

National Foundation for Australia-China Relations

Strategic Plan 2022-25



NATIONAL
FOUNDATION FOR
AUSTRALIA-CHINA
RELATIONS

澳中基金会



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Foreign Minister's Foreword

This year marks fifty years of diplomatic relations between Australia and the People's Republic of China.

During this period, our economic, cultural and people-to-people links have delivered immense benefits to both countries.

Since 2020, the National Foundation for Australia-China Relations has worked to promote cooperation between Australia and China, building links across community, business, education, health and science, climate change, and culture and the arts.

The Foundation has also played an important role here at home, engaging diverse Chinese-Australian communities.

As we look forward, the Foundation will continue to tell stories of modern Australia - a nation where half our people were born overseas or have a parent born overseas.

Engagement across industry will continue to grow, looking for mutual opportunities to collaborate with China, including in clean energy transition, education and aged care.

I congratulate the Foundation on its progress to date, and welcome its plans for the future.

Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Minister for Foreign Affairs



Chairman's Introduction

I am honoured to Chair the Advisory Board to the National Foundation for Australia-China Relations. Since its establishment in 2020 the Foundation has built a national platform that engages government, business and communities to support and find ways to engage constructively with China, across greater China and to involve our diverse stakeholders and communities.

There are many shared problems in the world that need shared solutions - sustainable open trade and growth, health and ageing, food and energy security, environmental management to name a few - where Australia and China have expertise and capability to work together for mutual benefit and in line with our national interests.

So far, the Foundation has delivered a range of programs to build Australia's institutional capability and engage our diverse and vibrant Chinese Australian communities. It has delivered three open competitive grants rounds with over 90 grants totalling around \$12 million awarded across community engagement, education, science, health, sport, the arts and business.

I am working with the Executive Team, led by CEO Peter Cai, to build the Foundation as a model organisation that fosters trust and understanding through its thoughtful engagement with China to advance Australia's interests. I am committed to ensuring the Foundation has in place good governance and risk management practices and constructive practical engagement as its focus.

With the support of the Advisory Board, our stakeholders and through building on the important legacy of its predecessor, the Australia-China Council, we can position the Foundation as a long-term asset for Australia.

Pru Bennett

Chairman



CEO's Introduction

I am honoured to have been appointed as Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation in December 2021. The Foundation is at the centre of efforts to promote and support collaboration between Australia and China for mutual benefit, as well as the rich contribution of Chinese Australians to Australia's national story and the many significant contributions of Australians to China's development.

The Foundation Executive Team has a strong focus on stakeholder engagement across all levels of government, business, education, science, health, tourism, community and arts and culture. There is an appetite for continued constructive engagement with China in Australia's national interest.

The Foundation is focused on a number of priority workstreams:

- Dialogue and exchange: supporting linkages between Australian and Chinese institutions
- China capability: improving China literacy to support informed engagement
- Community engagement: engaging diverse communities and supporting inclusiveness
- Business: advancing resilient trade and investment with China
- Communication: promoting our work and the contributions of our diverse communities and stakeholders
- Risk Management: good governance to support confident engagement in the national interest.

I am focused on ensuring the Foundation is innovative, informed and has the capability to meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities of today and in the years ahead.

Peter Cai

CEO



Our Mission Statement

- To support practical engagement with China, based on mutual benefit and respect, consistent with our national interest and the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
- To engage Australia's diverse Chinese-Australian communities, showcasing their historic and current contributions.

Our Context and Intent

The National Foundation for Australia-China Relations supports a mutually respectful relationship with China, one that is shaped by a strong sense of Australia's values and national interests, as well as mutual benefit.

Australia and China have made significant and lasting contributions to each other's development and history. Our economic and trade complementarities drive prosperity in both countries, with our high-quality Free Trade Agreement providing the basis for strong trade relations. Beyond economic opportunity, the relationship is underpinned by strong people-to-people links with wide ranging cooperation across all industries, sectors and community groups. This cooperation delivers dividends to both countries.

