

Media Roundup Issue 29 (15/07/17 – 21/07/17)

1. Push for 'Australian values' education to counter Chinese Communist propaganda

15/07/2017
Andrew Greene
ABC Online

Chinese Communist party "propaganda" and "brainwashing" must be countered by compulsory "Australian values" education, according to a group of pro-democracy activists alarmed at Beijing's growing influence in their new homeland.

The Australian Values Alliance (AVA), which was established last year by Australians with Chinese heritage, warned "foreign power" was trying to infiltrate all levels of government and the education system.

"The infiltration of the Chinese Communist Party into our society [is] damaging our core values," Australian Values Alliance founder John Hu said.

"In Australia we believe in freedom and democracy and the teaching they have is totally on the contrary."

Chinese students were particularly prone to interference from the Communist regime in Beijing, the AVA said, suggesting compulsory "Australian values" education be conducted as part of university orientation.

Read more: <http://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2017-07-15/australian-values-education-counter-chinese-communist-propaganda/8711068?pfmredir=sm>

2. Wikileaks: billionaire Australian donors Beijing links detailed in 'sensitive' diplomatic cable

16/07/2017
Nick McKenzie, Richard Baker
Sydney Morning Herald

When one of Australia's biggest political donors sought to deny links to a secretive Chinese Communist Party lobbying organisation, he did so in the style befitting a billionaire.

Chau Chak Wing, who has given more than \$4 million to the major parties, instructed his lawyer to write to the chief executive of Fairfax Media, Greg Hywood, and the ABC's managing director, Michelle Guthrie. He demanded apologies, saying: "Chau has no knowledge of an entity referred to ... as the United Front Work Department".

Late last month, Chau also conducted an "exclusive", front-page interview with the Murdoch newspaper, *The Australian*, in which he claimed he had "no idea" of the existence of the organisation.

"As to the entity referred to by the ABC as the 'united front work department', I have no idea what this is," Mr Chau said in the story, referring to a joint Fairfax Media and Four Corners investigation aired last month.

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/investigations/wikileaks-billionaire-australian-donors-beijing-links-detailed-in-sensitive-diplomatic-cable-20170713-gxb21c.html>

3. Australia urges China to release dissident Liu Xiaobo's widow

16/07/2017
Harry Pearl
Reuters

SYDNEY (Reuters) - Australia on Sunday called for China to lift curbs on the widow of Nobel Peace Prize-winning dissident Liu Xiaobo, who died of liver cancer in custody last week.

Liu Xiaobo, 61, was jailed for 11 years in 2009 for "inciting subversion of state power" after he helped write a petition known as "Charter 08" calling for sweeping political reforms in China.

His wife, Liu Xia, was at the hospital as his health deteriorated over the past couple of weeks, but has been under effective house arrest since her husband won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010.

"We call upon the Chinese government to lift any travel restrictions on his wife and to release her from house detention," Foreign Minister Julie Bishop told the Australian Broadcasting Corp.

Read more: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-australia-china-idUSKBN1A1010>

4. Anxious Bellamy's awaits Chinese response in licence row

17/07/2017
Eli Greenblat
The Australian

Bellamy's is awaiting a response from Chinese regulators on its suspended milk import licence after responding to a series of quality issues over the weekend, with hopes that its shares could resume trading this week.

Bellamy's could also update the market as early as this morning over its completed \$60 million rights issue and whether it might have to return the money because of the licence suspension.

Bellamy's has acted swiftly to beef up the management and corporate oversight of its recently acquired Camperdown Powder cannery, which owns the crucial Chinese dairy licence, appointing Carlton & United Breweries veteran Peter Fridell as a director of the subsidiary.

Read more (paywall):
<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/companies/anxious-bellamys-awaits-chinese-response-in-licence-row/news-story/e3dc4d5bb9796d10f09a8dd36986588c>

5. China's regulatory clouds obscure outlook for iron ore

17/07/2017
Stephen Bartholomeusz
The Australian

One of the factors fuelling the surge in the value of the Australian dollar over the past month and a half has been a surprising resurgence in iron ore prices. Their future trajectory, however, remains as unclear as usual.

While there is no doubt that Janet Yellen's testimony to Congress last week, which dialled down expectations of an aggressive normalisation of US monetary policy by the Federal Reserve Board, has been a major influence in the weakness of the US dollar and the consequent [spike in the Australian dollar](#) over the past few days.

But the Australian dollar has been firming strongly since the start of June, which coincides with the bounce back in commodity prices. The most important of those commodities to this market and economy is probably iron ore. Having plummeted from its unexpected recent peak of \$US95 a tonne in February, iron ore slumped to around \$US53 a tonne in June before starting a strong recovery to its current level above \$US65 a tonne.

Read more: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/opinion/stephen-bartholomeusz/chinas-regulatory-clouds-obscure-outlook-for-iron-ore/news-story/f76972ad913200770acb0749863e124b>

6. China's crackdown targets food safety, not Aussie dairy

18/07/2017

Rowan Callick

The Australian

China is certainly not targeting Australian dairy products, one of the leading international experts on China's food sector says, but it is still developing the skills and regulations needed to ensure high standards in what is a new and rapidly growing industry.

David Mahon, the Beijing-based chairman of Mahon China, a private equity management company that advises foreign companies on China's food sector, said China would not waste political and economic capital on such a campaign.

"Australia is a consumer star here, with its reputation for quality and safety sky high," Mr Mahon said, adding there was "no reason" for the Chinese government to throw a spanner in the works.

