

AUSTRALIA'S SILENCE ON TIBET

Australia Tibet Council 2017



How China is shaping our agenda



AUSTRALIA'S SILENCE ON TIBET: How China is shaping our agenda

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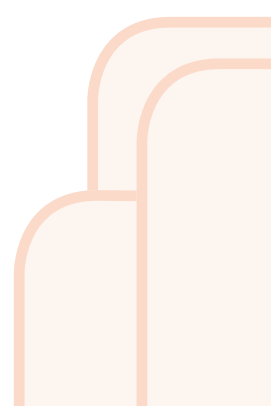
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the leadership of the Dalai Lama, the Tibetans have earned widespread public support, with the Tibet cause continuing to test the conscience of world leaders.

While China is far from winning over the international community on its policies in Tibet, in recent years it has been making rapid progress in numerous areas. Through a proactive foreign policy, utilising both economic leverage and soft power diplomacy, the Chinese government is making determined efforts to erode the support the Tibet movement has built up over many years.

In Australia, China's influence has infiltrated political and educational institutions, perhaps more than in any country in the western world. In fact, extensive reports in the Australian media over the past year have revealed an alarming level of Chinese influence in Australia.

Some examples:

- Businesses with ties to the Chinese government are the largest foreign donors to the major political parties. The country's intelligence and defence community warned the major political parties that these Chinese attempts to gain influence are a threat to Australia's national sovereignty.
- Chinese government-funded institutions are embedded within our universities, giving young Australians selective knowledge about a rising world power.
- Major agreements signed between China's state media and some of the leading media outlets in Australia help the Chinese Communist Party to propagate its message to the world.
- The government in Beijing keeps the Chinese diaspora in this country under tight control, as it directs its students studying at Australian universities, intimidates Chinese dissidents, co-opts community groups and financially supports Chinese language media.

As Chinese influence increases in Australia, explicit support from the Australian Government for Tibet has diminished. The Government's silence on the human rights crisis in Tibet is notable, with not a single public statement on Tibet being issued for nearly a decade. Furthermore, no Australian Prime Minister has met the Dalai Lama since 2009, although he has made five subsequent visits to Australia.

Recent media reports identified Huang Xiangmo and Chau Chak Wing as the two principal patrons of Australian politics and their connections to China's United Front Work Department.

Both men have led the Australian Council for the Promotion of Peaceful Reunification of China, a group under the umbrella of China's United Front Work Department and whose "peaceful reunification" work of safeguarding China's territorial integrity is focussed on undermining the freedom and democracy movements of Tibet, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Xinjiang. The United Front Work Department is responsible for implementing China's policies in Tibet. As a cause eliciting much support from the international community, Tibet remains a key target of the Department's overseas mission.

This report illustrates how the activities of these two donors are part of China's global mission to reshape the narrative on Tibet.

Our report also looks at China's influence on Australian universities and its impact on the Tibet movement. As universities rely more heavily on fees from overseas students for funding, they have become a vulnerable target for China's soft power offensive and have shown increasing reluctance to critically examine China's policies in Tibet. China's Confucius Institutes, hosted by 14 universities in Australia, prohibit discussions on certain topics, including Tibet. Self-censorship is common among academics whose careers depend on access to China for research or funding.

The University of Sydney's backflip on the Dalai Lama's public talk in 2013 is a good example of an Australian university bowing to Chinese pressure.

Perhaps no one in Australia sings from the Chinese Communist Party's song book on Tibet better than Bob Carr, a politician-turned-professor. A year before becoming Australia's Foreign Minister, Carr called the Dalai Lama "a cunning monk" and stated Tibet had historically been a part of China.

Since retiring from politics in 2014, he was handpicked to head the Australia-China Relations Institute at the University of Technology Sydney, who by their own admission work to promote "a positive and optimistic view" of the Australia-China relationship. In 2015, Carr welcomed Zhu Weiqun to the institute. As the former head of the United Front Work Department's Tibet section, Zhu has been China's main critic of the Dalai Lama.

This report also looks at how Australia's Tibetan community members, many of whom are former political prisoners, continue to live in fear even after leaving their homeland.

