Chapter Four: A Virtuous Circle? The 41st Parliament of Australia and the People’s Republic of China

The Governments in both countries are closely working together to achieve a virtuous circle in the Sino–Australia relationship.¹

During the period of the 41st Parliament, November 2004–October 2007, there was considerable growth and diversification in the Australia–China relationship. The economic complementarities which became a hallmark of the relationship during the previous Parliament provided an impetus for the signing of a number of agreements in areas such as the transfer of nuclear materials, mutual legal assistance, extradition and prisoner exchange and cooperative research on bio-security. Such agreements were accompanied by new capacity building projects focusing on water resource management, legal governance and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS in China. High-level bilateral visits were utilised to mark a number of significant landmarks in relations. During a visit to Beijing in April 2005, Prime Minister Howard announced that Australia and China would commence talks with China on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), while in April 2006, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited Australia and signed a bilateral safeguards agreement on the transfer of nuclear material between Australia and China.² The Chinese Premier’s visit was followed by John Howard’s ‘important, symbolic visit’ to southern China in June 2006, to witness the first delivery of Australian liquefied natural gas. The Chairman of the National People’s Congress, Wu Bangguo, also visited Australia during the period to claim, in a speech in the Great Hall at Parliament House, that ‘China–Australia relations are in their best shape in their history’.³

The developing multilayered character of the bilateralism was underscored by the agreement signed by President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister John Howard during the

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2. Wen Jiabao’s visit was followed by the ratification of two nuclear safeguard agreements between Australia and China in January 2007.
3. This was the first instalment resulting from the single largest trade agreement in Australia’s history. John Howard, Doorstop interview, Shenzhen, China, 28 June 2006, Wu Bangguo’s comment is found at: ‘Australia–China relations are better than ever’, China Daily, 25 May 2005.
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15th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) leaders’ meeting in Sydney in September 2007 which committed the two nations to an annual senior-level strategic dialogue to facilitate bilateral coordination on important international issues.4 The growing closeness between the two countries was further emphasised by President Hu’s four-point proposal for enhancing bilateral relations. Hu’s plan outlined a program for promoting closer high-level exchange between legislative bodies and political parties, building deeper bilateral economic and trade cooperation, increasing people-to-people links and increasing dialogue on regional and international issues.5 There was a corresponding shift in the tone of statements made by Prime Minister Howard. No longer preoccupied with the differences between Australia and China, a more comfortable Howard surrendered the shared interests/different values platform, relinquishing the descriptors: mature, practical and sensible. The sense of optimism and goodwill between Australia and China was ultimately consecrated by the loan of two giant pandas—Wangwang and Funi—to a South Australian zoo.6 From a parliamentary perspective, the foundations were laid for increased contact between the two legislatures. On 20 August 2006, the Department of the House of Representatives entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National People’s Congress in order to establish a framework of exchange between the two parliamentary institutions. The framework of exchange provided for regular exchanges of information between the legislators and parliamentary officials.7

Perhaps the most serious challenge to the relationship over the period of the 41st Parliament was the ‘defection’ of the Consul for Political Affairs at the Chinese

4. During Hu’s visit the single largest export deal for an Australian company was signed committing Woodside Petroleum to exporting up to $45 billion worth of gas to PetroChina.
6. This symbolic gesture surpasses the three-month loan of the pandas Fei Fei and Xiao Xiao for Australia’s Bicentennial celebrations in 1988. In an act which some have described as an act of great obsequiousness—the Presiding Officers of the Parliament, the Speaker of the House of Representatives (David Hawker), and the President of the Senate (Alan Ferguson), called on President Hu Jintao at the Hyatt Hotel, during his stopover in Canberra prior to APEC.
7. The MOU was signed in Beijing, at the Great Hall of the People, by Sheng Huaren, Vice-Chairman and Secretary of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC), and Mr Ian Harris, the Clerk of the House of Representatives. A delegation from the NPC, led by Mr Sheng Huaren, visited Australia as part of the MOU exchange framework from 28 May to June 2007.
Consulate in Sydney in June 2005. Chen Yonglin’s application for political asylum, and his allegations of extensive Chinese espionage activity in Australia, had the potential to seriously damage bilateral relations. Another event that threatened to disrupt bilateral goodwill was Australia’s hosting of the inaugural ministerial-level Trilateral Security Dialogue (April 2006) involving Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Japanese Foreign Minister, Taro Aso. China expressed serious concerns about such a dialogue (later renamed the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue) taking place and Foreign Minister Alexander Downer regularly sought to reassure Beijing that the talks were committed to discussing general regional concerns, and not the containment of China.\footnote{Patrick Walters, ‘Containing China a big mistake: Downer’, \textit{Australian}, 16 March 2006, p. 1 and Greg Sheridan, ‘Rice contains Downer on handling of China’, \textit{Australian}, 17 March 2006, p. 2.} The Dalai Lama’s visit to Australia during June 2007 was another subject of possible friction. The visit was accompanied by the Chinese Government’s customary expressions of disapproval and by the cautious consulting of diaries by the leaders of the major political parties.

Statements and speeches that were made in Parliament offer a snap-shot of the China-related issues that arose during this period. Some related to themes that had continued over successive parliaments, such as human rights in China, opportunities attached to China’s economic development, information about high level visits and matters related to Taiwan.\footnote{In this instance the Governor-General’s visit to China and Premier’s Wen Jiabao’s visit to Australia; Taiwan’s application to participate in the World Health Assembly and China’s passing of the anti-secession law.} Emerging concerns focused upon Australia’s Nuclear Safeguards Agreement with China and Australia’s intention to export uranium to China; the fate of Chen Yonglin and the government’s handling of his application for protection; the status of Free Trade negotiations; the effect of climate change and global warming in China and the quality of Chinese exports to Australia. In contrast to some of the China-related debates that took place during earlier parliaments, the character of the debate during the 41\textsuperscript{st} Parliament was largely bipartisan.

This chapter has two primary objectives. Firstly, it offers an analysis of the attitudes of members of the 41\textsuperscript{st} Parliament towards the Australia–China relationship, through drawing upon the results of a questionnaire that was distributed to all members of Parliament during 2007. Secondly, through examining the major China-related outputs of the Parliament—committee and delegation reports, parliamentary debates and policy
and legislative material—the chapter examines the specific contributions of the 41st Parliament to the development of the bilateral relationship.

15. President Hu Jintao visits Bywong Sheep Station near Gundaroo, north of Canberra, prior to APEC, 5 September 2007, image courtesy Peter West/Auspic.

**Parliamentary Questionnaire Methodology**

The majority of the twenty-four questions contained in the parliamentary questionnaire were clear and unambiguous ‘closed questions’ which utilised preset response options. Preset response options were chosen in the expectation that the data could be aggregated to reflect cross-party attitudes. Some questions asked respondents to attribute, on a rating scale, the level of importance they attached to a particular issue or
event and in some instances respondents were also given the option of adding comment. Other response options were dichotomous and sought YES or NO answers. On one occasion a dichotomous question was followed by an open question: ‘Do you believe that the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade and the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade can influence Australian foreign policy’, YES or NO, and if YES could you please provide an example’. A final question asked for additional comment about the Australia–China relationship. While some questions related to Australia’s foreign policy priorities, or the influence that the Opposition and minor parties may have on the nation’s foreign policy, the questionnaire was primarily concerned with identifying parliamentary attitudes to past, present and future aspects of the Australia–China relationship. Beyond the temporally-specific material, there were numerous questions addressing matters of trade, human rights, the export of Australian uranium to China and the China-related issues that are raised by constituents. Respondents to the questionnaire were instructed that their views would remain confidential and non-attributable.

The response rate to the questionnaire was 26%, with 59 of 226 parliamentarians responding. The majority of respondents represented a self-selected group of parliamentarians who appeared to have an active interest or involvement in the Australia–China relationship. A high proportion had visited the People’s Republic (66%) or the Republic of China (58%) and 83% were members of either the Australia–China Parliamentary Friendship Group, the Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group or the All-Party Parliamentary Friendship Group for Tibet. Results from the questionnaire offer useful, balanced and representative cross-party data which has not previously been compiled. The results from the questionnaire can also be read as a useful complement to other recent surveys on Australia’s foreign policy: the 2007 United States Studies Centre National Survey Results, ‘Australian attitudes towards the United States: Foreign Policy, Security, Economics and Trade’ (University of Sydney),

10. 21% belonged to the Australia–China Parliamentary Friendship Group (only); 17% belonged to the Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group (only); 3% belonged to the All-Party Parliamentary Friendship Group for Tibet (only). In terms of cross or multiple memberships: a further 26% belonged to the Australia–China and the Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group and 16% belonged to the Australia–China, the Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group and the All-Party Parliamentary Friendship Group for Tibet. An All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet was established in 2005 with Michael Danby as Chair and Bob Brown, Peter Slipper and Natasha Stott Despoja as vice-chairs. The Group supports the Dalai Lama’s ‘Middle Way Approach’ which would see Tibetans holding responsibility for managing internal matters, such as health and education, while China retained control of foreign affairs and defence.
the Lowy Institute polls surveying public opinion and foreign policy (2005 and 2007) and Allan Gyngell and Michael Wesley’s survey of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) employees, ‘The Perception of Australia’s Foreign Policy Makers’. 11

Overall, 42% of respondents were Labor, 41% were Liberal, 10% were Nationals, 3% were Democrats, and 2% were Greens, while 2% chose not to disclose their party. When matched against party representation in the 41st Parliament, responses were received from 18% of Liberals; 27% of Nationals, 22% of Labor, 50% of Democrats (2 in 4) and 25% of Greens (1 in 4). On a House–Senate comparison, 64% of respondents were from the Lower House and 36% were from the Upper House. As a rule, respondents tended to have longer records of service, for example, 26% had served for more than 15 years while 25% had served between nine and 12 years.

Quantitative data from the questionnaire was supplemented by qualitative data obtained through interviews conducted over the course of 2007. Interviews were conducted with over a dozen parliamentarians with specific interests in the Australia–China relationship. They were conducted with an equal number of Liberal and Labor parliamentarians as well as with representatives from both the Nationals and the minor parties. Interviews were also carried out with relevant parliamentary and government officials. These interviews presented an opportunity to expand upon aspects of the parliamentary questionnaire while also allowing for discussions about the interaction that takes place between the Parliament and the Chinese Embassy, the notion of Chinese ‘soft power’ and parliamentary perceptions of the future character of the bilateral relationship. In order to preserve confidentiality, the comments of interviewees have not been attributed.

