

Media Roundup Issue 107 (02/02/19 – 08/02/19)

1. Detained blogger Yang Hengjun sacks lawyers, China's police claim

02/02/19

Kirsty Needham

The Sydney Morning Herald

China's secretive state security bureau has told the human rights lawyers hired by the family of detained blogger Yang Hengjun that the Australian has rejected their legal assistance.

Yang has had no contact with lawyers or family since he was detained arriving at Guangzhou airport on January 19 and placed under residential surveillance in a secret location.

Beijing lawyer Shang Baojun said he and high-profile defence lawyer Mo Shaoping were told via phone on Friday afternoon by the Beijing State Security Bureau that Yang didn't want their services. They had formally applied to visit Yang on Monday and received no reply from the bureau all week.

"For the moment, we don't know if this message is true. If it is his own will, we will certainly respect it. But we don't know whether it is his own will," said Shang.

Read more: <https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/detained-blogger-yang-hengjun-sacks-lawyers-china-s-police-claim-20190202-p50vbp.html>

2. Tony Abbott attended Australia Day dinner with links to China's communist government

02/02/19

9news Staff

9news.com.au

It was an Australia Day dinner with the Chinese community - but Tony Abbott says he didn't realise he was being hosted by individuals with strong links to China's communist government.

The former Prime Minister insists there was no wrongdoing, as he prepared for a battle closer to home, rallying the troops in Warringah.



Each week China Matters collates news items about the Australia-China relationship

He's in campaign mode, but his attendance at a campaign dinner for an Australia Chinese Association has raised questions.

The former Prime Minister was a VIP hosted by lobbyists from China's Communist Party, delivering a speech in which he praised the rise of the superpower.

The Australia Day event was attended by high ranking affiliates of the United Front, which attempts to influence foreign politicians for Beijing.

Read more: <https://www.9news.com.au/2019/02/02/21/46/australian-politics-tony-abbott-chinese-new-year-dinner>

3. Don't fall for 'pyrrhic victory', Joe Hockey urges Trump on US-China trade row

03/02/19

Jacob Greber

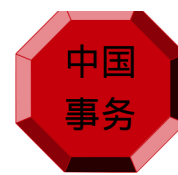
Australian Financial Review

Australia is warning Donald Trump not to succumb to a "sugar hit" trade deal with China that lets slip thornier structural issues on intellectual property theft, cyber-crime, corporate governance and subsidies to state-owned enterprises.

Concern is growing that the president could settle this month for a compromise deal with President Xi Jinping that only addresses the trade deficit, rather than a comprehensive set of changes that many western companies and governments increasingly want addressed.

If it only covers pledges by China, such as the one announced on Thursday after two days of top-level talks between the two sides that Beijing will order the purchase of more US soybeans, the result would be a bitter blow for Australia and other US allies suffering the growing costs of Mr Trump's bruising trade war with Beijing.

At a closed roundtable in Washington last week that included top Trump administration officials, Australian ambassador to the US Joe Hockey cautioned against a superficial outcome that rendered for nothing the pain everyone had already gone through during the trade dispute.



Read more (Paywall): <https://www.afr.com/news/politics/world/dont-fall-for-pyrrhic-victory-joe-hockey-urges-trump-on-uschina-trade-dispute-20190203-h1ascl>

4. Don't get caught in the middle when great powers collide

03/02/19

Kirsty Needham

The Sydney Morning Herald

It is the hypothetical question that hangs like a cloud over Australians in China in these uncertain times of US-Sino trade wars, as middle powers get caught in the middle.

What if Huawei executive heiress Meng Wanzhou had been transiting through an Australian airport, instead of Canada, when the United States issued her arrest warrant?

Former solicitor-general of Australia, Gavan Griffith, says the Canadian situation could happen in Australia.

Griffith, a Queens Counsel who works from London on international disputes, and was Australia's solicitor-general for 14 years, says if the United States made a proper extradition request, "Australia would be required to detain".

Read more: <https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/don-t-get-caught-in-the-middle-when-great-powers-collide-20190131-p50uoa.html>

5. Trump delivers Morrison a lesson in keeping it chill with China

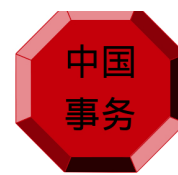
04/02/19

Glenda Korporaal

The Australian

As he writes his presidential version of The Art of The Deal, Donald Trump's handling of his relationship with China and President Xi Jinping provides some good insights for Australia in dealing with Beijing.

