

Media Roundup Issue 24 (10/06/17 – 16/06/17)

1. Australia Is Debating Chinese Influence. Should the U.S. Do the Same?

09/06/2017

**Bruce Jacobs, Kerry Brown, Kevin Carrico, Philipp Ivanov, Peter Mattis
ChinaFile**

“The Chinese Communist Party is waging a covert campaign of influence in Australia,” went the claim in the newspaper *The Age*, in a series of articles exploring China’s hard and soft power “Down Under.” The articles set off a domestic debate about just how wary Australians should be about their largest trading partner. How carefully should Australia manage its ties with China moving forward? And, although American attention remains focused on Russia’s interference in the 2016 presidential election, should the United States have the same debate?

Read more:

<http://www.chinafile.com/conversation/australia-debating-chinese-influence-should-u-s-do-same>

2. One Chinese political donation does not a scandal make

10/06/2017

**Bob Carr
The Australian**

Let’s be clear. Efforts by any country to subvert Australia should be investigated, monitored and brought to light. Yes, let’s ban donations from non-citizens. Let’s go further still — my own suggestion — and ban any donations that might reasonably be suspected as seeking to influence Australian foreign policy.

However, almost a week after ABC’s *Four Corners* screened its episode *Power and Influence: How China’s Communist Party is Infiltrating Australia*, we have evidence of donations by two Chinese to Australian political parties. Two. This is the paltry revelation that produced this week’s sensational headlines along the lines of

“China buys our politics”, “Chinese cash” in Fairfax newspapers and ABC bulletins.

Read more (Paywall):

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/inquirer/one-chinese-political-donation-does-not-a-scandal-make/news-story/e95b39e4e9cbc7a29996fe8c92446c63>

3. Bob Carr fascinates with sins of omission on Chinese influence

12/06/2017

**Chris Uhlmann (in response to Carr’s article above)
The Australian**

There are many sins of commission in Bob Carr’s crack at debunking his straw man version of the *Four Corners*-Fairfax investigation into Beijing’s influence in Australia.

More fascinating are its sins of omission.

The joint investigation examined Chinese Communist Party activities that ranged from directing student groups, through threatening pro-democracy advocates to effectively controlling most Chinese-language media in Australia.

We also reported that, in 2015, ASIO warned the Liberal, Labor and National parties that two of their big donors had Chinese Communist Party links. The parties chose to keep taking money from both.

Read more (Paywall):

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/bob-carr-fascinates-with-sins-of-omission-on-chinese-influence/news-story/25a5c094ae6b6a58097a6bbf54247a85>

4. China's Communist Party seeks news influence through Australian media deals

11/06/2017

Bill Birtles

ABC News Online

As concerns mount over Beijing's grip on Australia's Chinese-language media, the Communist Party is working to shape the narrative of mainstream outlets too.

China's state-controlled media giants have been determinedly pushing cooperation deals with international media outlets, including in Australia.

The ABC and Sky News are among the Australian media that collaborate with Chinese partners, in deals spanning everything from entertainment to news programming.

"By doing this sort of thing and having more of this type of cooperation, we will cover the world or cover China in a more open, objective and truthful way," said Liu Ge, the deputy director of CGTN, the English-language channel of state television broadcaster CCTV.

Read more:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-06-11/china-communist-party-seeks-news-influence-australia-deals/8607754>

5. Brumby warns negative attitude may deter Chinese investment

13/06/2017

Glenda Korporaal

The Australian

A negative attitude towards foreign investment could "compromise" Australia's ability to attract billions of dollars in new capital from China, the chairman of the Australia China Business Council, John Brumby, has warned in a report out today.

A former premier of Victoria, and current director of Chinese telco Huawei in Australia, Mr Brumby said China's investment in Australia was about \$75 billion — or less than 3 per cent of total foreign investment into Australia.

But he said Chinese investment into Australia could be expected to step up as the country's middle class grows, with demand increasing in areas where Australia had a competitive advantage, including agribusiness, health products, services, tourism, and education.

Read more (Paywall):

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/brumby-warns-negative-attitude-may-det-er-chinese-investment/news-story/8e1ba3b89af229a7be8c55565abae6ff>

6. Chinese lobby group formed to oppose same-sex marriage

14/06/2017

Rachel Baxendale

The Australian

The Australian Chinese community has founded a not-for-profit group to mobilise against same-sex marriage and the Safe Schools program.

Co-founder and Sydney GP Pansy Lai was behind a petition to the NSW government that last year gathered 17,500 signatures from Australian Chinese community members opposed to Safe Schools.

Dr Lai said she was overwhelmed by the response to her petition and had been inspired to form the Australian Chinese for Families Association, which launches this week. "I didn't realise until I did the petition just how many people there are out there who are really concerned about Safe Schools," she said.

Read more:

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/chinese-lobby-group-formed-to-op-pose-samesex-marriage/news-story/93919effaadf8065afd6793721ecd521>

7. ASIO warned ANU of donor links to Chinese Communist party, Opposition ramps up inquiry call

14/06/2017

Chris Uhlmann

ABC News Online

The Australian National University rejected a multi-million-dollar donation from a billionaire property developer last year after its vice chancellor was warned by ASIO that the benefactor had links to the Chinese Communist Party.

