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Overview

The Australia-China Relations Institute (UTS:ACRI) is an independent, non-partisan research institute established in 2014 by the University of Technology Sydney. Chinese studies centres exist in other Australian universities. UTS:ACRI, however, is Australia’s first and only research institute devoted to studying the relationship of these countries.

In the past Australia’s dominating economic relationships have been with the British Empire, the United States and Japan. Australia’s most important trading relationship is now with China, a nation very different in governance, politics and values. As China’s economy grows, so too does its strategic weight and the challenges and opportunities this presents to Australia.

UTS:ACRI seeks to inform Australia’s engagement with China through research, analysis and dialogue grounded in scholarly rigour.
The upward trajectory of the relationship between Australia and the People’s Republic of China (PRC) established in 2022 gained greater, though still cautious, momentum in 2023. An increased frequency of high-level dialogue and exchange paved the way for Prime Minister Anthony Albanese’s visit to Shanghai and Beijing in November, the first official trip by an Australian prime minister since 2016. Mr Albanese was joined on the trip by Foreign Minister Penny Wong and Trade Minister Don Farrell.

This successful series of meetings came on the back of Beijing rescinding many of the trade obstructions it imposed on Australian exports, and the release of Cheng Lei, one of the two Australians imprisoned in the PRC on charges related to national security, from detention after three years’ imprisonment. While trade restrictions remain on wine, lobsters and some meat supply establishments, senior Australian government ministers have expressed confidence that these will be removed early in 2024. Even with lingering restrictions, the value of Australian goods exports to the PRC hit a new record, topping $200 billion. The services trade also bounced back after borders reopened following the COVID-19 pandemic. PRC student numbers at Australian universities are already roughly back to pre-pandemic levels, albeit tourism arrivals continue to lag. Both countries have committed to continue strengthening people-to-people relations.

The sum of these developments lend weight to the assertion that the relationship over 2023 progressed towards the Albanese government’s articulated goal of ‘stabilisation’ – a seemingly modest aim made less so by the depths of the trough into which the relationship had plunged over the last seven years, and the increasing precariousness of global circumstances.

While the Australia-PRC bilateral relationship has undergone marked improvement, challenges and structural constraints remain. Worryingly, Australian citizen Yang Hengjun, who has been detained in the PRC for over five years, was given a suspended death sentence on February 5 2024. This constrains movement toward stabilisation in the bilateral relationship, and blunts Beijing’s claim that it wants to see the relationship ‘improve and develop’. Tensions are mounting in the South and East China Seas, concerns regarding the kinetic and non-kinetic threats posed by the PRC continue to grow, and competition in the critical minerals sector is intensifying. While Australia continues to call for the preservation of the cross-Strait status quo, anxieties regarding Beijing’s intentions are becoming more acute. Notwithstanding clear disparities between Canberra and Washington’s positions on ‘decoupling’ and the PRC’s economic integration through regional forums, there continues to be a risk that Australia could face blowback from a heightening of tensions between Washington and Beijing.

The Australia-China Relations Institute at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS:ACRI)
has continued to aspire to bring to light these developments and their implications for Australia by pursuing its core mission: to inform Australia’s engagement with the PRC through research, analysis and dialogue grounded in scholarly rigour.

UTS:ACRI was pleased to receive a grant from the Australian government’s National Foundation for Australia-China Relations to bring together Australian and PRC academic and industry representatives to support Australia–PRC cooperation in green energy. This initiative, led by our Research Principal, Professor Xunpeng Shi, will continue on through the first half of 2024.

In July 2023, UTS:ACRI welcomed Wanning Sun, a Professor of Media and Communication in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at UTS, as Deputy Director. A fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities since 2016, she is currently a member of the Australian Research Council College of Experts. As an academic researcher, Professor Sun is best known for her ethnography of rural-to-urban migration in the PRC, and for her study of transnational and diasporic Chinese media. She has produced a significant body of research on the politics of inequality in the PRC.

We had our most productive year on record, publishing 28 journal articles, 5 book chapters, two major research reports, seven analyses, 94 commentary pieces, one fact sheet and four Perspectives pieces. UTS:ACRI experts also delivered 15 conference presentations. The Institute released the third edition of our annual UTS:ACRI Poll, produced in cooperation with the UTS Business School’s Centre for Business Intelligence & Data Analytics (BIDA). Led by UTS:ACRI Manager, Research Analysis Elena Collinson and BIDA Deputy Director Professor Paul Burke, the Poll continues to strengthen its reputation as the most comprehensive Australian public survey on Australia–PRC relations. And each month UTS:ACRI continued to produce its Australia-China monthly wrap-up, keeping stakeholders and the general public up to date with key developments in the bilateral relationship.

As the Australian federal government implements its critical minerals strategy, UTS:ACRI together with the Australia China Business Council embarked on releasing Critical facts, critical minerals and China: What Australians need to know – a series of thought leadership analysis pieces around the PRC’s historical and potential future involvement in Australia’s critical minerals and rare earths sectors authored by UTS:ACRI’s Associate Professor – Research Marina Zhang and myself.


Complementing these core research endeavours were a variety of events that brought together leading experts and practitioners to discuss topical issues in the Australia–PRC relationship.

In November, UTS:ACRI hosted the Minister of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Liu Jianchao, in an in conversation with–style event to discuss the next stage of the PRC’s development and PRC-Australia relations. The event, Mr Liu’s only public engagement during his visit to Australia, followed meetings with Foreign Minister Wong, Trade Minister Farrell and Opposition Leader Peter Dutton. Mr Liu was the most senior PRC official to have visited Australia since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Earlier in the year, the Institute hosted Treasury Wine Estates CEO Tim Ford in conversation with UTS:ACRI Adjunct Industry Fellow and columnist for The Australian Glenda Korporaal to discuss how the economic links between Australia and the PRC survive amid the headwinds. UTS:ACRI also held events on the PRC’s foreign policy in the post-COVID era, cyber impacts on the US/PRC military balance, the PRC’s strategic culture and its effects on
alliance relationships, first-generation PRC migrants and social cohesion, Australia’s China knowledge capability, decarbonisation efforts in Australia and the PRC and the digital Chinese-language media landscape in Australia, among others.