The generally sanguine attitude towards Australia–China relations that emerges from questionnaire data and interview responses appears to be predicated upon a number of features: the benefits that have resulted from a thriving bilateral trade relationship; a continuing period of comparatively stable Sino–United States relations; and the prevailing attitude that the rise of China will be positive for the international community. Each feature has combined to create a period of unparalleled growth, confidence and sense of opportunity for Australia–China relations. Nevertheless, this

11. The two Lowy polls are titled: Australia and the World: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy (2007) and Australians Speak 2005: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy. Gyngell and Wesley’s survey is found in the appendix to Making Australian Foreign Policy (2003); Gyngell and Wesley sent their questionnaire to more than 800 DFAT employees and received 242 responses, or approximately 30%.
general sense of optimism does not extend across all areas of the relationship. Some parliamentarians expressed concern about China’s human rights record, the export of Australian uranium to China, the potential repercussions of a Free Trade Agreement, relations between the Chinese Government and the Republic of China (Taiwan), and lack of parliamentary attention given to China’s military expenditure. However, one of the most emphatic findings to emerge from this research is that there is great diversity in the way Australian parliamentarians view the Australia–China relationship. This diversity operates across the Parliament and within the parties; there is no one parliamentary model, nor one party model.

**Parliament and Foreign Policy**

There is a dominant perception that the Australian Parliament has an extremely restricted capacity to influence foreign policy. In *Making Australian Foreign Policy* (2003) Allan Gyngell and Michael Wesley offer the following assessment:

> Under the United States constitution, Congress has important roles in the foreign policy process: treaties made can only be ratified by a Senate vote; Congress has formal roles in the declaration of war and the appointment of diplomatic agents; and both houses have been highly active in setting the parameters for the exercise of executive powers in making foreign policy. The Australian Parliament has none of these formal powers. Rarely does the conduct of Australian foreign policy require enabling legislation; and the debate and discussion of foreign affairs is more often than not relegated behind domestic political issues that call on the legislative powers of both houses of Parliament. Parliamentary debates on foreign affairs are relatively rare, and often scheduled around the discussion of domestic matters … it is hard to find any significant role played in the formulation of Australian foreign policy by Federal Parliament. In addition to lacking the capacity to contribute or [sic] a formal role in the foreign policy process, Parliament is constrained by the lack of interest (or of incentive to take an interest) in foreign affairs by the majority of parliamentarians.

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Such a statement does not augur well for a discussion of the Parliament and foreign policy; it draws attention to the absence of any parliamentary legislative mandate in foreign affairs while reinforcing that the executive has the prerogative in foreign policy. Moreover, this extract does not simply claim that parliamentarians are estranged from the foreign policy process, but that many are in fact uninterested in foreign affairs matters.

In examining the role of the Parliament in foreign policy formation, Gyngell and Wesley focus on formal legislative power, rather than influence, facilitation, consultation or informal power. It is therefore worth noting other parliamentary activities that, while not directly or immediately contributing to legislated outcomes, can become critical to building parliamentary knowledge of, and influence in, foreign affairs. In addition to the parliamentary activities that Gyngell and Wesley identify—parliamentary debate, Question Time, questions placed on notice and committee work—there are other activities which could be identified: representation at multilateral forums (including forums specifically for parliamentarians, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union), representation at specific issues forums (e.g.: environment, rights or labour forums), and participation in the activities of inter-party parliamentary delegations and parliamentary friendship groups. Then we might also consider non-parliamentary activities such as contributing to public debate on foreign policy or working with non-government organisations in an attempt to influence foreign policy.

The Parliament may also indirectly involve itself in foreign affairs in ways not envisaged by Gyngell and Wesley. Parliamentarians may explain the Australian parliamentary system to members of other legislatures; they may promote an understanding of other nations and other political systems; or alternatively, they may involve themselves in second-track diplomacy—ameliorating against breakdowns in government to government communication, or conversely, discussing difficult bilateral issues at a level below that of head of state or government. As the Clerk of the House of Representatives, Ian Harris, has suggested:

> The value of legislator-to-legislator contact is significant, especially in areas where negotiations at officer level have not produced satisfactory results. Occasionally, when there are tensions at a government-to-government level, the contact between parliaments provides a means of continuing communication.¹⁴

¹⁴. Ian Harris, ‘The Role of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia in International Affairs, Globally and in the Asia/Pacific Region’, Address to the Canberra Branch of the Australian Institute of International Affairs, 19 November 2003, p. 5.
In the above extract Gyngell and Wesley also suggest that few Australian parliamentarians have backgrounds predisposing them to foreign policy work. Such a suggestion is supported by Kate Burton’s study of committee oversight of foreign and national security policy in the Parliament, in which she claims that her study of a database of nearly 600 current or former politicians revealed only 6 with diplomatic and foreign affairs backgrounds. 15 While this figure is surprisingly low, if we were to add parliamentarians with academic backgrounds in allied areas such as International Relations or Political Science we would find more parliamentarians with relevant backgrounds. For example, in the 41st Parliament, we find that Kim Beazley was a former Lecturer in Social and Political Theory at Murdoch University and Senator Russell Trood was formerly an Associate Professor in International Relations at Griffith University. Similarly, this number would be higher again were we to include younger generation parliamentarians who hold higher degrees and/or undergraduate degrees in International Relations.

With regard to the matter of parliamentary interest in foreign affairs, it should be noted that the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade is the largest committee of the Parliament. As Ian Harris has reflected, ‘there is considerable competition amongst our Members and Senators to become members of the committee, reflecting, I think, its importance in their eyes’. 16 It could also be argued that across the Parliament the Australia–China relationship is accorded a great deal of significance and receives regular attention. Many Members and Senators remain well informed about the relationship through their work with committees, through the activities of parliamentary friendship groups, through official parliamentary visits, and in some instances, through leading business delegations to China. Other parliamentarians remain informed about China-related matters through their connection with their Australian-Chinese constituents. One only need consider the interests of constituents in the seats that form the ‘China-belt’ that fans out around inner Sydney: Watson (Tony Burke, ALP), Bennelong (John Howard, LP), Barton (Robert McClelland, ALP), Lowe (John Murphy, ALP), Parramatta (Julie Owens, ALP) and Reid (Laurie Ferguson, ALP). According to 2001 Census data (with 2003 electoral boundaries) the numbers of

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16. Ian Harris, ‘The Role of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia in International Affairs, Globally and in the Asia/Pacific Region’, Address to the Canberra Branch of the Australian Institute of International Affairs, 19 November 2003, p. 4.
Chinese-born in these electorates are: Watson—9.6%, Bennelong—7.5%, Barton—6.8%, Lowe—6.2%, Parramatta—6% and Reid—7.5%.17

41st Parliament and Foreign Policy

The parliamentary questionnaire contained preliminary questions about the Parliament and foreign policy. These contextual questions focused on two areas: Australia’s foreign policy priorities and the perceived influence of the Opposition and minor parties on Australian foreign policy. In the first instance respondents were asked what level of importance they ascribed to six different interests or values when determining Australia’s foreign policy: trade, defence and strategic interests, the advancement of human rights, the promotion of Australian political ‘values’ and the establishment of strategic alliances with world powers. Overwhelmingly, priority was given to those matters of national self-interest which maximise Australia’s influence and power: trade, defence and strategic interests and the maintenance of security alliances. Correspondingly, less emphasis was given to values-based priorities such as human rights, the promotion of democracy or even the slightly nebulous notion of Australian political ‘values’. Advancing human rights and advancing democracy tended to be accorded important rather than highly important status, while unequivocal importance was placed upon trade, defence and strategic interests.

17. Figures include those born in Hong Kong but do not include those born in Taiwan; at the time of writing the results from the 2006 Census were unavailable. I thank Tony Kryger from the Statistics and Mapping Section of the Parliamentary Library for these figures.
Given Australia’s historic reliance upon security alliances, it is surprising that respondents did not attach higher importance to Australia’s strategic alliances with world powers. However, this may be interpreted as representing a high level of confidence in the current state of the alliance with the United States, rather than reflecting any diminution or abrogation of its value.

In turning to the question of what influence the Opposition and the minor parties are understood to have over foreign policy, we observe that the view of parliamentarians is more optimistic than that expressed by Gyngell and Wesley. While as many as 34% of respondents claimed that the Opposition and minor parties had negligible influence, the
majority believed that the Opposition and the minor parties could exert some influence on foreign policy.

Revealingly, 47% of Coalition respondents claimed the Opposition and minor parties have negligible effect on foreign policy—as opposed to 24% of Labor respondents and 0% of minor party respondents. Several respondents differentiated between the Opposition and the minor parties, claiming that the Opposition has some influence but that the influence of the minor parties is negligible, while one interviewee, endorsing the comments of Gyngell and Wesley, claimed that when it comes to foreign affairs, ‘The Parliament is merely a spectator’.

The following section of the chapter draws upon questionnaire data and interview responses to five themes: influential historical milestones in the bilateral relationship, economic relations, sources of information about China, travel to China and parliamentary attitudes toward Chinese ‘soft power’. This attitudinal study is followed by an examination of the major China-related committee inquiries that were undertaken during the 41st Parliament.

**Influential Historical Milestones in the Australia–China Relationship**

Increasingly, both major parties seek to promote the histories of their achievements in foreign policy in Asia. The Coalition does this through promoting John McEwen’s negotiation of the 1957 Australia–Japan Trade Agreement, Malcolm Fraser’s Indochinese refugee policy and the Coalition’s dismantling of the white Australia policy. Similarly, Labor leaders identify the activism of figures like Evatt, Whitlam and Gareth Evans in pursuing multilateral engagement, their commitment to engaging the Asia-Pacific—as well as their contribution to the dismantling of the white Australia policy. In the battle over which side of politics has best negotiated Australia’s foreign policy towards East Asia, China has emerged as a critical battleground. Both sides promote their China credentials—Whitlam’s recognition of China, Hawke’s ‘special relationship’ versus Fraser’s bipartisanship and the development of a ‘mature’ and ‘practical’ relationship under Howard. The increased impetus to claim China for one’s party is reflected in the assertion of one Labor parliamentarian, ‘The ALP’s China credentials are pure—the ALP has always considered Asia our future’.

