

## Media Roundup Issue 39 (23/09/17 – 29/09/17)

### 1. Top unis admit China influence, Go8 fears backlash

**23/09/2017**

**Primrose Riordan  
The Australian**

The peak body representing Australia's elite universities has for the first time acknowledged there have been "isolated" instances of Chinese government interference on campuses but warned mishandling the issue risks the country's third-largest export market.

In an interview with The Weekend Australian, Group of Eight chief executive Vicki Thomson said the response to China's influence within universities must be countered in a "measured way" to prevent a backlash and protect the international education sector.

Unprecedented growth in international student enrolments, largely driven by the influx of approximately 170,000 Chinese nationals, resulted in a \$22 billion boost to the Australian economy in the 2016-17 financial year — an 18.5 per cent increase on the year before.

In four prominent cases this year, academic staff at Australian universities have been targeted in Chinese social media campaigns after complaints from Chinese international students about "offensive" teaching material.

*Read more (Paywall):*

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/top-unis-admit-china-influence-go8-fears-backlash/news-story/c3286cf68d58f03b849d85b22bbd5b96>

### 2. Four council candidates linked to China Communist Party lobby

**23/09/2017**

**Brad Norington  
The Australian**

Four candidates in NSW local government elections this month have strong links to a Chinese Communist Party-backed lobby group and the wealthy businessman behind its operations, fuelling concerns about external influence in Australia's political process.

The four candidates — Simon Zhou, Paul Han, Jeanette Wang and Nancy Liu — are all close to Chinese national and property developer Huang Xiangmo, and have belonged to one of three lobby groups he runs in Sydney to advance Beijing's interests. Three of the candidates have won places on Sydney councils, and another who served previously was defeated.

Allegations about China's "soft power" influence in Australian politics arose last year when Labor senator Sam Dastyari was forced to resign from his frontbench post following reports he had endorsed Beijing's maritime claims over the South China Sea. It was also revealed that Mr Huang had paid one of his bills.

The issue was highlighted again in June when an ABC-Fairfax *Four Corners* program focused on the political activities of several Chinese businessmen, including Mr Huang, who has donated large sums to both major political parties but appears closer to Labor.

*Read more (Paywall):*

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/four-council-candidates-linked-to-china-communist-party-lobby/news-story/30b8c115f8c873accbd8d979a3adecf2>

### 3. China alarmism is costing us dear

**24/09/2017**

**Brian Toohey**

**Australian Financial Review**

Poor value for money will cut the number of Chinese students at Australian universities long before their supposed threat to national security starts to bite. Chalk up another win for market forces over ideology! Because there are more than 108,000 Chinese students at Australian universities, generating \$22 billion in fee income, value matters. Fairfax Media reported last week that a survey of 150,000 Chinese graduates found a foreign degree only adds an average \$100 a month to salaries – nothing like enough to warrant paying for an Australian degree. Australia's education commissioner in Shanghai said research shows foreign graduates are disadvantaged in the employment market and dissatisfied with the jobs they do find. Instead, the growth in high-quality Chinese universities means employers longer want to pay a premium for someone an overseas degree.

Australian universities have only themselves to blame for dissatisfaction with the value of their degrees. The universities are the only major sector in the

Australian economy with such overt contempt for their biggest customer base. Local and foreign students want well designed, well taught courses and significant contact with staff. But universities not only put a much higher value on research activity than on teaching, they divert a large slice of the income from student fees to funding research. Few lecturers have qualifications in teaching or curriculum design, while the quality of their research is judged by relatively crude measure – publication in refereed journals.

*Read more (Paywall):*

<http://www.afr.com/news/policy/education/china-alarmism-is-costing-us-dear-20170924-gynl6s?btis>

#### 4. Ex-ALP councillor 'cutting China ties'

**25/09/2017**

**Brad Norington**  
**The Australian**

A former NSW Labor senate candidate says he wants to “minimise confusion” he could be linked to alleged Chinese government interference in Australian politics by ceasing his association with billionaire property developer and big party donor Huang Xiangmo.

But Chinese-born Simon Zhou admits his new role as an elected member of Ryde Council in Sydney’s northwest means connections with Mr Huang could live on — because he is set to be a decision-maker on the businessman’s local development applications.

One in the pipeline is a multimillion-dollar revamp of the Eastwood shopping complex owned by Mr Huang’s Yuhu Group, so far blocked by Ryde Council.

