

**MEDIA RELEASE - 27 November 2017**

**China looks to Tasmania for agricultural and natural resource management expertise**

**The President of China’s premier agricultural research organisation and one of the largest in the world, the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS), have today signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with NRM South to share expertise and technologies in sustainable agricultural and natural resource management.**

**Professor Tang Huajun and his delegation of leading Chinese agricultural scientists met with the Premier, Will Hodgman, and Deputy Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, for a signing ceremony involving CAAS, NRM South and the University of Tasmania. Professor Tang is the highest ranking Chinese official to visit Tasmania since the Chinese President’s visit in November 2014.**

The signing of the MOUs is a landmark event in Tasmania’s collaboration with the Academy and Chinese agriculture. It stems from the historic visit of President Xi Jinping and his wife Madame Peng Liyuan to Hobart. The visit highlighted opportunities for Tasmania in a developing cultural and economic relationships with China. It also increased awareness of Tasmania in China, particularly our pristine environment and premium food and beverage products.

Following this visit, NRM South introduced itself to CAAS and has been discussing cooperation over the past two years. CAAS is playing a leading role in the modernisation of Chinese agriculture with more sustainable farming practices, better natural resource management, environmental improvement and increasing production of safe and healthy food.

CAAS has stated its keen interest to cooperate with NRM South, the University of Tasmania and the wider Australian regional NRM network to progress knowledge and practice in sustainable agriculture and natural resource management consistent with future plans in Tasmania, Australia and China.

The CAAS delegation is on a three-country visit to New Zealand, Australia (with Hobart as the sole destination) and Indonesia. NRM South CEO Donald Coventry commented,

*“This is a great first step in formalising a partnership that has been several years in the making. We’re honoured to host Professor Tang and the entire CAAS delegation, and look forward to future collaborations. This partnership will bring mutual benefits including potential agricultural trade and sustainability-focused intellectual property with a key trading partner. This partnership offers opportunities to build both substance and recognition of Tasmania as a leader in sustainable environmental and agricultural practice, to build links to premium markets in China and to assist in maintaining product differentiation into the future.”*

As part of the visit, the CAAS delegation had the opportunity to visit two farms and a revegetation site to learn more about our agricultural and environmental practices. This included a visit to Reid Fruit’s new cherry orchard in Jericho, the Greening Australia Tasmanian Island Ark revegetation site in Ross, a tour of the Coal River region and new farm developments by Houston’s Farm in Forcett.

Mr Coventry thanked the Australian and Tasmanian Governments for supporting this initiative. Mr Peter Ottesen, Assistant Secretary of Sustainable Agriculture represented the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. In April, the Department provided NRM South with a grant under the Australia-China Agriculture Cooperation Agreement to host the 2018 Australia-China Sustainable Agricultural Technology Forum in Hobart. CAAS will be a co-host of this Forum.

During the visit, NRM South discussed with Professor Tang and the delegation a number of initial joint projects in Tasmania and China on soil health, river restoration, honey bee health and systems for establishing partnerships in communities to achieve natural resource management outcomes.

Mr Coventry also welcomed the participation of the new Chair of NRM Regions Australia, Mr Parry Agius, in the CAAS delegation's visit to Tasmania. NRM Regions Australia is the representative group of Australia's 56 regional NRM organisations. Mr Coventry said that the MOU with CAAS will open up opportunities for exchanges between the other regions and China.

**For more information**, contact Donald Coventry, CEO for NRM South on 04 8807 3747 or via email on [dcoventry@nrmsouth.org.au](mailto:dcoventry@nrmsouth.org.au)

More information about the CAAS initiative is also available on the NRM South website at [www.nrmsouth.org.au/caas-initiative/](http://www.nrmsouth.org.au/caas-initiative/)

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### **Members of the Delegation of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Science to Hobart, 25-28 November 2017**

Prof. Tang Huajun	President of CAAS
Prof. Gong Xifeng	Director General, Department of International Cooperation, CAAS
Prof. Qin Yuchang	Director General, Institute of Animal Sciences (IAS), CAAS
Prof. Bu Zhigao	Director General, Harbin Veterinary Research Institute (HVRI), CAAS
Prof. Jin Ke	Deputy Director General, Institute of Agricultural Resources and Regional Planning (IARRP), CAAS
Mr. Xue Pengfei	Deputy Director for Division of General Affairs, Department of Science, Technology and Education, Ministry of Agriculture of China