

## The PRC's foreign policy in the post-COVID era: Implications for Australia

**Speakers:** Professor James Laurenceson, Director, UTS:ACRI

Ms Linda Jakobson, Founding Director and Deputy Chair, China Matters; Senior Advisor, China Office of Finnish Industries

Ms Yun Jiang, AIIA China Matters Fellow; UTS:ACRI Visiting Fellow

**Moderator:** Mr Samuel Yang, co-host, *China Tonight*, ABC TV

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**Mr Kevin McCann:**

Ladies and gentlemen, could we now begin the formal part of the evening? Thank you very much.

Good evening, everyone. And I'd like to commence by acknowledging the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation upon whose ancestral lands our city campus now stands and pay my respects to Elders both past and present and acknowledge them as the traditional custodians of knowledge for this land.

Look, a warm welcome for all of you who have joined us tonight, in person or online.

My name is Kevin McCann. I'm the chair of China Matters – is that better? And we are delighted to be hosting this event in partnership with the Australia-China Relations Institute at UTS. The Institute is an independent, non-partisan research institute established in 2014 by UTS. And while China studies centers exist in other Australian universities in Australia, this is the first and only institute devoted to studying the relationship between the two countries, China and Australia.

China Matters was a policy institute founded in 2014 by Linda Jakobson. And her purpose was to develop the understanding of Australian people of developments in China and inform Australia's policy towards the People's Republic of China. In 2019, I became Chair of China Matters, and by way of explanation of why I did that is that after I left the law, I became a company director and had considerable commercial contacts with China as a board member of BlueScope Steel and as chairman of the Macquarie Group.

But I also had other interests. One was I had a deep interest in Chinese students studying in Australia through – James, the rival up the street at University of Sydney. And we had a very large cohort of Chinese students studying mainly in engineering and in business. And my other interest was that I helped Julie Bishop, when she was in opposition, set up the New Colombo Plan. And the New Colombo Plan was designed to ensure that,

or provide an opportunity for, young Australian students who had graduated to study abroad. And as time developed, the scholarships – New Colombo scholarships, are extremely attractive. And interestingly, China was the second most popular destination of students before COVID came.

I've had a lot of interest in China. And I'm now chairing a pharmaceutical company that has a joint venture with a large Chinese company called Grand Pharma. And we are working on some oncology products. And I have to say the Chinese regulators are extremely good people to deal with and very welcoming to what this Australian company's doing.

The role of China Matters when I initially arrived was, as I said, to recognise the importance of China to Australia and it's sort of self-evidenced, given the Australia for 30 years, or 33 years now, has ridden on the back of Chinese imports of mainly our commodities. Obviously, if you've got a major trading company which has enabled Australia to enjoy a very strong economy, it's important to have institutions who help Australians understand that country.

At the same time, we recognise that we are two countries with different values and we certainly adhere to the rule of law, democracy and the rights of the individual. And so, we have a different regime, and we acknowledge and respect that the Chinese have their regime.

We're really coming together at a great time, because we've seen diplomacy come back again into that relationship. China Matters advocated in the Morrison years that we should give diplomacy a chance, and there was no appetite for that at the time. And I congratulate the Prime Minister Albanese, and also Penny Wong, and, of course, DFAT, who's got a professional diplomat who's the secretary and who has spent time in China as ambassador. And so, we've got the skilled diplomacy that's required to manage this important relationship. And I don't think Linda and I are naive about the fact that this is going to be easy. It'll be a challenge. But there's certainly the warmth with which the Prime Minister was received by the president of China, was really good to see.

The other thing China Matters did apart from our policy papers is we used to have tours of China. And the last one we did, we took Richard Marles, who's now the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Tanya Plibersek, who's the Minister for the Environment, and Ted O'Brien from the opposition who is now the shadow spokesman for energy.

And it was really important for those three people to do that. Because Ted O'Brien was an old China hand, but the other two politicians who are now really senior ministers in the Albanese government, gained a great benefit from Linda's visit. And what Linda did is she took us to meet officials from the PRC. We met a lot of academics and we met some business people. And we also met some students actually as well, some China students at Beijing University. It was a real introduction to the Labor two people. And I thought that was a great outcome.

And I'm delighted that Professor Laurenceson has augmented his faculty with – Professor Laurenceson is an expert economist on China. He's brought in some people who also know the Chinese economy, both in terms of education and in business. And I think that's great. If I can put in a pitch, James, for an extension of your role.

Sadly, just when diplomacy is winning, sadly, we're in the process of winding down China Matters. But as part of our parting gift, we are going to work with the Institute to establish the China Matters Fellowship at UTS:ACRI. We're going to donate our remaining funds to the university and this will provide a fellowship for at least four years for an Australian person, a scholar, to go to China and return to Australia and write a policy-relevant report on the topic of importance to Australia. And we will open this scholarship up to people who have a proven interest in China and have as a minimum an honors degree, but preferably a master's degree. If

there's anyone in the room who meets those qualifications, you can put in your application for – is it starting in 2024? Yeah, 2024.

And so, one of the things that Australia lacks is experts in China. Linda kept telling me that the two experts in Australia who were world-class was someone who was an expert in calligraphy and another person who was an expert in religion. And important as those two topics are, I think we can expand our scholarship, I hope.

Now, tonight's theme, which I'm introducing, is China's transformed foreign policy post-COVID. We know from reading Kevin Rudd's PhD thesis at Oxford, and we also know from his China oration that he gave earlier this year, that the People's Republic of China is no longer the same institution it is under President Xi Jinping. It has changed. And it's very important for us to know what the new China, what his objectives are, and what his country's objectives are and how he intends to proceed in the future.

The question then is how substantial is this change be? And we have three outstanding panellists who will, under the hands of an experienced moderator, Mr Yang, Samuel Yang of the ABC, who's a co-host of *China Tonight* on the ABC, and a reporter/producer with the business reporting team in Sydney. Samuel joined the ABC as a news cadet in 2018. And Samuel, you've clearly had a meteoric rise, so congratulations. I invite Mr Yang to take control of the evening from here in.

Thank you very much.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

Thank you. Thank you, Kevin. Thank you for your opening remarks.

Hello and welcome. I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land which we meet today, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, and I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

It's my great pleasure to be here tonight to be the moderator of tonight's panel discussion: China's foreign policy in the post-COVID era and the implications for Australia. Tonight at the end of the panel discussion, of course, we'll have some time for Q&A session for both in-person and online.

