



Media Roundup Issue 64 (24/03/18 – 29/03/18)

1. Qantas boss Alan Joyce concerned about impact of US, China trade war

25/03/2018

**Annabel Hepworth
The Australian**

Qantas chief executive Alan Joyce has warned that a trade war could have a “dampening effect” on economic growth around the world.

He made the comments amid concerns about the impact of Donald Trump’s tariffs and a potential trade war between China and the US, with fears that Australia would be caught in the crossfire.

“What’s happened in the United States on the tax rate and on the deregulation has been phenomenal for the economy there. We see really good growth. But what Trump is doing now, essentially with the trade war, I think has everybody worried. That could have a dampening effect on economic growth around the globe.”

He said the aviation sector depended on a strong economy.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/aviation/qantas-boss-alan-joyce-concerned-about-impact-of-us-china-trade-war/news-story/a8dc1dbae07aa2d7c0e44a57a15a91c2>

2. Australia risks being crushed by Antarctic rivals Russia and China, scientists say

25/03/2018

**Nicole Hasham
Sydney Morning Herald**

Australia risks ceding its influence in Antarctica to nations such as Russia and China because drastic cuts to scientific research are eroding its credibility in the region, respected scientists say.

They include the Australian Academy of Science, comprising more than 500 of the nation's leading scientists, which has warned of Australia's diminishing ability to address its Antarctic interests including its geopolitical claim, sustainable fishing in the Southern Ocean, climate change research and international Antarctic governance.

Australia has sovereignty over 42 per cent of Antarctica – almost six million square kilometres. It has traditionally played a commanding role in the affairs of the continent, largely due to its infrastructure assets and capability.

Read more: <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/australia-risks-being-crushed-by-antarctic-rivals-russia-and-china-scientists-say-20180323-p4z5vx.html>

3. Backdown unlikely as China toughens rhetoric on trade war

25/03/2018

Kirsty Needham

Sydney Morning Herald

Beijing: China's official communist party newspaper *People's Daily* has quoted American business icon Amway in support of China's position in the trade showdown with Donald Trump.

As US treasury secretary Steve Mnuchin went on Fox News to tell the Trump voter base that China would likely bend in "very productive conversations" at the weekend about Trump's \$US60 billion tariff threat, Chinese media told a different story.

World opinion supported free trade, and the US should take China's resolve to defend its interests seriously, was the upshot of a barrage of editorials and reports on Monday.

Read more: <https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/backdown-unlikely-as-china-toughens-rhetoric-on-trade-war-20180326-p4z6bq.html>

4. Is Australia set to join Asean as China's assertiveness grows?

26/03/2018

Richard Heydarian

South China Morning Post

The blossoming relationship between Canberra and its Southeast Asian neighbours is driven by shared geopolitical fears and economic greed, Richard Heydarian writes

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and Australia just concluded their first-ever special summit in Sydney. The high-profile event, which saw the participation of 10 heads of state and government, marked the increasingly warm relations between the largely Western nation and its Asian neighbours to the north.

In many ways, Australia was late to the party, as the United States and India held similar events earlier, even if Canberra was Asean's first dialogue partner more than four decades ago.

Read more: <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2138790/australia-set-join-asean-chinas-assertiveness-grows>

5. Call for budget tightening reveals China's anxiety on debt level

26/03/2018

Rowan Callick

The Australian

China remains agog this week, attempting to digest the implications of the country shifting towards personal rule by Xi Jinping, which may be for life.

The focus on the country's economic prospects that usually comes from the annual session of the National People's Congress, or parliament, has thus gone missing.

But China's economic choices remain no less important for the prosperity of the world at large, including of course Australia, where key sectors have placed many, if not most, of their eggs in the China basket.

