



Media Roundup Issue 62 (10/03/18 – 16/03/18)

1. China's Congress votes to abolish presidential term limits, allowing Xi Jinping to rule indefinitely

11/03/2018

ABC News

China's Congress has passed a constitutional amendment that removes presidential term limits, allowing President Xi Jinping to remain in office indefinitely and confirming his status as the country's most powerful leader since Mao Zedong died more than 40 years ago.

The vote passed with two "no" votes and three abstentions among almost 3,000 delegates.

China's ruling Communist Party proposed the amendment last month and there was never any doubt it would pass as Parliament is packed with loyal party members who would not have opposed the proposal.

The amendments also include inserting Mr Xi's political theory into the constitution, a feat no other leader since Mao had managed while in office.

Additionally, clauses were included to give a legal framework to a new super anti-corruption department.

Read more: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-11/china-abolishes-presidential-term-limits/9537166>

2. Chinese investors eye Australian private equity through Noah Holdings

11/03/2018

Su-Lin Tan

Australian Financial Review

New York-listed Chinese high-net-worth wealth manager Noah Holdings launched its first Australian office in Melbourne on Friday, with plans to invest up to \$2 billion in Australian private equity deals over the next four years.

It is a drop in the ocean for the group which is worth \$3.6 billion in market capitalisation but a significant detour for Chinese investors in Australia, who are maturing away from just property investment and development.

It has the biggest high-net worth network in China with \$300 billion of capital from about nearly 190,000 clients and family offices at its disposal, all of whom are now looking for more sophisticated products to invest in.

Read more (Paywall): <http://www.afr.com/real-estate/chinese-investors-eye-australian-private-equity-through-noah-holdings-20180308-h0x80v>

3. Australia Post's Christine Holgate finds doors still open in Beijing

12/03/2018

Kirsty Needham

The Sydney Morning Herald

Beijing: New Australia Post chief executive Christine Holgate appreciates the door-opening power of heading a large government-owned enterprise when in Beijing, where the state continues to hold significant business sway.

On a flying visit to China last week, a market she established for Australian vitamins as Blackmores' chief, Holgate swiftly secured a meeting with the president of China Post, and executives from some of China's biggest companies.

Two weeks ago she met with the president of the Bank of China, also state-owned. If there is strain in the diplomatic relations between the Australian and Chinese governments, Ms Holgate hasn't felt it.

Read more: <https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/australia-post-s-christine-holgate-finds-doors-still-open-in-beijing-20180311-p4z3sy.html>

4. Challenges mount in China enrolments drive

12/03/2018

Dan Wilkie

Australia China Business Review

In early February, the Chinese government lobbed a shot across the bow of Australia's higher education sector, warning students they may not necessarily be safe in the lucky country.

The announcement was the second such strike against Australian universities since December, with education exports, worth around \$31 billion a year to the national economy, getting caught up in increasing geopolitical tension between the two countries.

Political analysts suggest Beijing is railing against Australian education to show its displeasure with the nation's foreign policy, particularly Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's strident rhetoric over supposed foreign interference and criticism of China's expansion in the South China Sea.

Read more: <http://www.acbr.com.au/challenges-mount-china-enrolments-drive>

5. Security alarm sounded over Chinese company Huawei's possible involvement in Australia's 5G network

12/03/2018

Michael Walsh & Xiaoning Mo

ABC News

Chinese telecom giant Huawei faces the prospect of being barred from yet another major project in Australia because of national security concerns.

This time the concern is around the building of 5G mobile networks.

The Australian Financial Review reported late last month that the Critical Infrastructure Centre within the newly created Department of Home Affairs would conduct a national security assessment of the company.

Under legislation passed last year, the Federal Government has the power to direct carriers to take action protecting networks from national security risks.

Read more: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-11/security-concerns-over-chinese-firm-huawei-5g-technology/9522894>

6. Billion-dollar writedown for China's flagship Sino Iron project

12/03/2018

Brad Thompson

Australian Financial Review

The hits keep coming for CITIC's magnetite project in Western Australia with the Chinese conglomerate warning of a write-down of up to \$US1 billion (\$1.27 billion).

It is the fourth year in a row the Hong Kong Stock Exchange-listed CITIC has flagged big impairments on Sino Iron, with the latest review of the project's value coming just months after chairman Chang Zhenming raised the prospect of suspending operations.

CITIC has ploughed more than \$US12 billion into the Pilbara project, which is under a cloud amid various [legal disputes with Clive Palmer](#) and his private company Mineralogy.