My name's Samuel Yang. I am a journalist and presenter from the ABC. I'm a co-host of *China Tonight* on ABC TV. I speak, write and present in both English and Mandarin Chinese. And also, tonight my views are my own and of course not the views of the ABC.

Our speakers tonight starting with Professor James Laurenceson, Director of Australia-China Relations Institute at the University of Technology, Sydney. James has previously held appointments at universities in Australia, China and Japan. His academic research has been published in leading scholarly journals including *China Economic Review* and *China Economic Journal*.

Ms Linda Jakobson is the Founding Director and Deputy Chair of China Matters. A Mandarin speaker, she has lived and worked in China for 22 years, has written five books about China and East Asia. She is internationally known for her publications about China's foreign policy, cross-strait relations and the PRC's Arctic ambitions. She has served as a policy advisor in China to governments in seven countries.

Ms Yun Jiang is the AIIA China Matters fellow and UTS:ACRI visiting scholar. She was formerly an editor of China Story blog and a researcher at the Australian National University. Prior to this, she has worked for the Australian public service for eight years, including the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Department of Defence, and Treasury. Now, please welcome my panel.

All right. Before we kick off our discussion tonight, here's the important context for tonight's event. Now, China has emerged from COVID earlier this year. It's ready to engage with a world and of course it's suffering, it's struggling economically. Its views on the region and the world as well as its own regional and global roles can be different from what they were before the pandemic.

The nation's views on Australia can also be different. China's increasing foreign policy assertiveness, and Beijing and Canberra's fundamentally different views on the role that the US should play in the regional order against a backdrop of intensifying US-China strategic competition means that Australia-China relationship could face challenges ahead.

And of course there is optimism too. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has just wrapped up his Beijing trip, breaking a seven-year diplomatic freeze. And he's met with his Chinese counterpart, President Xi Jinping. And of course the meetings have been hailed as a huge success. And we will delve into that a bit later in the conversation as well.

Now, here is the common thread among the panel that we have all been to China recently, which is quite remarkable given the geopolitical climates. I was part of the Australian delegation attending the seventh Australia-China high level dialogue back in September. Of course, we talked about important issues from the bilateral relationship to trade and economy and people-to-people links.

But the highlight was really the Kung Pao chicken in Beijing I had. Of course, joking. It was a very productive and successful dialogue back in Beijing in September.

And now I would like to ask my panellists, and why did you go to Beijing? And what was the best food you had during your trip? Linda.

**Ms Linda Jakobson:**

Thank you.

Is this working? Yeah, easy answer, Jidan jiucai jiaozi (鸡蛋韭菜饺子), chive egg dumplings. Without doubt, that was the best thing. And I had them several times. I was there two weeks. I just got back from China this past Monday.

Why did I go? I have transitioned from Sydney to Helsinki. I now work for an outfit which represents 22 multinationals and I took 22 CEOs to China post-COVID to do the sort of things that I used to do for China Matters. In other words, have them meet with both officials and informal people in China to understand better the challenges facing the country.

I think it's so important to be on the ground to understand what Chinese people, whether they're officials, friends, colleagues, are thinking. It's one of the reasons why, in the China Matters, AIIA Fellowship, the late Allan Gyngell and I felt so important for Yun Jiang to have the possibility to go there. We wanted to facilitate that. Doing research on the ground is really important. And I was there some extra days doing my own research.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

Sounds great and excellent choice on food.

All right. James.

**Professor James Laurenceson:**

But Sam, it gets better because there's nothing better than Mapo doufu (麻婆豆腐), right? I think that's got to be the highlight. And I'll also just say one other thing very quickly. I managed to pick myself up a bottle of One by Penfolds. I'm not sure if you're familiar with this wine. And this one is the made in China one, the one that's made in vineyards in Ningxia. It's very hard to get, it's easy to get the Californian stuff and the French stuff, but I've got a couple of those bottles sitting at my house, Sam. Maybe you and I can catch up and enjoy that together.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

Please. Yeah.

**Professor James Laurenceson:**

Look, why did I go? I haven't been for four years, like many Australians. November 2019 was my last visit. This was really an opportunity for me to reconnect, speak to recently retired government officials, closely government-aligned think tanks, and some other more independently minded ones as well as a whole bunch of individual academics. Sam, it was great being back on the ground. I couldn't emphasise my agreement with what you said, Linda. You just have to be on the ground to get a sense of what's going on.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

Yun.

**Ms Yun Jiang:**

Well, as Linda has already mentioned, I went to China as part of a trip. It's funded by the Australian Institute of International Affairs and China Matters Fellowship. As a part of the fellowship, I was very fortunate to go to China as part of a research. And this is a baby, this is a result of that research, the report just published yesterday, so hot off the press, grab your copy.

I only visited two cities, Shanghai and Beijing. And for context, I was born and raised in the Jiangnan region, which encompasses Shanghai. I am Shanghainese and a little bit Suzhou person as well. That's my palate. My favorite food definitely would have to be from that region, of course, Xiaolongbao (小笼包), Shengjianbao (生煎包), the soup dumplings you get for breakfast. But I prefer the Suzhou style soup dumplings. It's a bit sweeter than the Shanghai style. I actually can't find it here in Sydney, though, so if anyone knows where to get it, please let me know.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

Great, that's really good to hear. We've all missed visiting China and going there and have had the opportunity to try some local food which was fantastic.

Now, from food to foreign policy, especially China's foreign policy in the post-COVID era, Linda, where is China's foreign policy now headed?

**Ms Linda Jakobson:**

Okay. Before I tell you the answer, or my answer to that, you caught me off guard with your food question and I didn't have a time to thank James and James' team for excellent collaboration in establishing the new China

Matters Fellowship – China Matters Fellowship at UTS:ACRI, and I'm really looking forward to working with you. Let me put that on the floor. Of course, thank you also for organising this event, and hello to everyone, lovely to see you. Food got in the way there, of my manners, for a moment.

Let me begin by saying this. If UTS was located in Europe, the title of this event would not be the one it is. It would be: 'The PRC's foreign policy in the post-Ukraine invasion era'.

Yes, the pandemic is one important factor in assessing China's evolving, as I call it. It's not statically just changed. It is evolving, nearly by the month, evolving, but geography matters. And from the viewpoint of Europe, where, as I mentioned, I now live and work, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has completely changed our view of China and its foreign policy, and it has transformed EU-China relations fundamentally.