Last week's trade talks in Washington, between officials from the US and China, provided further evidence about how Trump is the master of aggressively



pushing his own agenda, but also knows the importance of working on high level personal -relations to reach a deal.

His determination to meet Xi before a final trade deal with China is reached — supposedly by the March 1 deadline — is a reflection of his long career as a business negotiator, where he learned the best deal happens when you sit across the table with the top person, looking them in the eye.

While he has attacked China for its trade policies including -accusing its companies of stealing US technology — and Vice--President Mike Pence has not held back in his scathing attack on a range of China issues, and his intelligence chiefs accused China of working to undermine US democracy last week — Trump himself has astutely cultivated a respectful relationship with Xi.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/trump-delivers-morrison-a-lesson-in-keeping-it-chill-with-china/news-story/2011c5bedbd8bc4112d44034c5cffbe4>

6. How Huawei Chairman John Lord plans to win in Australia despite 5G and NBN bans

04/02/19

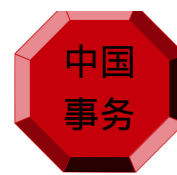
Yolanda Redrup

Australian Financial Review

The Australian chairman of controversial Chinese technology and telecommunications giant Huawei has said his company can still thrive in Australia, despite high-profile 5G and NBN bans, but called on tech and telecommunications leaders to call out false claims that he said were based purely on anti-China feeling.

Speaking to The Australian Financial Review, as the company found itself on the front pages of newspapers once more, over US charges, John Lord said that, while Huawei clearly faced an uphill battle in Australia, he was confident it could win over businesses, rather than government.

Having already been blocked on national security grounds by the federal government from participating in any part of Australia's 5G telecommunications infrastructure and National Broadband Network, Huawei's reputation took another hit last week, when the US government accused it of trying to



circumvent US sanctions against Iran, of committing bank fraud and of rewarding employees for the theft of competitors' secrets.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.afr.com/technology/how-huawei-chairman-john-lord-plans-to-win-in-australia-despite-5g-and-nbn-bans-20190124-h1agfa>

7. Chinese coal ban to last months

04/02/19

Glenda Korporaal and Perry Williams
The Australian

Australian coal exporters face restrictions on imports into China for at least the next few months, China sources told The Australian yesterday, as the Minerals Council considered taking action to ease a supply squeeze.

Shipments of Australian metallurgical coal have been sitting near ports off the coast of China, sparking speculation about whether the delays could be politically motivated as well as part of a general move by Chinese authorities to limit imports.

China is understood to have begun introducing restrictions on incoming coal last November after a surge in imports.

The restrictions were reportedly designed to help boost domestic coal prices and reduce oversupply. This led to a backlog of foreign coal on bulk ships sitting off Chinese ports waiting for customs clearance.

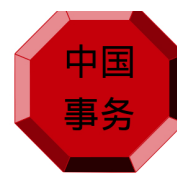
Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/chinese-coal-ban-to-last-months/news-story/0b976c7c13a964d0f9307c65c069d4b4>

8. Australia targets Chinese tourist groups with funding boost

05/02/19

Shi Yinglun
Xinhua

The Australian government has announced 11 million Australian dollars (7.92 million U.S. dollars) in additional funding to lure Chinese tourism groups to the country.



Simon Birmingham, the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, unveiled the boost for the Approved Destination Scheme (ADS) on Tuesday, saying it accounted for one quarter of the annual Chinese visitors to Australia.

According to Tourism Australia 1.42 million people visited Australia from China in the 12 months to September 2018, spending 11.5 billion AUD (8.28 billion USD).

Birmingham said those who came via the ADS spent an average of 865 AUD (623 USD) per night in Australia, promising that the additional investment would "pay for itself many times over."

Read more: http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-02/05/c_137800496.htm

9. Dances with dragons and lions: Young Chinese Australians keep Lunar New Year traditions alive

05/02/19

Yan Zhuang

The Sydney Morning Herald

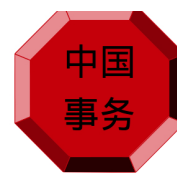
You'd be hard pressed to find a Lunar New Year celebration in Australia that doesn't involve a lion and dragon dance, but in China its appeal is diminishing.

It is increasingly the children and grandchildren of Chinese migrants keeping the tradition alive, particularly here in Australia.

"I have a lot of Chinese or Taiwanese relatives who come over and are like, 'You still do the lion dance? We don't care about that anymore'," says Jordan Ta, 19, who has been involved in Melbourne's Chinese Masonic Society Lion Dance team for seven years.