While the ALP appears more proficient at selling the history of their engagement with the region, the ALP also romanticises this engagement. The visit of the ALP Opposition delegation to China in July 1971, Prime Minister William McMahon’s claim that Zhou Enlai was playing Whitlam as a fisherman plays a trout, Gough Whitlam’s recognition of China in 1972 and Whitlam’s meeting with Mao in 1973—each has a central place in ALP folklore. Over time, a narrative about the ALP’s custodianship of the relationship has developed. Within such a narrative, and here I paraphrase it, the ALP is on the cusp of recapturing that which is rightfully theirs and the all-China-knowing Kevin Rudd will re-deliver China to the ALP. In prophesying a new golden age in Australia–China relations, one adherent to this narrative claims, ‘The Chinese are very aware of the history of Labor’s engagement with China—they respect it—and they know that Gough went there before any other Western leader’. When a Liberal parliamentarian was asked for an opinion about this ALP China-tenure narrative, he identified it as both ‘self-serving and absurd’. Both these responses help to illustrate how China has continually been used within Australian domestic politics for party differentiation.

Respondents to the parliamentary questionnaire were asked to rate, from an historical perspective, how influential a series of milestones have been in contributing to the character of the current Australia–China relationship. The questionnaire was interested in determining the weight accorded to certain milestones, from the Whitlam Government’s recognition of China in 1972 to Hu Jintao’s recent address to the Australian Parliament in 2003. With regard to the Whitlam Government’s recognition of China, 65% nominated this landmark event as highly influential, 19% claimed it as moderately influential while 10% claimed it as only marginally influential. (92% of ALP respondents nominated recognition as highly influential.) That 35% regarded recognition as anything other than highly influential may suggest that some parliamentarians have very partisan political memories. The liberalisation of the Chinese economy under Deng Xiaoping, an influence that engendered bipartisan response, rated highest.

The importance attributed to the Howard Government’s management of the relationship solicited an even more partisan response. While 74% of Coalition respondents identified the Howard years as highly influential, only 9% of ALP respondents did the same.\(^\text{19}\) Parliamentarians provided more varied responses to the level of importance accorded to Hu Jintao’s address to the Australian Parliament in October 2003. The level

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19. Correspondingly 23% of respondents from the Coalition attached moderate influence to bilateral relations under the Howard Government as opposed to 70% of Labor respondents.
of influence was evenly spread with: 22% highly influential, 36% moderately influential, 28% marginally influential and 14% not influential. Overall, however, President Hu’s address was considered the least influential historical milestone. See Figure 6—Influential Historical Milestones.

Australia–China Economic Relations

Over the course of the 41st Parliament the bilateral economic relationship developed exponentially. In 2006 China, combined with Hong Kong, overtook Japan as Australia’s largest trading partner. By mid-2007, China alone overtook Japan as Australia’s largest trading partner, with trade between the two nations exceeding $50 billion a year. With Australia benefiting from fast-growing commodity demand as a result of simultaneous growth in China and India, one would expect the vast majority of respondents to the parliamentary questionnaire to be extremely optimistic about the status of Australia–China economic relations.

In order to provide some context for parliamentary opinions about the growth in economic relations, respondents were asked two questions about the current status of the economic relationship. These were supplemented by two further questions about the possible effect of Australia’s fast-growing economic enmeshment with China. The sense of optimism about the trade relationship was supported by the fact that 76% of respondents considered Australia well-positioned to protect and promote Australian interests in China. Only 22% of respondents believed that Australia has become too reliant upon China for its economic prosperity. Relatively few (19%), felt that Australia’s economic reliance will negatively impact upon Australia’s political dealings with China. However, there were those who envisaged this reliance resulting in complex challenges for Australian policy makers. One Liberal Senator commented on the possibility of a more coercive China:

Australia has become increasingly economically dependent on Chinese resource imports but the growing power of China will change the geo-political power relationships in this region and Australia may find China demanding that Australia follow their policy objectives in the future.

A Liberal Member of the House of Representatives suggested such reliance has already resulted in political and moral acquiescence: ‘We have surrendered our principles because of trade and jobs’.
Figure 3—Given the importance of China to Australia’s economic prosperity, do you feel that:

Of these four questions, the one which elicited the greatest disparity in response, on a cross-party basis, was that asking whether the Howard Government had achieved the right balance between economic and non-economic aspects of the relationship—with 61% of respondents suggesting it had. However, any question about the performance of the Howard Government generated extremely partisan data. If we examine this response on a cross-party basis, we find that 96% of Coalition respondents claimed the Howard Government had struck the right balance, as opposed to only 28% of Labor and 0% of minor party respondents.

In May 2005 Australia and China began negotiations on an Australia–China Free Trade Agreement (AUCFTA). While there had been great expectation attached to such an agreement, throughout 2007 the negotiations struck numerous hurdles: Australia’s desire for the Agreement to include access for the service export markets of education (Australia’s leading service export to China), telecommunications and finance; and China’s desire for access for unskilled labour, were among the sticking points. Added to this have been differences in the way the nations approach policy negotiations. Yet, in spite of the limited progress, and the Minister for Trade Warren Truss’ description of the negotiations as ‘tortuous’, parliamentarians were still favourably disposed towards
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the prospect of an FTA with China. In fact, 79% of respondents claimed that an FTA would be in Australia’s interests.

There was generally strong support for the preferential access to Chinese markets that an FTA would deliver. However, concern was expressed over the effect an FTA might have upon Australia’s manufacturing sector. 42% of respondents believed an FTA would damage Australia’s manufacturing sector while 37% of respondents were concerned that it would substantially contribute to Australia’s trade deficit.

Figure 4—Do you believe a Free Trade Agreement with China would:  

Members of the House of Representatives were asked the associated question of how businesses in their electorate have responded to the economic ‘rise of China’. A


21. China has been negotiating Free Trade Agreements with some of Australia’s commercial competitors since 2001 and Australia needs to complete its FTA negotiations if it is to secure some competitive advantage. No respondent made mention of the need to reach agreement soon or before the deadline of April 2008.

22. The use of closed questions with regard to the FTA did not work as effectively as in other instances. This was largely because the precise terms of the FTA are yet to be decided. 8% of respondents suggested that their answer was dependent on the terms and comprehensiveness of such an agreement. Others qualified their responses by explaining: they were ‘wary of all bilateral treaties and trade agreements’ or that a ‘FTA would change rather than damage Australia’s manufacturing sector’.

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resounding 85% claimed that the business community in their electorate view it as a significant opportunity, with a clear majority welcoming an FTA with China.

Figure 5—How does the business community in your electorate consider the economic ‘rise of China’?

The data on constituents’ attitudes towards the proposed FTA with China is almost identical to the response to a similar question in the Lowy Institute poll, *Australians Speak 2005*. Asked ‘On balance, do you think signing a Free Trade Agreement with China would be good or bad for Australia or would it make no difference’ 51% thought an FTA with China would be good, 20% thought it would be bad and 29% were either unsure or thought that it would make no difference. However, in contrast with these findings, one Labor parliamentarian claimed that at the ALP state branch level there exists a great deal of discontent over an FTA with China which has been ignored by Caucus members who favour an FTA; he stated—‘The further you get away from the Parliament the more concern there is over an FTA with China’. For a more detailed analysis of different sectorial attitudes to the FTA see the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee report, *Opportunities and Challenges*. The

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report suggests that while the agricultural sector is supportive of an FTA with China, the horticultural, manufacturing, and textile, clothing and footwear sectors were all apprehensive about an FTA with China.24

The issue of intellectual property (IP) rights has become a significant sticking point in the FTA negotiations with both countries seeking substantially different chapters on IP. In April 2007 the United States filed two WTO cases against China over the inadequate protection of IP rights. While China has made it clear that it would not enter into bilateral discussions with any country that joined the United States in these cases, Canada, the European Union, Japan and Mexico have joined one or both of these cases as third parties. On 7 October 2007 Minister Warren Truss, announced that Australia would participate as a third party in this dispute. However, it should be noted that while IP protection and issues of pirating and the production of counterfeit goods are of concern to Australian business, in contrast with the manufacturing sector in the United States, exporters of minerals and energy in Australia are less affected by matters of intellectual property protection—copyright, patents and trademarks. With regard to the possible influence of IP issues on Australia–China relations into the future, 42% of respondents to the parliamentary questionnaire identified that enforcement of intellectual property rights will be moderately influential in determining the future character of the Australia–China relationship while 40% identified IP as marginally influential (see Figure 12—Influences on the future character of the relationship).

Sources of Information about China

In an attempt to gauge where parliamentarians obtain their information about China, the questionnaire asked which sources parliamentarians accessed for information about China and the frequency of this access. The questionnaire offered fourteen response options ranging from the local media to government departments to the Chinese Embassy. Responses to this question reveal a heavy reliance upon the Australian media and, perhaps unsurprisingly, a very low utilisation of Chinese language materials. Parliamentary activity—committee work and interactions with parliamentary colleagues—also emerge as influential or common sources. Additional sources of information included: state governments, personal and business contacts, visits to China, family, Chinese friends and the Chinese business sector (see Figure 7—Sources of Information about China).

Feedback from interviews suggests that many parliamentarians gain information about China through their involvement in parliamentary friendship groups. Parliamentary friendship groups promote bilateral relations, host delegations, create cross-parliamentary dialogue and provide a network of parliamentarians who can work with ambassadors and other country representatives. While friendship groups do not directly influence policy, they are considered to function as ‘chambers of ideas’ for advancing the bilateral relationship. Friendship groups often gain high level access to foreign leaders—representatives from the Australia–China Parliamentary Friendship Group had the opportunity to meet with President Hu Jintao. The Australia–China Parliamentary Friendship Group and the Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group both have extremely high levels of support in the Australian Parliament. At the time of writing, membership of the Australia–China Friendship Group was just short of 100 while membership of the Australia–Taiwan Friendship Group had recently surpassed 100. The role of parliamentary friendship groups is addressed further when the chapter turns to examine whether parliamentarians have observed any discernable change in the way China engages diplomatically.
Figure 6—Influential historical milestones—From an historical perspective rate how influential each of the following milestones has been in contributing to the character of the current Australia–China relationship

*At least one respondent marked between moderately and highly influential for these fields.
One respondent to the questionnaire claimed Chinese language skills, two respondents identified their staff as having any Chinese language skills and a minority identified themselves as utilising Chinese language resources for information about China.
**Travelling to China**

Australian parliamentarians are travelling to China and they are doing so with increasing frequency. A high proportion of respondents to the questionnaire had visited the People’s Republic (66%) or the Republic of China (58%). Of these, 59% had travelled to the People’s Republic during the 41st Parliament, while 41% had travelled to the Republic of China. A total of 68% of those who had travelled to China during the term of the 41st Parliament had done so in an official capacity—either as a member of a parliamentary or party delegation, a parliamentary friendship group, as a guest of the Chinese Government, or as a result of an individual study trip.