The news comes as the Opposition presses for an inquiry into foreign interference in Australia, conducted by Parliament's powerful joint intelligence and security committee.

The committee's deputy chair, Labor's Anthony Byrne, said the need for an inquiry was urgent.

The intelligence committee has the power to call agencies to give evidence in private, and he would be willing to interrogate politicians from all parties in public.

Read more:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-06-14/asio-warned-anu-of-china-communist-donor-links/8616014>

8. 'China panic': ambassador to Australia says claims of political interference groundless

15/06/2017

Paul Karp

The Guardian

Reports of foreign influence in Australian politics through donations by Chinese citizens are an attempt to whip up a "China panic", the Chinese ambassador to Australia has said.

At an event in Canberra on Thursday, Cheng Jingye labelled claims of Chinese interference a “groundless” attempt to reheat old allegations, akin to “cooking up the overnight cold rice”.

Last week Four Corners investigated more than \$4m of donations to the major parties by an Australian Chinese citizen, Chau Chak Wing, who was a member of a Communist party advisory group known as a people’s political consultative conference (CPPCC).

Read more:

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/jun/15/china-panic-ambassador-to-australia-says-claims-of-political-interference-groundless>

9. Abbott money man hit by China donations scandal

15/06/2017

**Nick McKenzie, Chris Uhlmann, Richard Baker, Sean Nicholls
Sydney Morning Herald**

A key political fundraiser for former prime minister Tony Abbott has maintained contact with Chinese Communist Party-aligned businessman Huang Xiangmo, despite warnings from ASIO to Mr Abbott about the billionaire donor.

My Huang has sought to get Abbott confident and Liberal party heavyweight, John Caputo, to intervene in his citizenship application, according to a well-placed source.

The revelation comes as the controversy over foreign interference in Australian affairs continues to grow, more than a week after a Fairfax Media and *Four Corners* investigation exposed efforts by China’s Communist Party to exert influence through political donations.

Read more:

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/abbott-money-man-hit-by-china-donations-scandal-20170614-gwr3ta.html>

10. It's time for Australia-US cooperation on Chinese investment

15/06/2017

Richard Fontaine

Australian Financial Review

After the Australia-US ministerial consultation in Sydney wrapped up in early June, the focus of alliance managers will not be turning to further ways of deepening alliance ties. And one sure way to deepen those ties is with more work on a challenge that both countries face: the national security implications of inbound Chinese investment.

Chinese investment has surged in Australia. Direct investment rose by 56 per cent from 2015 to 2016, and stood at \$4.8 billion last year. China has been the greatest source of new business investment proposals in the last several years, and Chinese firms are taking stakes in Australian farms, dairy companies, Chinese-language media outlets, and real estate.

Read more (Paywall):

<http://www.afr.com/opinion/columnists/its-time-for-australia-us-cooperation-on-chinese-investment-20170615-gwrjlz>

11. Malcolm Turnbull calls China a 'frenemy', toughens stance towards Beijing

16/06/2017

Angus Grigg & Lisa Murray

Australian Financial Review

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull labelled China a “frenemy” of Australia in unscripted remarks that showed his hardening attitude towards Beijing, a revelation that could further complicate Canberra’s already difficult relationship with its largest trading partner.

Mr Turnbull made the remarks at a public event in Sydney last October, signaling his growing frustration with Beijing’s militarisation of disputed islands in the South China Sea and its cyber-hacking of Australian institutions.

"You mean our frenemy," Mr Turnbull said when the subject of China came up over pre-dinner drinks at the function.

Read more (Paywall):

<http://www.afr.com/news/policy/foreign-affairs/malcolm-turnbull-calls-china-a-frenemy-toughens-stance-towards-beijing-20170615-gwrnsp>

12. Reference to China 'threat' removed from Lib's policy debate

16/06/2017

Andrew Burrell

The Australian

The West Australian Liberal Party has been pressured into deleting a reference to "Chinese" naval threats in a policy motion that will be debated at the party's federal council in Sydney this month.

It is understood some senior WA Liberals were unhappy with the decision to single out China as part of a push to station more troops in the far north of WA.

Concerns were raised that the motion could spark a divisive debate on Chinese military power at the Sydney meeting that will be attended by Malcolm Turnbull and federal ministers.

Instead, the motion has been formally amended to simply refer to "foreign" naval activity.

Read more (Paywall):

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/foreign-affairs/reference-to-china-threat-removed-from-libs-policy-debate/news-story/ba5770d37b0c4a7d79ad3ae3cb284967>

13. Chinese Labor donor arrested in Macau

16/06/2017

**Brad Norington
The Australian**

One of the NSW Labor Party's mysterious Chinese donors is a Melbourne-based businessman who was arrested in Macau last year over allegations he helped run a "high rollers" private junket operation for James Packer's Crown gambling empire.

Donation disclosure documents show the Nine Dragons Club, a Melbourne horse breeding company run by Tian Di, donated \$26,700 to the NSW ALP in September 2015.

Mr Tian has not been seen since his arrest in October during co-ordinated raids by Chinese police acting on claims that he and others were trying to lure high-stakes gamblers to Australia in contravention of Chinese law.

Read more (Paywall):

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/chinese-labor-donor-arrested-in-macau/news-story/f67498cbe717801d9baf68e60cbe25c9>