Australia Tibet Council believes there are both moral and strategic imperatives for our Government to support efforts to resolve the Tibet issue.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Our report makes the following recommendations:

To the Parliament

- Initiate a vigorous debate on China's influence on Australian politics.

To the Government

- Launch a full and independent inquiry into China's attempts to influence policy and decision-making in Australia.
- Uphold Australia's democratic principles and stand up for the Tibetan people. The Government can demonstrate its support by publicly endorsing the Tibetans' call for freedom and genuine autonomy in Tibet, supporting the Central Tibetan Administration and meeting the Dalai Lama at the highest level.
- Join like-minded governments to initiate visible coordinated diplomatic action on Tibet.

To the universities

- Protect their academic integrity by inviting the Dalai Lama to their campuses and encouraging scholars and students to examine the Tibet issue openly and critically.
- Close the Confucius Institutes by choosing not to renew their contracts with the Hanban. At the very least, introduce reforms that ensure greater transparency of their partnership agreements, hiring processes and curricula.
- Ensure that the programs at the Confucius Institutes are balanced and free of external pressures, by holding public lectures on topics that are relevant to Chinese culture and history but are currently forbidden – such as Tibet, the Dalai Lama, Taiwan and the Tiananmen Square massacre.

1

CHINA'S INFLUENCE ON AUSTRALIAN POLITICS AND TIBET

To what extent is the Chinese Communist Party attempting to shape the Australian agenda? To what extent has the Australian Government capitulated? Has Australia compromised its core values in the process?

AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE TO TIBET

Australia Tibet Council (ATC) has observed a declining engagement from the Australian Government as the human rights situation in Tibet continues to deteriorate, year after year. This is most notable by the Government's deafening silence on the Tibet issue for the best part of a decade. Kevin Rudd, who raised his concerns about "significant human rights problems in Tibet" in his famous speech at China's Peking University in 2008, remains the last Australian Prime Minister to speak publicly on Tibet.

The ATC has written to every Australian Prime Minister prior to their visiting China, calling on them to keep Tibet on the agenda for discussion with their Chinese counterparts. During her visit to China in 2013, Prime Minister Julia Gillard stated she would raise the human rights situation in Tibet with the Chinese leadership, but her admission was forthcoming only when questioned by a journalist at a press conference. In April 2016, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull led what was billed as Australia's largest ever trade delegation during his first visit to China. ATC supporters signed a petition, asking him to speak up for Tibet. We did not receive a response from either the Prime Minister or his office and he remained silent on Tibet.

The Government's engagement on Tibet has been limited to the annual Australia-China Human Rights Dialogue. Since 1997, Australia has used the Bilateral Human Rights Dialogue as the only formal instrument with which to engage China on human rights issues. Australia no longer even mentions Tibet in annual country statements to the UN Human Rights Council. The confidential human rights dialogue has been criticised for lack of accountability, clear objectives and failure to deliver measurable outcomes. No dialogue has taken place since February 2014. In 2004 and 2006, the ATC attended receptions for the Chinese delegation and NGOs during two Canberra-based



The Dalai Lama at a briefing to politicians and journalists in 2008.

Dialogue rounds. Since 2009, at the insistence of the Chinese delegation, ATC has been excluded from the reception.

The ATC is concerned about the Government's weak stance on Tibet and human rights issues in China even at multilateral forums, including the UN Human Rights Council, where like-minded countries (including the US, the UK, Canada and Germany) have consistently voiced their concerns.

A political leader's meeting with the Dalai Lama serves as a good barometer of how a country stands up to China. Australia, unfortunately, has taken the view, primarily espoused by China, that showing support for the Dalai Lama risks damaging its bilateral economic ties.

The last meeting between an Australian Prime Minister and the Dalai Lama was with John Howard in 2007. The Dalai Lama has visited the country five times since, however no Australian Prime Minister has met with him. In contrast, Barack Obama met the Dalai Lama in the White House four times between 2008 and 2016 during his time as the US President. Organisers of the Dalai Lama's Australian visits have noted that interest from the Government has waned over the years. Those who have offered support preferred not to publicise their involvement.

However, the Government's growing inaction on Tibet is not reflected in the Parliament. Tibet remains a multi-partisan issue for the Members of Parliament. Politicians from all sides of the political spectrum have become strong champions for Tibet through their membership of the Australian All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet.

