

## **CE meets Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Transport of Australia (with photo)**

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, met the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Transport of Australia, Mr Michael McCormack, at the Chief Executive's Office this morning (July 6).

Mrs Lam welcomed Mr McCormack, who visits Hong Kong to take part in the launching ceremony of a direct flight between Hong Kong and Sydney operated by an Australian airline, signifying the growing relationship between Hong Kong and Australia. The two places have close economic and trade ties, she said, pointing out that Hong Kong is Australia's fifth largest export market for goods, seventh largest trading partner in services and fifth largest source of investment. In addition, more than 600 Australian companies operate in Hong Kong. Noting that she was delighted to learn that the negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement between Hong Kong and Australia have been making good progress, she said she looks forward to the early conclusion of the negotiations and the commencement of discussion on a comprehensive avoidance of double taxation agreement to bring about more business opportunities for enterprises of both places.

Mrs Lam said that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), which has just celebrated the 21st anniversary of its establishment, has successfully implemented "One Country, Two Systems" over the years. The rule of law and judicial independence in the HKSAR are upheld and various rights of the people are fully protected. Pointing out that four of the overseas non-permanent judges of the Court of Final Appeal are from Australia, she said those illustrious judges have made significant contributions to the city's rule of law and reflect its judicial independence.

As Hong Kong and Australia have established sound foundations for co-operation in various aspects, Mrs Lam expressed the hope that the two places would continue to expand co-operation and exchanges in areas including cultural and creative industries as well as innovation and technology.