Ta, alongside Emily Zee, 22, and Zhen Lim, 34, will be performing in lion dances across the city during Lunar New Year celebrations.

Read more: <https://www.smh.com.au/national/dances-with-dragons-and-lions-young-chinese-australians-keep-lunar-new-year-traditions-alive-20190205-p50vo8.html>



10. Huang Xiangmo told Australian residency was cancelled after moving to Hong Kong

06/02/19

**Su-Lin Tan, Angus Grigg and Andrew Tillet
Australian Financial Review**

Chinese billionaire Huang Xiangmo was told in December his Australian permanent residency had been cancelled and the property developer and major political donor is now living mostly in Hong Kong.

It is understood Mr Huang left Sydney in November to pursue projects in Thailand and Hong Kong and before that handed over control of his Australian property interests to son Jimmy Huang.

[...]

The chief executive of China Matters, Linda Jakobson, said it was time the government and security agencies provided an explanation about Beijing's interference activities in Australia.

"[Then] everyone can understand if there is risk to our national security. We can't be told this is very dangerous without being told what is dangerous."

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.afr.com/news/politics/national/huang-xiangmo-told-australian-residency-was-cancelled-after-moving-to-hong-kong-20190206-h1axd9>

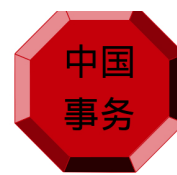
11. 'A man of many dimensions': the big Chinese donor now in Canberra's sights

06/02/19

**Nick McKenzie and Chris Uhlmann
The Sydney Morning Herald**

In December 2013, Australia's trade minister Andrew Robb strode to a lectern in a suburban Sydney shopping centre to vouch for a Chinese billionaire.

Property developer and million-dollar political donor Huang Xiangmo was a "visionary," said Robb, because of his role creating the Bob Carr led Australia



China Relations Institute in Sydney to help steer Australia through its most important bilateral relationship.

Huang was also “a man of many dimensions,” said Robb at the charity event.

“He’s a very thoughtful, cerebral fellow. I’ve had many interesting conversations already with Mr Huang on an endless range of topics.”

Robb would go on to take informal soundings, and donations, from Huang. One came on the day Robb finalised the China Australia Free Trade Agreement in late 2014.

Read more: <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/a-man-of-many-dimensions-the-big-chinese-donor-now-in-canberra-s-sights-20190206-p50vzt.html>

12. Aussie farmers, exporters brace for Beijing’s big barley tariff hit

06/02/19

Brad Thompson

Australian Financial Review

China has foreshadowed hitting Australian farmers with a crushing tariff on barley imports as the deadline approaches to respond to anti-dumping action launched through the World Trade Organisation.

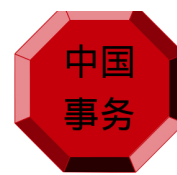
Australian exporters have been given until Monday to respond to China's dumping allegations, which came late last year hot on the heels of Canberra moving to counter Beijing's growing influence in the Pacific.

They are bracing for the possibility that heavy provisional tariffs could be imposed within weeks and cripple a trade worth billions of dollars.

China's Ministry of Commerce has outlined a case for an anti-dumping margin of 56 per cent after a big jump in barley imports from Australia.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.afr.com/business/aussie-farmers-exporters-brace-for-beijings-big-barley-tariff-hit-20190206-h1axdf>

13. Australia and the Taiwan contingency



06/02/19

Paul Dibb

The Strategist

Of all the credible contingencies facing Australia in the foreseeable future, the most challenging would undoubtedly be our involvement with the US in countering a major Chinese attack on Taiwan.

For obvious reasons, our politicians have refused to be drawn into public discussion about such a serious conflict. They prefer instead to resort to the 'we do not discuss such theoretical contingencies' as an understandable let-out. Discussion of this subject in academic publications in Australia has invariably tended to paint only the downsides of our involvement with the US in a war with China over Taiwan.

This article takes a different line and argues that if China were attacking US forces in a major military conflict across the Taiwan Strait and Australia refused to be involved, the very existence of the ANZUS alliance would be at risk.

Read more: <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/australia-and-the-taiwan-contingency/>

14. Dastyari reveals how Huang Xiangmo courted politicians

07/02/19

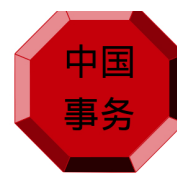
Jessica Cortis

The Australian

Sam Dastyari has revealed how Chinese donor Huang Xiangmo, who is believed to be stranded in Hong Kong after being stripped of his Australian Permanent residency, courted politicians and contributed millions of dollars to both major parties.

