

**One Belt One Road in Australia Conference**  
**Keynote speech delivered by Chief Minister Michael Gunner**  
**Darwin Convention Centre, 10 July 2018**

*Check against delivery*

I acknowledge the ancestral owners of this spectacular land, the Larrakia People. I pay my respects to Larrakia elders past, present and future.

I also acknowledge our distinguished guests.

His Excellency, Ambassador Cheng Jingye;

Mr Yin Zonghua, Vice Chairman, CCPIT Beijing;

Mr Liu Andong, President of Sinosteel Group Corporation Limited;

Mr Li Zhonghang, Vice Chairman & Secretary General of Silk Road Chamber of International Commerce;

Mr Chen Qibin, Head of preparatory group for CDB's representative office in Sydney; Deputy General Manager of CDB Shanghai Branch;

Mr John Brumby, National President of the Australia China Business Council;

Mr Daryl Guppy, President NT office of Australia China Business Council;

I travelled to China soon after become Chief Minister and met with the State Grid team, who told me about the saying that if I was to become a real man, I had to visit the Great Wall of China.

I promised it for my next trip.

I also told Mr Yang that in the Northern Territory if you want to become a real man, you have to swim with the crocodiles.

It's not a joke. It's actually one of our biggest tourist attractions.

So, Gentlemen, Crocosaurus Cove is just down the road.

Swim or no swim, it is an honour to have you here in Darwin and the Northern Territory.

Welcome.

Welcome ladies and gentlemen.

And an especially warm welcome to all our Chinese guests. I trust you are enjoying our hospitality and the beautiful Dry Season weather.

I know you will take home fond memories, knowledge, new contacts, new ideas, new friendships and a new appreciation for what is possible here and what is possible between our nations.

I thank the Australia-China Business Council for the opportunity to speak this morning. In particular I thank the President of the NT Branch, Daryl Guppy.

That we have so many special Chinese and Australian guests joining us for this forum is testament to your organisation's leadership.

It's testament to the importance of the Australia-China relationship.

It's a testament to the continued and welcome economic growth of China and the maturation of Northern Territory industry.

It's testament to the mutual opportunities awaiting both our nations under the key principles of mutual respect, mutual benefit and equality.

And its testament to the opportunities awaiting both our nations – indeed the entire region - through investment in Northern Australia.

You only need to look at a map to see the North matters.

You only need to look at a map to see Darwin is the North's economic and cultural focal point.

We are Australia's gateway to Asia. More than this, we are part of Asia. We're not near Asia, we're in it.

We are Australia's gateway to trade and investment along the belt and road.

And we are Asia's gateway – the belt and road's gateway - into the markets and minds of Australia.

The Northern Territory welcomes Chinese investment in line with Australia's rules and regulations.

The Northern Territory welcomes – and is better because of – Chinese investment.

More than any other jurisdiction, our eyes, ears, hearts and minds are naturally northward looking.

It's a function of our geography, yes. It's a function of where our opportunities await us. It's business.

But it's also much deeper than this.

It's friendship. It's history. It's blood ties.

Some of the oldest and most respected names in the Territory come China.

Some of our greatest Territory families are Chinese and Aboriginal-Chinese - like Jack Ah-Kit, the First Aboriginal Minister of the Crown in the Northern Territory.

His daughter Ngaree Ah Kit is now a key member of my own Labor caucus.

Darwin has had three mayors either born in China or of Chinese descent.

Chinese culture and tradition is part of the very fabric of who we are, what made us be, and who we are to become.

This great, emerging city may not even exist if not for our Chinese pioneers who worked the railways, the mines and established our early businesses and markets.

In the late 1800s, the Chinese outnumbered Europeans here by 7:1.

Maybe it goes back even further. Some historians suggest way back to the great Chinese mariner Zhou Man in the early 1420s.

Perhaps it goes back even earlier still. A picture of a cockatoo has recently emerged in a 13<sup>th</sup> Century manuscript in Sicily, with the suggestion it was gifted into Europe via early Chinese traders.

It's fun to think about if nothing else – and perhaps a great PhD topic for one of our Charles Darwin University students.

Today our relationship with China is stronger than it ever has been.

In many ways, I believe our relationship with China is our gift to Australia.

The Northern Territory and China are showing the rest of Australia how Chinese investment can work in Australia and how it can work well.

Think Landbridge and its long-term lease over the Port of Darwin:

Landbridge have increased the refrigerated container capacity fourfold since taking over;

They've developed close to two extra hectares of hardstand laydown area;

Construction will begin soon on the 34-hectare site for the Darwin Industry and Logistics Park;

And in the next couple weeks we'll have the port expansion 30-year masterplan.

Westin are also about to build a \$200 million luxury hotel right here on the harbour.

We're at the beginning of something special.

Join the dots between this new hotel our new direct flights in and out of Shenzhen and you can see how, together, we're opening the doors to more and more Chinese investors and entrepreneurs.

It's not only here in Darwin. Think of the \$800 million Jemena Pipeline in the Barkly region. It's 60 per cent owned by Chinese company State Grid.

The pipeline is going to create about 900 jobs, maybe 600 for Territorians. In a jurisdiction this size, that's a huge win.

So if you want to talk about mutual benefit, then look no further than these contributions to the Territory.

We welcome Chinese investment and we're ready to do more business.

We're only really just getting started up here. We have so much room to grow.

To put things in perspective, let's look at the Shandong province and the Northern Territory.

