



## **National President's Forum *Australia and the Chinese Century?***

### Outcomes Report

This report summarises the main outcomes of the National President's Forum hosted by the Australian Institute of International Affairs held in Brisbane on 19 October 2010.

The Forum brought together government officials, academics, journalists, professionals and other experts to discuss, debate, and engage with the many contemporary issues which shape Australia-China relations today. The Forum was preceded by a public forum moderated by the *Australian Financial Review* China correspondent Colleen Ryan.

Highlights of the Forum included:

- Participation by over 30 experts on Australia-China relations
- Involvement of four key government departments, seven universities, five international organisations and media representatives
- Lively opening addresses followed by an emphasis on open discussion
- Preparation of a Rapporteur's Report by Geoffrey Miller AO
- Distribution of reports and recommendations to relevant policy-makers



**National President's Forum  
Premier's Hall, Parliament House, Brisbane.  
18 October 2010**



## Australian Institute of International Affairs

### **Objectives**

The National President's Forum is one of the AIIA's most prestigious events, bringing together a select group of scholars, government officials and local experts for invitation-only discussion under the Chatham House Rule.

Specific objectives included:

- To bring together a select group of Australian, Chinese and other international experts to discuss the current state and future of the Australia-China relationship
- To analyse Australia's current engagement and strategic interests regarding China
- To examine the key issues which have a significant bearing on Australia China relations and that are essential to understanding China
- To debate and share ideas, and formulate recommendations for the future direction of Australia's engagement with China
- To assist public education about Australia's engagement with China as well as China's possible role as regional and/or global leader
- To establish a platform for future collaboration between Australia and China
- To produce solid policy recommendations for Australia's future policy on China.

Prior to the Forum at Parliament House, the AIIA organised a Public Forum at the Gardens Theatre, Queensland University of Technology. The *Australian Financial Review* China correspondent Colleen Ryan moderated a distinguished and engaging panel session exploring Australia-China relations. This free public event aimed to take discussions to a wider audience and has been attended by more than people.

Following the National's President Forum, all the participants were invited by Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland Ms Penelope Wensley AO to a reception at Government House for the presentation of the 2010 Fernberg Lecture by the Honourable Stephen Robertson MP, Minister for Trade and Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and a reception afterwards.

The incoming AIIA National President John McCarthy AO also spoke at the Export Week Breakfast organised by the Queensland Government Trade and Investment Commission at the Hilton Hotel on 20 October 2010.



## **Participants**

Speakers and discussants came from a variety of organisations that included:

- Government:
  - Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
  - Austrade
  - Office of National Assessments
  - Treasury
  - AusAID
- Academic Institutions:
  - Australian National University
  - Griffith University
  - University of New South Wales
  - Bond University
  - Australian Defence Force Academy
  - University of Sydney
  - Queensland University of Technology
- Enterprises and professionals:
  - Rio Tinto
  - Shell China & Hong Kong
  - Australia China Business Council
- Media:
  - *Australian Financial Review*
  - *The Courier Mail*
- Other Institutes and Organisations:
  - China Institute of International Studies
  - Lowy Institute for International Policy



**Margaret Jack**  
Former Executive Director, Shell China & Hong Kong

## **Format**

Four sessions focused on:

- **China Now:** China's Current Challenges and Opportunities
- **China Rising:** China's Long-term Policy and Strategic Interests
- **The China Effect:** Australia's Current China Policy
- **Australia's Response:** Australia's Future Policy Options on China

The discussion was conducted under Chatham House Rule to enable a frank discussion.



**Public Forum, 18 October 2010**  
Gardens Theatre, Queensland University of Technology  
Sponsored by Rio Tinto



### ***Feedback from Participants***

Feedback from participants indicated that the Forum was a great success, with the overall quality scoring an average of 4.4 out of 5.

Participants noted the following as some of the highpoints of the Forum:

- “Excellent interaction of views between participants.”
- “Wide range of views over China and excellent pool of expertise.”
- “Frank discussion on bilateral relationship.”

Participants noted the following impacts the Forum had on their understanding:

- “Introduced a range of perspectives and people whose competencies are relevant and will be very valuable to the development of my work on China.”
- “Better knowledge of all aspects of the relationship.”
- “Much better idea of China-Australia economic relationship.”
- “Much greater appreciation of business perspective.”

### ***Outcomes and Recommendations***

The National President’s Forum produced a number of recommendations for Australian policy on China. A Rapporteur’s Report was prepared by Geoffrey Miller AO and will be distributed to participants and key decision-makers and posted on the AIIA’s website: [www.aiaa.asn.au](http://www.aiaa.asn.au)



**Professor Peter Drysdale AM speaking at the Public Forum**



## ***Acknowledgements***

The National President's Forum was made possible through the generous support of:

- Rio Tinto
- The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Parliament House, Queensland
- Government House, Queensland

The Australian Institute of International Affairs would like to thank all participants in the Forum, particularly speakers, moderators, chairs and the Rapporteur.

The organising Sub-Committee was comprised of:

- Mr Clive Hildebrand, Immediate Past National President
- Ms Melissa Conley Tyler, National Executive Director
- Mr Geoffrey Miller AO, Immediate Past National Vice-President
- Mr Geoffrey Ewing, President, QLD Branch
- Mr Ian Dudgeon RFD, President, ACT Branch

This event would not have been possible without the dedication of the following:

- Mr John Robbins, National Deputy Director
- Mr Sam Crocker, National Office Intern
- Mr Luke Nasir, National Office Intern
- Mr Romain Le Floc'h, National Office Intern



**Dr Rong Ying of the China Institute of International Studies with AIIA National Executive Director Ms Melissa Conley Tyler attending the reception at Government House**