Read more (Paywall): <http://www.afr.com/business/billiondollar-writedown-for-chinas-flagship-sino-iron-project-20180312-h0xces>

7. #NotMyPresident: Chinese students in Australia protest Xi Jinping's rule

13/03/2018

Kelsey Munro

SBS News

Chinese students in Australia have joined in a rare display of dissent against Beijing, in a social media campaign rejecting President Xi's move to potentially rule for life.

Students at Australia's oldest universities Sydney and Melbourne have become the latest to register their protest at the abolition of term limits for China's president Xi Jinping in a rare public expression of dissent started by Chinese students in the US.

The global social media campaign, Xi's Not My President, uses hashtags #NotMyPresident and #IDisagree (and its Chinese equivalent #我不同意), and encourages overseas students to use the freedom they have outside China to voice the dissent that is silenced at home.

Students at universities in Hong Kong, the UK, the Netherlands and Canada have also followed their US counterparts in registering their dissent by putting up the campaign's posters on their campuses.

Read more: <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/notmypresident-chinese-students-in-australia-protest-xi-jinping-s-rule>

8. Ai Weiwei: Detention centres give Australia a 'bad image'

13/03/2018

Rosemary Bolger

SBS News

The Chinese artist and activist has criticised Australia's treatment of refugees as his work goes on display in Sydney.

Ai Weiwei, one of the world's leading contemporary artists, has installed a 60-metre inflatable life raft crammed with 300 figures on Cockatoo Island in Sydney.

It's a giant replica of the perilous journey thousands of refugees have made across the Mediterranean Sea and his contribution to this year's Biennale of Sydney.

As 'Law of the Journey' was unveiled on Monday, Ai called on Australia to take a more compassionate approach towards refugees and criticised the country's use of detention centres.

Read more: <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/ai-weiwei-detention-centres-give-australia-a-bad-image>

9. When will Australia find the courage to challenge China?

13/03/2018

Chris Uhlmann

9 News

While the world stands transfixed by the daily Donald Trump soap opera, there is less focus on an equally powerful man who will cast an even longer shadow over Australia.

China's rubber-stamp parliament has struck down a decades-old rule that set term limits on its presidents, allowing President Xi Jinping to rule for as long as he wants.

Of 2964 delegates, only two brave souls voted no and three abstained. But, let's face it, Xi's rule is so absolute that the hardy few dissenters were probably also under orders. A clean sweep might look a tad contrived.

Read more: <https://www.9news.com.au/national/2018/03/13/14/14/china-trade-predicament-as-australia-faces-south-china-sea-military-concerns>

10. Australia's Department of Defence has banned its officials from using Chinese social media app WeChat

13/03/2018

Peter Farquhar

Business Insider Australia

Australia's Department of Defence has banned employees from using one of the world's largest social media apps, WeChat.

The ban was [first reported in the Australian Financial Review](#), with the Australian Defence Department confirming it did allow "limited use of Facebook, but not WeChat".

The app, which has more than one billion users, is undergoing a security assessment. Until it is cleared, it is not allowed on any official's mobile device.

The ban follows the Department of Defence confirming to Business Insider just a fortnight ago that [it no longer uses any Huawei phones and is retiring its ZTE mobiles](#).

Read more: <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/australias-department-of-defence-bans-chinese-social-media-app-wechat-2018-3>

11. Claims Chinese researchers blocked from Australian universities

13/03/2018

Kirsty Needham

The Sydney Morning Herald

Beijing: Amid fears the Chinese government would "turn off the tap" of Chinese students enrolling in Australian universities, a Chinese education agency has complained about the opposite happening - Australian security agencies blocking visas for Chinese postgraduate students.

The Department of Home Affairs has confirmed that 40 Chinese PhD applicants who were awarded scholarships to study in Australia are experiencing visa delays as they go through legislated national security checks.

All of the researchers were awarded a scholarship from the Chinese Scholarship Council, part of the Chinese education ministry.

Read more: <https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/claims-chinese-researchers-blocked-from-australian-universities-20180313-p4z482.html>

12. Australia to stress international law in South China Sea dispute

13/03/2018

Colin Packham & Robert Birsell

Channel News Asia

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop will on Tuesday hail the role of international law in settling regional conflicts, comments apparently aimed at bolstering Australian efforts to build a coalition against Chinese assertiveness.

Bishop, in a speech ahead of a special meeting of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Sydney, will not name China but will argue that international law will stabilise a region strained by rival claims in the South China Sea.