Currently, with 30 members, the group has kept Tibet on the parliamentary agenda. Its delegations have twice visited Dharamsala in India, the headquarters of Tibet's government in exile, over the past decade and hosted visits of Tibetan leaders to the Australian Parliament. The Group is currently seeking access to Tibet to develop a greater understanding of the impacts of China's rule and seek to hold the Chinese government accountable for its policies.

CHINA'S INFLUENCE ON AUSTRALIAN POLITICS

In June 2017, a joint investigation by Fairfax Media and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) showed the extent to which China has infiltrated into Australian politics.¹ Analysts have warned Beijing seeks to win influence in Australia through political donations – a strategy in line with China's United Front Work's aim of winning friends and isolating enemies. These efforts are led by a small, but growing, cohort of Chinese-Australians with links to the Chinese Communist Party.

Duncan Lewis, head of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), in 2015 informed the major political parties that some of its top donors have ties to the Chinese government and that their contributions may come with strings attached. Peter Varghese, the former Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, issued a similar warning that political donations are made "with a purpose" and these Chinese companies may act to advance the Chinese Communist Party's interests.²

Addressing a parliamentary senate committee in May 2017, Mr Lewis noted that:

"Espionage and foreign interference continue to occur on an unprecedented scale, and this has the potential to cause serious harm to the nation's sovereignty, the integrity of our political system, our national security capabilities, our economy and other interests."

Between 2013 and 2015, Chinese businesses were the largest foreign donors to the major political parties in Australia. To get a clearer picture of the impacts of China on the Tibet movement in Australia, we can look closely at the two most significant donors – Chau Chak Wing and Huang Xiangmo.

Chau Chak Wing

A wealthy property developer from China, Chau Chak Wing donated over \$4 million to Labor and the Coalition from 2006 to 2016.³ A business school building at the University of Technology Sydney was named after him for his donation of \$20 million.



Chau Chak Wing. Photo: ABC

Of particular interest to Tibet watchers and supporters is Chau's connection to China's United Front Work Department. Chau served as a former chair of the Australian Council for the Promotion of Peaceful Reunification of China, an organisation under the umbrella of China's United Front Work Department. Its "peaceful reunification" work includes undermining the freedom and democracy movements in Tibet, Taiwan, Hong Kong and East Turkestan (Xinjiang) and supporting China's claims over disputed territories such as the South China Sea.

In 2017, Chau demanded an apology from Fairfax Media and the ABC for their reports revealing his connections to the United Front Work Department, while claiming he has “no knowledge” of the organisation’s existence. But the Chinese government’s archives show pictures of Chau welcoming the Department’s officials to his real estate company Kingold Group, based in the Chinese city of Guangzhou, as well as in Sydney and Brisbane.⁴

Huang Xiangmo

Huang Xiangmo moved to Australia in 2011 to seek new business opportunities. Between 2012 and 2016, he donated over \$2.6 million to Australia’s major political parties.⁵

Like his fellow Chinese-Australian businessman Chau, Huang also made a significant donation to the University of

Technology Sydney, with \$1.8 million donated to establish the Australia China Relations Institute.



Huang Xiangmo with Malcolm Turnbull at Chinese New Year celebrations. Photo: SMH

In early 2016, Huang learnt his Australian citizenship application was taking longer than expected. A key reason for the delay was that ASIO was examining his role as the President of the Australian Council for the Promotion of Peaceful Reunification of China, the same group that Chau chaired.

According to Dr Feng Chongyi, Chinese academic at the University of Technology Sydney and a vocal China critic, Huang is a key member supported by the Chinese authorities. Speaking at a Chinese consulate event in Sydney on the 66th anniversary of Chinese Communist Party rule, Huang said, “we overseas Chinese unswervingly support the Chinese government’s position to defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity and support the development of the motherland as always.”⁶

In August 2016, according to a report by the Australian Council for the Promotion of Peaceful Reunification of China, Huang led a delegation to the Tibet Autonomous Region to “witness its social and economic development.” At a reception hosted by United Front Work Department officials, the delegation vowed to safeguard China’s territorial integrity and oppose the “separatist forces abroad.”⁷ While Huang is permitted to visit Tibet, it remains closed to foreign media, diplomats, parliamentarians and independent observers.