Mr Zhou was one of four candidates contesting NSW local government elections this month with links to Mr Huang, who reportedly has attracted ASIO’s attention as head of a lobby group with Chinese Communist Party backing at a time of heightened concerns about Beijing’s influence in Australian politics.

*Read more (Paywall):*

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/exalp-councillor-cutting-china-ties/news-story/b44b2b8c0a7f1b1dcc736a5e7880017a>

## 5. Rise of China's army of 'personal shoppers'

**25/09/2017**

**Glenda Korporaal**  
**The Australian**

Sales by so-called daigous of Australian goods to Chinese consumers, such as baby formula and health products, could easily triple over the next two years, - according to a key player involved co-ordinating the trade locally.

In an interview with *The Australian*, Sydney-based consultant Livia Wang welcomed last week's announcement from China's State Council to extend the grace period for new rules for cross-border online trade by another year.

The managing director of consultancy Access CN, Ms Wang said the package of announcements from Beijing on the e-commerce market last week was good news, as it showed that Chinese authorities were determined to get the new rules around e-commerce sales of goods right.

"E-commerce is an important channel for goods to be imported into China and the government wants to give people time to adjust and to make sure the implementation of the new rules goes smoothly," she said. "It shows their commitment to encouraging the market."

*Read more (Paywall):*

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/rise-of-chinas-army-of-personal-shoppers/news-story/30568155a61042b62597dfc8bb84c20f>

## 6. China's roving students are lured home

**25/09/2017**

**Jonathan Moules**  
**Financial Times**

After high school in Nanjing, Queenie Ren followed a familiar path for young Chinese students. She moved to the US for higher education, studying economics at Brown University.

Five years later, she is back in China working for consultancies and investment banks. Now Ms Ren is considering applying to business school. But this time, she will stay close to home, planning only to apply to the Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business (CKGSB) in Beijing. She wants to remain in China because the

opportunity to build Chinese contacts is more important than the prestige of a western MBA.

“Networking gets more and more important for your career,” Ms Ren says. “It is important to be local to do that.”

China has long provided a large proportion of the international students on MBA courses in western business schools. According to new data from the Graduate Management Admission Council, the country accounts for the greatest number of international applications in the US and Canada, and is second only to India as a provider of foreign students in Europe.

*Read more (Paywall):*

<https://www.ft.com/content/5ba53db2-9d4c-11e7-8cd4-932067fbf946>

## 7. Chinese police to play by Australian rules under new deal

**25/09/2017**

**Kirsty Needham**

**Sydney Morning Herald**

Chinese police who want to question suspects in Australia will need to obey a new set of formal rules which include having an Australian Federal Police officer present for any interaction.

Chinese police have in the past pursued the country's nationals who are suspected of "economic crimes" into other jurisdictions, including Australia.

The new rules, negotiated between Australia and China, also mean that interviews must be recorded on video by Australian authorities, with an independent translator.

The Australia Federal Police has also banned the parading of returning fugitives in front of Chinese television cameras – a regular sight in Beijing as planes arrive at the capital's airport and handcuffed suspects are marched down the stairs for nightly news bulletins.

And no suspect can be forced to return to China.

*Read more:*

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/chinese-police-to-play-by-australian-rules-under-new-deal-20170925-gyoe6g.html>

## 8. Minister rebuffs calls for new uni standards on foreign interference

**26/09/2017**

**Primrose Riordan**

**The Australian**

Education Minister Simon Birmingham has rebuffed calls for new procedures to deal with Chinese government influence on students on university campuses, saying regulations already exist.

Senator Birmingham said universities were supposed to have their own protocols in place.

"The tertiary regulator TEQSA very clearly sets out the expectations that universities must meet," Senator Birmingham said. "Universities are and have always been responsible for the students they enrol and what's taught in their courses," he said.

He added the government had also set up the International Council to deal with issues around international students.

International Education Association of Australia head Phil Honeywood said governments should not get involved in responding to individual cases as such a move could threaten independence of institutions.

*Read more (Paywall):*

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/minister-rebuffs-calls-for-new-uni-standards-on-foreign-interference/news-story/768918f8c676dd451a54e0a1fdcbb56c>

## 9. Australian Federal Police return over \$200,000 in proceeds from crime to China in goodwill gesture

**26/09/2017**

**Bill Birtles**

**ABC News Online**

Just months after the Australian Parliament scuttled a push to ratify an extradition treaty with China, the Australian Federal Police has returned more than \$200,000 in proceeds from crime, in a move aiming to highlight law enforcement cooperation between the two countries.