"The rules-based order is designed to regulate behaviour and rivalries of and between states, and ensure countries compete fairly and in a way that does not threaten others or destabilise their region or the world," Bishop will say in

Sydney, according to a leaked draft of the speech seen by the Australian Financial Review.

Read more: <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/australia-to-stress-international-law-in-south-china-sea-dispute-10039408>

13. China raises concerns about student visa delays

13/03/2018

Michael Smith

Australian Financial Review

China has raised concerns about the long visa approval process for government-funded postgraduate students seeking to study at Australian universities amid suggestions the delays are politically motivated following fears about Beijing's alleged influence on university campuses.

The China Scholarship Council, which is overseen by the Chinese Ministry of Education, has raised concerns with the Chinese embassy in Canberra and universities about the long approval process for PhD students and scholars applying to work in Australia under the program.

Australian universities have also raised concerns with the Department of Home Affairs about visa approvals they say are taking up to 12 months to process. It is believed applicants are being vetted by intelligence agencies, which are becoming increasingly concerned about Chinese espionage activities in Australia.

Read more (Paywall): <http://www.afr.com/news/policy/education/china-raises-concerns-about-student-visa-delays-20180313-h0xep0>

14. Greens MP David Shoebridge backs off book on China influence

13/03/2018

Paul Maley

The Australian

Greens MP David Shoebridge has reversed his decision to launch Australian academic Clive Hamilton's controversial book on Chinese influence in Australia,

prompting accusations from former Greens leader Christine Milne that her NSW colleague has succumbed to political pressure.

Mr Shoebridge, a NSW Greens MLC, had agreed to launch Professor Hamilton's book, *Silent Invasion*, which alleges systematic interference by the Chinese Communist Party in Australian public life.

Professor Hamilton, himself a member of the Greens, said Mr Shoebridge had agreed to host the launch of *Silent Invasion* at NSW Parliament House but withdrew his invitation on Friday.

"He told me that some Green members believe that the book will stir up anti-Chinese sentiment in the community," he said. "Other Green members told me they'd heard nothing like that."

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/foreign-affairs/greens-mp-david-shoebridge-backs-off-book-on-china-influence/news-story/6f30b14349788c8256f90bd123c7ba47>

15. Smartpay taps into China tourist payments

13/03/2018

Stuart Condie

Australian Associated Press

Payment provider Smartpay hopes to tap into the burgeoning Chinese tourist market, signing a deal with Chinese giant Alipay that sent the ASX-listed firm's shares soaring as much as 64 per cent.

Smartpay said the deal with Alipay, which has 520 million active users in China, gives 25,000 merchants access to an estimated \$11 billion in Chinese tourist spending across Australia and New Zealand.

Smartpay will take a slice of each Alipay transaction on its eftpos terminals, with a trial set to launch in NZ next month.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/latest-news/smartpay-shares-surge-on-alipay-linkup/news-story/beaf41ef09419bf98fb4fcee9b3a3aba>

16. China's Massive Government Overhaul: What You Need to Know

14/03/2018
Shannon Tiezi
The Diplomat

A brief rundown of the changes and what they reveal about Beijing's priorities and ambitions.

When the National People's Congress of China formally passed a series of constitutional amendments on Sunday, it would have been the highlight of most annual sessions. But this year's NPC was just getting started.

Next on the agenda: [an extensive overhaul of a laundry list of government agencies](#). Through mergers and setting up new offices, Beijing hopes to make policymaking more efficient – and the changes thus offer insights into the areas where China's government is most interested in boosting its performance.

The plan will restructure the bureaucracy under China's State Council "to make the government better-structured, more efficient, and service-oriented," [according to state new agency Xinhua](#). This mostly means consolidating existing functions; according to *Xinhua's* report, the restructure will result in eight fewer ministerial-level bodies and seven fewer vice-ministerial level ones. *Xinhua* has a [list of what ministries and commissions](#) will make up the State Council after the reshuffle.

Read more: <https://thediplomat.com/2018/03/chinas-massive-government-overhaul-what-you-need-to-know/>

17. Chinese lead way in helping overseas tourist spending top \$40bn

14/03/2018
Mark Schliebs
The Australian

Spending by international visitors to Australia rose to \$40 billion for the first time last year, with about a quarter of that money coming from the Chinese market.

The 6 per cent rise in spending, to reach \$41.3bn, represents an extra \$2.2bn for the Australian economy and mirrors an increase in overseas visitor numbers to 8.1 million.

The figures from the latest international visitor survey by Tourism Research Australia show growth in spending in every state and territory except Western Australia.