Australian Council for the Promotion of Peaceful Reunification of China

The Australian Council for the Promotion of Peaceful Reunification of China (ACPPRC) is part of China’s global outreach project to strengthen its United Front work. It involves influential overseas Chinese and Australian political leaders, past and present, to carry out its mission.

The patrons of the ACPPRC have included senior leaders from both sides of politics. From Labor, they include former foreign minister Bob Carr, treasury spokesman Chris Bowen and Senator Sam Dastyari. Former Labor defence minister Joel Fitzgibbon was also a member of the council. From the Liberal party, they include former immigration minister Philip Ruddock, former NSW Premier Barry O’Farrell, and former prime ministers Gough Whitlam, Malcolm Fraser and Bob Hawke, who had all served as patrons in the past.⁸

The ACPPRC presents itself as a non-governmental organisation on its website. A closer look at their activities will show it is designed to advance the Chinese Communist Party’s interests in Australia.

The ACPPRC’s Tibet-related events in Australia	
2017	Rented crowds of Chinese students and community members to welcome China’s Premier Li Keqiang to Australia and drown out protests by Tibetans and Chinese dissidents. ⁹
2016	Participated in a delegation to Tibet, during which the delegation vowed to fight against the overseas separatist forces. ¹⁰
2013	Organised the ‘Beauty of Tibet’ photo exhibition at the Sydney Convention Centre. The event was timed a week before the Dalai Lama’s visit to Australia and was organised at the same venue of his public talk. ATC spokesperson called it a “propaganda” show. ¹¹
2008	Organised a series of events during the Tibetan Uprising, including a welcome banquet for a visiting pro-China Tibetan delegation ¹² , and a Q&A session on Tibet at the NSW Parliament House attended by politicians, academics and journalists. ¹³

United Front Work – a ‘magic weapon’

Mao Zedong called the United Front Work one of the “three secret weapons,” along with the armed forces and party building, that led to the Chinese Communist Party’s victory in 1949. Xi Jinping, China’s President, also refers to it as a “magic weapon.”

From the early days of the communist revolution, the United Front Work was the Chinese Communist Party’s way of mobilising allies outside its traditional constituencies – students, intellectuals, overseas Chinese and political groups in foreign countries. Its targets also include the “ethnic minorities” such as Tibetans and Uyghurs.

The United Front Work Department is also responsible for the implementation of Party policy towards ethnic and religious groups, including the Tibetans. It is the primary department liaising with exiled Tibetans and the Dalai Lama’s representatives for the Sino-Tibet Dialogue, which has been in

limbo since 2010. As a cause that has drawn much support from the international community, Tibet remains a key target of the Department's overseas mission.

Addressing a major United Front conference in Beijing in 2015, Xi Jinping called on his Party officials to “befriend” the non-Party groups to build the nation. Its modus operandi is simple: reward the allies and isolate the enemies.

TWO AUSTRALIAN POLITICIANS WITH CONNECTIONS TO CHINA

Labor Senator Sam Dastyari

In 2016, after overspending his parliamentary travel allowance by \$1670.82, Senator Sam Dastyari asked a Sydney-based Chinese businessman to pay the bill. In 2015, the Senator had also asked Huang Xiangmo to settle a legal bill of \$5000.¹⁴



Senator Sam Dastyari and Huang Xiangmo at a joint press conference on the South China Sea. Photo: SMH

When Huang's application for Australian citizenship was facing hurdles in early 2016, Senator Dastyari called the Australian Immigration Department to expedite the process. In the same year, the Senator joined Huang at a press conference endorsing China's claims over the disputed South China Sea. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull questioned whether the Labor senator contradicted his own party's policy in a “cash for comment” arrangement.¹⁵

There are no known records of Senator Dastyari's position on Tibet. Australia Tibet Council did not receive any response to its emails to the Senator, requesting a meeting on Tibet Lobby Day.

Liberal MP Craig Laundry

Of the many Chinese community members supporting Craig Laundry in the 2016 federal parliament elections, one stood out. Yang Dongdong, a Chinese businessman with close ties to the Chinese embassy, claimed to be Laundry's “community adviser.”¹⁶



Craig Laundry MP and Huang Xiangmo in Sydney. Photo: AFR

Yang is a member of the Overseas Committee of the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese and its subsidiary the Shanghai Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese. Like the ACPPRC, these groups are affiliates of China's United Front Work Department.