AFP Commissioner Andrew Colvin presented a cheque to a senior official from the Ministry of Public Security ahead of an international law-enforcement cooperation meeting in Beijing this week.

The two countries also signed agreements to formalise a framework around any future attempts by China to pursue corruption suspects residing in Australia, as part of its 'Fox Hunt' campaign to target overseas graft fugitives.

China previously ruffled feathers when it was revealed undercover investigators had been sent to Australia to try to convince corruption suspects to return to China.

*Read more:*

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-09-26/australian-police-pass-the-bucks-to-china-in-goodwill-gesture/8987154>

## 10. Labor to step up engagement with Asia

**26/09/2017**

**Phillip Coorey**

**Australian Financial Review**

Labor will try to up the ante over economic engagement with Asia with the announcement later this week of a new strategy, to substantially deepen economic, political and cultural ties with the region.

Shadow treasurer Chris Bowen will use a speech to the Asia Society to outline a comprehensive Asia engagement strategy which, Labor says, "will allow a future Labor government to develop policy for the region that meets clear objectives, rather than ad-hoc and inconsistent approaches".

When Labor was last in government, prime minister Julia Gillard outlined a comprehensive policy approach after commissioning the Australia in the Asia Century White Paper.

*Read more (Paywall):*

<http://www.afr.com/news/politics/labor-to-step-up-engagement-with-asia-20170926-gyp9a2>

## 11. NSW Labor leader echoes Chinese criticism of Australian media

**27/09/2017**

**Primrose Riordan  
The Australian**

NSW Opposition Leader Luke Foley has fully endorsed China's global infrastructure fund and mimicked language used by Beijing officials in attacking Australian media for being driven by a "Cold War mentality" towards the communist nation.

Mr Foley and prominent NSW Labor MP Ernest Wong, who has ties to political donor Huang Xiangmo, hosted a media conference at NSW Parliament House last week echoing China's criticisms of the Australian press.

In June, Mr Wong accompanied Mr Foley to China where the pair met with government and party officials in Beijing, Zhengzhou and Guangzhou.

At the media conference, attended by Chinese-Australian press, Mr Foley suggested some Australian media reports were suggesting the country cut ties with Beijing.

"I'm very concerned a series of reports on the Australian media seem to be suggesting we turn our backs on friendship with China," Mr Foley said. "I think there is a Cold War mentality on display here when you read some of these articles that you refer to and some of this reportage."

*Read more (Paywall):*

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/nsw-labor-leader-echoes-chinese-criticism-of-australian-media/news-story/e3b75579e712d150bf2200091e0894ff>

## 12. Australia must not neglect Chinese and other Asian studies

**27/09/2017**

**Jane Orton  
The Australian**

"If we want to produce Asian expertise from our universities we must have students at tertiary level who have a head start in Asian languages and familiarity with the background of the region," Elaine McKay wrote in 1990. "We

must get it right in the schools if this present wave in favour of Asian studies is to succeed."

It was a heartfelt call, but one Australia largely didn't answer. To this day there are no schools devoted to ensuring there will be some Australians from all backgrounds going on to university who are bilingual in English and Chinese (or Japanese or Indonesian) and have undertaken rigorous interdisciplinary study of the region and Australia's role and relations within it.

This is not to say there has been no impact from the Canberra-funded initiatives that followed the 1989 Asian Studies Council report and subsequent reprises of it over the past quarter century. Most recently, since the National Asian Languages and Studies in School Program in 2009-2011, the number of school learners of Chinese has doubled and many programs now provide language learning in the primary years for the minimum 350 hours recommended by the Australian curriculum.

*Read more (Paywall):*

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/australia-must-not-neglect-chinese-and-other-asian-studies/news-story/149c538d27291ff0b0cd5d0cf8b8634f>

### 13. Same-sex marriage a 'death spell that will leave you sonless': Chinese in Australia

**27/09/2017**

**Kirsty Needham**

**Sydney Morning Herald**

The ferocity of the same-sex marriage debate among Chinese Australians could be "good" training for democracy, but risks alienating young people, a Chinese newspaper has reported.

Under the headline "Divided down under", the Global Times newspaper reports that conservative, and mostly Christian, elderly Chinese have been politically activated in a way previously not seen in Australia.