I use Shandong because of my visit there early in my Chief Ministership. And I'm planning another trip later in the year.

You could fit about nine Shandong Provinces inside the landmass of the Northern Territory.

Nine Shandong Provinces inside the landmass of the Territory.

Yet our population is only .002 per cent of Shandong's population.

As the Song Dynasty poet wrote, Cang hai Yi Su

It's not even a drop in the ocean.

Let's look at the greater north, including the tops of Western Australia and Queensland.

Together we account for more than half of Australia's exports and about 12 per cent of Gross Domestic Product.

All this with only about 5 per cent of Australia's population.

Just imagine what we can do with more.

Just imagine what we can do with more people. More students. More investment. More entrepreneurs. More you.

This is the land of opportunity.

Darwin has grown into a modern, vibrant and multicultural 21<sup>st</sup> Century City.

We service four LNG trains, including the INPEX Ichthys project, which is Japan's largest ever foreign investment project.

We are the global leader in high quality saltwater crocodile skins.

The Northern Territory plains and regional centres, rich with the culture and languages of the First Australians, are now also rich with agriculture, cattle, minerals and tourism ventures.

We have Australia's largest undeveloped phosphate resources, the world's largest and lowest cost manganese mine, and we're among the six lowest-cost gold producing jurisdictions on earth.

Meanwhile our agribusiness products – our beef and mangoes, for example – are safe, sustainable and quality.

We have the closest deep water port to Asia – the busiest live cattle and buffalo export port in the world.

We can ship goods to or from Jakarta in four days, for example. That's nearly a whole week faster than you could from Brisbane, which is the next northernmost Aussie capital.

We can ship goods to or from Singapore in five days. In Brisbane it's nearly 11.

We can do Hong Kong, Shanghai and Tokyo in six, seven and eight days respectively. In Brisbane try 11, 11 and 10 days respectively.

Our university here in Darwin – Charles Darwin University - is among the top two per cent in the world and only getting better.

Many of our students are Chinese, but we want more.

We want more students taking the message of the Northern Territory to the homes, offices and boardrooms of the world.

Likewise, we want more students bringing modern Chinese culture to the Northern Territory.

The new direct air route to Shenzhen will make it easier for students, businesspeople and tourists alike.

I also want more Territorians travelling to China, so we get to know one another better at not only a Government to Government level, or business to business level, but at the person to person level.

This is one of the reasons why we're bringing back the Arafura Games in May next year. It's about bringing people of the region together, right here in the Territory, in friendly competition.

But more than what happens on the track, it's about new friendships. Better relationships. Better appreciation of our people and cultures.

This is how you break down barriers.

Competitors will also return to their home nations with a better understanding of the Northern Territory's emerging opportunities.

Like tropical health research, for example.

Like renewable energy – and with 300 days of sunshine a year, Alice Springs in the Red Centre is ready to lead the way.

We are investing in the Territory as a hub of exploration and travel of frontiers anew. Very soon we'll be launching rockets into space from Northeast Arnhem Land.

That most magical part of the world, home to the most ancient people, the most ancient stories, the most ancient languages, will soon be a seat of the extreme edges of human capability.

In the western part of the Territory, construction on the \$1.45 billion, 10,000 hectare, Project Sea Dragon prawn farm is ready to begin soon.

Sea Dragon has the potential to create 1500 jobs and, once it is shipping clean, green prawns to markets in Asia, it will be one of the biggest aquaculture producers in the world.

Sea Dragon has sites across our east and west border – right across the north. And we've teamed with the Federal Government to fund new roads.

We're on the same page. Sea Dragon proves lines on a map are no barrier to investment in the north

More than ever before in Australia's history, the Territory, Queensland, Western Australia and the Commonwealth are working together cooperatively and enthusiastically as Team North ... not the self-interested silos of yesterday.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Territory is ready for business.

My message since I've been Chief Minister, to people to our south and to our north ... over land and over ocean ... is this:

If you want a stable and safe regional base ... if you want to invest in a place that's both safe and on the rise ... come to the Northern Territory.

Come to the north.

If you want to be close to market ... close to both the great centres of Asia and Australia ... come to the Territory.

If you want your workers to be happy, healthy and live in the one of the friendliest and spectacular corners of the world, come to the Territory.

Funds exist to support investment in Northern Australia:

There is the \$200M Northern Territory Infrastructure Development Fund, which provides a pool of capital for investment for Territory infrastructure.

Under Commonwealth legislation, we have the \$5bn Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility, which may approve concessional loans for northern infrastructure like airports, communications, energy, ports, rail and water across the Territory, Queensland and Western Australia.

This is part of Australia's Developing the North Agenda, which will promote unprecedented investment in Australia's north – both from the private sector and the Federal Government.

Likewise, China's One Belt One Road will promote unprecedented growth and investment in our region.

Our two strategies work together.

The Belt and Road initiative and Developing the North generate - and benefit from - increased trade in and out of Northern Australia.

They both generate – and benefit from - greater Northern Australian infrastructure.

Ultimately, these two strategies promote a more prosperous Australia and more prosperous China.

They promote our businesses working together for mutual benefit.

They promote our people working together for mutual benefit.

And, while there will always be inevitable ups and downs in any strong, long-term relationship, they will promote our national governments working together for mutual benefit.

There is alignment here. There is opportunity here under the key principles of mutual benefit, mutual respect and equality.

From the Northern Territory perspective, this is something worth being excited about.

Thank you.