Pre-invasions, for example, Fins and the Finnish government, but also many European peoples and many European governments, had a somewhat positive view of China. This is despite China bullying its maritime neighbours. This is despite human rights abuses in China, for example, in Xinjiang.

Today, all that has changed. Public opinion across Europe has dramatically turned against China. Governments are now quite openly critical of China in a way that they were not pre-invasion.

Just to give one example, which has a bit of a link to Australia, the Finnish government who had really a positive relationship pre-COVID, pre-invasion, with China, now merely strives to have a functional relationship. Now, quote unquote, 'functional' is as bland a word as stable, which is, of course, what the Australian government says that it is aiming for in its ties with China.

Xi Jinping's decision not to, with one word, 'criticise' Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, not even go as far as India's Modi, who said, after all, to Putin, to his face, that now is not the time for war. It's completely changed an assessment of China, of China's foreign policy, in the eyes of those who view Russian's invasion of Ukraine as an atrocity.

So yes, Russia and China have had rather warm ties. They've been warming since Gorbachev visited Beijing in 1989. They have been especially warm during the last 11 years during Xi Jinping's leadership. It's been a friendship of convenience. We've all understood that. It's a rational partnership among two countries that pursue mutual interests. It's there to, that friendship, that partnership has been there to counter, really, the unilateral power of the United States. But with Xi's decision to support Putin, Xi has really transformed PRC's foreign policy to an extremely challenging one for all countries who would otherwise wish to balance, as evenly as they possibly can, between the United States and the PRC.

These are governments who would otherwise seek out China for more cooperation, stronger cooperation on many global pressing challenges. I'd also want to mention multinational companies who would otherwise consider increasing their investment in China. All of these, both governments and multinationals, refrain to do so now, or at least are doing so very gingerly, due to the public opinion pushing them to abandon, to shun China.

Moreover, these countries, these governments, I think, quite justifiably, ask, if China now pretends to be neutral, because this is what I was told time and again in Beijing over the last two weeks. China is neutral when it does not condemn. What else must we race for with regard to China's foreign policy if we can't even trust Beijing to stick to its really fundamental principles of respecting the rights of a sovereign nation and respecting non-interference, two principles which China has been very adamant about?

In my view, Xi has done his country a disservice. The PRC, at this moment, especially because of tensions with the United States, and I'm going to get there in a moment, would need some understanding from European nations, if not for any other reason, for purely economic reasons. But this is not going to be forthcoming.

Now, just a couple of words about the United States, because I know we're going to get to the United States later. Pre-COVID, the United States was criticised always when I went to Beijing. Depending on the day, it was criticised a bit or quite a lot. But now, today, the United States is literally blamed for everything. Everything. Vocally, openly, vehemently.

Let's be fair, the United States is, at the moment, with its intensifying efforts to curb not only high-tech exports, but also scientific collaboration, made clear, and this is despite all the flowery words coming out of Washington, that the US supposedly is only trying to stop the PRC from becoming stronger militarily. The United States, de facto, is striving to strangle the PRC from becoming a technological superpower. If the PRC citizens are upset, one can understand that. But there is a change in tone, definitely, from pre-COVID.

Just a few words, I have only a few minutes left, on the changes post-COVID, as this event title stipulates. I'd say that post-COVID China has very emphatically pursued better engagement with Southeast Asian countries.

Also, despite what I just said about vehemently criticising the United States, the United States and China have started to engage again face-to-face, and has, I think, yet again, proved how important face-to-face engagement is.

And we're seeing a lull at the moment in tensions, which are paving the way for Biden and Xi to meet later this month at APEC in California. This would not have been possible, had not this face-to-face engagement happened. Call it diplomacy or call it engagement, face-to-face meetings are incredibly important. And many of the Chinese diplomats or foreign ministry officials who I met in Beijing spoke about their isolation and what effect it has had psychologically on them over the last three years.

And lastly, China's foreign policy post-COVID is focusing very much on the global south. Xi Jinping, more than ever, probably in part because the Europeans are really shunning him, is trying to be regarded as the leader of the global south. I think we're going to see Chinese foreign policy really continue to evolve. Sam, I'll stop there.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

Yeah. Linda, just on the US-China relationship front, it was interesting to hear from the vice president, Han Zheng, not too long ago said China is willing to cooperate with the US at all levels ahead of the APEC meeting. What does that say to you about this foreign policy shift? Is it China trying to shift its term from the wolf warrior diplomacy into a different kind of style? Is it showing that China is willing to engage with the West again?

**Ms Linda Jakobson:**

Well, first of all, as you mentioned in your opening remarks, China is really encountering problems with the economy. I'm not going to go into those challenges because I know James is going to address them, but it's forced China to rethink parts of its tone, the way it goes about diplomacy, and its foreign policy goals. Not long-term goals. They haven't changed. Core fundamental goals have not changed, but certainly, warrior diplomacy, we've seen a lot less of it. And they need investment. They don't want everyone to go away. And I hope we'll have time to talk about the mood in Beijing among businessmen and other foreigners, which is quite gloomy. I do think there's a change in tone, for economic financial reasons.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

Okay, James, are you able to bring in some Australian perspective into this? Because we've just heard from Linda about some changes in China's foreign policy positioning in post-COVID era, and how is Australia responding to those shifts?

**Professor James Laurenceson:**

Yeah. That was a long list of ways in which the last few years have changed China's foreign policy, Linda. And I guess the temptation for me, Sam, is to say, well, with all those changes in Beijing, then, there's a lot of changes in Canberra too. And look, to be sure, there certainly have been. Anthony Albanese, in fact, likes to talk about the fact that China has changed. I just got one quote from him. I think this was when he was in Beijing last week. He said, quote: 'China has changed. Australia has changed. The relationship has changed.' All right. There you go. Signalling a lot of change. And of course, there have been very distinct policy changes. For example, the Aukus agreement, just several years ago, but Albanese said he was committed to implementing it, even when he was in Beijing. And Albanese is also keen to talk about how the context has changed. Everyone's clear, including our prime minister, that the US and China are now engaged in strategic competition. The context that Australia, as foreign policy operates, changes too.