UTS:ACRI’s stellar productivity was made possible through the efforts of our staff, honorary appointees and industry partners, including China Construction Bank, John Holland, King & Wood Mallesons and MA Financial Group. UTS:ACRI’s research associates now number 33 and continue to grow, representing academics in UTS faculties and institutes across a variety of disciplines. We are also grateful to the UTS:ACRI Management Committee and Advisory Board who continued their indispensable contributions through providing oversight, feedback and suggestions. We would like to express particular gratitude to our outgoing Advisory Board members Rowan Callick, Clinton Dines, Jane Golley, Peter Osborne, Richard Rigby, Wanning Sun, Merriden Varrall and Garry Willinge for their valuable insights and counsel.

We look forward to watching the ‘stabilisation’ dynamic unfolding and continuing to produce a broad suite of research and events in 2024.

Professor James Laurenceson
Director, UTS:ACRI
Our People

James Laurenceson
Director

Elena Collinson
Manager, Research Analysis

Ethan Pooley
Administrative Assistant

Wanning Sun
Deputy Director
(commenced July 2023)

Ming Liang
Institute Officer

Xunpeng Shi
Research Principal

Corey Lee Bell
Project and Research Officer

Amy Ma
Events and Communications Officer

Marina Yue Zhang
Associate Professor – Research
UTS:ACRI’s Management Committee monitors the Institute’s activities and performance, and approves the budget and strategic direction of UTS:ACRI’s research and other programs.

The Management Committee is headed by UTS Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International) Iain Watt and comprises Professor Glenn Wightwick, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Innovation and Enterprise); Associate Professor Grace Li, UTS Faculty of Law; Associate Professor Dongbin Wei, UTS Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology; and Professor James Laurenceson, UTS:ACRI Director.
Advisory Board

The role of the UTS:ACRI’s Advisory Board is to provide advice for the UTS:ACRI Management Committee’s consideration.

**Professor Wanning Sun**
(Acting Chair of the UTS:ACRI Advisory Board to May 2023)

Wanning Sun is a Professor of Media and Communication in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at UTS. She is a specialist in a number of areas, including Chinese media and cultural studies; rural-to-urban migration and social change in contemporary China; and soft power, public diplomacy and diasporic Chinese media. She is the author of three single-authored monographs: *Leaving China: Media, Migration, and Transnational Imagination* (2002); *Maid in China: Media, Morality, and the Cultural Politics of Boundaries* (2009); and *Subaltern China: Rural Migrants, Media, and Cultural Practices* (2014).

**Mr Clinton Dines**
(to May 2023)

Mr Clinton Dines is the Non-Executive Director of the Port of Newcastle, Freedom Road Travel and Fonterra Cooperative Group Limited. He served as the President of BHP Billiton China from 2001 to 2009. He has extensive frontline operational and commercial management positions in China and was BHP Billiton’s senior country executive in China for 21 years. He also held senior positions at Jardine Matheson Group, Santa Fe Transport Group and Asia Securities Venture Capital.

**Mr Rowan Callick OBE**
(to May 2023)

Author and columnist Rowan Callick worked for almost 20 years for *The Australian Financial Review (AFR)*, finally as Asia Pacific Editor. He was China Correspondent for the *AFR*, based in Hong Kong, from 1996-2000. He worked for *The Australian* from the start of 2006 until mid-2018, twice serving as China Correspondent in Beijing, and also as Asia-Pacific Editor. He continues to write regularly for the newspaper. He was awarded an OBE in 2015 for services to journalism and to the training of PNG journalists.

**Professor Jane Golley**
(to May 2023)

Professor Jane Golley is a Professor at the Crawford School of Public Policy at the Australian National University. Her research has covered a wide range of Chinese transition and development issues, including industrial agglomeration and regional policy; demographic change and economic growth; household consumption and carbon dioxide emissions, and rural-urban inequalities in education. Professor Golley has published a book on *The Dynamics of Chinese Regional Development: Market Nature, State Nurture*. 
Ms Renae Lattey

Renae Lattey is the Chief Executive Partner, Australia for King & Wood Mallesons. Prior to her appointment, Ms Lattey was the Managing Partner, Clients and Mergers & Acquisitions. Before her time in management, Renae had established a strong international profile having acted for major telecommunications clients throughout the Asia Pacific, particularly on projects in Singapore, Malaysia and New Zealand as well as in UK and Europe. Her work included advice to regional governments on World Bank telecommunications projects in developing countries and advising international communications providers on the Australian regulatory environment.

Mr Peter Osborne

From 2009 to February 2020 Mr Osborne was Managing Director Asia for Blackmores Limited, Australia’s leading ASX listed natural healthcare company. Mr Osborne was responsible for the overall strategy for Blackmores’ growth objectives in Asia. Prior to working for Blackmores, Mr Osborne was Australia’s most senior trade diplomat in China as the Minister (Commercial) and Austrade’s Country Manager for China in the Australian Embassy Beijing. Mr Osborne also previously held Australia’s Senior Trade Commissioner positions in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Taipei.

Professor James Laurenceson

Professor James Laurenceson is Director of the Australia-China Relations Institute at UTS. He has previously held appointments at the University of Queensland (Australia), Shandong University (China) and Shimonoseki City University (Japan). He was President of the Chinese Economics Society of Australia from 2012-2014. His academic research has been published in leading scholarly journals including China Economic Review and China Economic Journal. Professor Laurenceson also provides regular commentary on contemporary developments in China’s economy and the Australia-China economic relationship.

