



Roundtables with the International Confucian Association

Outcomes Report



Lunchtime roundtable at AIIA QLD

The Australian Institute of International Affairs, along with the University of New South Wales in Sydney and Deakin University in Melbourne, hosted a series of roundtables with a visiting delegation of experts from China, Singapore and Vietnam organised by the Beijing-based International Confucian Association. The roundtables took place in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne from 2 – 8 September 2013

The roundtables were part of a 2013 China-Australia Cultural Dialogue focusing on the broad theme of Eastern and Western cultural environments and traditions of thought and the relevance of this in shaping how we think about the world, our relationships and ‘do business’ in the twenty-first century.

At a time of major shifts in global wealth and power, Australians more than ever need to understand the cultural ethos driving the rise of Asia. The roundtables therefore enabled business, financial, academic, educational and civil society participants to deepen their understanding of contemporary international issues of real significance for Australia’s future competitiveness.

Equipping minds and labour forces for the challenges of global interaction and competition in the twenty-first century has been a catchcry of government and the media over the past year. A key message of the recent Australian Government White Paper on Australia in the Asian Century is the importance – for the successful strengthening of our business, scientific, educational, cultural, political



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and people-to-people engagement across the region – of Australians gaining a greater knowledge and understanding of the languages and cultures of the countries of Asia.

The presentations focused on five themes:

1. The Revival of Chinese Classical Education

Principal Feng Zhe, Four Seas Academy

The recent emergence of private academies in China, focused on ensuring education in the Chinese classics from early childhood, foreshadows a major renaissance not only in Chinese classical learning but also in the values and thought processes this nurtures. What is the contemporary relevance of such an education for the way China (and other Asian countries influenced by Confucian thought culture) will do business this century?

2. What are the Chinese Classics?

Professor Lee Cheuk Yin, National University of Singapore

The Analects, Daodejing, the Book of Changes and many other texts, with an ethos of education and community administration, have shaped and illuminated in various ways at least four millennia of Chinese history and informed contemporary Asia's peaceful economic rise. What is their continuing role and relevance?

3. What is unique about the Chinese Classics?

Professor Wen Haiming, Renmin University, Beijing

What are some of the key features of Chinese thought? How do they overlap or contrast with dominant assumptions about personhood, truth, belief, and work, life and play, in the contemporary West?

4. How do the Chinese Classics shape East and South East Asia?

Dr Ngoc Tho Nguyen, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Ho Chi Minh City

East Asian societies have long been familiar with the Chinese classics while South East Asian societies all have Chinese ethnic minorities which tend to play a key role in setting standards of excellence in education, government administration and commerce.

5. Developing Asia Literacy

Professor Tian Chenshan, Beijing Foreign Languages University

The Asian Century White Paper recommendations will only be realised if the values, thought culture and aspirations of Asians educated and nurtured by the Chinese classics are addressed seriously across all sectors of Australia's engagement with the region.



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The Events:

- Lunchtime roundtable in Brisbane at AIIA Queensland on Tuesday 3 September, 11am-2pm
- Evening expert roundtable on “*Education Infrastructure in the Asian Century – Can Australia get it Right?*” in Brisbane at AIIA Queensland on Tuesday 3 September, 6pm-7:30pm
- Lunchtime roundtable in Sydney at UNSW on Wednesday 4 September, 11am-2pm
- Lunchtime roundtable in Melbourne at Deakin University on Thursday 5 September, 11am-2pm
- Evening expert roundtable on “*The Implications of the Rise of Confucianism for Australia's Relations with the Region*” in Melbourne at AIIA Victoria on Thursday 5 September, 6pm-7:30pm



Ms Jin Meihua, Mr Reg Little, Mr Geoffrey Ewing, Mr Niu Xiping, Dr Tian Chenshan, Dr Lee Cheuk Yin



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Participants

International Confucian Association:

Mr Niu Xiping
Mr Feng Zhe
Dr Lee Cheuk Yin
Dr Wen Haiming
Dr Ngoc Tho Nguyen
Dr Tian Chenshan
Ms Jin Meihua
Dr Yang Xuecui
Ms Hai Pei
Mr Reg Little

Australian Institute of International Affairs:

Ms Melissa Conley-Tyler, National Executive-President
Mr Geoffrey Ewing, President of the Queensland Branch
Professor Jocelyn Chey AM FAIIA, AIIA NSW

Australian Commentators:

Rosita Dellios, Associate Professor of International Relations at Bond University
Colin Mackerras AO, Emeritus Professor, Griffith Business School
Karyn Lai, Associate Professor School of Humanities and Languages UNSW
Ping Wang, Senior Lecturer School of Humanities and Languages UNSW
Professor Jane den Hollander, Vice Chancellor Deakin University
Professor Gary Smith, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Global Engagement) Deakin University

Invited Guests:

In Brisbane:

Dr Brian Adams, Director of Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University
Rosita Dellios, Associate Professor of International Relations at Bond University
Maziar M. Falarti, International Relations/History Academic
Karim Issa, King & Wood Mallesons
Jiaxu Hou, Deputy Director, Confucius Institute at QUT.
Michael Krakat, Solicitor at the Supreme Court of Queensland and the High Court of Australia
Tim Lane, Chief Adviser - China Relations at Rio Tinto
Li Liu
Colin Mackerras AO, Emeritus Professor, Griffith Business School
Stuart Martin-Fox AO, Emeritus Professor, Griffith Business School
Chris Meakin, Director, Confucius Institute at QUT



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Caitlin Mullins, King&Wood Mallesons
James O'Neill
Jim Prentice
Paul Wildman
Juergen G. Woehrle, President, German Australian Business Association Inc
Ting Zhang, Lecturer, Confucius Institute at QUT

In Sydney:

Richard Broinowski, Adjunct Professor University of Sydney
Anthony Pun OAM, National Pdt Chinese Community Council of Australia Inc
Pr You Ji, Associate Professor School of Social Sciences UNSW
Huynh Long-Van
Peter Sloane, Honorary Consul-General of Mongolia
Quand Luu Tuong AO
Thanh Tran
Dr Ismail Jumiati, Director of Education Malaysia Australia Sydney, Malaysian Consulate

In Melbourne:

Dr Mark Chou, Lecturer in Politics Australian Catholic University
Julia Gong, Senior Associate Director Confucius Institute, University of Melbourne
Julian Hill, Executive Director International Education, Migration and Employment
Department of State Development, Business and Innovation
Dr Chengxin Pan Senior, Lecturer Deakin University
Dr Sally Percival Wood, Alfred Deakin Postdoctoral Research Fellow
A/Prof Guo-qiang Liu, Associate Professor Deakin University
Vince Marotta, Senior Lecturer Deakin University
Nicholas Henry, Lecturer in International Relations Deakin University



Acknowledgements

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- Reg Little
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- Geoffrey Ewing; Professor Jocelyn Chey; Robbie Cordukes from Sydney
- All others who attended and contributed to the roundtable discussion
- Olivia Scaramuzza; Samad Aftab and Aakriti Bhutoria from the National Office as the organising team.



ICA delegation and invited guests, lunchtime roundtable at UNSW