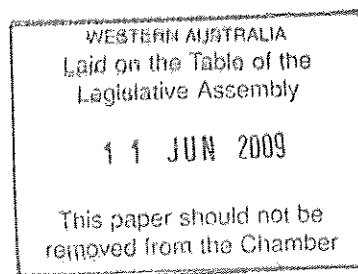




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Minister for Education; Tourism



Hon Colin Barnett MLA
Premier
24th Floor, Governor Stirling Tower,
197 St Georges Terrace
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Premier

Please find attached my report on my travel to Hong Kong and China from 18 April to 26 April 2009.

As you know, the purpose of my trip was to lead a delegation of Vice Chancellors from Perth's four public universities to promote Western Australia's higher education credentials.

I believe we successfully opened doors at government level to help promote access and linkages for the State's universities, while also strengthening other important government relationships, particularly in our Sister State of Zhejiang.

Yours sincerely

Dr Elizabeth Constable MLA
Minister for Education and Tourism

10 JUN 2009

MINISTER CONSTABLE'S VISIT TO CHINA

18 APRIL TO 26 APRIL 2009

From April 18 to 26 April 2009, I led a delegation representing the four Western Australian public universities to Guangzhou, Shanghai, Beijing and Hangzhou and involving tourism contacts in Hong Kong and Shanghai.

The main objectives of the delegation were:

1. To strengthen important government relationships, including our Sister-State relationship with Zhejiang Province, and to open doors at government level to help promote access and linkages for the State's universities.
2. To promote two-way research collaboration and linkages between China and Western Australian universities.
3. To promote Perth as a city with high quality universities and as an educational and tourism destination and to raise the profile of Western Australian universities in China
4. To prepare for the participation of Western Australia's higher education sector in the World Expo 2010 Shanghai.

- 1. To strengthen important government relationships, including our Sister-State relationship with Zhejiang Province, and to open doors at government level to help promote access and linkages for the State's universities.**

Guangzhou

Our meeting with His Excellency, Professor Song Hai, Vice-Governor of the Guangdong Province, allowed us to discuss the potential for strengthening cooperation in research and post-graduate studies and for promoting further exchanges in education and training.

Guangdong Province plays a very important role in Western Australia's relations with China, highlighted by the 25-year LNG supply contract signed in 2002. I understand this is still today the single largest trade deal either of our two countries has ever signed with a foreign country.

It was Governor Song's view that the successful LNG trade had also helped in the cooperation and exchanges between our two States in education and training.

Earlier, Acting Consul General, Mr Jeff Turner, and Australian International Education (AE) Senior Manager, Iris Zhang, provided a comprehensive analysis of Western Australia's relationship with the Guangdong Province and the potential for future development.

Shanghai

Western Australia has close economic ties with Shanghai where our single biggest customer, Baosteel, is located and many Shanghai-based companies have trade and investment links with Western Australia.

Our meeting with His Excellency Mr Shen Xiaoming, Vice-Mayor of Shanghai, gave us the opportunity to highlight the nature and quality of the Western Australian higher education sector and to emphasise that our universities were established under State legislation and seen by the Government as key institutions and central to the State's economic and social objectives.

Mayor Shen provided the delegation with an update on Shanghai's preparations for the World Expo 2010 and outlined a proposal for the delegation to return to Shanghai in 2010 to attend an educational forum to explore further opportunities for joint research and student/teacher exchanges.

This was welcomed by our delegation and I understand our representative office in Shanghai will be in touch with the Shanghai Education Commission in the near future to discuss this proposal in more detail.

Beijing

The delegation met with the Australian Ambassador to China, Dr Geoff Raby, and staff and received an excellent and insightful background briefing on education and tourism matters in Beijing and China.

The delegation provided an overview of aspects of higher education in Western Australia and on the delegation's objective to raise the profile of Perth as a centre for high quality higher education and research and of Western Australia more generally as an education and tourism destination and as a valuable resource for China.

The delegation also met with Dr Li Jiayang, Vice President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), and with Professor Xu Kuangdi, President of the Chinese Academy of Engineers (CAE), and explored further opportunities for collaboration in research and post graduate student exchanges.

CAS is a leading academic institution and a comprehensive research and development centre in natural science, technological science and high-tech innovation in China and is the national academy for the natural sciences. It plays a major role in providing advice on science and technology policy, in scientific research, in the training of scientists and in the commercialisation of science and technology.