But both Australia and New Zealand had failed to capitalise on their China opportunities because they had focused on short-term trading rather than building brands, he said.

Read more: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/chinas-crackdown-targets-food-safety-not-aussie-dairy/news-story/773d6cb584ff98699389484ae180e5ec>

7. Chinese investors are worried about a crackdown on debt – should we be too?

18/07/2017

Karen Maley

Australian Financial Review

Investors should have been celebrating reports that China's economy continued to power along in the second quarter. Instead, they are worried that the country's growth remains heavily dependent on credit and investment, at a time when China's top officials are signalling that the days of easy credit could be coming to an end.

On Saturday, Chinese President Xi Jinping stressed the importance of reining in vertiginous debt levels in the world's second largest economy and encouraging state-owned businesses to reduce their leverage.

As part of this program, he announced a new high-level committee would be set up to better co-ordinate financial supervision and close regulatory loopholes.

In case anyone missed the signal, The People's Daily – the Chinese Communist party's official mouthpiece – published a front-page article on Monday, which urged an escalation in the fight against "the risks that come from liquidity, credit, shadow finance, abnormal fluctuations in capital markets, as well as insurance market and real estate bubbles".

Read more: <http://www.afr.com/opinion/columnists/chinese-are-investors-worried-about-a-crackdown-on-debt--should-we-be-too-20170717-gxd6jb>

8. Foreign Donations, Local Politics: China's Australian Influence

18/07/2017
Ed Kennedy
The Diplomat

Australia's foreign donation scandal exposes long-term strategic challenges.

Of all the regions in the world where the recent global trend to isolationism is counterproductive, the Asia-Pacific is foremost. A region experiencing rapid economic growth, it also holds some of the world's greatest geopolitical challenges. Oftentimes, this is most visible in the "tinderbox" of the South China Sea, in Sino-Japanese tensions, and of course with Pyongyang's arms proliferation. Yet more subtle shifts can have the greatest impact in the long term. The past month in Australian politics illustrated this.

Concerns over undue influence by the People's Republic of China in foreign politics is not new.

In recent years, as Beijing has pursued a more muscular foreign policy in tandem with its pronounced economic growth in the post-financial crisis global economy, these concerns have grown.

Recent years have seen murmurs of concern in Australia, but the past month brought it to boil, with a PRC foreign-donations scandal that rocked Canberra's political class at its core. Australia is not unique in the Asia-Pacific in having concerns over domestic interference by the Chinese government.

Read more: <http://thediplomat.com/2017/07/foreign-donations-local-politics-chinas-australia-influence/>

9. China still top of Australia's wine export list

19/07/2017
Trevor Chappell
The Australian

China's thirst for Australian wine continues to grow at a faster rate than anywhere else in the world.

Industry group Wine Australia says China remains the top destination for Australian wine, with exports growing 44 per cent to \$607 million in 2016/17. That drove a 10 per cent rise in total Australian wine exports in the financial year to \$2.3 billion, or 778 million litres.

The United States remains the second largest consumer of Australian wines, with exports there rising three per cent to \$464 million.

Shiraz is Australia's largest export, followed by cabernet sauvignon and chardonnay.

Wine Australia chief executive Andreas Clark said the wine culture in China is still evolving, and consumers are enjoying the discovery of wine. "Australian wine is front and centre of that," he said.

Read more: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/china-still-top-of-australias-wine-export-list/news-story/679e03ca5de77120ca26a5f147a09adc>

10. Chinese general tours Defence facilities, South China Sea dispute on agenda

19/07/2017

Andrew Greene

ABC Online

A top-ranking Chinese general from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has toured a secretive military facility outside Canberra as part of a low-key "goodwill" visit to meet senior Australian Defence figures.

During this week's trip, General Wei Liang, a political commissar with the PLA's Southern Theatre Command, "exchanged views on regional security issues" including the territorial dispute in the South China Sea.

The Defence Department said the Chinese delegation's visit from July 15 to 19 involved discussions with senior officials, including Chief of Defence Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin, and tours of Victoria Barracks and HMAS Watson in Sydney.

During his four-day visit, the Chinese general also toured the highly secure Headquarters Joint Operations Command facility outside Canberra, where he was met by Defence's Commander of Joint Operations Vice Admiral David Johnston.

Read more: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-07-19/chinese-general-tours-defence-facility-south-china-sea/8725294>

11. ALP branch accepts Shorten edict on donations from Chinese businessmen

21/07/2017

Brad Norington

The Australian

The boss of the ALP's financially struggling NSW branch has succumbed to pressure from Bill Shorten to stop accepting donations from two Chinese-born businessmen allegedly linked to Beijing's "soft power" interest in Australian politics.

NSW ALP general secretary Kaila Murnain confirmed she will comply with an edict from Labor's federal leader that the party take "no donations" from Huang Xiangmo, a Chinese national and owner of property developer company Yuhu Group, and Chau Chak Wing, a Chinese-born Australian citizen who owns property developer Kingold Group.

Ms Murnain's decision is despite the NSW ALP branch's past heavy reliance on funding from the businessmen. Senior Labor sources are concerned ahead of the party's annual state conference next week about the branch's finances stresses, with costly state and federal election campaigns on the horizon.

A spokesman for Ms Murnain, Essential Media's Darren Rodrigo, said the NSW branch would "no longer accept donations" from Mr Huang and Mr Chau.

Read more: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/state-politics/alp-branch-accepts-shorten-edict-on-donations-from-chinese-businessmen/news-story/1fb8315ed1c6d52906ea6a797a4d1c8e>