

MEDIA RELEASE

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Former Australian Chief Justice speaks at UTAS

One of Australia's most celebrated and honoured legal figures will discuss the impact of Chinese rule on the Hong Kong legal and governmental system in a public lecture at UTAS tomorrow.

The Hon. Prof Sir Anthony Mason AC KBE was previously Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia and is currently a judge of the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal.

Foundation Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law and UTAS Distinguished Professor Donald Chalmers said the Hon. Sir Mason was a leading legal figure in Australia and around the world and this was a fantastic opportunity for Tasmanians to learn about the complexities of Hong Kong law from a firsthand perspective.

"Concerns about the future of the rule of law in Hong Kong before its constitution the Basic Law came into operation on July 1 1997 when it was officially handed over to China, and it is still an important decision today," he said.

The Basic Law is an enactment of the National People's Congress. The Basic Law granted a high degree of autonomy to Hong Kong and preserved Hong Kong's capitalist and common law legal systems and provided for an independent judiciary.

The Hon. Sir Mason was justice of the High Court of Australia from 1972 to 1987 and Chief Justice from 1987 until 1995. During his tenure as Chief Justice, the High Court handed down a number of landmark decisions relating to civil and political rights, especially relating to freedom of political communication and aboriginal land rights.

He has also held the positions of Commonwealth Solicitor-General, judge of the NSW Court of Appeal, judge of the Supreme Court of Fiji, President of the Solomon Islands Court of Appeal, Professor of Legal Science at the University of Cambridge (UK), Chancellor of UNSW and National Fellow at the ANU Research School of Social Science.

"He is a prominent legal figure in national and international courts, and one of the most important jurists of our time," Prof. Chalmers said.

Sir Anthony is a Commander and Knight of the Order of the British Empire and has been honoured as a Companion of the Order of Australia and Centenary Medallist. He also holds honorary doctorates from leading universities in Australia, Hong Kong and the UK.

The public lecture “The Rule of Law in the shadow of a giant: the Hong Kong experience” will be held at 6pm Thursday 13 October at Law Lecture Theatre 1. To RSVP email UTAS.events@utas.edu.au or call 6226 2521.

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