The mission of the CAE is to initiate and conduct strategic studies, provide consultancy services and promote the development of engineering and technological sciences in China. Membership of the Academy is the highest academic title in engineering science and technology in China.

These meetings were important to introduce both 'Academies' to the individual State universities and to provide an overview of the nature and quality of higher education in Western Australia.

Arising from these meetings, an invitation was extended to the Vice-President of the Chinese Academy of Science to visit Perth as part of his planned trip to Australia in August 2009 to consider further opportunities for collaboration in research in areas of common interest. This visit will be an opportunity to showcase Western Australia's research capabilities and facilities.

Discussions were also held with Mr Zhao Guocheng, Deputy Director General, the Office of Chinese Language Council International, and Mr Li Jianmin, Deputy Secretary General of the Chinese Scholarship Council about strategies to promote Chinese teaching capacity in WA schools.

The first Confucius Institute in Australia was established at the University of Western Australia in 2005. The Confucius Institute is a non-profit organisation dedicated to strengthening the links between China and Western Australia, especially in the areas of Chinese language training and cross-cultural awareness (including business culture).

In 2006, UWA established an agreement with the China Scholarships Council to award up to 50 scholarships per year for students from China's '985 project' universities. These universities are selected by the Chinese Government to be funded to become world class and include Beijing, Qinghua, Shanghai Jiaotong, Sun Yat Sen and Zhejiang universities. Curtin University of Technology is now a participant in this program.

The discussions highlighted many of the options that should be considered to improve the teaching of Chinese Mandarin Western Australian schools, including an exchange of teachers and educators. Mr Zhao indicated his organisation would be able to provide assistance.

Hangzhou

A highlight of the visit to Hangzhou was the discussions and interactions that took place to further the Sister-State relationship between Western Australia and Zhejiang Province and the promotion of further trilateral collaborative ventures between the University of Western Australia, Zhejiang University and Kobe University, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan – which also has a Sister-State relationship with Western Australia.

Trilateral collaboration involves interaction between scientific agencies, universities and industry with the objective of developing long term partnerships between Australia, Japan and China with a view to achieving medical benefits, scientific research outcomes and educational and commercial opportunities for all three parties.

The delegation met with Professor Yang Wei, President of Zhejiang University, and gained an insight into the tremendous developments in Chinese higher education and an overview of Zhejiang as one of China's top-ranked research institutes.

I officially opened the proceedings of the 2nd Forum for China-Japan-Australia Trilateral Collaboration at Zhejiang University and visited the joint UWA-Zhejiang laboratories, the Plant Functional Genomics and Nutriomics laboratory opened in March 2006 by Nobel Laureate Professor Barry Marshall and the Bio-therapeutics Centre opened by WA's Premier in 2007.

I was also given the opportunity to talk directly to Zhejiang University students and to promote Western Australian as the provider of a high-quality education. A similar opportunity was presented to me during an interview with the Overseas Study World Channel, Zhejiang Radio and TV Group. This channel has a potential audience of 60 million students across China.

I met with Mr Zheng Jiwei, Vice-Governor of the Zhejiang Provincial People's Government, and addressed an education forum of university presidents' and vice chancellors.

2. To promote two-way research collaboration and linkages between China and Western Australian universities.

Guangzhou

The delegation met with Professor Zhu Min, Vice-President of South China University of Technology, and visited the university's LNG training centre. This centre is funded by the Australia-China Natural Gas Technology Partnership Fund, which was established in 2003 as part of the historic agreement to supply LNG to China.

The fund is a joint initiative of the North West Shelf Australian LNG Pty Ltd and the Commonwealth and Western Australian Governments. It has funded training in Australia and China, and has set aside a notional \$12.5 million for research in the energy field, an outcome of which is the strengthening of the Australia – China energy relationship.

While training has been operating successfully, the fund has limited experience in running research and to date have not made decisions about how to expend the money set aside for research.

Curtin University of Technology and the University of Western Australia are involved in the Australian Centre for Natural Gas Management with the South China University of Technology (SCUT) and Sun Yat Sen University (SYSU).