Visits to China offer parliamentarians an opportunity to build relationships with members of the National People’s Congress; they expose parliamentarians to high-level Chinese perspectives on important local and international issues; they allow for bilateral issues to be discussed at a legislator-to-legislator level, while also exposing parliamentarians to various aspects of Chinese social, cultural and political life. The increased traffic between Australia and China is one of the benefits of a strong bilateral relationship, a benefit that extends beyond the receipts for steel, iron ore or uranium.


Many parliamentarians who travel to China do so through the provision of an Overseas Study Entitlement. Senators and Members are entitled to financial assistance to enable them to travel outside the Commonwealth of Australia to undertake studies and investigations of matters related to duties and responsibilities as members of Parliament, after completing three years service.25 Like the official inter-parliamentary delegations, individual parliamentarians who utilise their Overseas Study Entitlement

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25. Clause 9.2(b) of the Remuneration Tribunal Determination No. 14 of 2003 requires all parliamentarians to provide a statement reporting on usage of their Overseas Study Entitlement.
are required to report to Parliament on the purposes and outcomes of visits. Overseas Study Entitlement reports are released biannually and tabled in Parliament at the discretion of the Special Minister of State. If we look at 2005, as an example, we find that the following trips were undertaken.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senator/Member</th>
<th>Purpose of visit</th>
<th>Place(s) visited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simon Crean ALP</td>
<td>ALP Trade Delegation to China, hosted by the Chinese Government and focusing on bilateral trade, economic relations and the possibility of a Free Trade Agreement with China (February–March)</td>
<td>Beijing, Qingdao, Shanghai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gavan O’Connor ALP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren Snowdon ALP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Lundy ALP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Slipper Liberal</td>
<td>Travelled to China and Mongolia before and after the Parliamentary Delegation visit to China and Mongolia (April)</td>
<td>Hong Kong, Macau Guangzhou, Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Johnson Liberal</td>
<td>Attended the 2005 Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference (April)</td>
<td>Guangzhou, Hainan Island, Qingdao, Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duncan Kerr ALP</td>
<td>Minor Overseas Study Entitlement contribution to visit Nanjing to research the Sino-Japanese conflicts over interpretations of the Nanjing Massacre (otherwise privately funded) (May)</td>
<td>Shanghai, Nanjing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annette Ellis ALP</td>
<td>Attended 88th Lions Club International Convention in Hong Kong (June–July)</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trish Crossin ALP</td>
<td>Examining education as an export industry (July)</td>
<td>Shanghai, Chongqing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry Quick ALP</td>
<td>No report (August)</td>
<td>No report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Watson Liberal</td>
<td>Chaired the Second Asian Conference on Pensions and Retirement Planning in Hong Kong (November)</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Slipper Liberal</td>
<td>Discussions on trade and other bilateral issues (December)</td>
<td>Beijing, Xiamen, Guangzhou, Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the two official inter-parliamentary delegations that visited China, only one reported to Parliament, the delegation of April 2005. The delegation report, which was written by a parliamentary officer, outlines the delegation’s program, offers a synopsis of the activities undertaken and presents a commentary on the observations of the travelling group. Like many of the reports made by official delegations, this report presents as a
wide ranging and erratic amalgam of materials—notes from high-level meetings are accompanied by political and historical descriptions, which are uncomfortably linked by tourist observation and travelogue. This lack of clarity of purpose is also reflected in the speeches that accompany the presentation of reports to Parliament. More often than not such speeches descend into romantic hyperbole about visits to world heritage sites:

As a tourist, I was extremely grateful for the opportunity to view the terracotta warriors, which must be one of the most amazing sights on this earth, as well as parts of the Great Wall of China, one of the greatest engineering feats ever executed by man.26

Parliamentarians who undertake specific issues-based travel are more likely to produce informative reports about economic, political or cultural change in China.27 Nevertheless, many reports are so profuse with traveller’s descriptions that it is difficult to determine whether they are written by overzealous tourists or federal legislators on official parliamentary business. (It is interesting that in the above quotation the Senator who participated in an official inter-parliamentary visit, actually refers to herself as a tourist.) Florid descriptions of the tomb of Emperor Qin Shi Huang, the scenery of Guilin, the experience of visiting the Forbidden City, do not appear to satisfy parliamentary reporting requirements or fulfil any national interest criteria.

In fulfilling their reporting obligations, some parliamentarians risk reinventing themselves as B-grade travel writers, modern-day Marco Polos, regurgitating hackneyed statistics about economic growth, providing potted and arcane histories of tourist sites and even describing the views afforded from the upper terraces of hotels. An extract from a report written by a Senator who participated in the ALP delegation visit to China in 2005 offers a case in point:

The celebration of the Chinese Lunar New Year gives a glamorous impression to a first-time visitor to China such as myself. Beyond the visual impact this visit has confirmed to me that China is a truly enigmatic nation, with a cultural mystique and growing economic power … I have been struck by the sublime symbolism that


27. Senator Brett Mason offers an informative report about democratisation and legal and judicial independence in Hong Kong; Senator Trish Crossin produces a report on education as an export industry focusing on the vocational and educational sector in China; other meaningful reports produced during this period were by: Byrne, Faulkner, Gash, O’Connor, Payne, Ray and Rudd. See ‘Parliamentarians’ Overseas Study Travel Reports’, Department of Finance and Administration, January to June 2005, July to December 2005, January to June 2006, July to December 2006.
pervades all aspects of Chinese etiquette, social mores and physical environment. It makes one’s immediate environment and personal interactions a book to be read. I think being able to read this ‘book’ and drawing its meaning will help me to understand how things work in China.\textsuperscript{28}

There has long been a deep-seated cultural compulsion for the Western traveller to attempt to speak authoritatively about China. In this manifestation we observe the type of western fantasy that often stands in for China. It renders China a place of the imagination, indeed a ‘book’, peopled by those who are at once sublimely cultured, mysterious and inscrutable.\textsuperscript{29}

**Charm Offensive or Offensive Charm?**

The notion of soft power that was introduced in the previous chapter can facilitate a discussion of whether parliamentarians consider China to be exercising a new, sophisticated and nuanced form of diplomacy—or soft power. It can also be employed to ask whether parliamentarians consider this power assists China achieve its hard objectives. In an attempt to answer such questions this section of the chapter considers the interaction that takes place between members of the Australian Parliament and the Chinese Embassy. In examining feedback from the parliamentary questionnaire, it turns to examine the types of representations that are made to Australian politicians by Chinese Government officials about social and political events in China and Australia.

In late May 2005 the Consul for Political Affairs at the Chinese Consulate in Sydney walked into the Sydney office of the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and asked to urgently speak to the State Director. Unable to arrange an appointment, Chen Yonglin departed—leaving behind two letters requesting political asylum. In the days that followed, and once the request for territorial (political) asylum was rejected, Chen Yonglin offered his sensational story to the media. He claimed that, for the last four years, he had been responsible for the monitoring and harassment of Chinese political dissidents in Australia, including members of the Falun Gong movement. He also alleged that the Chinese Government had developed a 1000–


\textsuperscript{29} There is an anecdote that when Henry Kissinger first visited China in 1971, he remarked to Zhou Enlai that he thought it wonderful that he was finally able to visit Zhou’s ‘mysterious country’. To which Premier Zhou is said to have replied, ‘There’s nothing especially mysterious about China, Dr Kissinger, once you know a little about it.’ As cited by Paul Monk in a Radio National interview, ‘China—Thunder From the Silent Zone’, 18 September 2005.
member spy ring across Australia and that these spies were involved in government-sponsored kidnappings.\textsuperscript{30} Claiming that his life was in danger and that he would be jailed and possibly executed if he was returned to China, Chen applied for Australia’s protection.

China’s Ambassador to Australia, Madame Fu Ying, emerged to reject Chen’s claims that he would be executed if he returned to China. In suggesting that the death sentence in China was reserved for the most brutal murderers she suggested, ‘China has moved on. It’s not the 1970s. China is not behind the bamboo curtain. I feel very uncomfortable people still think that way. I’m very surprised’.\textsuperscript{31} In response to her handling of Chen’s allegations, journalists and China-watchers alike began to talk about a new style of Chinese diplomacy, one which was conciliatory, cooperative, self-confident, tolerant of criticism, even humorous. The \textit{Australian Financial Review} identified Madame Fu as an exemplar of this new diplomacy describing her as ‘a paradigm of the new elite Chinese diplomat who has learned from the West the disarming arts of issues management and public diplomacy based on personal charm.

\textsuperscript{30} The Senate committee that inquired into DIMIA and DFAT’s handling of Chen’s request for political asylum expressed concern about the allegation regarding Chinese surveillance carried out in Australia. The committee expressed a desire that the Australian government state publicly that it ‘takes very seriously its obligations to protect those resident in Australia and will not tolerate its laws being disregarded’. In adding further comment to the report, Senator Bob Brown claimed: ‘The overall picture presented to this committee is one of largely unchecked surveillance and, at times, harassment of Australian citizens in Australia by agents of the Peoples [sic] Republic of China. The Australian government is not responding to this unacceptable intrusion of a foreign government into domestic life and freedoms of our country’. Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, \textit{Mr Chen Yonglin’s request for political asylum}, September 2005, pp. 56, 59. Since Chen’s allegations there has been widespread concern over the extent of Chinese military, political and economic espionage activity in Australia. China, which relies heavily on human intelligence, is said to draw upon three categories of spy, ‘professional spies’ paid to collect information, ‘working relationship’ spies operating in business circles and ‘friends’, frequently Chinese nationals or expatriates, who operate in less formal networks. In alleging 1,000 spies, Chen is probably referring to this later group.