In 2008, as a key leader mobilising thousands of Chinese students and community members to welcome the Beijing Olympic Torch relay in Canberra, Yang told Chinese media that he would protect the torch from Tibetan protesters. Documents he submitted to the Overseas Committee of the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese showed he also organised the anti-Dalai Lama protests during his visit to Australia in 2015.¹⁷

In July 2015, when members of Sydney's Tibetan community staged a protest at the local Chinese consulate, Yang announced on social media that Craig Laundry had issued a statement "strongly condemning the conduct of the thugs who attacked the Chinese consulate in Sydney."

In June 2017, the Australian Financial Review wrote the story, 'Craig Laundry and the China Connection,' which referred to the MP's comment on the Tibetan protesters.

In response to this, ATC launched an online petition, calling on Mr Laundry to meet with the Tibetans to hear their side of the Tibet story. The MP declined ATC's request for a meeting and blamed the media for misquoting him.

AUSTRALIA TIBET COUNCIL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Parliament

- Initiate a vigorous and balanced debate over the many legitimate concerns brought to the fore by the revelations of China's influence on Australian politics.

To the Government

- Launch a full and independent inquiry into Chinese attempts to influence policy and decision-making in Australia.
- Uphold Australia's core values and democratic principles and stand up for the Tibetan people. The Government can demonstrate its support by publicly endorsing the Tibetans' call for freedom and genuine autonomy in Tibet, supporting the Central Tibetan Administration and meeting the Dalai Lama at the highest level.
- Join like-minded governments to initiate visible coordinated diplomatic action on Tibet.

2 CHINA'S INFLUENCE ON UNIVERSITIES AND TIBET

In 2001, a speech at a Tibetology conference by Zhao Qizheng (who was the Minister in charge of the Information Office of China's State Council at the time) was leaked to the outside world.

"External publicity on Tibet is an important element of our country's external propaganda. It is also a very important element of our struggle against the Dalai clique and hostile western forces..."

"Our struggle for the international public opinion will be more rigorous and complicated than ever before. Our external propaganda work on Tibet will be very difficult. Therefore, we must work hard and make improvement."

"Our most important political responsibility is to publicise our work in Tibet and to struggle for international public opinion." ¹⁸

The speech showed how Beijing was prioritising its propaganda work on Tibet as the Dalai Lama's popularity grew in the West.

A BILLION-DOLLAR INDUSTRY

Higher education is Australia's third largest export industry, with the number of international students studying in Australia hitting a new record in 2016. The largest number of international students comes from China, constituting 29.4 per cent of the total population.¹⁹

Have our universities compromised academic integrity as they deepen financial ties with China, where freedom of speech and open inquiry are unwelcome?

While it is difficult to show conclusively that the universities have indeed compromised their core principles, there are many instances to support our concerns. Speaking on condition of anonymity,

one academic told the Australia Tibet Council that those in China studies are expected to tread carefully, as universities' dependence on Chinese student numbers and other forms of funding continue to grow.

"Covert pressure produces self-censorship in the current stressful, insecure academic environment. Specific instances regarding Tibet are hard to pinpoint, partly because it's downplayed as a subject for discussion," the academic said.

Australian universities, in particular the Australian National University, have many acclaimed China scholars. Nonetheless, with a few notable exceptions, few are willing to engage in critical discussions about Tibet. Fear of a backlash from the university management, Chinese scholars and Chinese students has produced a culture of self-censorship.

Another academic on Tibet, again speaking on condition of anonymity, noted the increasing reluctance of Australia's leading universities to host the Dalai Lama or lend their name to any forums that critically examine the Chinese government's policies in Tibet.

Only one Australian university has invited the Dalai Lama to its campus during his past five visits. In 2009, the University of Tasmania invited the Dalai Lama to visit its campus, but cancelled its plan to give him an honorary doctorate. The university, which receives \$30 million a year from Chinese students, was accused of bowing to Chinese pressure.²⁰

The University of Sydney's backflip on the Dalai Lama's public talk is a more recent, if not more outrageous, example of Chinese pressure on an Australian university. The events that followed demonstrated the power of grassroots support for the Dalai Lama. In January 2013, the university authority gave the nod to its Institute for Democracy and Human Rights to host a public lecture by the Dalai Lama during his visit to Australia in June.