SCUT and SYSU have operated the Chinese Training Centre since 2005. It is aimed at technical and operational personnel in terminals, power plants and city gas companies. Training in Australia – which is provided by the University of Western Australia and Curtin University of Technology – is directed at middle and senior-level executives and managers from China's natural gas industry.

The training is financed by a \$25 million fund, set up as a part of Australia's successful bid to supply China's first LNG plant in Guangdong Province. Although the Chinese and Australian training centres operate independently of each other, there is a good deal of contact and interaction between the centres.

Hangzhou

The high level Government to Government relationship which underpins the Sister-State relationship with Zhejiang provides a platform on which education and research linkages have been, and will continue to be built.

The presidents and vice chancellors forum which I opened highlighted the strong interest between our universities to develop new ties and further educational and research relationships.

During our meetings, I invited Mr Zheng Jiwei, Vice-Governor of the Zhejiang Provincial People's Government, to lead a university presidents' and vice-chancellors' visit to Perth in the near future.

The visit would allow us to showcase our research and educational capabilities and will incorporate a forum or forums to focus on areas of mutual interest between Western Australian and Zhejiang Province universities.

3. To promote Perth as a city with high quality universities and as an educational and tourism destination and to raise the profile of Western Australian universities in China

The importance of China for Western Australia cannot be overstated.

Education is now Australia's third largest source of overseas earning, generating \$15.5 billion in 2008 and supporting 126,000 people. It is a significant industry for Western Australia where more than 41,400 international students from all education sectors contribute approximately \$1 billion to our local economy.

While the State derives important economic and social outcomes from international education, over the past decade we have seen our share of the national market falling. It is essential that Western Australia enhances our attractiveness as a destination for international students and raises our profile within emerging countries such as China.

The long term benefits of education linkages with China go far beyond improving the international student market however. Successful two-way educational linkages and research exchanges will also help promote tourism and trade and indeed all facets of our relationship with China.

Education 'Fairs' in Guangzhou and Hangzhou

I opened and participated in two Western Australian Education Fairs in Guangzhou and Hangzhou.

The aim of participating was to raise the profile of the events and show government support for our education and tourism agents and representatives and for Western Australian universities and Perth Education City (PEC) promotional activities.

The function in Guangzhou was hosted by Shinyway Guangzhou and the Education Fair in Hangzhou by iAE-Longre (Hangzhou). Both organisations are education agents that our universities work with in China.

The targeted audience for these functions were prospective undergraduate and graduate students, university representatives, PEC and agents. I emphasised in my opening address at the fairs that the objective of my delegation was to enhance important governmental and educational relationships and to promote the quality of Western Australian universities.

I also focussed on Perth as a liveable and attractive city and as an excellent study and research destination for Chinese students.

Professor Alan Robson, from University of WA, also addressed the students at the Guangzhou fair, while Professor Kerry Cox, from Edith Cowan University, addressed the Hangzhou function.

“Friends of Western Australia” functions in Guangzhou, Shanghai, Beijing and Hangzhou.

Further promotional activities for my delegation involved hosting and participating in four ‘Friends of Western Australia’ functions in Guangzhou, Shanghai, Beijing and Hangzhou.

These functions aimed to reinforce networks, create new linkages and enhance existing relationships. The invitees included representatives from the local education and tourism sectors, alumni from WA universities, high level business people, consular staff and tourism and education media.

The functions were seen as broad promotional opportunities to showcase Western Australia, lift the State’s profile in China as a higher education and tourism destination and to recognise the importance of Chinese friends of Western Australia.

These various promotional activities were extremely well attended and attracted senior people from a broad strata of Chinese professional and commercial activities.

Promotion of the WACE program in schools in China

Another important aspect of the delegation’s work was to visit and sign Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with schools in Shanghai and Guangzhou to increase to five the number of schools in China which are offering the Western Australian curriculum to their senior students (WACE).

MOUs were signed with the NIT-Huangpu School in Guangzhou and the Gold Apple School in Shanghai as a first step in implementing the WACE program in their schools.

In the next phase the Schools must demonstrate to the Western Australian Curriculum Council that they have the necessary resources and have implemented processes that will ensure a successful experience for all students who enrol in the WACE program.

The WACE program has been offered in Beijing since 2004 with many students scoring a Tertiary Entrance Rank above 90 and hence meeting the core requirements of nearly all faculties in all universities in Australia.