But look, acknowledging all that, Sam, I'm going to push back a bit against that. I actually think, when I look at the Albanese government, leaving aside the Morrison government, when I look at the Albanese government over the last 18 months, and particularly when I look at the Albanese performance in China over the last week, I'm actually surprised by how many themes are coming through that is very, very a traditional Australian foreign policy approach to managing relations with China.

Let me give you some examples. First of all, diplomacy is back. Positives are being emphasised. I remember looking at a speech, it was a press conference Albanese gave in Beijing this last week, and in one press conference, Albanese said the word 'positive' 14 times. I think he was trying to make a point. Don Farrell, our trade minister, was standing right next to him and he threw in a couple positives of his own. Now in a sense, there's nothing surprising about that. This is very standard foreign policy practice. A decade ago, I remember my old boss, Bob Carr, when he was foreign minister, he would always, that was the DFAT talking points that was given to him, that he should always talk up the positives.

Another thing I noticed is that Albanese is saying things like, 'We will not let the differences define us. We will focus on our areas of mutual benefit.' Well, again, nothing particularly surprising about that when you take a longer-term context, but that sort of language did disappear under coalition governments. It certainly disappeared under the Morrison government's last 18 months term.

Here's another thing, Sam, I noticed. Albanese is talking about the economic side of the relationship again as well. How many times did we hear, over the last week, particularly when Albanese was in Shanghai, I heard it at least half a dozen times, where he said, 'Look, China accounts for a one third of our trade and trade accounts for one in four Australian jobs,' and he kept drumming home that message repeatedly.

Again, there's nothing particularly surprising about that in the longer term context, but we all know that, particularly during Morrison's term, the focus was intensely on security. And what I'm hearing now is a much more balanced view of the relationship with China. Albanese's not walking away from security positions. He said he was committed to implementing AUKUS, but economics is getting a good look in once more. Look, I'll stop there, Sam. There's obvious changes, but I think there's a lot that stayed the same, or at least compared with pre-2017.



**Mr Samuel Yang:**

Yeah, I think that that quote was very catchy, in a way: ‘China has changed, Australia has changed, the bilateral relationship has changed’, and of course it’s very obvious that both countries are trying to, moving forward the relationship. And it was a clear message that was given during my visit at the dialogue in Beijing. And then, the both sides were really open to talk, to discuss all sorts of issues, including security issues between the two nations and between the two delegations.

I think, Yun, we would like to draw some of your insights in terms of how Australia watchers in China, watching everything at the moment: what’s happening, what’s going on in China, Anthony Albanese visiting China, and what do they think about the bilateral relationship at the moment?

**Ms Yun Jiang:**

Well, as you can imagine, the media in China is quite positive about Albanese’s visit. After all, the state media and the media ecosystem in general in China is controlled quite strictly by the government through propaganda and censorship, so it is expected that it follows very closely to the government line. And the government line is that the relationship has basically turned a corner and is now trending to a more positive direction.

From the government’s, from China’s perspective, when we talk about ‘China has changed, Australia has changed’, I remember, when Morrison was still the prime minister, the usual comment was that it was China that has changed, and China is responsible for everything that has happened.

But if you hear what people in China say, obviously, they say that it is Australia’s fault. And I think one sentence they often say is, ‘The person who tied the bell has to untie the bell,’ and they blame it entirely on Australia. Both governments like to entirely blame each other, which is what you expect, as governments do.

What does China actually want? And what has changed for, I guess, China’s changed attitude to Australia? Well, I think one point is that, I believe that China actually understands and expects that Australia will follow the United States. It’s not really a surprise to the Australia watchers or to the Chinese government there that Australia will follow the United States in strategic matters.

But what concerned them, what I guess they were a bit more outraged at, was the fact that they believed Australia was ahead of the United States on many matters. It was not really a follower, but a vanguard on some issues. One of which was, of course, banning Huawei, Australia being the first country to ban Huawei. And according to them, Australia was also lobbying other countries to do the same.

What China wants: China wants to be respected as a great power in the region. Xi Jinping, of course, talks about the Great Rejuvenation and that, usually, it hearkens back to when China was a very big power in the Asian region, whereas other countries are smaller powers. Of course, in general, public discourse, we like to talk about all countries being equal. There’s 190 countries in the world also, and they’re all equal. But the thing is that the international system is hierarchical, right? The United States – countries do take into consideration the interest of great powers more so than the interest of smaller powers.

And I’m sure you can think of many examples of, for example, Australia’s decision to vote in the United Nations sometimes because we think about why we vote certain ways, because we know that’s what the United States wants. China also wants that in the region. It wants a difference in the region as well. It wants other countries to consider its interests, and also, its national pride when countries make decisions or have announcements.

Every country, of course, and its leaders, have pride, and when that gets injured, they are prone to overreact. For China, one of the sticking points was the independent inquiry into COVID. I believe that really hurt the pride of the country when Australia announced that. And as a result, it imposed trade sanctions against Australia, even though it actually hurts China as well. Trade sanctions absolutely hurt both parties.

And in fact, some of the international relations scholars in China mentioned to me that they believe that China's leaders took that action, it may not necessarily be an entirely rational decision, but more out of an injured pride perspective. When the Australian government, when decision makers, I guess, would consider government decisions, we do need to take into account more than just a rational calculation, risk and reward, but also think about this more emotional side of things as well.

And before Australia, of course, we can't just say, 'Okay, China is the irrational, emotional' - Australia is as well. When the Prime Minister Morrison announced the press conference to address the Twitter insult, that was also quite an emotional overreaction on the part of our Australian leader. And from China's perspective, Australia's decision to announce, to push for an independent inquiry was a sign to them that Australia was unwilling to accept China as a great power in the region.

What has changed? Well, the new government's tone and rhetoric towards China has changed significantly, and I think that is one of the reasons why China's attitude has changed as a result as well. And this is despite there being no change in strategic and defence policy. I don't think China expects Australia to change its strategic defence policy anyway. Well, you could ask, 'Okay, well now we are softening to - we softened our language to China.' In the olden days, someone perhaps will say, 'Is that kowtowing to China?' Well, then you could equally ask our country is kowtowing to great pals in the region when they take into account their interests.

In fact, I would argue that we just have a normal relationship with China now, that is on par with other countries in the region. In fact, previously Australia's relationship with China was worse than United States' relationship with China. And now we are getting back to normal. I wouldn't say, actually, we'll have that question later to look into the future, but now we are back on track.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

Yeah. So speaking of back on track and normalising, we've been hearing that kind of narrative of rhetoric for a while now, especially given the Albanese's Beijing visit recently. And also we've seen the trade impediments have been removed on the Australian produce.

