

## **A new China narrative for Australia**

### **Submission by Michael Cooney**

1 April 2019

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on your narrative. Today's event in Canberra was a very interesting conversation.

I have two simple observations, offered in my private capacity, principally derived from my background in government, most recently as Prime Minister Gillard's speechwriter 2010-2013.

The first is that the narrative should contain a far more substantial treatment of environment. The 'prosperity' section on pp2-3 should be cut by a third to a half, with all that space allocated to the environment, principally climate change but also river and ocean health. This should be principally conceived as an opportunity to engage with China in an area of mutual interest, a clean and sustainable environment; but also one which strongly reinforces the other key Australian interests you identify, perhaps most notably that of a mutually agreed upon set of rules, but also that of remaining a prosperous "lifestyle" society.

The second is that you might wish to think about really turning this into something that looks like a Prime Ministerial speech, and working with one or more former Prime Ministerial speechwriters on that. The current draft is a pretty superior draft for this stage and is by no means overwhelmed by officialese, familiar diplomatic metaphors or terms of art - it's really pretty good. All the more reason it is well placed to benefit from a real polish.

*Michael Cooney is National Director of the Australian Republic Movement.*