



Australia China Business Council  
澳大利亚中国工商业委员会

## **MEDIA RELEASE – For Immediate Release**

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### **AUSTRALIA CHINA BUSINESS COUNCIL WA HONORARY AWARDS 2024**

PERTH: The Australia China Business Council Western Australia (ACBC WA) is pleased to announce the recipient of the ACBC WA Honorary Awards Program for 2024, **Hon. Mark McGowan**, business, community, and former government leader based in Perth, Western Australia.

The Hon. Mark McGowan is the recipient of the award for outstanding and sustained service to the Western Australia–China Relationship.

This award was announced and presented at the ACBC WA and Chinese Chamber of Commerce Australia (CCCA) Chinese Lunar New Year Gala held at Crown Perth in the Grand Ballroom on 16 February 2024.

The Honorary Awards Program was established in 2016 as an initiative of the ACBC WA and has been established to recognise outstanding and sustained service to the Western Australia-China relationship. This prestigious program was created because exceptional individuals that contribute to the Western Australia and China trade, investment and cultural relationship deserve to be recognised.

Mr McGowan, the former Premier of Western Australia from 2017 until 2023, has played a critical role in the growth of cooperation and understanding between Western Australia and China through demonstrating outstanding leadership in building and maintaining relationships with organisations essential to the state's ongoing and future prosperity. WA accounted for 52 per cent of Australia's total trade goods with China over the last previous financial year, with \$158.1 billion in goods traded in 2022-23.

According to preliminary research from a soon-to-be released report from the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre estimates that Australia's trade with China increased disposable income by a national average of \$2,500 per household in the 2021/22 financial year and reached as high as \$8,500 in some states and territories. This increase equates to 4.5 per cent of disposable income per capita and \$26.7bn billion overall (gross) benefit to household disposable income.

Mr McGowan has been supportive of the Chinese business community in WA, and regularly advocated during the low points of the bilateral diplomatic relationship for a more positive and respectful relationship between Australia and China and that value to all Western Australians.

"For those who have been involved in the WA-China bilateral relationship in recent years, this award will not come as a surprise. Mr McGowan has made a sustained contribution to the Western Australian relationship with China over many years with a focus on delivering positive economic outcomes for all people of Western Australia. His efforts to maintain the state's major export industries during the pandemic were fundamental to the resilience of both the state and national economies.

In particular, the Premier's WA-China Strategic Dialogue, an annual discussion with the largest Chinese investors in the state, has continued to position WA as an ideal economic partner. We were honoured to facilitate his final Dialogue in Beijing in April 2023, which was notable for Mr McGowan being one of the first Australian Premiers to visit China following its broad reopening.

It is important to also single out his leadership for all Western Australians during the pandemic, and in particular his dedication to WA-China diaspora and business community during a difficult time in the bilateral diplomatic relationship, where he encouraged greater mutual understanding and respect," said James Clarke, President of ACBC WA.

"It's an honour to receive this award. The relationship with China is very important to Australia, and in particular Western Australia's success and security and it's important that it is defended.

It's also important to acknowledge the great role that Chinese Australians play in our country and the way that they have strengthened and improved it.

I'm pleased to have played my part as Premier in supporting the relationship," said Mr McGowan.

**For further information (including access to a photo) please contact:**

#### **Australia China Business Council WA Branch**

James Clarke  
President – WA Branch  
[PresidentWA@acbc.com.au](mailto:PresidentWA@acbc.com.au)  
0406 179 609

#### **ACBC WA Media Channels**

Website [acbc.com.au](http://acbc.com.au)  
LinkedIn [www.linkedin.com/company/962015/](http://www.linkedin.com/company/962015/)

Please see background information on Hon. Mark McGowan and ACBC WA on the following page.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **HON. MARK MCGOWAN**

Hon. Mark McGowan served as the 30th Premier of Western Australia from March 2017 until June 2023. He also served as Treasurer and Minister for State Development.

He won two elections in 2017 and 2021. The 2021 victory was the biggest election victory in Australian history securing 70% of the two-party vote.

As Premier he regained the state's triple A credit rating and ensured Western Australia was the only government in Australia paying down debt. WA regained its position as Australia's most successful state and economy.

He is a vocal advocate for the WA-China relationship and the positive economic impact that the relationship has and continues to deliver to WA households.

He also passed unprecedented economic, social, and environmental reforms leading one of the most progressive governments in WA history.

He led WA through COVID securing the best health and economic outcomes of any jurisdiction in the world and was among the first Australian leaders to visit China once it had opened its door to the world once more.

His final visit to China as Premier, in April 2023, was to hold the fifth Premier of WA's China-WA Strategic Dialogue, advocating to some of the largest investors in the state that WA remains the beating heart of the bilateral economic relationship (two-way trade of over \$150 billion in 2022-23).

He served in parliament for 27 years including as a minister in the 2000s.

Prior to entering Parliament, he served as a lieutenant in the Royal Australian Navy. He was awarded the Governors Commendation for Bravery in 1997 for saving an unconscious driver from a burning car.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **AUSTRALIA CHINA BUSINESS COUNCIL WA BRANCH**

ACBC Western Australia (ACBC WA) is one of the most active branches with an established reputation as a driving force behind building relationships between WA and China. ACBC WA serves as a focal point for the State's business relations with China. Western Australia enjoys a strong partnership with China and is thriving on a trade and investment relationship built upon the export of minerals, energy, agricultural goods and education services and Chinese investment in the Western Australian resources sector.

ACBC WA has played a leading role in promoting the business relationships between Western Australia and China. WA represents a wide variety of businesses actively involved with China. Membership includes major resources companies such as Fortescue, Tianqi Lithium, Rio Tinto, Hancock Prospecting and Woodside, through to medium and small businesses involved in Australia-China trade. ACBC WA has recognised the importance of building relationships with Chinese companies operating in Western Australia, a number of which have joined ACBC WA and are represented on our Executive Committee. Chinese companies who are members include Sinosteel, Baosteel and CITIC Pacific Mining.

ACBC WA also maintains strong ties with government at the Federal and State level and enjoys strong working relationships with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Austrade, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation. ACBC WA has a strategic alliance with the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Australia (Perth Branch), with a focus on the promotion and development of mutually beneficial initiatives and programs aimed at further promoting the benefits of the Australia-China bilateral trade and investment relationship.