Professor Richard Rigby

(to May 2023)

Professor Richard Rigby is an Emeritus Professor in the College of Asia and the Pacific at the Australian National University. Professor Rigby joined Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs in 1975, where he worked until the end of 2001: postings included Tokyo, Beijing (twice), Shanghai (Consul-General 1994–1998), London, and Israel (Ambassador, 2000–2001). He then joined the Office of National Assessments as Assistant Director-General, responsible for North and South Asia. He was also the Founding Director of the ANU China Institute and Associate Director of the Australian Centre on China in the World.
Dr Merriden Varrall
(to May 2023)

Dr Merriden Varrall is Director of the Australia Geopolitics Hub at KPMG, where she provides business-relevant insights into global, regional and local geopolitical trends. From 2014-2018, Dr Varrall was the Director of the Lowy Institute’s East Asia Program, where she is a non-resident fellow. Before joining the Institute, Dr Varrall was the Assistant Country Director and Senior Policy Advisor at United Nations Development Programme, China. Prior to that she worked for the Australian Government Treasury and the Department of Family and Community Services.

Dr Garry Willinge

Dr Garry Willinge is Managing Director of Cbridge Limited (HK), a management consulting, corporate advisory, capital markets and leadership development firm. He has interests in companies across a number of sectors around the world and facilitated early stage companies’ growth, IPO and exits. He is an Adjunct Professor of Business Studies at Curtin University in Australia and previously served a full term of nine years on the Advisory Board of Curtin Business School. In November 2013, he received an honorary degree of Doctor of Technology from Curtin University.
Honorary Appointments

Through its honorary appointments program, UTS:ACRI values its engagement with research, educational and industry partners.

UTS:ACRI honorary appointments are made in line with the UTS Honorary Titles and Awards Policy. Adjunct academic titles are awarded to academics from other universities on the basis of their achievements and expertise.

Adjunct industry titles are awarded on the basis of expertise and recognition in business, public sector, not-for-profit, professional or cultural communities.

Emeritus Professors

Professor David Goodman
Professor of Chinese Politics,
University of Sydney

Adjunct Professors

Professor Greg Austin
China cyber and strategic policy expert

Professor Louise Edwards
Emeritus Professor of Chinese History, School of Humanities and Languages, University of New South Wales; Honorary Professor, School of Modern Languages and Cultures, University of Hong Kong

Professor Mark Beeson
Professor of International Politics,
University of Western Australia

Professor Greg McCarthy
Former BHP Chair of Australian Studies, Peking University

Professor Jocelyn Chey AM
Former Australian Consul General to Hong Kong

Professor Guanghua Wan
Director, Institute of World Economy, Fudan University

Dr Michael Clarke
Senior Lecturer, Centre for Future Defence and National Security, Canberra, Deakin University

Professor Tao Xie
Dean, School of International Relations and Diplomacy, Beijing Foreign Studies University
Adjunct Associate Professors

Dr James Cheong
Associate Professor, Hang Seng University of Hong Kong

Professor Junji Xiao
Associate Professor, Lingnan University of Hong Kong

Dr Chengxin Pan
Associate Professor of Political Science, Department of Government and Public Administration, University of Macau

Dr Jingdong Yuan
Associate Professor, Department of Government and International Relations, University of Sydney; Associate Senior Fellow, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

Adjunct Industry Fellows

Mr Murray Davis
Trade and Investment Commissioner – Greater China, New South Wales Government

Ms Glenda Korporaal OAM
Writer and columnist, The Australian

Adjunct Fellows

Mr Kevin Magee
Former Australian Ambassador and senior Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade official

Mr Muyi Yang
Senior Electricity Policy Analyst, Ember

Visiting Fellows

Dr Pei Duan
Associate Professor and Master Tutor, Shanxi University of Finance and Economics

Ms Yun Jiang
AIIA China Matters Fellow
**Visiting Scholars**

UTS:ACRI maintains an active visiting academic program. Visitors are PhD students from other institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institute</th>
<th>Research Topic</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Duration (Months)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Xianneng Ai</td>
<td>Beijing Institute of Technology</td>
<td>Energy and environmental economics</td>
<td>01/06/2022</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Ming Chen</td>
<td>Beijing Institute of Technology</td>
<td>Economic cost and strategic choice for the achievement of carbon neutrality in China</td>
<td>17/04/2023</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Xi Chen</td>
<td>East China Normal University</td>
<td>China-Australia Antarctic cooperation</td>
<td>10/11/2023</td>
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<td>Qin Li</td>
<td>Beihang University</td>
<td>Climate change policy</td>
<td>01/06/2022</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Jingqi Mao</td>
<td>China University of Mining and Technology</td>
<td>Forecasting and regulation of coal power overcapacity based on multi-source heterogeneous data</td>
<td>22/09/2023</td>
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<td>Shengpeng Wang</td>
<td>East China Normal University</td>
<td>The reshaping of global innovation patterns and China’s strategic response in the context of unprecedented changes witnessed over a century</td>
<td>01/11/2023</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Yadong Wang</td>
<td>China University of Mining and Technology</td>
<td>Energy system engineering</td>
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<td>Qi Wei</td>
<td>China University of Petroleum</td>
<td>Natural gas market</td>
<td>12/10/2022</td>
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<td>Yibo Zong</td>
<td>Renmin University of China</td>
<td>Stranded assets in China: Regional heterogeneity and economic impact</td>
<td>16/11/2023</td>
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Research Associates

Dr Lai-Ha Chan  
UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Dr Peter Choi  
UTS Faculty of Science

Associate Professor Dana Cordell  
UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures

Dr Camille Dickson-Deane  
UTS Science

Dr Kamal Dua  
UTS Health

Associate Professor Michael Fabinyi  
UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Professor Youguang Guo  
UTS Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology

Professor Tim Harcourt  
UTS Institute for Public Policy and Governance

Associate Professor Colin Hawes  
UTS Faculty of Law

Adjunct Professor Philip Hayward  
UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Dr Keith Heggart  
UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Associate Professor Christina Ho  
UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Emeritus Professor Andrew Jakubowicz  
UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Associate Professor Yongjian Ke  
UTS Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building

Dr Brent Keogh  
UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Associate Professor Susie Khamis  
UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Dr Soojin Kim  
UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Associate Professor Grace Li  
UTS Faculty of Law

Associate Professor Fion Lim  
UTS Learning Centre (SILC)

Associate Professor Zhen Luo  
UTS Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology

Associate Professor Shiko Maruyama  
UTS Business School

Associate Professor Ofer Mintz  
UTS Business School

Professor Michele Rumsey  
UTS Health

Associate Professor Song Shi  
UTS Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building

Associate Professor Natalie Stoianoff  
UTS Faculty of Law

Professor Kathy Walsh  
UTS Business School

Associate Professor Jianxin Wang  
UTS Business School

Associate Professor Dongbin Wei  
UTS Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology

Professor Stuart White  
UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures

Associate Professor Jingqing Yang  
UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Associate Professor Yang Yang  
UTS Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology

Dr Litao Yu  
UTS Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology

Dr Yi Zhang  
UTS Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology
Research Grants Program

UTS:ACRI offers a research grants program to support the development of research by academics in UTS faculties and institutes across a variety of disciplines that will help inform Australia-China relations.

In 2023, two recipients were awarded UTS:ACRI research grants.

- **Associate Professor Song Shi**, UTS Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building, *The competitiveness and barriers of Chinese agents in the Australian housing market*

- **Professor Wanning Sun**, UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, *News consumption and belonging: Australian media coverage of China and Mandarin-speaking first-generation migrants in Australia*

Grant applications undergo strict and rigorous assessment by the UTS:ACRI Grants Assessment Committee. The Committee is comprised of academics with extensive experience and research credentials.
Institute Operating Principles

UTS:ACRI is a UTS entity providing rigorous and independent scholarly research and evidence-based analysis of the highest quality to key stakeholders in the Australia-China relationship, including the Australian public.

UTS:ACRI’s day to day activities and the strategic actions of the Management Committee and Members are bound by UTS policies and procedures relating to academic integrity, independence and transparency.

Key UTS policy instruments relating to the work of UTS:ACRI include:

- Code of Conduct
- Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression
- Academic Integrity
- Industry Advisory
- Gifts and Benefits
- Honorary Titles and Awards
- Research Policy

All policies are available via UTS Governance online at: <https://www.uts.edu.au/about/uts-governance/policies/uts-policy>. 
Funding

UTS contributions $1,330,073.08
81 percent of UTS:ACRI’s funding in 2023 was derived from contributions by the University of Technology Sydney.

External contributions $306,570.58
19 percent of UTS:ACRI’s funding in 2023 was derived from external contributions by the Australian government, the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, China Matters, industry supporters and community contributions.

Grants
Project and research grants were awarded by the National Foundation for Australia-China Relations, an Australian government initiative, and the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia.

Industry support
Industry contributions were received from China Construction Bank, John Holland, King & Wood Mallesons and MA Financial Group.

China Matters/UTS:ACRI Fellowship
A contribution was received from China Matters, an Australian policy institute, to establish the China Matters/UTS:ACRI Fellowship, commencing 2024.

Community contributions
Community contributions were received from UTS’ donations program.

*UTS:ACRI receives funding from external contributors to support its mission to inform Australia’s engagement with the PRC through research, analysis and dialogue grounded in scholarly rigour. External contributors do not provide strategic direction nor do they shape or influence UTS:ACRI’s research and other programs.*

Total income $1,636,643.66
Research and Analysis
Overview

Research is the basis on which UTS:ACRI seeks to inform Australia’s engagement with the PRC. By uncovering facts and deepening understanding though undertaking and supporting evidence-based analysis, UTS:ACRI research serves to promote sound public and private sector decision-making, as well as raising the level of Australia-China relations literacy amongst the general public.

Traditional academic output such as scholarly journal articles and conference papers are complemented by a flow of research reports, polls, fact sheets, briefs and commentary pieces that explore contemporary developments.

The analysis and conclusions in these publications are formulated independently by their authors. UTS:ACRI does not take an institutional position on any issue.

In 2023 UTS:ACRI staff published:

- **28** Journal Articles
- **15** Conference Presentations
- **1** Factsheet
- **5** Book Chapters
- **1** Government Submission
- **1** Poll
- **11** Monthly Wrap-ups
- **4** Perspectives Series Pieces
- **94** Commentary Pieces
- **2** Research Reports
- **7** Analyses

(see Media and Commentary for a full list)
Journal Articles


Michał Wojewódzki, Yigan Wei, Tsun Se Cheong and Xunpeng Shi, 2023. ‘Urbanisation, agriculture and convergence of carbon emissions nexus: Global distribution dynamics analysis’, *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 385: 135697.


An Pan, Yaoyao Qin, Han Li, Wenna Zhang and Xunpeng Shi, 2023. ‘Can environmental information disclosure attract FDI? Evidence from PITI project’, *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 403: 136861.


Song Shi and Xunpeng Shi, 2023. ‘The impact of Chinese regulation of limitation on currency transactions (LCT) on Sydney housing prices’, *Housing Studies*. 


Qin Zhang, Li Xu, Keying Wang and Xunpeng Shi, 2023. ‘What effect did the Green Credit Policy have on China’s energy or emission intensive firms?’, International Journal of Emerging Markets, 18 (9): 2363-2382


Book Chapters


Polling

**UTS:ACRI/BIDA Poll 2023: Australian views on the Australia-China relationship**
July 11 2023

Now in its third year, the UTS:ACRI/BIDA Poll 2023 led by UTS:ACRI Manager, Research Analysis Elena Collinson and Deputy Director of the Centre for Business Intelligence & Data Analytics at UTS, Professor Paul Burke, takes the Australian public’s pulse on prominent aspects of, and recent events pertinent to, the Australia-China relationship. Through so doing it hopes to build a better understanding of the relationship’s immediate past as well as the trends which may shape its future.

