

I am an Australian citizen and feel privileged to live in a country where its citizens enjoy freedoms and a lifestyle that are unavailable to many people around the world. Sadly over the last few years I have seen that our way of life has been affected by foreign interference.

I wish to advise that I support the abovementioned bill 100%. I believe that the introduction of this bill is in the best interests of all Australians and at the same time honours all those who have fought and died to make sure all Australian citizens could enjoy freedom and democracy.

The bill does not target any particular country or government, but it is obvious that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is our biggest threat. They have infiltrated our political system, bribed our elected representatives, bought up a considerable amount of Australian property and businesses and have interfered in our universities and schools with their Confucius Institutes and intimidated Australian citizens.

The interference in our universities was highlight recently by Drew Pavlou who was suspended from the University of Queensland for his criticism of the Chinese Communist Party. He was attacked and threatened by Chinese students loyal to the CCP. Instead of supporting an Australian citizen and a student at UQ the university chose to penalise him.

The Confucius Institutes which have been set up around the world as promoting Chinese language and culture are in fact a propaganda arm of the CCP. They are funded by Hanban, an organisation directly under China's Ministry of Education. Hanban makes the decisions as to how the teaching is conducted, what materials are used, what can be discussed and who can be employed. Sydney Morning Herald reported in an article 25 July 2019 that "Agreements signed by the University of Queensland, Griffith University, La Trobe University and Charles Darwin University state in identical clauses that they "must accept the assessment of the Confucius Institute Headquarters on the teaching quality" at their centres." How can we allow a foreign government to make decisions that affect our children?

The sister city relations is another avenue of control and interference by the CCP. As explained by Australian Values Alliance (AVA) in an open letter to the Wagga Wagga council in April 2020. "For a long time, the authoritarian regime of the CCP has been using "sister city" relations as a tool for its "United Front" to intervene, infiltrate and even export its human rights persecution, rather than a genuinely friendly relationship among the peoples based on freedom of speech, freedom of thought and freedom of cultural exchanges and civic contacts."

The CCP has also been pushing its One Belt One Road Initiative globally. It is clear that this is another avenue for the CCP to take control of countries involved by lending money they can't repay and then taking long-term control of infrastructure, natural resources and property. The fact that Daniel Andrews signed Victoria up to the OBOR shows that Australian citizens need the Minister for Foreign Affairs to be involved in these sorts of agreements. This deal not only puts the Victorians in a vulnerable position but all Australians. On the Australian Government of Australia website, Geoff Wade, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security when writing about China's One Belt, One Road initiative under Key Issue states that "Critics claim that it facilitates Chinese economic and strategic domination of the countries along these routes. OBOR provides a global context for China's growing economic links with Australia".

Many Australians were outrage when on 1 October 2019 the Box Hill Police Station in Victoria raised the CCP flag on the 70th anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party. The ceremony was attended by the mayor as well as state and federal ministers. How can Australian government representatives and an Australian police station honour a police state that is responsible to the deaths of an

estimated 100 million Chinese citizens and one that is to this day arresting, torturing, killing and harvesting the organs of many innocent people? It was revealed in the independent China Tribunal chaired by Sir Geoffrey Nice on 17 June 2019 that "Forced organ harvesting has been committed for years throughout China on a significant scale and that Falun Gong practitioners have been one – and probably the main – source of organ supply. The concerted persecution and medical testing of the Uyghurs is more recent and it may be that evidence of forced organ harvesting of this group may emerge in due course."

There is no doubt that the CCP is a violent and illegal dictatorship that has no respect for the rule of law and human life. We have watched their brutal crackdown on many groups and individuals such as Tibetans, Uyghurs, Christians, Falun Gong practitioners, human rights activists, the people of Hong Kong, foreign journalists and anyone who speaks out against the CCP. They have openly threatened many governments around the world including the Australian government. Any action the CCP takes is always for their own benefit and never for anyone else.

The pandemic that has had a devastating impact on the lives and the economy of the world was a direct result of the CCP's lies and coverups. There is no doubt that any dependence on the Chinese Communist Party will be dangerous to Australian citizens. It is important when discussing this issue that we do not equate the Chinese people with the Communist Party. The Chinese people have long been suffering under the brutal and cruel CCP.

It goes without question that the Minister for Foreign Affairs should be aware of economic agreements made with foreign governments, or any agreements that may result in interference or influence that is not in line with our values and national interests before they happen.

I would like to thank the Australian government for taking this action to protect the Australian people and to ensure our nation is free from interference from foreign governments.

Kind regards.
Amanda Dowie