

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Indonesian Sultan conferred honorary degree for contribution to democracy and reform

The reigning Sultan and Governor of Yogyakarta who championed for social and economic development will be conferred a Doctor of Laws *honoris causa* during ceremony in Hobart today.

His Majesty Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono X will receive the honorary degree during a ceremony at the Hobart Town Hall Ballroom, which will include an academic procession.

Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor Mike Calford said it was a fitting conferral which would strengthen ties with the Yogyakarta region, renowned as a centre for education.

The Yogyakarta Sultanate, to which Sri Sultan ascended on March 7, 1989, has served and protected people of the region for centuries.

In his first years, Sri Sultan was an important and credible voice in the burgeoning movement for democracy that surrounded President Suharto's final years.

Sri Sultan's declaration of support for democratic reformation, made jointly with the then Governor of Yogyakarta, Sri Paku Alam VIII, was read in front of hundreds of thousands of people on May 20, 1998, and was considered influential in the resignation of President Suharto the following day. Among the elections that followed was that of the Governor of Yogyakarta, to which he was popularly elected on October 3, 1998.

"His Majesty is an accomplished administrator, who has borne the faith of a nation, as would a sultan, but also the resolve of its people, as would a statesman," Professor Calford said.

"He has pursued a social and economic development agenda for Yogyakarta, centred around a knowledge economy within the region, with a particular focus on the development of science and technology, agriculture, tourism and cultural industries.

"The University sees its relations in the Asian region as having central importance and today is a small but very meaningful step in achieving a broader vision of engagement and involvement."

Professor Calford said the City of Hobart and State Government had worked with the University to ensure the success of Sri Sultan's visit and today's ceremony.

"The University believes that achievements for the institution and the State are best achieved in partnership," he said. "Today's ceremony is a very good example of this coming to fruition."

Information released by:

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