

ADDRESS BY THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER, THE RT. HON. J.D. ANTHONY, C.H., M.P. AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE QIN SHIHUANG EXHIBITION, NATIONAL ART GALLERY OF VICTORIA, MELBOURNE, 21 DECEMBER, 1983.

---

Sir Andrew Grimwade, representatives of the Government of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Mathews, Mr. Kennett, Lord Mayor, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. I am very pleased to be here tonight and to have the privilege - I believe it is a very real privilege - of officially opening this unique exhibition.

It is one of the most important staged in Australia. And it will, I am certain, have enormous impact on those who come to see it, here in Melbourne and in the other cities to which the exhibition will travel.

I think very few people could fail to be stirred by the glimpse this exhibition provides of life in China 2,000 years ago, under one of the most remarkable figures of Chinese history the emperor Qin Shihuang. The exhibition vividly brings to life the culture of that period in China's history, its richness, its individuality and its artistic skill and development. Through this exhibition, we are able to learn something of a great Emperor, and a great period in China's history. In addition, we can see, in the life-size terra cotta statues that are the centrepiece of this exhibition, the faces of the people of China at that time - because the faces were modelled on those of individual soldiers throughout the empire.

The discovery from which this exhibition comes is one of the most remarkable in the history of archaeology. This is the first exhibition devoted exclusively to the find to travel outside China, and to allow such an important exhibition to come here is a most generous gesture by the Government of the People's Republic of China.

It is most fitting, also, that this exhibition should coincide with the 10th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Australia and China. Ten years ago, there was virtually no contact between our two countries, either at the political or private level. Our knowledge and understanding of China and the Chinese people were extremely limited. The establishment of diplomatic relations was, in a very real way, the start of a change in our perception of China and its place in the world. To the good fortune of both our peoples, I think, it also came at a time when China itself was

looking to end its isolation, and assume a more active role in world affairs.

Today, we have significant and broadly-based relations with China. Trade is substantial, and can be expected to grow. There has been a steady growth of contracts and exchanges between Australia and China in many fields. These include agriculture, technology, science, the arts, education, journalism, legal studies, health and sport. Politically, the relationship has developed to a point where we now share many common views on important international and regional issues.

Our Prime Minister has paid two visits to China, and I have also been there, in 1979. When our Prime Minister was last in Peking, he invited the Chinese Premier to visit Australia, and I am delighted that the Premier has been able to accept. We look forward to extending a warm welcome to him when he arrives as a guest of the Australian Government next April, and I believe his visit will mark an important stage in the development of relations between our two countries.

The process of developing those relations is also furthered by this exhibition. Two earlier Chinese exhibitions - the archaeological exhibition of 1976 and last year's exhibition of Chinese classical paintings - have already been highly acclaimed in Australia. I am sure this exhibition, indemnified by the Australian Government for \$21.4 million, will win an equally warm and broad reception.

Again, I thank the Government of the People's Republic of China for allowing the 10th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries to be celebrated in this way. I thank all those who have been involved in bringing this exhibition to Australia. My thanks go particularly to Mr. Jim Leslie, Chairman of the International Culture Corporation, for the corporation's role in managing this exhibition. They go also to Mr. George Pusack, Chairman and Managing Director of Mobil Oil Australia, which is the sole sponsor of this exhibition, as it was for the 1976 exhibition.

I now have pleasure in declaring this exhibition officially open.