The Chief Minister of the Northern Territory Paul Henderson and Minister for Resources, Kon Vatskalis today welcomed the historic arrival of the Vice President of the People’s Republic of China – his Excellency Mr Xi Jinping to Darwin.

Mr Henderson hailed the Vice President’s three day visit to the Northern Territory as historic.

“This not only reinforces the strength of the China – Australia relationship but also represents a deepening of the China – Territory relationship,” Mr Henderson said.

“China is our second largest trading partner, last year trade with China was worth about $1.3 billion.”

“However, our ties extend beyond trade and this visit further cements our close relationship,” he said.

Mr Vatskalis credited China’s role in buffering Australia’s economy from financial meltdown during the global financial crisis.

“It is China that played a pivotal role in keeping Australia from being battered like Europe and North America during the global financial crisis.”

“And it is China that economists around the globe agree will in the next two decades become the world’s economic engine room.”

“That makes our relationship critical to helping to continue to grow and shape the Territory’s economy now and into the future.”

Mr Henderson and Mr Vatskalis will hold talks with Mr Xi Jinping before hosting a dinner for the Vice President and his delegation at the Darwin Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The dinner will be attended by business and community leaders, along with members of Darwin’s Chinese community.

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