

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Sunday, 2 April 2023

STRONGER EDUCATION, TRADE AND TOURISM TIES WITH CHINA

The Andrews Labor Government is building closer ties with Victoria's largest trading partner through strengthened tourism links, improved trade for Victorian products and stronger relationships to ensure Victoria is a preferred destination for Chinese students to study and live.

Premier Daniel Andrews today announced key outcomes from a four-day visit to China – focused on education, trade and tourism that will deliver local jobs and foster cultural ties between Victoria and China.

A working group between Victoria's Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, Department of Education, and the Chinese Ministry of Education will help attract more Chinese students to Melbourne, and ensure they know Victoria is a welcoming, safe place to study and begin a career.

Focused on postgraduate students, the group will discuss the opportunity for further student exchanges – which could include short-stay exchange or longer visits for Masters students and PhD candidates – and the Victorian government will work with higher education providers as part of these discussions.

As a result of the Premier's meeting with Mr Wang Xiaohui, Party Secretary of the CPC Sichuan Provincial Committee, a standing working group will also be established between Victoria, led by the Department of Premier & Cabinet (DPC), and the Sichuan region – home to 91 million people – which will refresh the next chapter of the partnership between the two jurisdictions.

The group will build on existing trade ties to ensure more Victorian goods can be exported to Sichuan, promote further cooperation in health and medical research, discuss the exchange of important cultural artefacts and improve the links in education between the two regions – particularly in higher education.

The Party Secretary also accepted the Premier's invitation to visit Victoria to convene a meeting of the standing working group and share lessons from the upcoming World University Games in Sichuan to support Victoria's 2026 Commonwealth Games.

A taskforce, also led by DPC, will begin with Jiangsu Province, a sister state in China's east, to set out the next set of priorities between the two jurisdictions – with the Governor of Jiangsu to visit Victoria in 2024.

Jiangsu universities have more than 20 partnerships with Australian higher education providers, more than two-thirds of which are in Victoria. Jiangsu, with a population of 80 million, is also a huge market for Victorian produce – particularly seafood and wine – that is experiencing a strong return after the pandemic.

Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet Jeremi Moule and Victoria's Commissioner to Greater China Brett Stevens also met with Chairman of Sichuan Airlines, Mr Shi Zuyi. Prior to the pandemic, Sichuan Airlines flew daily from Chengdu to Melbourne – currently, the flight takes place three times a week.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"Our relationship with China is deeper than just trade – it's a partnership built on respect, trust and friendship, and one that benefits all Victorians in every sector."

"After more than three years, we've met with Chinese leaders in sister provinces that are home to more than 170 million people, sending a message to China that Victoria is a fantastic place for Chinese people to visit and study."

Media contact: Lily King 0499 791 387 | lily.king@minstaff.vic.gov.au