\textsuperscript{31} Malcolm Farr, ‘Australia can give defector a visa: China’, \textit{Daily Telegraph}, 7 June 2005, p. 2. The sense that China has \textit{moved on} and developed a better sense of its international obligations was reinforced by a statement by Alexander Downer. When asked about the Chinese reaction to street violence in Burma during September 2007, Downer claimed: ‘This isn’t the China of old. The China of new is a China that listens to its friends and its neighbours, and listens to them a lot’. Alexander Downer, ‘Doorstop Interview—Washington DC, United States of America’, 27 September 2007.
and the appearance of openness’. For those who subscribe to the soft power thesis, Madame Fu emerged as a key instrument in China’s charm offensive.

Former Ambassador Madame Fu Ying is described by some parliamentarians as having run ‘Canberra’s most active embassy’, one which regularly engaged parliamentarians on a range of issues. Madame Fu is also described as building strong relationships with members of the Australia–China Parliamentary Friendship Group. She would invite members of the Friendship Group to ‘test’ sensitive issues—such as the status of Falun Gong or Taiwan’s desire to join the World Health Organization and she would draw on members of the Friendship Group for advice about China’s domestic issues: reducing poverty in rural areas, increasing China’s environmental protection and energy efficiency. In what may be characterised as a period of openness and exchange between the Embassy and members of Parliament, Madame Fu also built relationships with those outside the Friendship Group and is credited with engaging parliamentarians with whom she differed: friends of Taiwan, supporters of Falun Gong and those lobbying for Taiwanese representation at non-governmental regional forums.

There are also parliamentarians who are considerably less effusive in their praise for the diplomacy of Madame Fu, or for what one parliamentarian described as Madame Fu’s ‘silken assurances’. Another parliamentarian, critical of the way the Chinese monitor statements made in Parliament, spoke of being ‘hauled over to the Embassy for a breakfast with Madame Fu’ and ‘rapped over the knuckles’ for comments made about Taiwan. Another described a similar act of ‘robust diplomacy’—being approached by a Councillor from the Chinese Embassy, quizzed on why he visited Taiwan, and told ‘to pull [his] head in’. Each rebuke suggests that the Chinese Embassy commits substantial diplomatic resources to monitoring the contact that takes place between members of Parliament and the Taiwanese. It is not simply that the Chinese Embassy,


33. Kurlantzick claims, ‘China has aggressively wooed Australia, sending its finest diplomats, building up cultural exchanges, offering a strategic partnership, and aggressively promoting the importance of China’s demand for natural resources to the Australian economy,’ *Charm Offensive*, p. 214.

34. Another interviewee claimed that the Israeli Embassy was the most active, another, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office.

35. While there are many friends of Taiwan across the Parliament all parties accept the terms of the 1972 Joint Communiqué or *Paris Agreement*, signed by Australia and China on 21 December 1972 as outlined in Chapter Two.
which sits just 500 meters from Parliament, may reprimand parliamentarians who are supportive of the Taiwanese, or keep updated membership lists for the Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group, but parliamentarians claim that whenever a motion is raised in the Parliament about Taiwan you can look into the public galleries, in either chamber, and you are guaranteed to be observed by a representative from the Chinese Embassy.

In an environment where an increasing number of parliamentarians may be cautious about adopting positions which may offend the Chinese Government, one would assume that it would be difficult for the Taiwanese to gain the attention of parliamentarians. Friends of Taiwan claim ‘China’s rise is a real challenge for Taiwan’ and ‘it is more difficult for Taiwan than ever before’. Nevertheless, a number of interviewees reported that the Taiwanese had become extremely active and skilful advocates who have been successful in brokering the support of parliamentarians. There is a perception that while the Chinese appear to target foreign policy elites (the executive or certain members of the Friendship Group), the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) is much more successful in building relationships across the Parliament. The success of the TECO is underscored by the fact that there are more members of the Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group than the Australia–China Parliamentary Friendship Group.36

It is clear that the Republic of China, through the diplomatic contrivance of the TECO, spends a good deal of money developing sympathetic ears within Parliament House. In fact, to the current generation of parliamentarians, Gough Whitlam’s mantra—‘Never take the Taiwan trip’—appears to have lost its force with many parliamentarians enjoying generously funded trips to Taiwan.37 The friends of Taiwan employ a neutral language to describe the TECO’s ‘skilful advocacy’ or their duchessing of Australian parliamentarians: ‘The Taiwanese work very hard with Australian politicians’, ‘The Taiwanese have a reputation for being very generous towards politicians’, ‘Taiwan has an enormous number of friends in the Australian Parliament’. One interviewee went

36. There is a suggestion, which was both endorsed and rejected by different interviewees, that when parliamentarians are appointed to a position of parliamentary secretary or above, they are tapped on the shoulder by the Prime Minister and told to quit their association with the Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group.

37. Rowan Callick claims that when Michael Danby spoke to his then colleagues Laurie Brereton and Mark Latham about visiting Taiwan, Latham related to Danby the advice Gough Whitlam gave him before he took his seat in Parliament—‘Never take the Taiwan trip’, see ‘Caught in the eye of the dragon’, Australian Financial Review, 20 August 2005, p. 24.
further to claim, ‘Taiwan is a like-minded democracy and the relationship between the Taiwanese and the Parliament is stronger than any other relationship’.

This is not to say the Chinese are not engaged in the same type of diplomacy, albeit more targeted, and one interviewee claimed that while ‘The Taiwanese are active lobbyists, the Chinese are more successful lobbyists’. One interviewee claimed that the Chinese aggressively court members of the Government—they send them to China and give them access at all levels’. This is certainly true of the Senate’s Foreign Affairs, Trade and Defence Committee, which in undertaking a comprehensive inquiry into the Australia–China relationship, accepted an invitation to visit China as guests of the Chinese Government. In many instances, there is a good deal of hypocrisy at play. For while some parliamentarians are critical of the way the two Chinas conduct their diplomacy in the Pacific, in the local version of cheque-book diplomacy, many parliamentarians enjoy the benefits of generously funded China trips.

In March 2005 China passed an anti-secession law making it ‘illegal’ for Taiwan to secede from China—and mandating military action by the People’s Liberation Army should Taiwan formally declare independence. The passing of this law received little attention in Parliament. While it could be argued that the anti-secession law represented a rearticulation, rather than a change of position, it is possible that any misgivings parliamentarians might have had about the law were shelved by Ambassador Madame Fu Ying, who on 15 March 2005, addressed a cross-party meeting at Parliament House to explain the law. On the same day Senator Bob Brown presented a motion opposing the law. The motion was only supported by 7 Greens and Democrats senators. In the House the only MP to note the passing of the anti-secession law was marked by a

38. Former member of the Victorian Parliament, Victor Perton, indicates that this is also taking place at state level and that many Victorian parliamentarians are seduced by ‘lavish’ official hospitality and sponsored trips to China, see Tom Hyland, ‘Hard Power, Soft Targets’, Age, 11 November 2007, p. 15.

39. While the Chinese Embassy would later release a statement suggesting that ‘The Members of Parliament felt Fu Ying’s speech was of great help to facilitate their understanding of China’s position in [sic] Taiwan question’, White House spokesman Scott McClellan described the law as ‘unhelpful and something that runs counter to recent trends toward a warming in cross-strait relations’, ‘Ambassador Fu Ying Addresses Australian Parliament on China’s Anti-Secession Law’, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, 22 March 2005, and ABC Radio ‘China’s anti-secession law ‘empty’: experts’, PM, 9 March 2005.

speech by Michael Danby. The Chinese were clearly attuned to the parliamentary reaction for when the official Australian Parliamentary Delegation visited China in April 2005, a month later, the Chinese expressed their appreciation that Australia had adhered to the one China policy and it was ‘noted’ that the Senate had rejected Senator Brown’s motion opposing the law.

The question of Chinese Government influence is occasionally given consideration at Senate Estimates, when Opposition and minor party representatives can probe ministers and departmental officials about the interaction that takes place with the Chinese Government. We see an example of this during a hearing in May 2007, in which ALP Senator for New South Wales, John Faulkner, quizzes the First Assistant Secretary of DFAT’s North Asia Division, Peter Baxter, about the representations that were made to the Department in the lead up to the Dalai Lama’s visit in 2007:

**Senator Faulkner**—What, if any, involvement has DFAT had in the pending visit of the Dalai Lama? In other words, are officials assisting in organising the Dalai Lama’s visit?

**Mr Baxter**—No. Officials are not assisting in organising the Dalai Lama’s visit in terms of organising or facilitating his program. The Dalai Lama is visiting Australia in his position as a significant religious leader and his visit is being organised by Tibetan support groups within Australia.

**Senator Faulkner**—Are you aware of any engagements that have been made or scheduled with the Prime Minister, ministers or other government officials?

**Mr Baxter**—I can only speak for our portfolio. The Minister for Foreign Affairs said, a little over a week ago, that he would not be available to meet the Dalai Lama on this visit. In terms of the Prime Minister, that is outside our portfolio responsibilities.

**Senator Faulkner**—Was a meeting requested with the foreign minister by the Dalai Lama?

**Mr Baxter**—Yes, it was. As we understand it, the Tibetan affairs office in Australia has approached a number of political leaders on both sides of politics.

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41. In March 2006, the Chairman of the Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group, Margaret May, also spoke at a seminar in Taiwan to mark the one-year anniversary of the anti-secession law coming into effect.

Senator FAULKNER—Yes, I think that is true. Has the government received representations from the Chinese in respect of the Dalai Lama’s visit?

Mr Baxter—Yes, we have.

Senator FAULKNER—Could you indicate the nature of those representations?

Mr Baxter—The Chinese position on the Dalai Lama is well known. The Chinese have raised with us in bilateral meetings their concerns about the visit, and on 17 May in a press conference in Beijing China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson restated Beijing’s well-known position on the Dalai Lama and the Tibet question, opposing meetings by political leaders with the Dalai Lama. In those comments the ministry of foreign affairs in Beijing did not mention Australia specifically, or Australian leaders.

Senator FAULKNER—But in terms of direct contact with DFAT itself, has that been quite substantial?