And of course, and the prime minister is very confident that the remaining trade sanctions will be removed, Australian lobster or beef and wine. And so this is at a time that we've been hearing a lot of relationship that's thawing or normalising. And Linda, I would like to ask you that, how much foundation is there in this current positive trajectory, do you think?

**Ms Linda Jakobson:**

How much foundation? Well, I think to a certain extent the Australia-China relationship is going to be dependent on the US-China relationship. I think all countries relationships, all countries who are either allies or close friends of the United States, are going to be impacted by the US-China relationship. And as I mentioned, we're now in a lull in those tensions. I don't want to say going back, because going back never happens. You always go forward. But there's certainly a lot less tension. There's still adversaries. The United States continues to call China an adversary, but this face-to-face meeting cavalcade, I mean, they've really had several of them at very high levels, has helped to bring engagement, has helped to bring dialogue back.

So we're going to see this culminate in Xi Jinping, Joe Biden visit next week already, in about seven, eight days time. But please don't think that the tensions are over. United States, as I mentioned in Chinese local parlance, is out to get China is not willing to accept China as peer. And so they have very stringent export controls, all sorts of restrictions on collaboration already in place. We're going to see these move into the spheres of AI, even further than semiconductors in all different kinds of high-tech areas. And it's going to continue to cause tensions.

I do think both countries want to cooperate on climate change. And I mentioned this because now I'll bring the conversation back to Australia. As long as there's some kind of engagement balance between the United States and China and they're not at loggerheads, as long as they're talking, I think Australia should really try its best now to take advantage of this lull in tensions and intensify its own engagement with China. This is the moment to do it. Because if there is another, and there will ultimately be another really dip in US-China relations, it will also affect Australia's relations with China. So in the short term, I'm quite optimistic about Australia having the chance now to dig in and deepen that engagement with China.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

And James, we've been seeing that the President Xi has been quite busy meeting a lot of global leaders, including Australia's prime minister. And why is this happening right now? Is it just because China is under enormous economic pressure?

**Professor James Laurenceson:**

Yeah, look, that's part of it. And of course one of the reasons that China's keen to engage with Australia is it certainly does suit China in a period of intense strategic competition between Washington and Beijing. To be able to point to a staunch US ally like Canberra and say, well hang on, despite that strategic competition with Washington, we can still have a good relationship with a country like Australia. So that's certainly part of it, Sam.

That question about how much ballast there is in the relationship – I've been reading a lot of op-eds over the last week in the Australian press, particularly from those on the hawkish end of the spectrum. And they're very keen to stress the point: look, yes, there was lots of smiles between Alba and Xi in Beijing, but don't get too excited. Those fundamental differences are still there. And the relationship's still very brittle, still very fragile, and any day it could just blow up again.

I'm genuinely more optimistic than that. I think both sides now are engaging with realistic expectations. No one imagines, as Yun said, that Australia's not going to be a US ally, we're not going to proceed with AUKUS. I'd also say that neither – I'm not sure what you sensed when you were both there, but I don't think anyone wants to go back to the complete dysfunction of 2020 to 2022. So I think that gives us some balance.

And the final point I would say, and this is a point I made at a big think tank forum I went to in Beijing, was there are genuine differences between Canberra and Washington. And if I think our government, the Albanese government, is smart, and I think they are smart, they'll make these differences clear. But in the economic realm, for example, I genuinely believe that Canberra is actually more aligned with Beijing than it is with Washington when it comes to international economic issues.

Canberra is not interested in China's economic containment. Canberra is not interested in less economic engagement with China, right? Albanese says, 'We want to trade more with China.' So yes, we want diversification, but the Australian government's version of diversification is not de-coupling and it's not even this pseudo de-coupling, 'de-risking'. It's simply, we want to trade more with other countries, but we want to trade more with China as well. So I think that's a message that Beijing wants to hear. And given that difference, I think it'll make differences between Canberra and Washington in the strategic realm a bit more palatable.

**Ms Linda Jakobson:**

Can I just add one quick point? There's another big difference. I was not only in Beijing two weeks ago, for two weeks, I've been in Washington DC in late September. In Canberra today, there's not the poisonous attitude towards China that, excuse me, prevailed during the Morrison government and prevails today, very much so, in Washington.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

Yun, your recent report has been focusing on this bilateral relationship and then how stable it is or can it be. And what's your thoughts on this?

**Ms Yun Jiang:**

Thank you. Well, my report is titled, *Can Australia and China have a stable relationship?* Actually. So if you want to know the answer, please read.

And so I think what has changed, we are on a more stable footing than before. So previously, I mean in any relationship there were always ups and downs. There will always be challenges. So you wouldn't expect a relationship to always be positive. There will always be challenges, but what has happened is that previously we were juggling those challenges. Perhaps we were standing on one foot while juggling, and that's a very difficult thing to do. Not that I've tried. But now that we have a more stable relationship or we are standing on two feet and we're juggling those challenges. So it's a little bit easier, I think. So my report is focused more on challenges and therefore perhaps I'm not as optimistic as James.

As a result, there's a deterioration in the US-China relationship and Australia is strategically aligned with United States, but the problem is that the economic interest and security interest is no longer as clearly delineated as before. So you don't have a separate basket and go, okay, trade investment, that's economic issue. It's not a security issue. That's not really the case anymore. I don't think any governments in the world really think that way. And most obviously this is occurring in technology. So we'll talk about the containment China by the United States, that is very, very prominent in the technology space. And China believes that United States is thwarting its economic development. It's not just a technological containment, not just a military containment. China believes that it's an economic containment, that it will basically reduce its economic growth figure, and that obviously has an impact on stability of the regime as well.

So in response, it is also pursuing self-reliance as a response. But whether it can be achieved, that would be very, very hard to do. When United States talk about 'small yard, high fence', I mean to China, that – that's protectionism. But even then, even if you believe in small yard, high fence, where the boundary of the yard seems to be ever expanding today, this is not sensitive, tomorrow it could be sensitive. So it creates a lot of uncertainty for businesses as well. And the United States will – it has – pressured its allies and partners to follow. So while Canberra may not like it, United States will pressure other countries to do the same. And when that happens, then Canberra will have to make a choice, unfortunately. So in that sense, economic links may not be as a ballast as it has been in the past. So I am sorry to be a bit pessimistic. I'm always so pessimistic.