WeChat, the popular Chinese social media platform, had become "a virtual battlefield" in Australia between the two sides of the same-sex marriage debate.

University of Queensland PhD student Liu Tingting, who researches Chinese dating apps and Chinese sexual culture, says the social media platform is being flooded with alarmist and offensive posts opposing same-sex marriage.

Read more:

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/same-sex-marriage-a-death-spell-that-will-leave-you-sunless-chinese-in-australia-20170927-gypomw.html>

## 14. Resisting China's magic weapon

**27/09/2017**

**Anne-Marie Brady**

**The Interpreter**

In the classic Cold War-era film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, aliens quietly invade earth by replicating the bodies of each human being they encounter. The resulting 'pod people' take on the physical characteristics, memories, and personalities of the humans they replace. In its day, the film was understood as an allegory for political influence activities. It speaks to an ongoing fear about the vulnerability of open, democratic societies to foreign influences undermining their sovereignty and their politics.

China's foreign influence activities have hit the headlines in both Australia and now New Zealand, but Chinese influence is not unique to these two countries. China's attempts to acquire political influence abroad are widespread and pervasive. They are part of a global strategy that has its own government department (统战部) that follows a longstanding approach adapted to fit current government policies. Foreign influence activities are a core task of China's United Front work (统一战线工作), one of the famed 'magic weapons' (法宝) of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) that helped bring it to power.

Under CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping, foreign influence activities have gone into turbo drive. CCP United Front officials and their agents follow a longstanding policy of developing relationships with foreign and overseas-Chinese personages (the more noteworthy the better) to influence, subvert, and, if necessary, bypass the policies of the local government and promote the interests of the CCP.

Read more:

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/resisting-china-s-magic-weapon>

## 15. James Campbell: Finally China's cheer squad is facing scrutiny

**27/09/2017**

**James Campbell**  
**Herald Sun**

These are troubling times for China's Australian cheer squad. For more than a decade the Communist superpower's influence on Australian politics had been quietly growing without anyone making much fuss about it.

All that changed this year when the Labor Party and a number of brave Coalition backbenchers surprised everyone by forcing the Turnbull Government to abandon its attempt to ratify an extradition treaty with Beijing that had lain dormant since it was signed in the dying days of the Howard government.

That event coincided with the Australian media starting to report on the flow of People's Republic of China-connected money to our politicians, a story that had been sitting in plain view for years but that for some reason we had largely chosen to ignore.

*Read more (Paywall):*

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/opinion/james-campbell/james-campbell-finally-chinas-cheer-squad-is-facing-scrutiny/news-story/79e3b3f31ad237c67e593b88b1875353>

## 16. China wields trade might

**28/09/2017**

**Rowan Callick**  
**The Australian**

The story of South Korea's travails with China is a salutary one, with key ramifications for Australia.

It is about the capacity of the North Korean crisis, the joker in every pack of cards in play in our region, to cause ever-deepening problems for even the largest of companies, even though they conduct no business with Pyongyang.

It is about Beijing's capacity and preparedness to co-ordinate efforts to send a message — if deemed important enough strategically — even to those who seem among its closer friends, and even though it appears itself to be an economic loser as a result.

It is about the risks run by companies that depend especially heavily on business with a country with such a capacity to tone down or cease corporate activities through political direction — where crucial decisions may be made that are way beyond any firm's ability to control or even significantly influence.

It is about, ultimately, how a society determines its priorities when there is no easy solution, no how-to guide, no win-win path.

*Read more (Paywall):*

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/opinion/rowan-callick/china-wields-trade-might/news-story/fa7bbb5e5d24dc84b6bbe90b99f63326>

## 17. A2 Milk wins China formula approval

**28/09/2017**

**Trevor Chappell & Simone Ziaziaris**

**The Australian**

Infant formula suppliers The A2 Milk Company and Wattle Health Australia have strengthened their regulatory position in the lucrative Chinese market. A2 Milk's application to continue selling its infant formula products in China has been approved by China's health regulator, the China Food and Drug Administration (CFDA).

Formula manufacturer Synlait Milk (SM1), which has been in partnership with A2 Milk (A2M) since 2010, submitted the mandatory CFDA application in May. All infant formula manufacturers must register brands and recipes with the CFDA for products to be imported into China from January 1, 2018. Also, foreign manufacturers of infant formula products in China must register the canning facility used to blend and pack the products with the Certification and Accreditation Administration of People's Republic of China (CNCA). From January 1, 2018, all infant formula to be sold in China must be manufactured by a facility accredited by the CNCA, and each facility can only register up to three brands.