Mr Baxter—There have been a number of representations made by Chinese representatives in Australia and during visits to China by Australian ministers and officials.43

While the matter was not pursued by Senator Faulkner, it would have been interesting to know more about the nature of these representations.

Respondents to the parliamentary questionnaire were asked whether they had received representations from Chinese officials about the political status of Taiwan, the rights of workers to collectively organise in China, the activities of Falun Gong practitioners in Australia or the political status of Tibet.44

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44. In the week prior to the distribution of the questionnaire, the Dalai Lama visited Canberra, giving renewed attention to China’s human rights record in Tibet.
These responses suggest the Chinese Government, or Chinese Embassy in Canberra, is an active advocate when it comes to the political status of Taiwan and the activities of Falun Gong practitioners in Australia. When asked if the Chinese engaged parliamentarians any differently from nationals from other countries it was suggested that, with the Chinese (PRC), ‘there is no unofficial line and that the Chinese do not deviate from the set text’; ‘what is reported in the news is what is said in meetings; the message is unchanged’.

While some interviewees consider the notion of Chinese soft power an aberration, or the ultimate oxymoron, others feel that some parliamentarians have become so well-disposed towards China that they are no longer objective. It is argued by some that China’s image is now so positive that ‘the message about human rights cannot get through’ or that ‘people with commitments to human rights are losing the battle’. Others claim that China’s image is so positive that Parliament has overlooked China’s rising military expenditure.

The majority of parliamentarians envisage China’s rise as peaceful. By and large it is considered that China’s central concerns are domestic—maintaining growth, dealing with inequities in the distribution of wealth and maintaining internal political stability. A number of interviewees made a point of stating that they did not consider China’s rise a threat and numerous interviewees identified China as a non-expansionary power: ‘Modern China is not a threat, China is now being led by a class of very well-educated
officials'; ‘China is primarily concerned with developing standards of living.’ In regard to increased Chinese military expenditure, another interviewee claimed: ‘Even if it’s increased by 17.6% it is developing from such a low base that it is of little concern’. Some went further and suggested, ‘China does not get enough credit for its work as a peacemaker (principally in North Korea).

Numerous respondents to the questionnaire offered comment about important collaborative exchanges that have been taking place between the two nations. These extended from the interaction between education sectors (and the positive effect of overseas Chinese students in Australian schools and tertiary institutions), to cooperative endeavours surrounding preparations for the Beijing Olympics, to the contribution being made by CPA Australia to accounting professional services and standards in China/Hong Kong. Another respondent drew attention to the interaction that takes place with China through the United Nations (UN), particularly through the United Nations Security Council.

Committee Work

Respondents to the parliamentary questionnaire were asked whether they believed that the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade or the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade can influence Australian foreign policy. A total of 57% of respondents felt that these two committees can influence policy. Those who held this view were asked to provide an example. Many respondents identified the general capacity of the committees to influence ministerial or

45. However, this sentiment is not universal. Senator Christine Milne claims, ‘In my view, we are going to see pressure for territorial expansion from China because of the huge weight of population and the consequent environmental scarcity’, ‘Delegation Reports: Parliamentary Delegation to China and Mongolia’, Senate, Debates, 7 November 2005.

46. In December 2003 the Senate’s Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee released a report titled, The (not quite) White Paper: Australia’s foreign affairs and trade policy, Advancing the National Interest. The report advocates for the increased parliamentary participation in the foreign policy process through JSCFADT. Recommendation 1 proposed, ‘The Committee recommends that upon the commissioning of any future White Paper, the Minister for Foreign Affairs shall refer the proposal to the parliament’s Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT). The Joint Committee shall undertake broad public consultations regarding the proposed content of the White Paper, and shall report its findings to the parliament. The report shall inform the development, by government, of the White Paper, and shall be published along with the White Paper as an accompanying document’. This recommendation was not accepted by the government.
government thinking; alternatively, numerous respondents saw committee work as an opportunity to feed into the policy process. Some cited examples where these committees had contributed to specific policy development: these included areas such as regional security, relations with Latin America, the development of free trade agreements and the cross-referencing of issues with the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties. Others suggested that these committees offer parliamentarians an avenue to record human rights concerns or an opportunity to contribute to policy development in less politically sensitive or controversial areas.

During the 41st Parliament the Australia–China relationship often became the object of parliamentary interest and the subject of parliamentary analysis. This interest was demonstrated by the work of parliamentary committees. The major China-related inquiry undertaken during the period was conducted by the Senate’s Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee.\(^47\) This resulted in a significant two-part report on the Australia–China relationship: *Opportunities and Challenges* (November 2005) and *China’s Emergence: Implications for Australia* (March 2006). Additionally, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry and Resources undertook a major inquiry examining the development of the uranium industry and the possibility of exporting Australian uranium to China (November 2006).\(^48\) As mentioned above, the Senate’s Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee also inquired into the Government’s response to Mr Chen Yonglin’s request for political asylum (September 2005) and the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (Human Rights Subcommittee) inquired into *Australia’s Human Rights Dialogue Process* (September 2005).

The first part of the major Senate report, *Opportunities and Challenges* offers a detailed analysis of trading, commercial, social and cultural links with China. The second focuses on the geo-political and strategic aspects of the bilateral relationship. The terms

\(^{47}\) It should be noted that this committee travelled to China as guests of the Chinese Government.

of reference for the inquiry focused on Australia’s economic and political relations with China and Australia’s response to China’s emergence as a regional power. In keeping with this, the report is largely concerned with examining the bilateral relationship through a trade prism.\textsuperscript{49} The first 245 pages of the 349-page report (part one) examines the incentives and obstacles to trade with China across a number of industry sectors, while the remaining 100 pages focus upon non-economic matters: human rights, the promotion of ‘China literacy’ in Australia, public diplomacy, science and technology and political links. Part two examines China’s foreign policy and China’s relationships in East Asia and the Pacific.\textsuperscript{50} In presenting the first of the reports to Parliament, the Chair of the committee, Labor Senator for New South Wales, Steve Hutchins, identified factors that the committee considered possible of derailing China’s economic progress:

… the Chinese government’s ability to manage effectively a rapidly expanding economy; the potential for social and political unrest as the country opens up to new ideas and its people’s expectations change; the gap between rich and poor; China’s growing appetite for energy resources; and environmental degradation. There are also external threats that could disrupt China’s economic progress, such as the conflict between Taiwan and China over the One China policy; tensions between China and Japan over sensitive issues such as their differing interpretations of history; and the trade deficit with the United States.\textsuperscript{51}

Drawing from the report, Senator Hutchins identified three further concerns attached to the development of Australia–China relations: corruption in local government and the need for improved corporate governance in China; China’s flagrant violation of intellectual property standards; and human rights and labour rights.\textsuperscript{52} These three concerns provided the basis for many of the committee’s recommendations.

\textsuperscript{49} Former China-related Senate inquiries: Foreign Affairs and Trade References Committee, \textit{Australia–China Relations} (1996) and the Senate Standing Committee on Industry and Trade, \textit{Australia–China Trade} (1984) took similar approaches.

\textsuperscript{50} With regard to the Pacific the report recommended that the Australian government, through the Pacific Islands Forum, encourage China and Taiwan to adhere to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) principles on development assistance, Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, \textit{China’s Emergence: implications for Australia}, Recommendation 7, p. 182.


\textsuperscript{52} The committee was concerned that the Australian government ‘places too much weight on the trading relationship … and ignores the human rights abuses occurring in the country’. Senator Steve Hutchins, ‘Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee Report’, Senate, \textit{Debates}, 10 November 2005, p. 16.
One of the themes to emerge from the inquiry was that Australia needed to develop experts ready to advise government and business leaders on China-related matters. One professor after another came before the committee and spoke of Australia’s limited capacity to deliver China-literacy. Numerous witnesses spoke about a missing generation of Asianists and about the effect that this deficiency would have on Australia’s commercial, strategic, security and cultural interests. The evidence received by the committee was embodied in the remark by Professor David Goodman, a remark which shattered the illusion of a China-literate nation: ‘We do not have the educational and intellectual infrastructure for dealing with China.’

As a result of such evidence the committee recommended ‘that the Australian government place high priority on encouraging China literacy in Australia by: working with state and territory governments to promote the study of Asia at both primary and tertiary levels; provide more support for in-country language training; establish scholarships for ‘double degrees’ incorporating language studies; and provide scholarships to encourage Chinese students to apply for courses in Australia in the humanities and social sciences.’

Despite the overwhelming evidence provided, the Government responded to this recommendation by outlining its commitment to Asian language learning in Australia, suggesting that it had done enough to promote Asia/China-literacy in Australia’s primary, secondary and tertiary education sectors.

53. Professor David Goodman, Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Opportunity and Challenges: Australia’s relationship with China*, November 2005, p. 274. Stephen Morgan claimed if there was ‘a crisis in the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party, we may find that Australia would not have sufficient people able to provide advice to intelligence agencies, your committees and defence services, let alone provide advice to business and civilian interests’, p. 274. Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Opportunity and Challenges: Australia’s relationship with China*, November 2005, p. 274. Also see comments from John Fitzgerald and Robin Jeffrey.