And another challenge I wrote about in the report is also the anti-espionage and foreign interference issue. And it is related a little bit to what Linda was saying about the mood. Back in 2020 in Australia we had this counter foreign interference campaign, and as a result there was a lot of suspicions against people with links to China, specifically Chinese-Australians. I myself was one of the people affected. But in China as well, the anti-espionage campaign has meant that people with foreign links in China are also becoming under suspicion. And that really has damaged people-to-people links.

A lot of people I know who are not ethnic Chinese, for example, have left China and have not returned because they didn't feel as welcomed as before. And I'm sure Linda has know that a lot of people in Australia and United States who are ethnic Chinese have left those countries as well. So we are seeing a trend towards possibly less people-to-people links on top of the economic links fraying.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

Yeah, we don't have much time left for the panel discussion, but I do have an open question for all of you. So the future of the bilateral relationship, are we going back to how things were before the deep freeze or are we expecting a new kind of relationship moving forward? If so, what does it look like?

**Professor James Laurenceson:**

So look, of course, as Linda said, you can't go back in time. That's impossible. So the context has changed. So we're never going to get back to the sunny optimism I think of 2015. But again, so I'm going push back. I know it's very common to say that there is no reset, but what I am seeing is a reset in the approach. And it seems to me that on trade and on political dialogue, we're going to get back to the pre-2017 status quo. Our Trade Minister Don Farrell, stood up in Shanghai and said that he expected all of the trade restrictions – so we're talking wine, lobster and beef – to be removed, in quote, 'in a very short space of time.'

Now the Australian Trade Minister doesn't stand up and say that unless he's got a very clear steer that that's where we're heading. And you would've seen the joint statement both sides put out at the end of Albanese's visit where it was senior level dialogues back on and not just at the leader level as well across the board. So in those two important spaces, I think we are going back to some pre '17 status quo, acknowledging, of course, the context has changed.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

Linda?

**Ms Linda Jakobson:**

I'm going to let Yun have the last word, and I'm going to say that, please, all of you, read Yun's report - it's on both the websites of the AIIA and China Matters - because it gives you a very good overview of the Chinese perspective of this, and reminds us of why I'm not as optimistic as James: as long as both countries struggle with putting a security lens to many aspects of the relationship and very easily will fall into that trap when problems occur, and they're bound to occur. We live in a very fraught international order at the moment. I'm not that optimistic that these pitfalls can be avoided when a security lens is applied, but Yun gets the last word.

**Ms Yun Jiang:**

Look, we can never go back to the past. Obviously nowadays circumstances are different. I think the biggest challenge is increasing US-China tension and certainly despite China's increasing economic power and as well as geopolitical power, I do think that United States is still basically a global hegemon, and therefore has a lot of power at a disposal to really, I guess, contain China, or at least affecting China's future growth, as well as really affecting other countries' decisions. So I'm not as optimistic that we will go back to what it was, but I'm still hopeful that there could be areas, small pockets for cooperation. After all, we cooperate where we can, and that is a good message.

**Ms Linda Jakobson:**

So the ladies are a bit pessimistic and the gentleman is quite optimistic.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

All right, on that note now we'll be taking questions from online and in person. For the online audiences, please submit your questions via the Q&A tab at the bottom of your screen. And for in-person attendees, we'll be coming around with some microphones. And please if I can ask you to state your name and your affiliation and please keep your question to one brief question. Thank you. And please raise your hand.

And that gentleman please, with a red shirt.

**Audience question:**

Thanks very much for the discussion. Very interesting. My name is Juan, and I work for a start-up. I was curious to know, if the image of China in the world was affected by the invasion of Russia into Ukraine, I'd like to get your thoughts about the war between Israel and Palestine. What's China perception of that? What's their position, how that may impact their image in the world?

**Ms Linda Jakobson:**

Okay, yes. Two crises, two very serious crises. Two infringement of human rights going on at two fronts. So that's what I meant, that we live in such a volatile world. China, with the Middle East, has always tried to be balanced. It walks a tight rope. It has done quite a lot of work to make friends in the Middle East lately. This is obviously a disaster for China to have this happen. It doesn't want to take sides. The US has been pushing it to condemn, for example, the Hamas attack. China didn't do that. It danced around that question. But something I forgot to say about the Ukraine situation was China doesn't want this situation in Ukraine. I mean though everyone in Europe is really hopping mad at China for not condemning the Russian invasion. It's not as if China wanted Putin to invade. China wants peace. And I think quite honestly, sincerely wants peace, it's a lot easier for China to pursue its own interests with peace. So it'll continue to be so-called a neutral balancer on the Israel-Palestinian question.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

Would you like to add?

**Ms Yun Jiang:**

Yeah, well this issue is quite close to my heart personally, because I do have a very close friend whose whole family lives in Gaza, including five nieces and nephews age between two and 10. So it is obviously very distressing for them.

So China's approach, I think China has been developing a closer relationship with Israel, including through a technological cooperation. But since the latest conflict, I think from Israel's perspective, Israel is not very happy with China's lack of condemnation of Hamas. But it appears that China's approach is more aligned, at least it appears to be taking more of a side to the other Arab countries. I think for China, it believes that there are more countries, more states in the region that it thinks that it can get onto its side by supporting the Arab causes rather than Israel.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

All right, next question.

**Audience question:**

John Ross from *Times Higher Education*.

My interest, I guess, is in the educational relationship between Australia and China. And there was a sense that the geopolitical relationship could spill over into education with safety warnings by Chinese authorities about student safety in Australia and things like that. My sense is that didn't really affect Chinese flows to Australia, obviously the pandemic did. I guess my question is, is that stuff all finished now? And what are we looking at now for Chinese student flows to Australia in the context of high youth unemployment, involution, the trends that we're seeing now in China?

**Professor James Laurenceson:**

Thanks John. I might take that one.

So you're right. Back in 2018 there were a few signals sent out from Beijing that the flows of students might be under threat.

But I remember being asked about that at the time and I always thought that would be a tough lever for Beijing to pull. Because Beijing doesn't get to tell households and families directly where to send their children. Now of course they can message through state media that Australia's not a safe country and so on. But the problem Beijing hits up against there is that there's a massive Chinese diaspora in Australia. So the average Chinese family doesn't wake up and read the *People's Daily* to understand Australia, right? They'll speak to their friends and relatives that are already here.

