



## Rethinking China with Jason Yat-sen Li

In China Matters' monthly lecture series: 'Rethinking China', speakers with diverse expertise and background are asked to describe how they see the People's Republic of China, why they see it that way, and on that basis share their thoughts on what kind of China strategy Australia should pursue in the medium to long term. Our third lecturer was prominent business and community leader Jason Yat-sen Li together with moderator, renowned journalist and broadcaster Geraldine Doogue.

Below are some of Jason's key observations.

"As Chinese Australians, and I don't want to speak for everyone but certainly for me and those close to me, we feel this dissonance and it can't be resolved intellectually, morally, we just manage it day to day. In a pragmatic sense we're always crunched in the middle and it's a dissonance that must not be interpreted as disloyalty to Australia."

"We need to be careful when we use that throwaway line 'China is a place whose values are fundamentally different from our own'. It is the political values of the CPC that are different but the values of the people I think they are the same and the dangerous thing is when we say somebody's values are fundamentally different we make it easier to imagine an enemy."

"The dissonance experienced by many Chinese Australians ... I'd argue that's also Australia's dissonance. Australia faces the same dissonance, the same challenges of how do we walk that line between our values and principles, our interests of what we stand for and how we act pragmatically day-to-day. If we were smart about it we would enlist more Chinese Australians to help us formulate this strategy because they intrinsically understand the tension here and the need to walk that line."

"We've all heard about the uptick in anti-Asian hate but I think that there's something else that's even more concerning, because I think that it's less visible and I think that it's more widespread, and that is distrust of the CPC and the PRC very easily translates to distrust against Chinese Australians, and that's tremendously dangerous."

"[Distrust of Chinese Australians] actually drives Chinese Australians into the arms of the CPC because the CPC have a strategy where they're trying to charm and entice Chinese Australians into their bosoms. They say 'look, you'll never belong in Australia, Australia doesn't trust you, they don't treat you as one of theirs, you'll never be truly included in their society, but you know what, you're one of us.'"

"If we can give Chinese Australians a true sense of belonging that they do share equally ... in the past, present and future of our country, if we can do this and empower Chinese Australians that would be the greatest expression of strength of our liberal democracy and our confidence."