54. See ‘China literacy’, Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, Recommendations, 15, 22 and 23.

55. See responses to Recommendation 15 (‘ensure there is a pool of highly skilled China experts in Australia ready to advise government and business leaders on developments in that country’) in ‘Government Response to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee’s *Inquiry into Australia’s Relations with China*’, pp. 22–24, [http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/fadt_ctte/china/govt_response.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/fadt_ctte/china/govt_response.pdf) (accessed 2 August 2007). Kevin Rudd has committed the ALP to investing in Asia-literacy, ‘What an enormous badging and branding opportunity for this country in terms of how we market ourselves into the region from Europe and from North America to be able to say: ‘We know most about this country and most about this region compared with any other Western culture and Western economy. We have the largest number of Japanese
Exporting Uranium to China

Over the course of the 41st Parliament there was a significant shift in debate about Australia’s uranium resources. The decline in global energy security and the growing concerns over the world’s rising global greenhouse gas emissions combined to focus attention on Australia’s uranium deposits. Following the advice of the Uranium Mining, Processing and Nuclear Energy Review Inquiry, chaired by Ziggy Switkowski (2006), and the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry and Resources Inquiry into Developing Australia’s Non-fossil Fuel Energy Industry (2006), the Howard Government announced a new strategy for the development of uranium mining and nuclear power in Australia. This strategy sought to remove the structural and legislative barriers that would stymie the development of a substantial export industry while seeking to promote uranium for its clean energy capacities.56

Prior to this announcement, Australia and China entered into a bilateral safeguards agreement on the transfer of nuclear material (April 2006), an agreement opening the way for the sale of Australian uranium to China. This was followed by the ratification of two nuclear safeguard agreements between Australia and China in January 2007. The 800–page House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry and Resources report gives consideration to the practical, strategic, economic, security and

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environmental debates for the development of a uranium industry, with a section of the report dealing explicitly with the export of uranium to China. The statement of the committee reveals that it did not have substantial concerns about the security of Australian uranium exported to China and it was supportive of the use of nuclear power in reducing global greenhouse gas emissions:

While the Committee understands the concerns expressed by some submitters about the added risks for export of uranium attendant upon the absence of a fully ‘open society’ in China and its allegedly poor proliferation record, the Committee nonetheless concludes that such concerns should not prevent sales of Australian uranium to China … the Committee’s support for sales of uranium to China is underpinned by the fact that use of nuclear power will aid in China’s development and help to address the global energy imbalance, while also earning export income for Australia. Use of Australia’s uranium will fuel the generation of base-load electricity in China in a manner that is far less carbon intensive than the alternatives and this will be of unquestionable global environmental benefit’ adding that it was confident that ‘sales of uranium will not, either directly or indirectly, contribute to any military purpose in China’.  

Given the position taken by the committee, and that documented in the Switkowski report, it was surprising that individual members expressed a higher level of concern about the export of uranium in the parliamentary questionnaire. Respondents were asked whether they were concerned about the export of Australian uranium to the People’s Republic. Just under half, or 42%, expressed concern over the effect the export of uranium would have on nuclear proliferation and security. If we look at the responses on a cross-party basis we find that concern was expressed by 100% of minor party respondents, 65% of ALP, 25% of Liberal Party and 0% of the National Party respondents. Respondents were also asked if they had any other concern. Concern was expressed over whether China would honour the safeguard agreements (and not use uranium for weapons), while others questioned how China would manage its nuclear waste. Some parliamentarians raised general concerns about the environmental impact of nuclear power and the effect that uranium exports would have on Australia’s international reputation as a responsible international citizen.

Human Rights

When concern was expressed over the Australia–China relationship by members of the 41st Parliament, it most often focused on China’s handling of human rights. Of all the unsolicited comments that were offered at the end of the parliamentary questionnaire the most candid focused on the Parliament’s, or the Government’s, position on human rights in China. While one respondent claimed that ‘The rights of Falun Gong practitioners, and others, do not receive enough attention in our bilateral relationship’, other respondents were more vociferous in their criticism of the Howard Government: ‘The Federal Government gives zero significance to human rights and promoting democracy. This is not good enough’ while one member of the ALP claimed, ‘Alexander Downer and Kevin Rudd don’t care two hoots about human rights issues in China’.

Figure 9—Do you receive representations from individual constituents or organisations about any of the following human rights issues:

- The parliamentary questionnaire sought to identify what representations Australian parliamentarians receive about human rights matters in China. The results reveal the type of issues raised and the reach of different advocacy groups. When compared with the feedback on the question about representations from Chinese Government officials they also illustrate the multiple and often competing representations that are received on politically sensitive matters.

Of the 81% who had received representations from individuals or organisations about human rights issues in China almost all, or 96%, had been approached about the rights
of Falun Gong practitioners. It also appears that the extensive representations from the Falun Gong movement have also drawn attention to the practice of so-called organ ‘harvesting’. Beyond these five fixed categories respondents were also given the option of specifying any other representations received about human rights. Those included approaches made about the status of Taiwan, or threats made against Taiwan, while a further 8% of respondents identified approaches about Tibet or Tibetans (something which may have been interpreted by other respondents as ‘rights of ethnic and religious minorities’). Other parliamentarians noted approaches about such issues as: employment rights, the death penalty, democracy in China and the fate of pro-democracy advocates, while one interviewee stated their personal concern about the growing incidents of child abduction in China.

Figure 10—The China-related matters raised by your constituents relate to:

A total of 53% of respondents had been approached by their Australian-Chinese constituents about specific China-related issues. Of these, 83% had been approached about human rights, 67% had been approached about immigration matters and perhaps surprisingly, only 40% had been approached about commercial or trade matters.

These results suggest that Australian parliamentarians consistently receive representations about a variety of human rights matters in China. Yet despite the frequency of these representations, few parliamentarians appear committed to

58. In May 2007, after sustained international advocacy over organ harvesting, the Chinese Government introduced new regulations which ban organ trading, requiring all transplant recipients to have the written consent of donors.
highlighting human rights in the Parliament. Those who do include: Senators Bob Brown, Christine Milne and Kerry Nettle (Greens); Senators Andrew Bartlett and Natasha Stott Despoja (Democrats) and Chris Bowen MP, Carmen Lawrence MP, Martin Ferguson MP and Michael Danby MP (ALP). Michael Danby alone spends more time documenting human rights abuses in China, in Parliament, than do the other 225 parliamentarians combined.\footnote{Michael Danby consistently highlights human rights issues in China through Questions in writing on issues including: Chinese labour camps, conditions for coal mining workers, harassment of Tibetan minorities, Chinese aid to Sudan, democracy in Hong Kong, organ harvesting and the barring of goods manufactured in forced labour camps in China.}

A number of interviewees considered that giving voice to such issues was part of their parliamentary mandate—‘parliamentarians should focus on the international citizenship; human rights are indivisible and parliamentarians can play a role here’. Similarly, when speaking about raising human rights matters in Parliament, another interviewee claimed—‘my role is to put pressure on government, to speak to the people of Australia, and to make Australia’s position known to foreign governments’.\footnote{When discussing human rights abuses in China a number of interviewees suggested that it was important not to be seen as lecturing foreign governments while others were mindful to recognise Australia’s own failures in protecting human rights. Another interviewee, who spoke of raising his concerns about the treatment of political dissidents, Falun Gong practitioners and trade unionists during a meeting in the Great Hall of the People, claimed that the Chinese ‘anticipated these questions and simply brushed them aside’.}

Nevertheless, human rights advocates claim to be marginalised from parliamentary debate: ‘Those members of Parliament who do not solely focus on the economic aspect of the Australia–China relationship are excluded from the debate’. Another parliamentarian committed to highlighting human rights in China claimed that as a result of the thriving economic relationship, ‘an impenetrable wall has gone up around issues of human rights in China’. Some argue that the Parliament is extremely reticent in taking a position which may offend the Chinese and that this results in various acts of self-censorship.\footnote{Claiming ‘fatuousness has always been a strong element of the Australian response to China’, Greg Sheridan suggests that senior politicians deliberately avoid issues of human rights abuses in China: What’s that? Labour rights in China? I think I’m washing my hair. Chinese prison conditions? Not my bailiwick. The future of democracy? What if we talk about the future of trade instead.’ Greg Sheridan, ‘Agents of change see a free China’, \textit{Weekend Australian}, 31 March 2007, p. 29.} One such criticism relates to the failure of the Speaker of the House to formally acknowledge the presence of two visiting dignitaries—Former
Canadian cabinet minister David Kilgour and European Parliament member Edward McMillan-Scott—who were in Canberra in August 2006 to attend a parliamentary forum drawing attention to the alleged ‘harvesting’ of organs from Falun Gong practitioners. Despite the numerous approaches that were made by Carmen Lawrence, Speaker David Hawker, in possible contravention of parliamentary protocol, failed to acknowledge their presence in the public gallery. When quizzed about his actions, the Speaker claimed, ‘While there are not firm guidelines (about recognising the visits of dignitaries), there are clear rules if you like that I try to follow and given the precedents that have been here for many years, I continue to follow those’ ...\(^{62}\)

Another way in which human rights matters in China are brought to the attention of the Parliament is through petitions. Petitioning facilitates a direct link between the public and the Parliament and provides the only means by which a citizen can directly place a matter before the Parliament. There were 743 petitions submitted to the House of Representative during the 41\(^{st}\) Parliament (to 21 June 2007). If we are to identify these petitions on a portfolio basis, the greatest number related to: Health and Ageing (170), Foreign Affairs (164) and Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (106).\(^ {63}\)

During the 41\(^{st}\) Parliament there was an average of one China-related petition received by the House each sitting week. (There were 53 China-related petitions presented in the House of Representatives over 53 sitting weeks.) Of these, 35 related to Falun Gong and 12 to the alleged practice of organ ‘harvesting’. Other China-related petitions during the 41\(^{st}\) Parliament included: Taiwan’s application to be represented in the World Health Assembly and the World Health Organization (four), the treatment of bears in China (one), and a petition alleging the persecution of the Chinese human rights lawyer, Gao Zhisheng (one).\(^ {64}\) It is extremely likely therefore that the Falun Gong movement was the single most active petitioner to the 41\(^{st}\) Australian Parliament. In terms of the number of signatories they were also extremely well represented.\(^ {65}\)

\(^ {62}\) Nick Leys and Andrew Fraser, ‘Fragile China’, Australian, 17 August 2006.

\(^ {63}\) The total number of petitions presented to the House was: 2005—235; 2006—276; as at 21 June 2007—148. Making a Difference: Petitioning the House of Representatives, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Procedure, August 2007, p. 8.

\(^ {64}\) By comparison, eight petitions about Falun Gong and one on organ harvesting were presented to the Senate over the same period.

\(^ {65}\) As the petitions about Falun Gong decline there is a commensurate increase in the number of petitions received about organ harvesting. For example, between October
Chapter Four: A Virtuous Circle?

Figure 11—Number of Falun Gong petitions tabled in the House of Representatives during the 41st Parliament:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Falun Gong Petitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Human Rights Dialogue

Prime Minister Howard proposed the establishment of a formal high-level bilateral dialogue on human rights with Premier Li Peng on his visit to China in March–April 1997. The first talks were held in Beijing in August 1997 and initially involved officials from the two countries’ foreign ministries. Australian participation in the annual meeting has grown to include representatives from the Attorney-General’s Department, the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC). A wide-ranging number of issues have been discussed at the annual Dialogue. These include issues such as: freedom of speech and freedom of assembly in China, cultural and religious freedom in Xinjiang and Tibet, China’s use of the death penalty, China’s ratification of international conventions, China’s use of re-education and the rights of people living in China with HIV/AIDS. In recent times the Dialogue has grown to include discussions about human rights in Australia: the human rights of indigenous Australians and the policy of mandatory detention for all illegal immigrants and asylum seekers.