So it was quite remarkable that particularly with the pandemic, on top of the geopolitical tensions, just how stable Chinese student numbers – I mean, I think University of Sydney, their student numbers actually went up from China during the pandemic. Now the last time I looked at the visa application data, John, last month, was it is actually higher now than pre-pandemic. So those Chinese student flows are back on and they're bigger and better than before. And how does that tie in with China's economic prospects? So I did speak about this to my Chinese colleagues, and the sense I got was that the slowdown of the Chinese economy, the difficulties of young graduates finding jobs in China, on net terms, is probably going to act as a bit of a push factor. So that's going to encourage more Chinese households to send their children overseas. Because the domestic environment in China is indeed so difficult.

**Ms Yun Jiang:**

I'll just add a gendered perspective this as well. So you'll see that there are a lot of female students in Australia and I believe also this showed that female students are more likely to remain in Australia than male students. And that's because of sometimes the traditional gender expectations that is often foisted on girls and women in China. And one way for them to escape that is to go overseas and study. And I think in Australia we have perhaps more of an equal attitude to gender and the roles of women in society. So I think when they are in the country and they can experience the fact that they perhaps don't have to confine themselves to a specific role, I think that's really positive.

**Ms Linda Jakobson:**

Okay. Well, it's good that we have a panel that's giving a lot of different views because I'm going to give a bit of a contrary view to both James and Yun, which just tells you how diverse a country China is and we have to always keep that in mind. There is no one truth about China.

So my view is a bit different. At the moment, for example, not only the foreign ministry but also state owned enterprises do not employ people who have a foreign spouse or have had a foreign education.

Now, state owned enterprises, James will know the percent, is not in any way the biggest factor in employment. It's a small factor compared to the private sector. It's probably something like a third to two-thirds, the two-thirds being the private sector, somewhere in that ballpark. But still, it's a very sought after job to be in the state enterprises and also government to be very honest.

There is a bit of an anti-Western, especially; not anti-foreign. You can get your degree in Africa or Latin America and that's not so bad. But anti-Canada, anti-Australian, and anti-America, anti-Europe tendency at the moment.

And I noticed that people now are thinking through. I agree with actually everything that Yun said about the gender issue and also what James said about the unemployment being a huge problem there.

But we have to always keep in mind that Xi Jinping has really taken the country in a bit of an anti-foreign/anti-Western direction, and parents are thinking twice about cutting off the possibility of a state-owned enterprise job from their kids.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

All right.

Before I return to the room, here is a question from the online audience: Will Australia pursue an independent foreign and security policy in our long-term interests in line with ASEAN? And if not, why not? This question is from Hock Ooi.

**Ms Linda Jakobson:**

Can you repeat it? Sorry.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

Yeah. So the question is, will Australia pursue an independent foreign and security policy in our long-term interests in line with ASEAN? And if not, why not?

**Ms Linda Jakobson:**

I'll be very brief. I've heard that question since I moved here in 2011 and started plunging into Australian foreign policy as a beginner. There are lots of people in this country who would like Australia to pursue an independent foreign policy in line with ASEAN and Southeast Asia, generally.

Australia is a staunch ally of the United States. It has made its choice. Government after government since I've been here talks about the need to align Australia's interests better with Southeast Asia. I think Penny Wong has taken some steps in that direction and is to be commended. But generally speaking I'm not too optimistic.

**Professor James Laurenceson:**

Well Linda, I've got to go the other direction a bit to keep the trend going.



Look, one thing I told my Chinese colleagues is – there's a view, the natural default in Beijing, I think, is to see AUKUS as clear evidence that Australia has made its choice; it's lining up with the United States to contain China.

I'm not entirely convinced, because Australia has long had the approach of welcoming China's economic rise, deepening economic engagement with China, but balancing the risk that China could convert its economic heft into military power in the security realm.

So I mean a decade ago, right, Julia Gillard was welcoming US marines to be rotating through Darwin. So there is one view that says, 'You know what? AUKUS is really just a continuation of this Australian approach.'

And what AUKUS ends up being in a decade, I don't think anyone knows yet. I mean, we know it involves something to do with nuclear-powered submarines that we may or we may not get. And Pillar 2 involves something to do with enhanced technology cooperation. But precisely what that solidifies into, we don't know yet.

**Ms Linda Jakobson:**

But we do know that US-China competition will intensify.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

All right, back to the room. The gentleman over there. Can we give him a mic? Thank you.

**Audience question:**

Thank you to the panel today... tonight. My name's Damian Meduri, I'm the Associate Director for Greater China within Investment NSW.

The panel: you brought up tonight a specific point about the deterioration of people-to-people relationships, and an aspect of espionage and counter security measures as well.

I want to ask an element of perhaps language learning and capacity to engage with people-to-people relationships going forward.

I was part of the generation that got the golden sunshine of language learning, a lot of focus on China at that time, free language learning resources. And looking towards what the university is offering at the moment, Australians engaging in Chinese language, for example, is much lower now than it was previously.

And obviously, the closing of outlets, media outlets such as The China Project, as well as quite important in this space. Another voice that's not as prominent anymore.

So the question I have is, how might we avoid falling into the trap where the less we are willing to engage, the wider the gap of knowledge might become between the two countries?

**Ms Yun Jiang:**

Okay, I will start off with that. First, I'll say I love languages. I am in my second year of Arabic and I hope to start Hindi next year as well. But actually language is really hard.

Well, actually my first language was Shanghainese, but then I lost that, and then it became Mandarin.

And then when I came to Australia when I was 11, I started studying English. It was so hard. I think I was actually slightly traumatised learning English at that age. But, you know, now I'm speaking English, and it's probably my best language now.

But it is hard and you think that at the end you'll be rewarded for your hard work, at least. Just, from my personal perspective from working in the government, I don't think that really was the case. I felt that at least the government departments did not really utilise the language skills of its employees.

So in my department for example, there are quite a few people that can speak other languages but they were not really being used for their linguistic or cultural skills.

So I think the problem is not really that people are not willing to learn language, but that there's no demand, at least not in public, maybe public service. Maybe there is in private sectors, I'm not sure.

