

[HKETO Sydney holds reception in Melbourne to celebrate Year of the Pig \(with photos\)](#)

To celebrate the Year of the Pig, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Sydney (HKETO Sydney) co-hosted a Chinese New Year reception in Melbourne on February 25 (Melbourne time) with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, Invest Hong Kong and the Hong Kong-Australia Business Association under the theme of "Connect and Excel".

Speaking at the reception, the Director of HKETO Sydney, Mr Raymond Fan, said Business of Design Week (BODW) 2018 held in Hong Kong was a successful collaboration between Hong Kong and Melbourne.

"I am delighted to welcome over 30 design masters and creative leaders joining us today who participated in BODW in Hong Kong two months ago. The Melbourne Pavilion, featuring more than 130 Victorian design projects, highlighted the extraordinary work of the city's designers. It was the largest Australian design delegation ever to take part in an international design conference," he said.

Mr Fan said that 2018 was an incredibly successful year for Hong Kong and a landmark one for the Hong Kong-Australia relationship.

"Hong Kong continued to build on its reputation as the gateway to Asia, growing its connections with the Mainland of China and the region. Hong Kong continues to be one of the best connected cities in the world, with world-class transport and infrastructure making it a business, transport and trade hub.

"In 2018, Hong Kong International Airport handled a record-breaking 74.7 million passengers and 5.1 million tonnes of cargo, retaining its reputation as one of the busiest airports in the world," he said.

"The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge has been opened, measuring a staggering 55 kilometres. The Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, connecting Hong Kong and Mainland China, was opened in September last year. Travellers can reach Guangzhou in as little as 48 minutes or go as far as Beijing in less than nine hours," he added.

Hong Kong also continues to thrive as a world leader in economic freedoms and as a business hub, excelling in its endeavours to further develop its reputation as a dynamic and rewarding place to do business.

Mr Fan said 2019 is shaping up to be another excellent year both for Hong Kong and for its relations with Australia. In November, Hong Kong and Australia announced the successful conclusion of negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) at the margins of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

Summit in Papua New Guinea. Through the Agreement, Australia can secure the best commitment on services that Hong Kong has ever offered in an FTA, with guaranteed certainty of access for Australian suppliers of education, financial, transport, construction, tourism and recreational services and other professional services.

"This year, we will also see the further development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, a collection of nine mainland Chinese cities, Macao and Hong Kong. With an estimated GDP of US\$1.5 trillion – comparable to Australia's GDP (US\$1.32 trillion in 2017) – and a population of nearly 70 million, the Greater Bay Area will open up co-operation, trade and people-to-people connections in Asia like never before," he said.

Mr Fan said the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area promulgated by the Central Government on February 18 clearly supports Hong Kong in consolidating and enhancing Hong Kong's status as an international financial, transportation and trade centre as well as an international aviation hub; strengthening Hong Kong's status as a global offshore Renminbi business hub and its role as an international asset management centre and a risk management centre; promoting the development of high-end and high value-added financial, commercial and trading, logistics and professional services; making great efforts to develop the innovation and technology industries; nurturing emerging industries; and establishing Hong Kong as the centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region.

"These areas of work are all conducive to developing Hong Kong further as an international metropolis with enhanced competitiveness. The Greater Bay Area will surely bring Hong Kong significant opportunities to diversify its economy and develop innovation and technology, which is an economic driver in the new era," he said.

"As we enter another busy year in 2019, I look forward to the fostering of a stronger relationship between Hong Kong and Australia. Hong Kong stands ready to connect you to your next opportunity and to help you to not only succeed in your endeavours, but to excel in them," Mr Fan added.

The Governor of Victoria, Ms Linda Dessau, said Hong Kong and Victoria are strong partners in investment, trade and tourism. On people-to-people links, Hong Kong has one of the largest Australian communities abroad.

"We also have many strong cultural links including an arts exchange programme between the Dancehouse of Melbourne and Hong Kong's West Kowloon Cultural District," she said.

On the Greater Bay Area, Ms Dessau noted it is clear that the aspiration to develop a world-class economic, business and technology hub would create many opportunities in investment and partnership, as well as collaboration opportunities in infrastructure, urban planning, health, education and financial services.