It examines how views have changed over the years since the inaugural 2021 poll. It also tracks opinions in relation to five demographic areas: age groups, state/territory of residence, education, geographical location (urban or rural) and which political party the respondent nominated as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy.

This year’s results reflect the view that the Australia-China relationship has made progress towards stabilisation, but aspirations for the future of the relationship continue to lie alongside apprehension and anxiety.
Inside the tent: Bob Hawke’s ringside seat to China’s reforms, Beijing 1986
May 12 2023

Drawing on new documents released from the National Archives of Australia, Professor James Curran, Professor of Modern History at Sydney University and International Editor at *The Australian Financial Review*, reflects on Bob Hawke’s visit to Beijing in May 1986.

The report features four parts. Section 1 establishes the context. It argues that the significance of the visit can only be understood against the backdrop of the development of Australia–PRC relations over the preceding decade, the extent of – and limits to – the PRC’s economic reforms under Deng Xiaoping and Bob Hawke’s approach to Australian foreign policy, in particular his appreciation of where the PRCs modernisation fitted into the broader narrative of the Asian economic growth story of the 1980s. Section 2 offers an analysis of Hawke’s discussions with PRC leaders, placing these exchanges within the setting of what some historians have called the ‘golden age’ of Chinese reform and openness. Section 3 explores the foreign policy dimension of the visit and Section 4 the visit’s meaning for the bilateral relationship. A conclusion attempts to identify the overall significance of the visit for both countries.
First-generation PRC migrants and social cohesion: Views on news about the PRC and Chinese-Australians
August 30 2023

FIRST-GENERATION PRC MIGRANTS AND SOCIAL COHESION: VIEWS ON NEWS ABOUT THE PRC AND CHINESE-AUSTRIANS

Author Wanning Sun, UTS:ACRI Deputy Director and Professor of Media and Communication in the UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, investigates responses and reactions by first-generation Mandarin-speaking migrants in Australia from the People’s Republic of China (PRC) to news stories about the PRC and about Chinese-Australian communities in English-language Australian digital, print, television and other media.

Drawing on three focus groups, a quantitative survey of 689 respondents and 20 in-depth interviews, this report seeks to understand the implications of these first-generation migrants’ views on news reporting for social cohesion in Australia.
Conference Presentations

Marina Zhang, Mark Dodgson and David Gann, ‘Entrepreneurship in innovation ecosystems: Evidence from China’s spatial cluster and digital platform ecosystems’, presented at the wISE Scholarship in Oceania Conference, Macquarie University Business School (MQBS) and Strategic Management (STR) Division, March 23 2023.

Marina Zhang, ‘China’s catch-up in electric vehicles: A meso-level perspective’, presented at the wISE Scholarship in Oceania Conference, Macquarie University Business School (MQBS) and Strategic Management (STR) Division, March 24 2023.


James Laurenceson, ‘Australia’s approach to relations with China: The enduring frame of liberalism’, presented at One Troubled Relationship, Many IR Theories: Understanding Australia–China Relations and Beyond, Centre for Governance and Public Policy (CGPP), Griffith University, July 17 2023.

James Laurenceson, ‘Australia–China relations: Moving beyond the ‘lowest ebb?’’, presented at the Queen’s Club, Sydney, August 8 2023.


Monthly Wrap-ups

The Australia-China monthly wrap-up is a concise monthly summary and analysis of major developments in the Australia-China relationship.

- Elena Collinson and Corey Lee Bell, *Australia-China monthly wrap-up: January 2023*, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, February 8 2023.
- Elena Collinson and Corey Lee Bell, *Australia-China monthly wrap-up: February 2023*, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, March 10 2023.
- Elena Collinson and Corey Lee Bell, *Australia-China monthly wrap-up: March 2023*, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, April 6 2023.
- Elena Collinson and Corey Lee Bell, *Australia-China monthly wrap-up: April 2023*, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, May 15 2023.
- Elena Collinson and Corey Lee Bell, *Australia-China monthly wrap-up: May 2023*, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, June 16 2023.
- Elena Collinson and Corey Lee Bell, *Australia-China monthly wrap-up: June 2023*, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, July 21 2023.
- Elena Collinson and Corey Lee Bell, *Australia-China monthly wrap-up: July 2023*, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, August 24 2023.
- Elena Collinson and Corey Lee Bell, *Australia-China monthly wrap-up: August 2023*, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, September 14 2023.
- Elena Collinson and Corey Lee Bell, *Australia-China monthly wrap-up: September 2023*, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, October 10 2023.
- Elena Collinson, *Australia-China monthly wrap-up: October 2023*, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, November 18 2023.
Perspectives

Perspectives is UTS:ACRI’s commentary series, featuring a piece on a topical subject in the Australia-China relationship from an invited expert contributor.

- Corey Lee Bell and Elena Collinson, The Defence Strategic Review: What about commerce warfare?, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, April 27 2023.
- Yun Jiang, Australian public opinion on the PRC: Complexities, contradictions and lessons for policymakers, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, July 17 2023.
- Kevin Magee, Is stabilising the relationship with the PRC enough?, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, November 13 2023.
- Kevin Magee, Taiwan’s presidential election: Ramifications for Australia, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, November 20 2023.
Analyses

• Ethan Pooley and James Laurenceson, *Australian government support for research collaboration with the PRC*, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, July 17 2023.


• Michael Clarke, *AUKUS, the Defence Strategic Review and Australia’s quest for deterrence*, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, October 30 2023.

• Michael Clarke, *Australia’s post-DSR posture and US ‘integrated deterrence’: A road to nowhere?*, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, November 6 2023.