Mr Dastyari said his first encounter with Mr Huang should have sparked "warning bells" after he met him at a private restaurant in Sydney's Chinatown which had no name or signage.

"He had just booked out an entire restaurant to have dinner with me. I was vain. Arrogant. Thought I was special," he told The Daily Telegraph.



“He had a mixture of personal charm and charisma and also the fact that he came to Australia with an incredible amount of wealth that was being splashed around at a charity level, a community level and a political level.” he said.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/dastyari-reveals-how-huang-xiangmo-courted-politicians/news-story/85c0592569a3d4583108b9a1cd64c13d>

15. Great Leap as the Long March ends

07/02/19

Will Glasgow

The Australian

It's not as dramatic a development in the Australia-China relationship as Yuhu billionaire Huang Xiangmo's inability to return to his Mosman mansion.

But it's an interesting sign of the times.

Margin Call can reveal Australia's former ambassador to China Geoff Raby is relocating from Beijing to Sydney.

Since stepping down as Australia's man in China in 2011, Raby has run a successful advisory business out of Beijing. Clients have included Wesfarmer, Qantas, Macquarie and Seek.

It has made catching up with Raby something of a fixture on the itineraries of many blue-chip Australia boards and travelling politicians — of all colours — as they visit the Middle Kingdom.

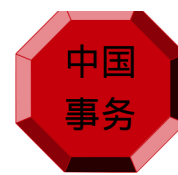
Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/margin-call/great-leap-as-the-long-march-ends/news-story/6223a738c24111dfafec8d17e4f85763>

16. Beijing closes account of one of Australia's most popular online communities

07/02/19

Michael Li and Tracey Shelton

ABC News



The WeChat account of one of Australia's most popular Chinese online communities has been banned by the Chinese Government despite the site's "strict self-censorship", as experts say China's crackdown on social media has raised concerns for media outlets in Australia.

Our Steps — an online community boasting 300,000 followers with a focus on Chinese residents in Australia — said they were shocked when they received the news their official WeChat account was permanently closed last week.

"We didn't receive a breach of rules notice before our official WeChat account closed," said Astina, the founder of the online network, who requested her surname be withheld for fear of further repercussions from Beijing.

She said none of the posts sent out to their 55,000 WeChat subscribers had been blocked or censored, due to their strict self-censoring policies.

Read more: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-02-07/china-crack-down-on-public-social-media-platforms/10780590>

17. Clock ticks on Chinese billionaire Huang Xiangmo's chance to appeal against Australian visa cancellation

07/02/19

Sarah Zheng

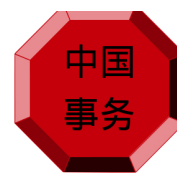
South China Morning Post

A high-profile Chinese political donor has less than a month to appeal against the reported cancellation of his Australian permanent residency, after his ties with China's Communist Party sparked concerns about Beijing's suspected influence in Australian politics.

Chinese billionaire property developer Huang Xiangmo has 28 days to ask the Australian Department of Home Affairs to consider restoring his visa, according to guidelines on department's website.

He could also apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for a review within nine days of receiving the notice to cancel his visa.

A department spokesman declined to comment on individual cases.



Huang's fight to return to his multimillion-dollar Sydney mansion, where his wife and son live, comes after officials stripped him of his residency and denied his long-delayed application for Australian citizenship, The Sydney Morning Herald reported on Tuesday.

Read more:

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/2185324/clock-ticks-chinese-billionaire-huang-xiangmos-chance-appeal>

18. Banned billionaire Huang Xiangmo to Liberal and Labour: I want my money back

08/02/19

Su-Lin Tan

Australian Financial Review

[...]

The chief executive of China Matters, Linda Jakobson, said while Australia should protect its national security, it was time the government and security agencies provided an explanation about Beijing's interference activities in Australia.

"We have to do better than what ASIO is saying which is, 'I know something you don't know and if you knew what I know then you would agree with me'. And this is happening more and more nowadays," she said.

"We have to get past this and we have to provide a nuanced explanation to the Australian public about what the People's Republic of China is doing so that everyone can understand if there is risk to our national security."