One clear objective of expanding the WACE program in China is to attract additional high quality Chinese students to decide to pursue their higher education studies in Western Australian universities.

Many of the successful students apply to Australian universities. However, to date, WA universities have not been the preferred destination for most of these students.

My delegation also visited the National Institute of Technology (NIT) school in Beijing to promote educational opportunities in Western Australia and to formalise a sister-school relationship with Rossmoyne Senior High School.

The Final of the 2009 “Experiencing WA” English Language Competition.

The delegation attended the final selection of the Joint Western Australia - Zhejiang High School English Language Competition (ELC) which is a high profile event in China.

The ELC has been held in Zhejiang annually since 2005 and is open to all Zhejiang Province high school students between Year 10 and 11.

This fifth competition is based on questions about Western Australia and has an initial take up rate of 250,000 students. The 25 winners of the competition are awarded a free trip to Perth.

The competition has helped to raise the profile of Western Australia among Zhejiang’s youth but has not resulted in students undertaking further education in WA. The competition format and objectives are now scheduled for review.

Tourism

I opened and participated in two Western Australian Education Fairs in Guangzhou and Hangzhou and four “Friends of WA” functions in Guangzhou, Shanghai, Beijing and Hangzhou.

Not only did these functions allow me to promote Western Australia as a desirable educational destination, but they also gave me the opportunity to promote the State’s tourism attractions.

The “Friends of WA” functions attracted dozens of Chinese travel media representatives and I conducted a press conference at the conclusion of each event. This has resulted in widespread coverage in travel media publications, websites and television stations.

In Shanghai, I was the guest of honour at Tourism Australia’s 10th anniversary dinner for the Approved Destination Status (ADS) bilateral tourism arrangement between the Chinese and Australian Governments.

Many of the guests were members of the Chinese travel industry and I was able to promote Western Australia as a desirable tourist destination.

Earlier in Hong Kong, I had a meeting with Mr Johnny Nee, General Manager, Tourism Australia North East Asia. Mr Nee provided me with a comprehensive insight into the tourism relationship between Western Australia and key Asian countries, including China, Hong Kong and Korea.

We discussed the potential for direct flights from China to Western Australia, the promotion of self-drive Perth-Sydney-Perth holidays, Western Australia's potential involvement in the 2010 Expo and the need to develop iconic Western Australian tourism destinations that will attract Chinese tourists.

Also in Hong Kong, I met with Ms Deborah Biber, the chief executive officer of the Australian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong. She spoke of her willingness to co-operate with the Western Australian Government to promote educational and tourism links between our two countries. She said the current economic downturn meant many Hong Kong companies were preparing for the recovery and this gave Western Australia a great opportunity to develop relationships and to promote and develop their businesses.

4. Preparation for Western Australian higher education participation in the World Expo 2010 Shanghai

During our meeting in Shanghai, His Excellency Mr Shen Xiaoming, Vice-Mayor of Shanghai, provided the delegation with an update on the city's preparations for the World Expo 2010.

He also outlined proposal for a much larger delegation to return to Shanghai in 2010 to attend an educational forum, in conjunction with the Expo, to explore further opportunities for joint research and student/teacher exchanges.

This was welcomed by our delegation and I understand our representative office in Shanghai will be in touch with the Shanghai Education Commission in the near future to discuss this proposal in more detail.

At an earlier meeting in Hong Kong, Mr Johnny Nee, General Manager, Tourism Australia North East Asia, spoke of the benefits the Expo could bring to Western Australia.

He provided details of Australia's pavilion at the Expo, which is already under construction, and other planned events.

**Minister's Delegation to China
18 April – 25 April 2009**

Official party

Hon Elizabeth Constable MLA
Minister for Education; Tourism

Mr Richard Strickland,
Chief Executive Officer
Department of Education Services

Professor Alan Robson AM
Vice-Chancellor
University of Western Australia

Professor Jeanette Hackett
Vice-Chancellor
Curtin University of Technology

Professor Kerry Cox
Vice-Chancellor
Edith Cowan University

Professor Gary Martin
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Faculty, Enterprise and International)

Mr Kent Acott
Media Advisor
Office of the Minister for Education

Government of Western Australia Trade Office

Mr B J Zhuang AM
Regional Director
Western Australia Trade and Investment Promotion

Ms Nancy Zhang
Marketing manager Greater China
Perth Education City

Mr Allen Cheng
Marketing Manager China/Hong Kong
Tourism Western Australia

**Minister Constable's delegation to China
Itinerary
18 April – 26 April 2009**

Saturday 18 April 2009

7.55am Arrived in Hong Kong

Meetings

10.30am Met with Mr Johnny Nee, General Manager, Tourism Australia, North East Asia.