For over 200 years, Chinese-Australians have been making substantial contributions in all fields of Australian life. Their contributions have enriched us as a country, and Australia is a better and stronger nation for it. Chinese-Australians contribute to the bilateral relationship through community and cultural links. Personal links and mutual understanding also grow from two-way travel and study, with Australian universities currently hosting over 125,000 Chinese students. China has hosted Australian scholars under the New Colombo Plan since 2015. COVID-19-related border closures have significantly impeded travel between the two countries. Before COVID-19, over one million Chinese tourists visited Australia annually and China was the 6th most popular travel destination for Australians.

The Foundation will fulfil its mission statement through focusing its work on four strategic pillars:

- promoting connections and practical cooperation;
- building understanding and exchange;
- showcasing Australian excellence; and
- engaging Australia's diverse Chinese-Australian communities.

The Foundation and its staff will draw on the significant expertise Australia has in engaging with China across foreign, trade and investment policy; industry and professional services; education; community engagement; and public diplomacy. It will be collaborative in nature, working across all business sectors; education and research centres of excellence; levels of government; and Australian communities, to identify and forge new connections with China and support existing ones. It will promote research and develop the tools required to strengthen Australian understanding of, and engagement with, China in Australia's national interests. It will promote relations and connections among Australians and an understanding of the contributions Chinese-Australians have made to Australia's development, as well as the contributions Australia has made to the development of China.

How We Will Work

The Foundation will:

- Uphold Australia's commitment to freedom and democracy.
- Support collaborative partnerships, where all parties act with mutual respect and bring their expertise and experience to support the Foundation's objectives.
- Be inclusive, to ensure a wide range of Australian stakeholders in the bilateral relationship are engaged in the Foundation's work, including all sectors, levels of government and communities.
- Respect diversity, by reflecting the cultural, linguistic, historical, religious and geographic diversity of Australian society.
- Work fairly and ethically, to ensure the Foundation and its partners act in an open and accountable way.

Our Strategic Objectives

Promoting connections and practical cooperation

The Foundation will develop, promote and strengthen engagement, including by nurturing new connections through practical support, seed funding and by harnessing networks and expertise.

Sectoral cooperation will be tailored to fields where Australian capability and economic priorities match China's growth and economic priorities. These will be determined in collaboration with business, state and territory governments, federal government agencies and other stakeholders.

The Foundation will assist in efforts to understand and more effectively engage with China, including through mapping engagement, commissioned research, and developing specialised training programs and tools highlighting best practices.

Building understanding and exchange

The Foundation will be a resource for all sectors, levels of government and communities, providing expertise and facilitating connections to deepen leadership, industry and community networks.

The Foundation will support exchange and programs that contribute to better understanding, including through bilateral 1.5 and 2 track dialogues and exchange programs across industry, government, and education, sporting and cultural sectors. It will develop and support research, information, tools and advice which strengthen Australian stakeholder understanding and ability to engage confidently in the national interest, including in areas such as social media, e-commerce, sectoral matching and mapping areas of existing engagement.

Showcasing Australian excellence

The Foundation will build on Australia's existing reputation for excellence in many fields of science, research, industry, arts, culture, and sports. It will promote and strengthen Australia's value as a partner in the international community, in our region, and in business. It will help showcase the quality of our technical expertise; the vibrancy of our sporting and cultural sectors; and highlight Australia's attractiveness as a tourism, study and investment destination. It will help underline our well-earned reputation as a safe and reliable exporter of high quality goods and services that have, and can continue to contribute further to China's development.

Engaging Australia's diverse communities

The Foundation will build on the already extensive people-to-people links between Australia and China through engaging at the community-level and supporting community-led activities. It will seek to build new engagement and partnerships across Australia's culturally and geographically diverse communities to support two-way links and understanding between Australia and China.

Recognising the remarkable contributions of Chinese-Australian communities to Australian society, and the important role they play as advocates and stakeholders in our international relationships, the Foundation will engage these communities as a priority.

The Foundation will seek pathways for Chinese international students to connect more with the broader Australian community and improve their experience of studying in Australia.

The Foundation will seek ways to improve access to information for stakeholders, including through bilingual services wherever possible.

It will engage with Australian and Chinese language media to build understanding of Australian society and values, support a balanced and accurate commentary on Australia's domestic and foreign policy agenda, and communicate the importance of the relationship and the benefit it brings to both countries.