But in a government, you put in all effort to learn a language, and I know that I have colleagues at DFAT who told me that they felt their languages skills got worse after they got to DFAT.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

All right. That's very interesting insight from Yun.

Next question. I have the lady at the front.

**Audience question:**

Thank you very much panellists. Very interesting discussion.

My name is Grace Li, I'm from the UTS Law Faculty. So we see during the COVID years many of the global corporations have moved out from China. Some of them moved their headquarters to Singapore elsewhere, some of them move their production line to Vietnam, somewhere in Southeast Asia.

I want to hear your thoughts on this. Will this trend continue? Will it worsen or will it get better? Thank you.

**Ms Linda Jakobson:**

Yeah. So I mentioned that I was in China in part because of 22 multinational CEOs, all of them asking that question. All of them are now realising that if they put all their eggs in one basket in China, that was a mistake. And during the COVID years have already taken some steps to relocate to India, Vietnam, like you said or elsewhere.

Everyone recognises though that you have to be in the China market. You cannot be a global player if you're not in the China market. I'm very bad at numbers, so I won't quote the numbers that, for example, the CEO of McKinsey and also Joerg Wuttke, head of the EU Chamber of Commerce in Beijing said, but if China grows 2.5 percent, the total GDP is let's say 10. And if India where a lot of at least European companies are relocating to grow six or seven percent, they're still at four. So I mean there's still a huge difference between India and China. Even if India now continues it's rather remarkable growth and gets some of the infrastructure challenges in place.

So yes, I think de-risking is on the minds of all multinational CEOs at the moment, also because of the risk of Taiwan. At least Europeans woke up to their naivety about Russia. No one thought Russia was going to invade Ukraine, no one. And it happened. So they're taking at least into account that there could be a war in

the Taiwan Strait, but no one's going to completely leave China either because you can't be a global player without being in China.

**Professor James Laurenceson:**

Just to get on this theme of diversity, Grace, I spoke to the AusCham, Australian Chamber of Commerce in Beijing and in Shanghai, and the mood of those folks was overwhelmingly positive.

So it just goes to show that if we're talking American companies or European companies, it's not necessarily the same when you're talking about Australian companies. And I imagine it would be different if I was talking to Japanese companies as well.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

Our next question. The gentleman in the middle on the left.

**Audience question:**

Thank you. Colin Hawes from UTS Law Faculty as well.

I was just wondering: we tend to assume that China is going to be the same attitude for the next few years towards the US, et cetera. And the political situation in China won't change much.

But what would the panellists say if they had an interview with Xi Jinping? Recommendations to him. What should they do? What should China do to get the US sanctions removed, to improve their relationship with the US, or is it really impossible? Is it just the US is not interested in – unless the Communist Party collapses and they introduced democracy, multi-party democracy?

**Ms Linda Jakobson:**

I'll take a stab at this because I – actually, we had the pleasure of meeting Ambassador Nick Burns with my group, because I know Nick from my Harvard days. And he was asked this question. He gave a very splendid diplomatic answer. I'll give my own, not quoting him, but it made me think about it.

I can't see in the present political mood in the United States – and we haven't talked about that, what a split country it is, what a very challenging political time the United States is going through for a number of reasons, and what the Chinese are going through under the leadership of Xi Jinping. I can't see anything that's going to happen in the near future for the United States to even consider taking away those sanctions, to be quite honest. The United States has made a decision that engagement was a mistake.

We allowed, now I'm quoting Americans, not saying this myself, I don't believe that, but we allowed China to develop with our help much too fast without thinking about the consequences.

Now it's true and the Chinese will tell you that globalisation helped them develop immensely and it was fantastic. But should Americans continue engagement? I definitely think so.

But the Americans are hell-bent on stopping China from becoming a technological superpower and that'll have grave economic consequences. So no, I can't see anything that could happen in the near future under these two political systems which would remove those sanctions or decrease tensions like in the mid to long-term.

Sorry to be so terribly pessimistic. I think that was the last question.

**Mr Samuel Yang:**

Yes. I do have another two questions from online, but unfortunately that's what we have time for tonight. I'm sorry we couldn't get to your questions from our online audiences.

But tonight we've definitely covered a lot of ground tonight and this conversation is at a really critical time. And given the recent events between the two nations and whether those views are pessimistic or optimistic, China has changed and so has Australia.

And it would be very interesting to see what pans out in the next coming months in terms of our remaining trade sanctions. And also the APEC meeting will be in focus as well as the leaders of the biggest two economies are going to meet.

Please, thank you my panellists and thank you for the audience here in the room and also online for your questions and for your interests.

Now, I will hand over to Professor Wanning Sun, Sun Wanning, for closing remarks.

**Professor Wanning Sun:**

Thanks Samuel. Gosh, I am so relieved that I don't have to do the job of ranking the three speakers according to the level of optimism or pessimism, but I can tell there is an optimist, there is a realist there, and there is a pessimist there. I'll leave it to you to work out who is who.

But one thing I can say is that we may not agree whether we can be optimistic or pessimistic about what's happening in Australia and China relationship, but what I can say for certain is that this is never going to be a boring space to watch. And whether you wake up to hear the good news on a day, Monday, or the bad news on Tuesday, you're going to keep hearing about China.

And as a media specialist who is very sensitive to what's being said in the news, it's never a dull day for me. But my job here is to say thanks. So can I take this opportunity to say thank you to our speakers today for helping us making sense of very complex situations in this very complex time. And I think the more complex things are, the more important it is to have such clear-eye analysis. So thank you for that, and thank you Samuel for your excellent moderation.

But to you members in the audience, it's really, really good to see you here either in this room and online. And we really appreciate your support and we really endeavour to continue to produce work and research that interests you and hopefully informs you as well.

And so it is for this reason that I am, I am sure my colleagues are as well, very excited to hear about the future China Matters/ACRI Fellowship. And I really look forward to the announcement of more details. So watch that space as well.

Just also want to mention that we'll be sending an email to everyone who's registered so that we can get your opinions on how this event went so that we can use this feedback to continue to improve our future events' organisation.

So if you want to know more about Australia-China relationships and about our research, you can go to our website, it's [australiachinarelations.org](http://australiachinarelations.org), where you can also find all sorts of research and reports there as well. And also check out and follow us on Twitter as well. Twitter: [@acri\\_uts](https://twitter.com/acri_uts). And so thank you again to speakers and thank you to everyone in the audience. Goodnight.