*Read more (Paywall):*

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/companies/a2-milk-wins-china-formula-a-approval/news-story/13ba8f3e897f755985c51cd43885b867>

## 18. Labor plans joint ventures with China in Australia's north

**28/09/2017**

**Phillip Coorey**

**Australian Financial Review**

Labor could enter jointly funded infrastructure ventures with the Chinese government in Australia's north under Beijing's Belt and Road initiative, all as part of an escalated embrace of Asia, should it win the next election.

Shadow treasurer Chris Bowen will today propose coordinating the \$5 billion Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund with the Belt and Road initiative, a massive push by Chinese President Xi Jinping to fund a global network of major infrastructure projects throughout the region and beyond such as ports, rail networks, bridges and roads. It is regarded with suspicion in certain circles as a vehicle by which Beijing wants to exert political and economic influence.

In a major policy speech, Mr Bowen will accuse the Coalition government of "tinkering" and "gradualism" when it comes to engaging with Asia as he outlines what he says will be a fundamental whole of government and whole of nation approach.

*Read more (Paywall):*

<http://www.afr.com/news/labor-plans-joint-ventures-with-china-in-australias-north-20170927-gyq7n3?btis>

## 19. Chinese vehicle manufacturer invests in Pilbara Minerals

**28/09/2017**

**Tess Ingram**

**Australian Financial Review**

Pilbara Minerals has inked a multi-pronged supply and investment agreement with a major Chinese car company in what is expected to be the first in a wave of investment by electric vehicle manufacturers in to the burgeoning lithium sector.

The deal with Great Wall Motor Company, announced late on Thursday, includes an agreement to sell up 150,000 tonnes a year of product from Pilbara's Pilgangoora project in Western Australia, a \$28 million equity investment and the potential for \$US50 million debt financing.

It makes the Perth-based company the first Australian lithium player to agree to sell some of its product to a vehicle manufacturer and the first lithium company globally to receive direct investment from a car company.

*Read more (Paywall):*

<http://www.afr.com/business/mining/chinese-vehicle-manufacturer-invests-in-pilbara-minerals-20170928-gyqjxf?btis>

## 20. Geoff Culbert says Asia the key to Sydney Airport growth

**28/09/2017**

**Michael Smith**

**Australian Financial Review**

Sydney Airport's new chief executive, Geoff Culbert, says his focus will be on capitalising on Asian tourism to drive the airport's growth over the next decade and flagged plans to work closely with governments to maximise the economic benefits of a boom in international visitors to the nation's economy.

"There is this massive opportunity we are sitting on right now to capture this growth in travel coming out of Asia," Mr Culbert told *The Australian Financial Review* on Thursday.

"We are all aligned around that, so if we can capture that growth the flow on benefit for the federal, state and the local economy is huge so that's where I'll be focusing."

In his first interview since Sydney Airport announced his appointment this week, Mr Culbert spoke about his life-long fascination with airports and a decade working in Asia, which would help him identify the opportunities from the world's fastest-growing economies.

*Read more (Paywall):*

<http://www.afr.com/business/transport/aviation/culbert-says-asia-the-key-to-sydney-airport-growth-20170928-gyqky7?btis>

## 21. Chinese interest in Aussie farm land rises 880 per cent

**29/09/2017**

**Sharri Markson**

**The Daily Telegraph**

Chinese interest in Aussie farming land rose by an extraordinary 880 per cent — or 13 million hectares — in the past year, as foreign ownership of our land overall dropped.

A report by the Australian Taxation Office, to be released today, shows the area of Australian agricultural land that has a foreign interest fell from 52 million hectares to 50 million in the year to June 30, 2017.

But the area of land with Chinese interests increased from 1.46 million hectares to 14.4 million hectares in the past year, the report reveals. Of the 14 million hectares with a Chinese interest, 9.1 million were entirely owned by Chinese firms.

But in a massive crackdown, the Turnbull government has forced overseas buyers to sell \$134 million worth of residential and agricultural land — overall 29 properties — they had already bought.

*Read more (Paywall):*

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/chinese-interest-in-aussie-farm-land-rises-880-per-cent/news-story/89c6344954bf47a2103a0929a0025f38>