In April, the event was cancelled. That same month, the university's Vice-Chancellor Michael Spence had attended the Bo'ao Forum in China's Hainan province, where Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Chinese President Xi Jinping were also present.

The university's China Studies Centre, which works in partnership with China²¹, was also involved in the discussions about the Dalai Lama's lecture.



Rally for the Dalai Lama at Sydney University in 2013.



Professor Stuart Rees at the rally for the Dalai Lama at Sydney University in 2013.

When the issue became public following a media interview with a student from the university, a Tibet supporter involved in hosting the event, the ATC launched an online campaign and Students for a Free Tibet organised a protest on campus. As a result of the public pressure, the university reversed its decision. The Dalai Lama's lecture was reinstated, but with a number of caveats. It was not to be held on campus, the university's logo was not to be used and no media coverage would be allowed.

The university's Vice-Chancellor wrote to the director of the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights following this decision:

*"Thank you so much for your skill in dealing with this situation so effectively and in the best interests of researchers across the university. I think that the negotiated solution meets all the concerns."*²²

CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES

Have cash-strapped Australian universities become an easy target for China's soft power offensive?

Confucius Institutes are a classic example of China's soft power offensive. These institutes, underwritten by the Chinese government and purportedly teaching Chinese language and culture, are designed to present China in a positive light. They have been met with opposition as they threaten the academic freedom within universities.²³ Advocacy groups for Tibetan rights believe the Confucius Institutes are used to shape the global discourse on Tibet.²⁴

According to Hanban, an agency of China's Ministry of Education which operates the Confucius Institutes, there are 500 of these institutes at universities around the world – including 14 in Australia. Hanban also operates 568 Confucius Classrooms in schools worldwide, of which 67 are in Australia. Li Changchun, China's top official in charge of propaganda from 2002 to 2012, called the Confucius Institutes "an important part of China's overseas propaganda set-up."²⁵

Outsourced to China, a report on Confucius Institutes by the US National Association of Scholars, details four main areas of concern:²⁶

1. Intellectual freedom: Hanban policy requires the Confucius Institute to follow Chinese law, including speech codes. Chinese teachers, hired and paid by the Chinese government, face pressures to avoid sensitive topics, such as Tibet, Taiwan and Falun Gong.
2. Transparency: Contracts between the universities and the Hanban on its funding arrangements and hiring policies are often unavailable for public examination.
3. Entanglement: Confucius Institutes are part of a complex system of relationships in China.
4. Soft power: Confucius Institutes tend to promote a positive image of China, avoiding human rights issues whilst presenting Taiwan and Tibet as undisputed territories of China. They aim to nurture students with selective knowledge about China's history and politics.

While explicit rules on discussion of Tibet are hard to find due to lack of transparency, academics who work in a range of western countries and were cited in the report mention Tibet and the Dalai Lama among the list of off-limit topics, along with Taiwan and the Tiananmen Square massacre.

Over the years, China has sent delegations of Tibetologists to countries visited by the Dalai Lama, and hosted events with exiled Tibetans in the US, Australia and the European countries. The purpose of these delegations is to counter the positive attention given to the Dalai Lama and to promote China's narrative on Tibet.

In 2012, the University of Sydney hosted a public lecture on the Dalai Lama's reincarnation, not by a Tibetan expert but by an academic from China. ATC's spokesperson said it was part of China's broader agenda to reshape the global narrative of the Dalai Lama, a popular figure in the west.²⁷

List of Confucius Institutes in Australia

1. University of New South Wales
2. University of Sydney
3. University of Melbourne
4. La Trobe University
5. Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
6. Queensland University of Technology
7. University of Queensland
8. University of Adelaide
9. University of Western Australia
10. Charles Darwin University
11. University of Newcastle
12. Confucius Institute at NSW Department of Education
13. Business Confucius Institute at Victoria University
14. Tourism Confucius Institute at Griffith University

The ACT's global partner, International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), has observed similar trends in the US and Europe. In 2009, North Carolina State University cancelled a public talk by the Dalai Lama, allegedly due to objection from its Confucius Institute. In 2011, the ICT asked a Confucius Institute near Washington for materials on Tibet, only to receive books and DVDs that promote the Chinese narrative on Tibet.