The core targets announced by Premier Li Keqiang in his low-key state of the nation address reflect strong confidence in the recent management of the economy, but with some added monetary and fiscal tightening that reflects anxiety about China's tottering debt mountain.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/opinion/rowan-callick/call-for-budget-tightening-reveals-chinas-anxiety-on-debt-level/news-story/bf3ef09c6d3e83acf2a43bf37df3315a>

6. New deals will help protect Australia from China-US trade war: Ciobo

26/03/2018

Patrick Hatch

Sydney Morning Herald

Building new trade relationships with emerging markets is the best thing Australia can do to protect itself from the growing dispute between China and the United State which threatens to break out into a full-blown trade war, trade minister Steve Ciobo says.

Global markets have been reeling after the world's two largest economies levelled billions of dollars of punitive tariffs against each other late last week.

The Trump Administration overnight on Thursday announced tariffs worth \$US60 billion targeting technology products, and that it would restrict Chinese investments and file a case against it in the World Trade Organisation.

China, Australia's largest trading partner, hit back on Friday announcing plans to implement tariffs worth \$US3 billion, targeting 128 US products including pork, fruit, nuts, wine and steel.

Read more: <https://www.smh.com.au/business/the-economy/new-deals-will-help-protect-australia-from-china-us-trade-war-ciobo-20180324-p4z63d.html>

7. Australia should steer clear of the sanction fight between the US and China

26/03/2018

Bruce Baer Arnold

The Conversation

Even though Australia follows the United States in much of its policy, Australian exporters and consumers will be hoping we don't get caught in the crossfire as the US and China impose sanctions on each other.

US President Donald Trump has the power to impose [trade sanctions](#) on China for its disregard of US intellectual property ([IP](#)) rights: patents, trademarks and copyright.

These sanctions could make Chinese exports more expensive or prevent access to the US market. China has already [indicated](#) it will play tit for tat, imposing its own sanctions.

Read more: <https://theconversation.com/australia-should-steer-clear-of-the-sanction-fight-between-the-us-and-china-93856>

8. UN backs Xi Jinping's version of human rights

26/03/2018

Rowan Callick

The Australian

China has convinced the UN Human Rights Council to support President Xi Jinping's core rights concept: that it should pursue "a community of shared future for human beings".

China's motion was agreed by the 47-member council over the weekend, with only the US opposing and 17 countries, including Australia, Britain, Japan and Switzerland, abstaining.

It urged "mutually beneficial co-operation in the field of human rights", stressing respect for each country's interpretation of the concept, in strong contrast with the long-established UN aspiration of implementing universal human rights.

The co-sponsors of China's motion included Syria, Cambodia, Venezuela, Pakistan, Egypt, Myanmar, Burundi and Eritrea.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/un-backs-xi-jinpings-version-of-human-rights/news-story/16e308e7572fd668630bf9ccc2f4071c>

9. Leading China scholars sign open letter saying Beijing influence debate is not racist

27/03/2018

Fergus Hunter

Sydney Morning Herald

A group of leading Australian academics has penned an open letter to declare vigorous support for the national debate about Chinese Communist Party-linked influence and interference, expressing a firm belief that the scrutiny is "essential" and not motivated by racism.

According to the scholars, who describe themselves as "deeply concerned", the debate is necessary to confront Beijing-linked influence activities in Australia and protect the nation's intellectual freedom, democratic rights and national security.

The message is a public response to a [letter released last week by a separate group of academics](#) – including renowned expert Geremie Barmé and the first Australian ambassador to China, Stephen Fitzgerald – that urged the Turnbull government to delay its foreign influence legislation and warned that Chinese Australians are being stigmatised in an increasingly polarised debate.

Read more: <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/leading-chinese-scholars-sign-open-letter-saying-china-influence-debate-is-not-racist-20180327-p4z6kl.html>

10. Xi moves a pebble in China's economy and Australia suffers an earthquake

27/03/2018

Michael Sainsbury

Crikey

No matter the result of the economic standoff between China and the US, Xi Jinping's moves to shed China's extraordinary debt and avoid a stagnant economy are already making a mark on Australia's economy.

