our state — marketing no amount of money can **buy**.

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To give some perspective on this, consider that recently when I met **China's** Foreign Minister Wang Yi during his visit to the state, an image of us meeting on the Foreign Ministry's website was viewed an incredible 50 **million** times in just three days.

That's why we are putting significant effort into marketing Tasmania to our key markets and capitalising on this opportunity. I've got to say, the timing couldn't be better with Lonely Planet just recently ranking us in the top four must-see destinations in the world, and just last week Saffire being judged best luxury resort in the world.

It will be important for all of us to show a welcoming face to our international visitors and to demonstrate the friendliness and hospitality for which our state is famous.

Similarly, President Xi's visit provides us with a massive opportunity to grow our export markets into **China**, and to attract **Chinese** investment here.

Chinese business ties to Tasmania are already strong, with direct trade (including **Hong Kong**) of \$784 **million** or 28.5 per cent of our merchandised exports.

China is our largest single trading partner and increasingly a major source of much needed investment into our **island** state.

Some examples of these investments in **mining** include Jiangsu Shagang **Group's** **stake** in Grange Resources' Savage River Mine and **China** MinMetals ownership of the Rosebery Mine.

In **energy**, Shenhua **Energy** via its Guohua subsidiary has **purchased** a major **stake** in Hydro Tasmania's **wind** farms.

There is increasing interest in our secure and safe agricultural industries, an example being the recent investment in the beef industry on King **Island** by the Nanshan **Group**.

To help capitalise on President Xi's visit, the Government is hosting our first "TasInvest" conference. Held over three days, TasInvest will showcase our state's competitive advantages in three key sectors — agribusiness, tourism and resources — as well as promoting opportunities in potential growth areas such as international education, and Antarctic and Southern Ocean research. TasInvest will also

feature business-to-business matching sessions, and **site** tours in all regions of our state — South, North, and North-West.

I am extremely pleased that all events are **sold** out, with more than 270 registered delegates to the TasInvest conference, with more than 100 delegates from **China**, including eight **Chinese** Fortune 500 companies plus senior interstate delegates from ASX companies, and financial institutions such as Westpac, NAB, Torque **Mining**, Pitcher Partners, and Australian Super.

Events and field tours will be held right around our state, showcasing the fantastic opportunities to invest in our competitive advantages such as **mining**, agriculture and tourism, and a massive 650 people will be attending the dinner — demonstrating, I believe, a real confidence in our state's future.

In my view, building on our successful ties with **China** is important for the future prosperity of Tasmania, for growing our economy and for creating jobs for Tasmanians. That's why I accepted the offer from the Prime Minister to visit **China** with him and all the other state Premiers just two weeks after being sworn into office; it was an opportunity too good to miss.

On that trip, I was able to hand-deliver the message that Tasmania is open for business and I'm pleased that trip is now paying dividends.

On that trip I was able to personally extend and reinforce the invitation to President Xi to visit our state that then-premier Lara Giddings offered in 2013.

It was on that trip that I met representatives of the **Chinese** Development Bank, cementing our commitment to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding with them, which I am today signing in Canberra. This MOU will provide unprecedented opportunities for Tasmanian businesses to access **Chinese** investment.

And it was on this trip that I met Andrew "Twiggy" Forrest, who was travelling as part of the Prime Minister's business delegation. I'm delighted that he has accepted my invitation to visit Tasmania and participate in our program of events over the next few days.

I hope in years to come we can look back at the events of and around November 18, 2014, with pride. Pride in what we have been able to achieve and pride in that we have grasped the opportunities that have come forward from closer ties with **China**. A key measure will be economic growth and greater job numbers. While Government has an important role to play, it will be the efforts of all of us, including most particularly Tasmanian businesses and the support of the broader community that will enable these opportunities and **lead** to a more prosperous Tasmania.

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpri : Politics/International Relations

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