• Michael Clarke, *Australian defence strategy, deterrence and the PRC’s military posture*, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, November 14 2023.

• Michael Clarke, *The good, the bad and the ugly: Australian defence and strategic policy in an uncertain future*, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, December 6 2023.


Factsheets

• Elena Collinson and Ethan Pooley, *The Australia-PRC trade and investment relationship: 2022 timeline*, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, September 4 2023.

Government Submissions

Media and Commentary
Overview

UTS:ACRI experts continued to make in-depth contributions to analysis of Australia-PRC relations in the media, providing comment on foreign policy and security, trade and investment, the clean energy transition, innovation, politics and society. UTS:ACRI research also continued to be reported on. Expert comment and coverage of UTS:ACRI research featured in a wide range of Australian and international media outlets, including:


UTS:ACRI experts also published a steady flow of commentary pieces in media outlets, subject-specific publications and policy forums in Australia and overseas.
Commentary Pieces


Wanning Sun, ‘Don’t mention the war’: China and Japan’s diplomatic row and history’s long arm’, Crikey, February 16 2023.


Corey Lee Bell and Elena Collinson, ‘Will the decision on Bougainville’s independence rupture Australia’s Pacific family?’, 9Dashline, February 27 2023.


James Laurenceson, ‘Aukus isn’t enough to secure the region’s prosperity – there is still much more work to be done’, The Guardian, March 18 2023.

Wanning Sun, ‘TikTok bans could be the canary in the coalmine for global economic and technological fractures’, Crikey, April 14 2023.


Corey Lee Bell and Elena Collinson, ‘Taiwan’s presidential trips show its marginalisation in debates about its future’, Australian Outlook, Australian Institute of International Affairs, April 18 2023.

Wanning Sun, ‘Fortunes of war: Why the Australian media won’t change how it writes about China’, Crikey, April 20 2023.

Marina Zhang, ‘Chinese tech dominance more myth than reality’, East Asia Forum, April 21 2023.

Marina Zhang, ‘Rising tides, shifting sands: Rethinking Australia’s foreign policy towards China’, Australian Outlook, Australian Institute of International Affairs, April 21 2023.

Corey Lee Bell, ‘Prospects for an Australian defence industry fund’, The Diplomat, April 22 2023.


Corey Lee Bell, ‘Taiwan’s 2024 presidential election candidates: What will Hou or Lai’s election mean for tensions across the Taiwan strait?’, Taiwan Insight, Taiwan Studies Programme, University of Nottingham, June 6 2023.


Marina Zhang, ‘Global lithium supply and Australia’s role’, Australian Outlook, Australian Institute of International Affairs, June 15 2023.


James Laurenceson, ‘They want our lithium, we want their cars. No, we’re not decoupling from China’, The Sydney Morning Herald, June 22 2023. (Reprint: ‘The resurgence of China–Australia trade’, Insights, Asialink, University of Melbourne).


Haiqing Yu and Wanning Sun, ‘Who leads and brokers opinion on Australia’s WeChat’, East Asia Forum, July 8 2023.

Wanning Sun, ‘What is this thing called the ‘national interest’?’, Crikey, July 14 2023.


Wanning Sun, ‘Australia may ban WeChat – but for many Chinese Australians, it’s their ‘lifeline’’, The Conversation, July 21 2023. (Reprints: ‘Australia may ban WeChat – but for many Chinese Australians, it’s their lifeline’, ABC News, July 22 2023; ‘分析：澳洲或将禁止微信 但它是许多华人的生命线 [Analysis: Australia may ban WeChat, but it is a lifeline for many Chinese]’, ABC中文, July 26 2023).

Mark Beeson, ‘Australian foreign policy is traditionally hitched to the US – but the rise of China requires a middle path for a middle power’, The Conversation, August 1 2023.


Greg Austin, ‘The US navy is still more powerful than China’s: More so than the Australian government is letting on’, *The Conversation*, August 18 2023.


Wanning Sun, ‘More work to do: How Chinese-Australians perceive coverage of themselves and China in Australian media’, *The Conversation*, August 30 2023. (Reprinted in other outlets, including *SBS Chinese*, and *South China Morning Post*).


James Laurenceson, ‘Australia’s not likely to catch a cold, just a sniffle from China’s economic downturn’, *The Conversation*, September 7 2023.


Marina Zhang, ‘China’s new anti-espionage law is sending a chill through foreign corporations and citizens alike’, *The Conversation*, September 27 2023.

Marina Zhang, ‘Australia and Indonesia should better their battery cooperation’, *East Asia Forum*, October 4 2023.


Wanning Sun, ‘The one word that captures the pulse of urban China’, *Crikey*, October 18 2023.

Corey Lee Bell, ‘Australia should support Japan and South Korea’s accession into AUKUS’, *The Diplomat*, October 19 2023.


Xunpeng Shi and Yifan Shen, ‘Bifurcation in the critical minerals market could throw off the global energy transition’, The Diplomat, November 7 2023.

James Laurenceson and Michael Clarke, ‘The Coalition risks the general’s lament, of fighting the last war over China policy’, The Interpreter, Lowy Institute, November 10 2023.


Wanning Sun, ‘What does ‘national interest’ mean when it comes to Labor’s China policy?’, Crikey, November 15 2023.

Wanning Sun, ‘Is a re-set likely in our media’s China coverage?’, Pearls and Irritations, November 21 2023.


Marina Zhang, ‘China shifts to electric overdrive as Mitsubishi takes the off-ramp’, East Asia Forum, November 29 2023.

Marina Zhang, ‘Australia, Indonesia aim to challenge China’s dominance in EVs and batteries’, The Diplomat, December 2 2023.


Wanning Sun, ‘Is AUKUS a blessing or a curse for Australian universities?’, Crikey, December 7 2023.


