

Sixth National Meeting of China Matters

Held in partnership with the Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs, Australian National University

17 October 2017

The objective of the meeting is to formulate specific policy proposals regarding Australia's relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC). The meeting will be conducted off-the-record.

Each session has three panellists and a moderator. Each panellist has *seven* minutes to make remarks and is encouraged to take a stand on a controversial issue relating to the session focus. The moderator will then probe the issue(s) further with the panellists before opening up the discussion to everyone. Comments are expected to be a maximum of *four* minutes.

The 'jazz club style' format of the meeting is designed to create a conversation among peers. There is no Q&A. While panellists initiate the conversation, their follow-up remarks throughout the session must be brief, so that the majority of the session is an open back-and-forth among all participants.

0830 Tea and coffee

0850 Participants move to meeting area to take their seats

0900 – 0915 **Welcome** Dr **Brendan Taylor**, Acting Director, Coral Bell School, ANU
Ms **Linda Jakobson**, CEO and Founding Director, China Matters

0915 – 1045 **Session I How should Australia respond to Xi Jinping's ambition?**

Panellists: Ms **Frances Adamson**, Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Mr **Andrew Michelmore**, Executive Manager, MMG; Board Director, China Matters
Mr **John Denton AO**, Partner & CEO, Corrs Chambers Westgarth

Moderator: Ms **Linda Jakobson**, CEO and Founding Director, China Matters

Panellists and participants should articulate what constitutes an effective but nuanced Australian foreign policy considering the importance of the PRC as an economic, political and security actor.

Key questions: How should Australia prepare for an unpredictable region shaped by unreliable US policy and contentious PRC policy? Realistically, who should Canberra partner with if it decides to be more self-reliant in foreign policy? What are the PRC's objectives in the BRI? How should Canberra respond given the economic opportunities?

1045 – 1110 Morning tea

1110 – 1240 **Session II Australia needs PRC investment. But how to deter PRC control, especially in critical infrastructure?**

Panellists: Mr **David Irvine AO**, Chairman, Foreign Investment Review Board
Major General **Stephen Day DSC AM**, Advisor, PwC
Mr **Lloyd Jones**, Non-Executive Director (Independent), Blue Scope Steel

Moderator: Ms **Natalie Cope**, CEO, Australia China Business Council (NSW); Member of Advisory Council, China Matters

Panellists and participants should discuss ways to ensure that PRC investment is made welcome while at the same time deterring PRC control of sensitive critical infrastructure assets.

Key questions: What precisely are those sceptical of PRC investment afraid of? Does it matter whether the investor is a (passive) financial investor or an (active) operator, and whether the investor is a PRC state-owned-enterprise or private enterprise? Would Australia be better off with stricter upfront rules that constrain foreign investment in critical infrastructure but provide more clearly defined, if more limited opportunities to foreign investors? Who should be responsible for managing public perceptions of the benefits from, and challenges of, PRC investment?

1240 – 1355 Lunch 1300-1315 Recital by pianist Ms **Mia Huang**, ANU School of Music student

1355 – 1525 **Session III How does Australia respond to growing PRC influence and activity in Australia, without creating prejudice against Chinese-Australians?**

Panellists: Mr **Kenrick Cheah**, President, Chinese Australian Forum
Ms **Ming Long**, Non-Executive Director, AMP Capital
Mr **Jason Yat-sen Li**, Chairman, Vantage Asia Holdings; Member of Advisory Council, China Matters

Moderator: Ms **Erny Wah**, Policy Officer, DFAT (Young Professionals representative)

Panellists and participants should discuss ways to alleviate the pressure felt by many Chinese-Australians amidst the growing activism of the PRC government in Australian society and the resulting media attention.

Key questions: How does Australia respond to growing PRC influence and activity in Australia, without creating prejudice against Chinese-Australians? Is there something the government should do, other than just encourage a more nuanced understanding of Chinese-Australian communities? How can Chinese-Australians be spurred to engage with mainstream discussions about the PRC? What advice to give those accused of 'racism' when defending Australian values?

1535 – 1645 **Session IV What should Australia do? Formulating specific policy recommendations**

Panellists: Session I: Ambassador **Jan Adams** AO PSM, Australian Ambassador to the People's Republic of China; Board Director, China Matters
Session II: Mr **Andrew Parker**, Deals Partner and Asia Practice Leader, PwC; Board Director, China Matters
Session III: Mr **Chris Moraitis** PSM, Secretary, Attorney-General's Department

Moderator: Professor **Michael Wesley**, Dean, College of Asia and the Pacific ANU; Chair of Advisory Council, China Matters

Each panellist will briefly summarise the policy recommendation(s) of one session, and possibly put forward their own suggestion. Participants are asked to comment on these recommendations and appraise their practicality.

1645 Meeting concludes