In the endless election cycle that Australian politics has become, Malcolm Turnbull is facing a greater threat to his legacy than the citizenship ruckus, Tony

Abbott white-anting, and Labor's party polling strength combined: the global economy.

The threats are largely from Australia's greatest "friends" — trade paramour China, and joined at the hip strategic bedfellow the United States — and therefore unmanageable from Canberra. After five years in power, China's Xi Jinping finally has the internal clout to enact reforms on China's bloated industrial sector and to open up its financial sector as rising debt threatens to tip the economy into possible decades of stagnation.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.crikey.com.au/2018/03/27/xi-moves-a-pebble-in-chinas-economy-and-australia-suffers-an-earthquake/>

11. Scientologists linked to China ask state for \$1b rail to \$31b city

28/03/2018

Clay Lucas & Simone Johanson
Sydney Morning Herald

The consortium proposing a \$31 billion high-tech city on Melbourne's western city fringe asked Victorian taxpayers to chip in more than \$1 billion for a rail line to its development.

And documents leaked to *The Age* show that funding for the new city in East Werribee would be entirely underpinned by money from Chinese Communist Party businesses.

Australian Education City - a company with close ties to the Church of Scientology but little experience in large-scale development - wants to build a university city that would bring more than 24,000 new overseas students to Melbourne.

Read more: <https://www.theage.com.au/politics/victoria/scientologists-linked-to-china-ask-state-for-1b-rail-to-31b-city-20180328-p4z6r3.html>

12. Australia's 'fertility tourism' the new drawcard for Chinese couples

28/03/2018

Carrie Greenbank

Nine News

In an era of flourishing numbers of Chinese visitors, sun surf and sand are the usual drawcards; but doctors are now predicting a boom in a new trend.

Millions of Chinese women desperate for children may soon be on their way to Australia as part of a predicted boom in 'fertility tourism.'

"We think the level of interest is huge, we have been inundated with queries," Dr Kenneth Leong, a Monash IVF clinician, told 9NEWS.

Read more: <https://www.9news.com.au/national/2018/03/28/18/08/australias-fertility-tourism-the-new-drawcard-for-chinese-couples>

13. Australia Should Chill Out About Chinese Cash, Watchdog Says

29/03/2018

Michael Heath

Bloomberg News

Australia needs to be more relaxed about Chinese cash despite the political tensions that come with it, says the head of Australia's foreign investment watchdog.

Chinese investors are boosting their stakes in Australian property and infrastructure, stoking concerns about the world No. 2 economy's influence Down Under. But their growing presence simply reflects China's burgeoning power, and Australia needs such capital for its economic development, said Foreign Investment Review Board chief David Irvine.

"Having a largest economic partner who is not a traditional ally, that's I think one of the big challenges of Australian foreign policy," Irvine said in an interview. "It's a fact of life. We will adapt to it."

Read more: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-03-28/chill-out-on-china-says-australian-gatekeeper-to-foreign-buyers>

14. China ties chilly and lacking a strategy

29/03/2018

David Uren
The Australian

China's economic growth rate has slowed in the past four years but it is still expected to add economic activity this year roughly equivalent to Australia's entire economy. On the International Monetary Fund's preferred measure, it has been adding the equivalent of an Australian economy or more every year since 2004 and will do so into the indefinite future.

The rise of an economic superpower is transforming the world economy, and the economies of Asia in particular. China has become the dominant source of trade, investment and the movement of people in its neighbourhood. Its "Belt and Road" initiative is calculated to foster development in poorer countries in the region while cementing their commercial linkage with China. American economic interests in Asia remain huge, particularly in Singapore and South Korea, but they are rapidly being eclipsed by China.

Read more (Paywall): <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/china-ties-chilly-and-lacking-a-strategy/news-story/faf4f6ed843903122bf6d4323ec471dd>