12noon Met with Ms Deborah Biber, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Chamber of Commerce Hong Kong.

Sunday 19 April 2009

9am Depart Hong Kong.

12noon Arrived in Guangzhou.

Meetings

2pm Opened Western Australian Education Fair and made speech to prospective students.

7pm Planning meeting for full delegation

Monday 20 April 2009

Meetings

8am Breakfast meeting and briefing from Acting Consul General, Mr Jeff Turner, and Australian International Education (AE) Senior Manager, Iris Zhang.

9.35am Met officials from National Institute of Technology (NIT) Hangpu School.

10.30am Made speech at memorandum-of-understanding signing ceremony between the Curriculum Council of WA and NIT school.

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| 11am | Visit to LNG Training Centre, South China University of Technology. |
| 11.30am | Met with Vice President Zhu Min from South China University of Technology. |
| 12pm | Attended function hosted by Vice President Zhu Min. |
| 4pm | Met with Professor Song Hai, Vice-Governor of Guangdong Province. |
| 6pm | Hosted and spoke at "Friends of Western Australia" joint tourism/education promotional function. |

Tuesday 21 April 2009

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| 8.10am | Depart Guangzhou. |
| 9.55am | Arrive in Shanghai. |

Meetings

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| 12noon | Hosted and spoke at "Friends of Western Australia" joint tourism/education promotional function. |
| 3pm | Met with Mr Shen Xiaoming, Vice-Mayor, Shanghai. |
| 4.30pm | Visited Gold Apple School, Shanghai. |
| 6pm | Guest speaker at dinner to celebrate 10 th Anniversary of Approved destination Status with Tourism Australia. |

Wednesday 22 April 2009

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| 9am | Depart Shanghai. |
| 11.20am | Arrive Beijing. |

Meetings

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| 12.15pm | Meeting and lunch with Dr Geoff Raby, Australian Ambassador. |
| 2pm | Met with Dr Li Jiayang, Vice-President, Chinese Academy of Sciences. |
| 4pm | Met with Professor Xu Kuangdi, President, Chinese Academy of Engineering. |

6.30pm Hosted and spoke at "Friends of Western Australia" joint tourism/education promotional function.

Thursday 23 April 2009

Meetings

12.30pm Meeting and lunch with Mr Zhao Guocheng, Deputy Director General, The Office of Chinese Language Council International, and Mr Li Jianmin, Deputy Secretary General, China Scholarship Council.

3pm Visited National Institute of Technology (NIT).

6pm Depart Beijing.

8.05pm Arrive Hangzhou.

Friday 24 April 2009

Meetings

9.30am Met Professor Yang Wei, President, Zhejiang University, and opened the 2nd Forum of the Trilateral Collaboration, Zhejiang University.

10am Toured joint laboratories in Plant Function Genomics and Nutriomics, Zhejiang University.

10.20am Addressed Zhejiang University students about educational opportunities in WA.

10.55am Met Professor Yang Wei, President of Zhejiang University.

12noon Hosted and spoke at "Friends of Western Australia" joint tourism/education promotional function.

2.30pm Attended and spoke at WA-Zhejiang University VCs and President Forum. Met Mr Zheng Jiwei, Vice-Governor, Zhejiang Provincial Peoples Government.

6pm Attended function hosted by Mr Zheng Jiwei, Vice-Governor, Zhejiang Provincial Peoples Government

Saturday 25 April 2009

Meetings

- 8.30am Participated in judging in the Final of the 2009 'Experiencing WA' Zhejiang High School Students English language Competition.
- 10.30am Opened and addressed prospective students at the Western Australian Education Fair.
- 11.45am Attended function hosted by Mr Peng Bo, Deputy Director General of Zhejiang Foreign Affairs Office.
- 1pm Depart Hangzhou.
- 4pm Arrive in Shanghai.
- 5pm Visited Shanghai campus of Raffles University.

Sunday 26 April 2009

- 9am Depart Shanghai.