“This record run is great for the country,” federal Tourism Minister Steven Ciobo said before the report’s release today.

“The more tourists that visit, the more they spend, the better for our economy and jobs.”

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/chinese-lead-way-in-helping-overseas-tourist-spending-top-40bn/news-story/90c1fc2d35b6d3e9fa32498377aa297d>

18. Australia's kerbside recycling system in crisis following China ban

14/03/2018
Kelsey Munro
The Guardian

Recycling industry in Victoria and NSW on verge of collapse, Senate inquiry told.

Australia’s kerbside recycling systems are at risk of collapse, a Senate inquiry has heard. China’s ban on importation of recyclable rubbish has left councils and state governments in Victoria and [New South Wales](#) scrambling to find space to stockpile growing mounds of waste.

An estimated half of Australia’s recyclable waste was going to [China](#) before the ban, the hearing was told, although the precise share of waste exported was not known.

[Victoria](#) was already in crisis – waste contractors to 13 regional councils had stopped accepting recyclables last month.

A similar number of local councils in NSW are facing the collapse of kerbside recycling collection programs due to contractors refusing to take the material,

according to Linda Scott, the president of the NSW Local Government Association, which represents the state's 128 local councils.

Read more: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/mar/14/australias-kerbside-recycling-system-in-crisis-following-china-ban>

19. Australia on its own when managing foreign influence on Australian soil

15/03/2018

John Fitzgerald

Australian Financial Review

People in China who follow Chinese-language sites in Australia were startled by the warnings that started flashing on their screens. "All Chinese students in Australia are warned to be on the alert for possible threats to their safety," [China's embassy and consulates](#) cautioned in an official alert on December 20. "Attacks and insults targeting Chinese students have been taking place around Australia."

PRC-funded Chinese-language websites and radio stations in Australia, including [Melbourne's 3CW](#), repeated the warning between music breaks, in endless loops, along with a recital of phone numbers for presumably distressed students eager to contact their local consulates and parents.

In February, the central Ministry of Education issued an almost identical message under the ominous title "2018 Warning No. 1 for Study Abroad". Ostensibly, the target audience was students. "All Chinese students studying abroad in Australia should be vigilant, strengthen risk prevention, and pay attention to their personal protection", it warned.

Read more (Paywall): <http://www.afr.com/news/world/asia/australia-is-on-its-own-as-beijing-demonstrates-its-power-in-the-region-20180311-h0xbze>

20. China's quest for political control and military supremacy in the cyber domain

16/03/2018

Elsa Kania

The Strategist

The People's Republic of China seeks to contest information dominance (制信息权) and discursive dominance (话语权) in cyberspace. For the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), cybersecurity is integral to comprehensive [state security](#) (国家安全). That's distinct from 'national' security in that it focuses on preserving stability and legitimacy to ensure the regime's survival. Xi Jinping has said that 'without cybersecurity, there is no state security'.

In this concept of cybersecurity, information security and control take priority. Indeed, for the CCP, threats to cyber sovereignty (网络主权) are seen as existential in nature. For that reason, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is actively building its capabilities to engage in 'military struggle' (军事斗争) in the cyber domain.

The CCP has long believed itself to be engaged in an ideological contest in cyberspace. It has sought to counter foreign 'hostile forces' (敌对势力) through censorship and propaganda. It blames those influences for popular protests that have overthrown authoritarian governments, as in the Arab Spring.

Tellingly, a research centre with the Cyberspace Administration of China has written, 'If our party cannot traverse the hurdle represented by the internet, [it cannot traverse the hurdle of remaining in power](#) for the long term.'

Read more: <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/chinas-quest-political-control-military-supremacy-cyber-domain/>

21. Cyber advice on WeChat 'not provided to MPs'

16/03/2018

Primrose Riordan

The Australian

The Home Affairs department — which houses the nation's spy agencies — has fallen short of following the Defence Department's ban on China's WeChat on

work mobiles, but said the move was a “timely reminder” of the cyber risks of third party apps.

In a statement to *The Australian*, the newly formed department confirmed it could isolate the phones of staff who download the app. Federal MPs, who sit in on sensitive briefings, have not been told not to download the app, owned by Chinese company Tencent.

In a statement to *The Australian Financial Review* this week, a spokesman said the Defence Department “does not provide or support the use of unauthorised software, including the WeChat social media application, on Defence mobile devices”.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/national-security/cyber-advice-on-wechat-not-provided-to-mps/news-story/d6f26e2fc30708715dd76e5fbf532dc4>