

## UTS:ACRI address: China's Ambassador to Australia

'Promote healthy and stable development of China-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in the spirit of mutual respect and mutual benefit'

**Speaker:** H.E. Mr Xiao Qian, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to Australia

June 24 2022

Great Hall, University of Technology Sydney and online

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Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

Good morning!

It's my great pleasure to be here for the event. I'd like to start by expressing my sincere thanks to UTS:ACRI for its kind invitation, to Professor Andrew Parfitt for your kind introduction, and to James and your team for all your kind and thoughtful arrangements.

I'd also like to express my appreciation of the contribution UTS has made over the years in promoting exchanges and cooperation between China and Australia in education, scientific research and other fields, and of the important role ACRI has played in promoting understanding of China-Australia relations.

### **Ladies and gentlemen, Dear friends,**

I am glad to take this opportunity to exchange views with you on China-Australia relations. In the past 5 months since I came to Australia as Ambassador, I've been visiting different places, meeting with colleagues and friends from different walks of life. On China-Australia relations, my message is clear and consistent. The past 5 decades have been a successful story of friendly cooperation between our two countries, and the nature of this relationship is mutually beneficial. The recent years our relationship has been a difficult period, nonetheless, China's policy of friendship towards Australia remains unchanged. Looking into the future, China and Australia relations enjoy great potential for cooperation and bright prospects.

Not long ago, I published two articles in *The Australian Financial Review*, and during my recent visit to Perth, I addressed the National Conference of Australia China Friendship Society. On those two occasions, I talked mainly about the past 50 years of our bilateral relations, the great achievements we have made. And I talked about the potential areas of cooperation between our two countries in the long run. For those of you who may have interest, please visit my Embassy website for the details. In the interest of time, today rather, I would like to focus on the up-to-the-minute state of China-Australia relations and my views on what we could do in the immediate future.

After the recent federal election, Australia has a new Labor government. It's a choice by the Australian people and it's a domestic affair of Australia. Nonetheless, it has provided us with an opportunity of possible

improvement of China-Australia bilateral relations. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang has sent his message of congratulation to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Prime Minister Albanese wrote a letter of appreciation as reply. The defense ministers from China and Australia held a successful meeting at the sideline of Shangri-la Dialogue in Singapore. These communications and face-to-face contacts are obviously very significant for our bilateral relationship. But equally important is how we can keep the momentum and put our bilateral relationship back on the right track for a sound and steady development. Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi made an important remark during his recent trip to the South Pacific, and I quote: 'To improve China-Australia relations there's no auto-pilot mode, a reset requires concrete actions'. My view is, there are five major areas where it is important for China and Australia to make joint efforts.

**First on the political front, it's important to respect each other.** Respect for each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity, political system and development mode, these are the basic principles for sound and healthy relations between two sovereign states. Our world is colorful and diversified. Democracy is applied in different forms in different countries, even among western democracies. Socialism with Chinese characteristics in China is the choice of the Chinese people. It is based on the national conditions of China and has achieved great success in tremendously improving the livelihood of the 1.4 billion Chinese people. During the 4 decades of reform and opening-up, China's per capita GDP has increased by more than 200 times, and the rural residents' per capita disposable income increased by nearly 120 times. China and Australia are different in many aspects. But there is no reason that we cannot co-exist peacefully when we respect each other.

**Second on economic front, it's important to stick to the principle of mutual benefit.** The exchanges and cooperation between China and Australia in the past several decades have fully demonstrated that the nature of this relations is mutual beneficial. It has contributed to China's modernisation, especially its industrialisation and urbanisation process. It has also created a huge trade surplus and considerable job opportunities for Australia, promoting the prosperity of Australia's mining, agriculture, education, tourism and other sectors. Australia is the only OECD member that has maintained economic growth for 29 consecutive years, and has weathered multiple global or regional economic and financial crises. It's fair to say that its cooperation with China is a very important contributor in that respect.

The mutually beneficial nature of the cooperation between China and Australia will not only stay in the long run but also reinforce. China implements the new concept of innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development, and focuses more on the quality and efficiency of development. The Australian Labor government's emphasis on addressing the issue of climate change is strong. This offers even greater opportunities for China-Australia cooperation. To consolidate and expand mutually beneficial cooperation between our two countries requires favorable atmosphere and policies.

**Third on security front, it's important to take an objective and rational view.** Essentially, the right to development is the fundamental right of the people of a sovereign state. China is a big country with an ancient civilisation of over 5,000 years. It used to be at the forefront of the world history for a long time. The development achievements of China today come from the unremitting hard work of the Chinese people. Our goal is to change our people's life for the better, not to challenge any country.

The size or strength of a country does not determine the nature of its relations with others; its policy does. Big and powerful countries could be your friends, while small and weak countries could be your enemies. China pursues an independent foreign policy of peace, adheres to the path of peaceful development. China is committed to building a community with a shared future for mankind, and will always be a positive force for world peace and development.

There is a lot of areas where China and Australia share common grounds, there is no historical grievance or fundamental conflict of interest between us. China's development is an opportunity instead of a threat to Australia. There is every reason for China and Australia to be friends and partners, rather than adversaries or enemies.

**Fourth on international and regional affairs, it's important to strengthen coordination and cooperation.** China is a participant, builder, contributor and beneficiary of the existing international system. China supports necessary reforms and improvements to the international order and system, so as to make it more just and equitable, but China does not seek to start a new one. China will firmly uphold the international system with the United Nations at its core, the international order based on international law, and the basic norms governing international relations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

China and Australia were allies during World War II, and we share the same interests in safeguarding the post-war international order. As important countries in the Asia-Pacific region and open economies, as members of East Asia cooperation, RCEP, APEC, G20, UN and other UN agencies, China and Australia share a lot of common grounds. We have also been coordinating and cooperating in areas such as countering terrorism, transnational crimes, climate change, disaster relief, UN peacekeeping among others. Coordination and cooperation between China and Australia in international and regional affairs serves the best interest of our two countries and two peoples, and is also conducive to the global and regional peace, stability and prosperity.

**Last but not least, it is important to properly handle differences.** It should be no surprise that there exist differences between and among countries. As I have repeated, there are many areas of common grounds between China and Australia, and these are the areas where we can continue to cooperate for the benefits of our two countries and two peoples. There are undeniably certain areas where upon China and Australia have different views, and these are the areas where we should continue to conduct constructive dialogues, to minimise the differences between us and enlarge our common grounds. We should properly handle the differences so it will not affect the overall cooperation between us.

**Ladies and gentlemen, Dear friends,**

The relations between China and Australia is important to both countries. China has always been viewing our relations with Australia from a strategic and long-term perspective. China's policy of friendly cooperation towards Australia remains unchanged.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between China and Australia. It is hoped that our Australian colleagues could join us to make concerted efforts by moving towards each other, taking concrete actions, adhering to the principle of mutual respect and mutual benefit, so as to bring our bilateral relationship back on the right track of development at an early date.

Thank you!

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