Events
Overview

In 2023, UTS:ACRI continued to deliver a program of high-quality events, hosting 13 events including public addresses, panel discussions and roundtables, delivered in-person and online.

Events List

Australia-China relations in 2023: Beyond ‘stabilisation’?, February 9 2023, UTS:ACRI and online

To start the new year, UTS:ACRI hosted a panel discussion with Ms Linda Jakobson, Founding Director and Deputy Chair, China Matters and Senior Advisor, China Office of Finnish Industries; Professor James Laurenceson, UTS:ACRI Director; and Professor Guanghua Wan, UTS:ACRI Adjunct Professor and Director, Institute of World Economy, Fudan University, who joined journalist and broadcaster Ms Geraldine Doogue AO, host of ABC Radio National’s Extra and Saturday Extra, to discuss the outlook for the relationship between Australia and the PRC and the PRC’s foreign policy and economy in 2023.
The ninth ISETS energy transition forum, February 23 2023, online

UTS:ACRI, in partnership with the Energy Studies Institute at the National University of Singapore, co-hosted the Ninth Energy Transition Forum organised by the International Society for Energy Transition Studies (ISETS). This forum brought together experts to examine the benefits and impact of closer cooperation between the PRC, Australia and ASEAN countries in the clean energy supply chain. From the challenges facing each country in achieving their decarbonisation targets, to the opportunities for collaboration on the global stage, this forum provided a comprehensive look at the future of clean energy in Asia.

The speakers included Professor Xunpeng Shi, UTS:ACRI Research Principal and President, ISETS; Dr Marina Yue Zhang, UTS:ACRI Associate Professor – Research; Mr Anthony Coles, Chair, Net Zero Working Group, Australia-China Business Council; Ms Ravenna Chen, APAC Regional CEO, TusStar; Mr Beni Suryadi, Manager, ASEAN Centre for Energy; Dr Muyi Yang, UTS:ACRI researcher and Senior Electricity Analyst, Ember; and Dr Yao Lixia, Senior Research Fellow, Energy Studies Institute, National University of Singapore.
Digital Chinese-language media in Australia: Impact, influence and insights, March 29 2023, online

UTS:ACRI, in partnership with the UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Science’s School of Communication, hosted a webinar with expert observers and practitioners to tease out the complexities of the digital Chinese-language media landscape in Australia. Panellists approached these issues from a range of perspectives – industry, business models, media profession, policy, regulation, as well as media content and narratives.

Professor Wanning Sun, UTS:ACRI Advisory Board member and Professor of Media and Communication Studies at UTS and, and Professor Haiqing Yu, Vice-Chancellor’s Principal Research Fellow, RMIT University, delivered a presentation on their recently released book *Digital Transnationalism: Chinese-Language Media in Australia* (Brill, 2023), before joining a panel with Mr Leo Lian, Director and Founder, Lion Media Group, and Mr Bang Xiao, Supervising Producer, ABC Chinese, moderated by Professor Fran Martin, Reader in Cultural Studies, University of Melbourne.

Boosting Australia’s China knowledge capability, April 19 2023, online

This UTS:ACRI webinar explored the current state and future needs of Australia’s China knowledge and research ecology that had recently been examined in *Australia’s China Knowledge Capability*, a report by the Australian Academy of Humanities, funded by the National Foundation for Australia-China Relations. Professor Louise Edwards, UTS:ACRI Adjunct Professor and a member of the report’s Advisory Group; Ms Ciara Morris, report co-author and Editor, China Policy; and Dr Yu Tao, Senior Lecturer in Chinese Studies, University of Western Australia, discussed and contextualised the key findings of the report on a panel moderated by Professor Anne McLaren, Professor in Chinese Studies, Asia Institute, University of Melbourne.

The panel discussed the state and trajectory of China knowledge capabilities in Australia, some of the underlying causes for current weaknesses in this critical capability and potential pathways for improvements. The latter included recommendations covering planning, funding, coordination between business, government and universities, and student incentivisation.
In conversation with Treasury Wine Estates CEO Tim Ford, May 16 2023, UTS Business School and online

UTS:ACRI, in partnership with the UTS Business School, hosted Mr Tim Ford, Chief Executive Officer of Treasury Wine Estates (TWE), in conversation with Ms Glenda Korporaal, UTS:ACRI Adjunct Industry Fellow and columnist for The Australian. Mr Ford discussed his experiences with the PRC, having recently returned from his first visit in three years. During the discussion attention was given to topics including TWE’s PRC strategy, the impact of Beijing’s decision to impose crippling tariffs on Australian wine imports, the company’s current presence in the PRC and its plans for the PRC market moving forward.
Book launch – ‘The Chinese Corporate Ecosystem’, May 30 2023, UTS Law School and online

UTS:ACRI, in partnership with the UTS Law Faculty’s Private Law and Beyond Interest Group, hosted the launch of *The Chinese Corporate Ecosystem* (Cambridge University Press, 2022) by Associate Professor Colin Hawes, UTS:ACRI Research Associate and A/Professor in the UTS Faculty of Law. A/Professor Hawes delivered a presentation on the book’s key findings, noting that in contrast to common perceptions of a top-down political economy in the PRC, wherein Beijing has a pervasive influence in the corporate world, his findings indicated that the ecosystem of the latter is in reality fragmented, and the central government’s control over corporations, including state-owned corporations, faced a number of limitations.

Cyber impacts on the US/PRC military balance, July 6 2023, online

Dr Greg Austin, UTS:ACRI Adjunct Professor and China cyber and strategic policy expert, and Ms Caitríona Heinl, Executive Director, Azure Forum for Contemporary Security Strategy, delivered presentations on the current state of play and near future for the power balance between the US and the PRC in relation to military cyber capability, before participating in a panel discussion moderated by Dr Marina Yue Zhang, UTS:ACRI Associate Professor – Research.

