

Eighth National Meeting of China Matters

Held in partnership with La Trobe University

Como House, 18 October 2019

The objective of the meeting is to formulate specific policy proposals regarding Australia's relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC). The meeting will be conducted *off-the-record*.

Sessions I, II and III have three panellists and a moderator. Each panellist has *seven* minutes to make remarks and is encouraged to take a stance on a controversial issue related to the session focus. The moderator will then open up the discussion to everyone. Comments are expected to be a maximum of *four* minutes. In Session IV, panellists summarise and discuss key recommendations of the day and provide insights into the viability of these policy prescriptions.

The 'jazz club style' format of the meeting is designed to create a *conversation among peers*. There is no Q&A. While panellists initiate the conversation, their follow-up remarks throughout the session must be brief, so that most of the session is an open back-and-forth among all participants.

0830 Tea and coffee

0850 Participants move to meeting area to take their seats

0900 – 0915 **Welcome** Professor **Simon Evans**, Pro Vice-Chancellor, College of Arts, Social Sciences and Commerce, La Trobe University

Mr **Alistair Nicholas**, CEO, China Matters

0915 – 1045 **Session I** **Does the security establishment adequately consider Australia's economic interests with the PRC?**

Panellists: The Hon **Warwick Smith** AO, Chairman, National Foundation of Australia China Relations

Mr **Patrick Hutchinson**, CEO, Australian Meat Industry Council

Senator the Hon **Concetta Fierravanti-Wells**, Senator for New South Wales

Moderator: Ms **Linda Jakobson**, Founding Director, Deputy Chair, China Matters

Security risks dominate policy discussions about Australia's relationship with the People's Republic of China. Australia's business sector has not effectively prosecuted its case for the economic benefits of increased engagement with the PRC.

Questions: Does the security establishment have too much influence on the formulation of China policy? How can business ensure its voice about the importance of robust engagement with the PRC is heeded by Canberra? Under what circumstances would Australia's security decisions have economic consequences?

1045 – 1110 Morning tea

1110 – 1240 **Session II** **What are Canberra's policy options if the PRC decides to punish Australia economically for being too supportive of the US?**

Panellists: The Hon Dr **Craig Emerson**, Director, Australian APEC Study Centre
Ms **Madeleine King** MP, Shadow Minister for Trade; Member for Brand, Western Australia

Mr **Richard Yetsenga**, Chief Economist and Head of Research, ANZ



Moderator: Mr **Alistair Nicholas**, CEO, China Matters

The US is moving to decouple from the PRC economically. Many experts predict that the trade conflict between the PRC and the US will last decades. If Beijing decides that Canberra is too supportive of Washington, it could retaliate harshly.

Questions: What immediate retaliatory measures would Beijing implement to punish Canberra? Longer term, will the PRC seek to reduce economic ties with Australia? Can it successfully do so? How should Australia respond to such threats and risks?

1240 – 1245 Group photo

1245 – 1355 Lunch 1330-1335 *Bian Lian* performance

1355 – 1525 **Session III How should Australia deal with PRC-US strategic technological competition?**

Panellists: Dr **Heather Smith** PSM, Secretary, Department of Industry, Innovation and Science

Major General **Gavan Reynolds** AM, Head Military Strategic Plans

Professor **Attila Brungs**, Vice-Chancellor and President, University of Technology Sydney

Moderator: Mr **Andrew Parker**, Partner and Head of Asia Practice, PwC Australia

The Trump administration's confrontational approach to technology competition with the PRC means that technological decoupling is a real possibility. Consequently, Australian policy makers will need to effectively counter pressure to limit technological cooperation with either big power.

Questions: What elements of PRC-US strategic technological competition stand to harm Australian interests the most? Will organisations that work with both US and PRC entities face financial and technological constraints? How can Australia safeguard its interests in this strategic contest?

1535 – 1645 **Session IV What should Australia do? Commenting on specific policy recommendations**

Panellists: Ms **Caroline Millar**, Deputy Secretary, National Security, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Mr **Richard Maude**, Deputy Secretary, Indo-Pacific Group, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Mr **Dennis Richardson** AC, Former Secretary, Department of Defence

Moderator: Professor **Michael Wesley**, Dean of the College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University

Each panellist will assess the suggested policy recommendation(s), appraise their practicality, and put forward her/his own suggestion(s). Participants are asked to discuss the new recommendations.

1645 Meeting concludes