According to China's state news agency Xinhua, books on Tibet published by a Chinese government think tank in Lhasa were distributed to the Confucius Institutes.

CASE STUDIES OF TWO ACADEMICS

Bob Carr, Australian politician-turned-professor

Politician-turned-professor Bob Carr has been known to make claims that Tibet has historically been a part of China. In 2011, Carr posted an article on his blog Thoughtlines titled ‘Don’t Meet This Cunning Monk’ – a piece that has since been deleted. This piece urged Australia’s political leaders not to meet the Dalai Lama. One year later, Carr assumed the role of Australia’s Foreign Minister.²⁸



Bob Carr with Zhu Weiqun, the Dalai Lama’s chief critic, and a Chinese delegation at the Australia China Relations Institute in 2016. Photo: SMH

In 2014, Carr was handpicked by Huang Xiangmo, one of the key Chinese patrons of Australian politics, to head the Australia-China Relations Institute at the University of Technology Sydney.²⁹ Huang’s \$1.8 million donation helped set up the institute, which by its own admission was the first think tank working to give a “positive and optimistic view” of the Australia-China relationship.³⁰

As the director of the Australia-China Relations Institute, Carr frequently meets with visiting officials from the Chinese Communist Party. These meetings are not publicised on the institute’s website, but are widely reported in the Chinese language media.³¹

In 2015, Carr met with Zhu Weiqun, former head of the United Front Work Department’s Tibet section and China’s chief critic of the Dalai Lama. A photo that appeared in People’s Daily, the Chinese Communist Party’s flagship newspaper, shows Carr standing with Zhu. Between the two men was a Tibetan thangka painting. Next to Zhu was a “living Buddha” – a Tibetan-looking man who described Chinese policies in Tibet as an “excellent system that can win over people’s hearts.”³²

Dr James Leibold from Melbourne’s La Trobe University told the Sydney Morning Herald that: “by accepting \$1.8 million from Huang Xiangmo and making him the chairman of the board, ACRI (and by extension UTS) feel obligated to not only host a controversial figure like Zhu Weiqun, but also unwittingly function as a propaganda outlet for the Chinese Communist Party.”

Carr believes it’s not the institute’s role to discuss human rights issues. “We’re not Human Rights Watch or Amnesty International,” he told the Australian newspaper.

Feng Chongyi

While Bob Carr, former Australian Foreign Minister, and the think tank he now heads is seen as unashamedly pro-China, Chinese academic Feng Chongyi, also from the University of Technology Sydney, is a vocal critic of the Chinese Communist Party.



Feng Chongyi.

In March 2017, Feng traveled to China for a research trip, but was stopped from boarding his return flight to Australia. Feng's week-long detention by the Chinese authorities became international headlines. The ATC has learned that during his detention, Feng was interrogated about his connection to the Dalai Lama and his engagement on the Tibet issue.

As a leading figure in Australia's Chinese pro-democracy circles, Feng is well-respected by the Tibetan community. His first contact with the Tibetan government-in-exile was at its Sino-Tibetan conference held in Geneva in 2009. He has since visited Dharamsala in India, the headquarters of Tibet's government-in-exile. In Australia, he has hosted talks for visiting Tibetan leaders and spoken at a panel discussion – China, Australian Universities and the Heavy Price of Censorship – organised by the ATC.

Feng headed China studies at the University of Technology Sydney for 11 years. When the China Research Centre closed in 2014, he applied for a position at the newly-established Australia-China Relations Institute. Feng was rejected and today teaches communications, a topic unrelated to his many decades of scholarship on Chinese politics.³³

AUSTRALIA TIBET COUNCIL'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

We call on Australian universities to:

- Protect their academic integrity by encouraging academics and students to critically examine issues such as Tibet and human rights in China and inviting the Dalai Lama to their campuses.
- Close the Confucius Institutes by choosing not to renew their contracts with the Hanban. Or at the least, introduce reforms that ensure greater transparency about their partnerships and hiring processes at the Confucius Institutes.
- Ensure that the programs at the Confucius Institutes are balanced and free from external pressures. This can include requiring all Confucius Institutes to hold at least one public lecture every year on topics that are relevant to Chinese culture and history but are currently forbidden, such as Tibet, the Dalai Lama, Taiwan and the Tiananmen Square massacre.

