



16 April 2024

Greetings from China Matters!

Sadly, this will be the last newsletter from China Matters. After ten years since the public policy initiative was founded, we are winding down. I have retired to my home country of Finland after 32 years overseas: 22 in China and 10 in Australia.

For several years, China Matters was a thriving China-focussed institution. It provided diverse assessments of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Australia's relationship with it. Our flagship publication China Matters Explores was widely read. China Matters also brought together politicians, senior public servants, top business executives and university leaders to contemplate the impact on Australia's future of developments in the PRC—and how the Government in Canberra should mould its policies toward Beijing. Our website remains live and has the details of our many activities.

Did we provide policy-makers evidence-based assessments of the PRC, a middle ground from which to judge the actions of the PRC? Several Federal Government ministers from both sides of the aisle and Department secretaries have said publicly that we did.

Importantly, we also offered employment to more than a dozen talented young Australian China analysts. Nurturing the next generation of China experts is China Matters' most profound legacy. I am pleased to announce that our support will continue in the form of the China Matters-UTS:ACRI Fellowship.

China Matters board decided to donate the organisation's remaining funds to this new initiative. Private donations from our loyal supporter circle were also forthcoming. Please see [here](#) for more about this wonderful initiative.

I am delighted to be partnering with UTS:ACRI and its director James Laurenceson, as we together continue to provide mentorship and support for aspiring China analysts in Australia. Applications for the first China Matters-UTS:ACRI Fellowship are due 10 May 2024.



I take this opportunity to thank China Matters Chair Kevin McCann AO for his unwavering support and encouragement. I am also indebted to my fellow board members: Dr Stephen FitzGerald AO, The Hon Dr Peter Hendy, Mr Andrew Parker, Dr Heather Smith PSM, Dr Michael Wesley, as well as our former CFO/COO Jeremy Stevens. I want to pay tribute to the late Allan Gygell RIP who before he passed supported the idea of a legacy Fellowship focussed on field work to be done in the PRC. I know Allan would be delighted that the spirit of China Matters lives on in this Fellowship.

My most heartfelt thanks go to all our supporters. It was our supporters that kept the mission of China Matters alive and stopped us from being swept out of the China narrative in Australia. Our supporters—anonymous ones but also vocal ones—not only kept encouraging us when we were on top and respected in Canberra, but also in 2020 when we attracted the ire of those in Government who wanted to muzzle us and who sought to have our voice removed from the China debate in Australia. I am deeply grateful for that support.

Freedom of speech is essential in a democracy. I continue to believe that Australia needs to have a deep and nuanced understanding—untainted by ideology—of the drivers behind Beijing’s policies in order to maintain a working relationship with the PRC.

As the Chinese saying goes, 天下无不散的宴席: There has never been a banquet that doesn’t end!

Wish warmest wishes.

Linda Jakobson
Founding Director and Deputy Chair
China Matters