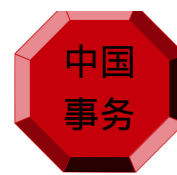
Read more (Paywall): <https://www.afr.com/news/politics/banned-billionaire-huang-xiangmo-to-liberal-and-labor-i-want-my-money-back-20190208-h1b0e0>

19. Australia catches a glimpse of China's claws

08/02/19

Robert Gottlieb

The Australian



On the global stage there is now a rush for the “safety” of the US dollar which is forcing American bond yields towards new lows as the world fears we are spiralling towards an escalation of the US-China technology-driven trade war.

But here in Australia, our banking gymnastics obscure our own escalating battle with China which is starting to affect our key exports like education, coal and agricultural products. We depend on China but China is deliberately moving its itself to a position where Australia is dispensable and we do not recognise this incredibly dangerous development. It’s time to part the curtain.

My business friends tell me that when they talk to top government people in China, they are alarmed to discover that China is very unhappy with Australia. China has decided, without fuss, and on a step-by-step basis, to punish us for our bad behaviour. They have chosen to target our soft underbellies like students, coal, apartments and agriculture. The blows are not severe — more like a “rap on the knuckles”.

Read more (Paywall):

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/opinion/robert-gottliebsen/australia-catches-a-glimpse-of-chinas-claws/news-story/b996e8c0f021eb91a31d791a7527face>

20. China’s multi-billion dollar media campaign ‘a major threat to democracies’ around the world

08/02/19

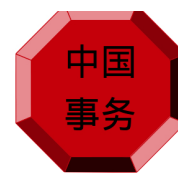
Sean Mantesso and Christina Zhou

ABC News

In September 2018, billboards adorned with kangaroos and pandas began popping up around Australia's capital cities as part of a \$500 million advertising campaign urging viewers to "see the difference" on China's Central Global Television Network (CGTN) — available on Foxtel and Fetch TV.

But "seeing the difference" comes with an important caveat.

Experts warn China's media is being wielded as a tool to shape public opinion and serve the ideological aims of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) across the globe.



And, as a part of its efforts, Beijing is training up foreign journalists, buying up space in overseas media, and expanding its state-owned networks on an unprecedented scale.

When the international arm of China Central Television (CCTV) news rebranded and became CGTN in 2016, Chinese President Xi Jinping urged the media organisation in a congratulatory letter to "tell China stories well" and spread China's voice.

Read more: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-02-08/chinas-foreign-media-push-a-major-threat-to-democracies/10733068>

21. Beijing cops diplomatic protest over treaty breach

08/02/19

**Primrose Riordan
The Australian**

Australia has lodged a diplomatic protest with Beijing after a longstanding consular treaty with China was breached over the detention of three Australian citizens originally from the communist nation.

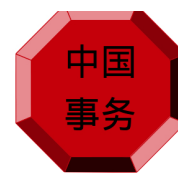
The friction with China has emerged after Australia complained about the speed with which diplomats were notified about the detention of Chinese-Australian Yang Hengjun by Beijing's security services.

Australia — unlike Britain, Canada and the US — has not updated its travel advice to include a warning that Australian citizens who were previously Chinese nationals or had Chinese heritage have a greater chance of being treated like a Chinese citizen when detained.

Following Mr Yang's detention, Chinese media warned that visitors with both Chinese and foreign passports would be treated as Chinese within China.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/foreign-affairs/beijing-cops-diplomatic-protest-over-treaty-breach/news-story/557ea930a096ba3bc2a8eb778cc7d5a8>

22. Federal MP's computer network hacked in possible foreign government attack



08/02/19

David Wroe and Chris Uhlmann

The Sydney Morning Herald

Federal MPs' emails and data may have been compromised by a cyber attack on Parliament that is being described as "sophisticated", suggesting the involvement of a foreign government.

While sources said it was too early to say who was behind the attack, they said the fact that Parliament had significantly upgraded its cyber defences since an attack by Chinese intelligence in 2011 suggested the latest hackers were highly skilled.

The Australian Signals Directorate, the government's key agency on cybersecurity, moved swiftly in recent days to lock down and protect the network, it is understood. The agency's Director-General, Mike Burgess, was in Parliament on Friday morning, as was Alastair MacGibbon, head of the Australian Cyber Security Centre.

The top MPs who oversee Parliament confirmed that security agencies were now investigating the incident and urgent action has been taken to protect the network, including the changing of all passwords.

Read more: <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/federal-mps-computer-network-hacked-forcing-passwords-to-be-changed-20190208-p50wgm.html>