3 AUSTRALIA'S TIBETAN COMMUNITY

Australia is home to around 2,000 Tibetans. The majority of them are former political prisoners and their families from Tibet. These former political prisoners are men and women from all walks of life, young and old. They spent many years in prison for merely exercising their fundamental rights and opposing China's repressive policies in Tibet, whether by participating in a protest or writing a political essay. Some were even imprisoned for distributing books about the Dalai Lama in their community.

These Tibetans have come to Australia to seek safety and some use their newfound freedom to advocate for an end to China's occupation of their homeland. But even after moving to a new country, many Tibetans continue to be harassed by the Chinese government. The Chinese embassy attempts to silence their voices by threatening to deny them visas to Tibet to visit their families.

Some of the Tibetans interviewed for this report have revealed that they are required to sign a contentious document to obtain a visa. The Tibetans are forced to admit that leaving Tibet was a mistake and that they had been led astray by the "overseas separatist forces" and to commit that they will refrain from joining political activities and the Tibetan community associations in exile.

One Tibetan activist was granted a visa only after his family in Tibet paid a hefty bond to the local Chinese authorities and promised that he would not undertake any political activity during his visit. Another member of Sydney's Tibetan community was denied a visa because he works as a volunteer teacher at their weekend Tibetan language school. A Tibetan woman was denied a visa because she attended the Dalai Lama's teachings in Sydney, while the visa application of her husband, a caucasian Australian, was approved.

Tibetans wanting to visit their families in Tibet face a difficult choice, as participating in a demonstration in Australia could endanger their chances of obtaining a visa. A member of Sydney's Tibetan community sums up his dilemma: *"I have left Tibet, but I continue to live in fear. If I speak out for my people inside Tibet, I am afraid of the consequences on my family. If I don't speak out, I feel guilty of not using my democratic rights in a free country."*



An activist who enrolled to participate in the Tibet Lobby Day, an annual lobbying program by Australia Tibet Council, received a phone call from the Chinese embassy warning him against taking part in the lobbying day in Canberra.

Many of these Tibetans have refused to yield to the Chinese pressure. Names of the Tibetans interviewed for this report are withheld to protect their safety.

Apart from putting direct pressure on individuals, the Chinese government uses a divide-and-rule strategy to undermine the efforts of Australia's Tibetan community. A group, loosely known as the Tibetan Chinese Friendship Association in Australia, is supported by businesses with ties to the Chinese government. This group, which purportedly builds friendship between Tibetans and Chinese, is designed to create disunity in the local Tibetan community and support the Chinese government's narrative on Tibet. Headed by a handpicked Tibetan man, the group acts as a proxy representative of the Tibetan community for the Chinese embassy, hosts Tibetan cultural events, and welcomes visiting Chinese officials to Australia.

Furthermore, the Tibetan community and the Australia Tibet Council have been targeted by espionage operations that use malware to attempt to infiltrate their online communications and monitor their activities.

Twice in 2017, the Member of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile representing Australia received emails which contained repurposed legitimate information with the aim of enticing recipients to open malicious documents containing malware viruses. Research by the Citizen Lab on the attempt to infiltrate the communication of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile³⁴ validates long held concerns of Australia Tibet Council and other Tibet support groups around the world, for whom cyberattacks are a regular occurrence. The ATC has noticed increasing attacks on its website over the past year.



CONCLUSION

There are both moral and strategic imperatives for Australia to support the Tibetan freedom movement.

The Tibetans' commitment to non-violence is worthy of admiration and respect from the international community. The Dalai Lama's message of peace, compassion, environmental protection and interreligious harmony are critical to addressing the challenges of the 21st century.

A resolution of the Tibet issue is not only a matter of justice; it is squarely in Australia's national interest as it would contribute to stability in the region and to a more peaceful world. Remaining silent is a contradiction of Australian values and principles and diminishes its moral standing.

China's rising influence is not only a threat to the Tibet movement but also a threat to the strength of Australian democracy.

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