

**40TH ANNIVERSARY OF SISTER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
TASMANIA AND FUJIAN PROVINCE
SPEECH BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, WEDNESDAY 15 DECEMBER 2021**

[Vice-Regal Salute is played]

Please be seated.

Distinguished guests, including:

- His Excellency Mr Zhao Long, Acting Governor of Fujian Province
- The Honourable Guy Barnett MP, representing the Tasmanian Government
- The Honourable Sir Guy Green, former Governor of Tasmania
- The Honourable Doug Lowe, Patron of the Australian Fujian Association of Tasmania and former Premier
- Mr Long Zhou, Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Melbourne
- Mr Michael Sadleir, Australian Consul General in Guangzhou;

Good evening and welcome to the Hobart celebration of the 40th Anniversary of our Sister State Relationship between Tasmania and Fujian Province.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community. I recognise a history of truth, which acknowledges the impacts of colonisation upon our Aboriginal People. I stand for a future that respects and acknowledges Aboriginal stories, culture, language and history.

This 40th Anniversary is an opportunity to reflect on how our two peoples have deepened our friendship and worked together to promote our common and shared interests.

In 1980, our then Tasmanian Premier, Doug Lowe, became the first Tasmanian leader to visit China.

He met with Fujian Governor Ma Xingyuan who reciprocated the visit a year later. Mr Lowe had Governor Ma for tea, and they both signed the Sister Relationship Agreement.

In the decades following, successive leaders from Tasmania and Fujian have visited one another, extending the connections from the political through to the community.

In 1998 Sir Guy Green, as Governor of Tasmania, paid a visit to the city of Fuzhou in Fujian. He also travelled more widely, delivering lectures on Tasmania to local university students.

Sir Guy continues as Patron of the Tasmania Chapter of The Australia China Business Council.

The deepening of our Tasmania-Fujian relationship was further advanced by our late Premier of Tasmania, Jim Bacon, during a visit to Fujian in 2001. He met with then-Governor Xi Jinping and was bestowed an honorary citizen of Fujian. At that time, Mr Bacon invited Governor Xi to visit Tasmania.

Former Premier, Lara Giddings visited Fujian three times and also invited now-President Xi of the People's Republic of China to visit Tasmania.

In addition to these invitations from our Tasmanian Premiers, it was, I understand, an invitation from Tasmania's "future" leaders that sealed the deal. Sixteen primary school students from Scotch Oakburn College in Launceston invited Fujian's most famous Governor to visit our State.

Tuesday 18 November 2014 was that memorable day. The Government House Guest Book bears the signature of President Xi, marking his visit with Madame Peng Liyuan. On that day, President Xi planted a magnolia tree on the East Parklands, which can be seen from the Conservatory or during a walk in the magnificent gardens of Government House.

To our colleagues in Fujian [on screen] I have no doubt you will share just as many fond memories and connections. It is my honour to speak of our friendship and history. I extend our very best wishes from Tasmania for an even stronger collaboration and future.

In conclusion, as we move to the year of the tiger, as a mark of our friendship, tonight our Government House will be lit up in yellow, the international colour of friendship, our forty years of friendship.

Thank you.