The panellists discussed the advantages of the US and its allies over the PRC in the build-up of cyber military assets, the use of cyber campaigns alongside traditional warfare strategies, lessons in cyber military capability from the Russia-Ukraine war, and the importance of stabilising US-PRC relations amid escalating geopolitical tensions.
The PRC’s strategic culture and its effects on alliance relationships, July 13 2023, UTS:ACRI

This seminar, hosted by UTS:ACRI and the UTS Asia Pacific Research Group, featured a presentation by Dr Catherine Jones, Lecturer in International Relations, University of St Andrews, on the strategic culture of the PRC, how this strategic culture informs US alliance relationships in the Indo-Pacific and the implications for the foreign policy practice of countries such as Australia.
First-generation PRC migrants and social cohesion - Report launch, September 7 2023, online

The key findings of a new UTS:ACRI report, *First-generation PRC migrants and social cohesion: Views on news about the PRC and Chinese-Australians* were discussed by a panel comprising report author Professor Wanning Sun, UTS:ACRI Deputy Director; Dr Jimmy Li, President, Chinese Community Council of Australia – Victoria Chapter (CCCAV); and Dr James O’Donnell, Lecturer, College of Arts and Social Sciences, Australian National University, with Professor Monica Attard OAM, Co-Director of the Centre For Media Transition, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at UTS, moderating proceedings. The Hon Professor Verity Firth AM, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Social Justice and Inclusion) UTS, delivered opening remarks.

The panel discussed the key findings of the report, providing their views on the accuracy, fairness and balance of Australian English-language media reporting on the PRC and Chinese-Australians; the level of mutual trust between PRC Mandarin-speaking migrants and Australia’s English-language media; and the correlation between these migrants’ consumption of Australian English-language media and their senses of inclusion, acceptance and belonging.

The PRC’s foreign policy in the post-COVID era: Implications for Australia, November 9 2023, UTS Business School and online

UTS:ACRI in partnership with China Matters hosted a panel discussion comprising Professor James Laurenceson, Director of UTS:ACRI; Ms Linda Jakobson, Founding Director and Deputy Chair, China Matters and Senior Advisor, China Office of Finnish Industries; and Ms Yun Jiang, UTS:ACRI Visiting Fellow and AIIA China Matters Fellow, with Mr Samuel Yang, co-host of *China Tonight* on ABC TV, moderating proceedings.

Panellists discussed the PRC’s evolving foreign policy, how Australia watchers in the PRC now think about Australia-PRC relations and how much ballast there is in the current positive trajectory in the bilateral relationship. Mr Kevin McCann AO, Chair, China Matters Board, delivered opening remarks.

This event was hosted by UTS:ACRI in partnership with China Matters, with the establishment of a new joint initiative announced: the China Matters Fellowship at UTS:ACRI.
Australia-China energy and climate change dialogue: Powering a decarbonised future, November 20-24 2023, UTS Business School and site visits

With support from the National Foundation for Australia China Relations, UTS:ACRI hosted five academic and industry representatives from the PRC for a week-long program of events in Sydney, bringing them together with leading academic and industry figures from around Australia to explore the potential for bilateral collaboration to advance decarbonisation and combat climate change.

The PRC delegation included Professor Xiansheng Sun, Council Chairman, International Society for Energy Transition Studies and former Secretary General, International Energy Forum; Dr Yongping Zhai, Senior Advisor on Carbon-Neutrality, Tencent Holdings Ltd and former Chief of Energy Sector Group, Asian Development Bank; Professor Shaozhou Qi, School of Economics and Management, Wuhan University; Professor Ye Qi, Head, Thrust of Carbon Neutrality and Climate Change, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Guangzhou; and Professor Qinhua Xu, School of International Relations, Renmin University of China.

The core event was a two-day closed-door dialogue with more than 30 Australia-based energy academics and experts and industry and government representatives, including from the Australian National University, the National University of Singapore, University of Newcastle, University of Technology Sydney, Victoria University, Asia Society Australia, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Climate Energy Finance, the Australia China Business Council, the Minerals Council of Australia, the Business Council of Australia, China Construction Bank, Deloitte Australia, John Holland Group, Keypoint Law, King & Wood Mallesons, KPMG, State Grid Australia, Zhejiang Energy International and Investment NSW.

Following the closed-door dialogue, the PRC delegation participated in site visits with new energy companies, as well as the Hydrogen Hub at Port Kembla.
E-powering a decarbonised future: Opportunities and challenges for Australia-China cooperation, November 20 2023, UTS Business School and online

As part of the ‘Australia-China energy and climate change dialogue’, UTS:ACRI with support from the National Foundation for Australia China Relations, hosted a panel discussion on green energy in relation to Australia and the PRC. The panel comprised Associate Professor Emma Aisbett, Associate Director, Zero Carbon Energy for the Asia-Pacific Initiative, Australian National University; Dr Ross Lambie, Chief Economist, Minerals Council of Australia; Professor Qinhua Xu, School of International Relations, Renmin University of China; and Dr Yongping Zhai, Senior Advisor on Carbon-Neutrality, Tencent Holdings Ltd. The panel was moderated by Professor Tim Harcourt, UTS:ACRI Research Associate and Industry Professor and Chief Economist, UTS Institute for Public Policy and Governance.

Panellists discussed areas where cooperation is likely to be mutually beneficial, potential impediments to collaboration, including geopolitical and supply chain resilience concerns, and debated the potential role of nuclear energy.
The next stage of China's development and China-Australia relations: In conversation with Minister Liu Jianchao, November 28 2023, UTS:ACRI and online

Mr Liu Jianchao, Minister of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, delivered an address before being joined in conversation by UTS:ACRI Director Professor James Laurenceson.

Mr Iain Watt, UTS Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice-President (International), opened proceedings and concluding remarks were delivered by the Hon Warwick Smith AO, UTS:ACRI Advisory Board Member and Chairman of the Global Engagement Committee – Business Council of Australia.