2006 and September 2007, there were 11 petitions concerning organ harvesting. It could be argued that while petitions may perform an important democratic function, they are more successful in strengthening community views on an issue than they are in bringing an issue to the consideration of the Parliament.

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The Howard Government claimed that the Human Rights Dialogue was fundamental to its engagement with China and that official dialogue is the most practical and effective way of progressing discussions on human rights. The Howard Government was also keen to point out that Australia has the highest level dialogue of any nation—at the Assistant Minister level—and that the United States does not engage in any type of human rights dialogue with China. The Howard Government claimed that the Dialogue is the most effective mechanism for facilitating incremental change. However, critics suggest that Australia has traded the right to publicly criticise China on human rights, in exchange for an official dialogue, which has lacked transparency and failed to deliver any substantive outcomes.67 In criticising the Howard Government for its muted advocacy on human rights, numerous respondents to the Parliamentary questionnaire claim: ‘The Human Rights Dialogue is a sham … China’s role reinforcing external, repressive regimes is of growing concern …’, while another identifies the Dialogue as ‘a device for obviating any real discussion on human rights’.68

67. Journalist Greg Sheridan claims, ‘Our behind-closed-doors human rights dialogue with China has no effect on human rights and is not designed to. It allows us to satisfy our own values by making the representations we should without constant public brawling with Beijing’, ‘Sensible diplomatic approach to China serves our interests’, Weekend Australian, 25–26 July 2002, p. 17. Elsewhere Sheridan has written, ‘Our present official human rights dialogue exists solely so the Government will never have to say anything publicly about Chinese human rights’, ‘Shamed by our silence’, Australian, 2 June 2005, p. 11. Mike Steketee also claims, ‘The Howard Government has worked assiduously to push human rights to one side in the relationship with China’, ‘The price is rights’, Weekend Australian, 1–2 April 2006, p. 20. The Howard Government’s response to these criticisms is that official discussions are a more effective way of engaging China on issues of human rights issues than by attempting to publicly shame China. Moreover, that the process is transparent as press conferences are held after meetings. The above mentioned Senate inquiry found it difficult to assess the effectiveness of Australia’s Human Rights Dialogue with China because a lack of materials on the Dialogue’s outcomes. Deputy Chair and Liberal Senator for Western Australia, David Johnston claimed, ‘the principal thing that I came away from this inquiry with was that China has no real history of transparency’, ‘Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee Report’, Senate, Debates, 10 November 2005, p. 21.

68. The abovementioned allegations by Chen Yonglin were not raised at the Dialogue. Alexander Downer claimed, ‘The law in Australia says that these matters must be considered by the Immigration Department and we wouldn’t be raising the case in human rights talks with the Chinese …’, ‘Transcript of a doorstop interview of the Minister for Foreign Affairs: Adelaide, 27 June 2005. The Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee also received submissions which suggested that the Human Rights Dialogue was inadequate, see Opportunities and Challenges, p. 255. Here we find that Chen Yonglin himself describes the dialogue as having failed to make any progress.
In March 2004 the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade referred an inquiry into Australia’s human rights dialogue process with China, Vietnam and Iran to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT). The terms of reference required that the committee ‘inquire into and report on the human rights dialogue process, with particular reference to: parliamentary participation and oversight; involvement of non-government organisations; the roles and obligations of participating agencies; reporting requirements and mechanisms; and the monitoring and evaluation of outcomes’. The criticisms of the process, as identified in the submissions received by the committee, focused on three major themes: the lack of transparency and accountability and reporting function in the dialogue processes, that the Dialogue was process rather than outcome focused and did not deliver substantive outcomes, and the limitations of bilateral as opposed to multilateral dialogue on human rights.

In evidence provided to the committee by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Director of the China Political and External Section, East Asia Branch, Peter Roggero, offered the following assessment of human rights in China:

Regarding human rights in China in the broad, I think our assessment is that the situation has, over a longer period, improved rather than worsened. Obviously there are instances on occasions where you would see two steps forward and one step back … but in the broad we do see an incremental improvement. I think a lot of that improvement has resulted from China’s economic development feeding into legal reforms, which provide people with greater legal protections against abuses, and the growth in China’s administrative capability. So there is increasing transparency in the way China is governing itself, and that flows into improvements in the way that human rights are observed in China. In our dialogue with China we try and tap into that improvement generally, point out areas where we think things are not improving or not improving as well as they could be or should be, and, in many cases, through the Human Rights Technical Cooperation Program, directly provide practical assistance to encourage those kinds of reforms and changes.

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70. It was also suggested that, because of the dialogue, Australia is less likely to sponsor United Nations resolutions against human rights in China at the Commission of Human Rights in Geneva.

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Asked if he could identify any instances where the human rights situation had worsened Peter Roggero replied:

Unfortunately we do not have accurate figures for many issues, including, for example, the death penalty. It is possible that over some years there have been higher numbers of instances of death sentences, but we do not know that for a fact because China does not publish the figures. Some years ago, China devolved the authority for issuing death sentences to below the central level. It used to be the prerogative of only the Supreme People’s Court. When they devolved that to the provincial level we fear that there may have been an increase in some of those death sentences being issued. We have raised that on many occasions with the Chinese government, including through the dialogue. I was pleased to hear at the most recent dialogue that China is reviewing that policy and looking at putting that authority back to at least the Supreme People’s Court—at the central level, the top level—rather than allowing provincial level courts to make those sorts of decisions. That is an area where it may have become worse over some years. I could not say that for a fact because China does not publish those figures.72

The JSCFADT report made five recommendations for improving the Human Rights Dialogue process (remembering that these also related to dialogues with Vietnam and Iran). Two related to increasing the level of parliamentary participation and oversight of the dialogue process, through formalising the participation of parliamentarians from Government and non-Government parties.73 One recommendation stated that the Government consider further involving NGOs through preceding each meeting (in Australia) with a forum where NGOs could brief members on their human rights concerns. The final two recommendations related to increasing reporting obligation requirements. This would entail the Minister for Foreign Affairs tabling an annual statement in Parliament on the status and proceedings of each meeting and having government departments and NGOs make more effective use of their websites to convey up-to-date information on the Dialogue. The Government accepted three of the five recommendations. Those that the Government did not accept related to preceding each bilateral dialogue with a forum involving NGOs and the recommendation suggesting that the Minister for Foreign Affairs table an annual statement on the status of the dialogue. In the first instance the Government argued that it had already established a number of effective mechanisms through which NGOs are able to relate their concerns. The Government claimed that the formal ‘tabling of a report in

72. ibid.

73. The Howard Government notes that in the past the Minister for Foreign Affairs has written to the Leader of the Opposition and the Opposition Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs to nominate representatives for the dialogue but that the Opposition has never bothered to respond to these invitations.
Parliament would compromise the guarantees of confidentiality that have been so important in ensuring that the dialogues feature frank discussions of sometimes quite sensitive issues’. However, the response also explained that ‘The Government is prepared to provide in camera briefings to Parliamentarians at their request’. 74

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a snapshot of the attitudes held by the members of the 41st Parliament towards the Australia–China relationship. It has sought to offer perspectives on issues ranging from where parliamentarians obtain their information about China to what types of China-related issues are raised by constituents. At the same time it has sought to contribute to an understanding of the way the Australian Parliament engages with foreign policy concerns through its committee work and through its interaction with members of other legislatures. Together with the material contained in Chapter Three, the chapter has also offered evidence of the way the Chinese Government and its officials engage in various diplomatic behaviours to influence members of the Australian Parliament on issues sensitive to Beijing.

In concluding this chapter it is worth giving consideration to what respondents to the questionnaire believed to be influences on the future character of the Australia–China relationship. The categories assessed ranged from the economic (China’s demand for energy resources), to the environmental (a climate change agreement with China), to the bilateral (Australia’s human rights dialogue with China) to the international (China’s emergence as a stakeholder in global/regional affairs).

The responses to this question suggest that the greatest threat to the future prosperity of the bilateral relationship relates to the potential for the emergence of a less liberal approach to trade matters: including reduced market access or a stalled program of trade liberalisation. At least for now, China’s human rights record, concerns over China’s regional relations, or even its ‘chequebook diplomacy’ in the Pacific—will only become important insofar as they have the capacity to affect either the economic baseline or the Australia–United States alliance. This is reinforced by comments made by interviewees who anticipated that the potential for change in Australia–China relations would likely emerge from a substantial economic downturn within China or

from a fundamental change in the power structure of the Chinese Communist Party. With respect to parliamentary attitudes towards democratisation in China, while there are those who are mindful not to overstate the likelihood of any movement towards democracy, there is a sizable number who believe that market liberalisation and economic growth will result in political change and democratic reform in China.

The other issue most commonly nominated as a potential influence on the future character of the Australia–China relationship was cross-Strait relations. It was suggested that ‘conflict between China and Taiwan is constantly diminishing as the two sides come to better understand one another and they become more enmeshed—both through trade and people to people contact’. Another parliamentarian described the cross-Strait situation as ‘a knot that cannot be untied’. Speaking of the Taiwan Straits and the Korean Peninsula, one Senator stressed how important North Asian security was for Australia, claiming, ‘If there is a crisis in North Asia, Australia will starve!’ Other anticipated areas of difficulty in bilateral relations included: China’s relations with its North Asian neighbours; broader human rights abuses in China; the growing number of Chinese nationals making asylum or protection claims in Australia (and the possibility of an unsuccessful claimant being repatriated and executed75); and any incident involving the surveillance and harassment of Australian citizens by the Chinese Government.

75. Australia receives as many as 1000 applications for protection visas from Chinese nationals each year. Between 5–6% of these applications are successful. (See Senator Amanda Vanstone, ‘Questions without notice: Asylum Seekers’, Senate, Debates, 12 June 2005, p. 29.)
**Figure 12—Influences on the future character of the relationship**—Using the contemporary Australia–China relationship as a starting point, indicate how influential you feel each of the following will be in determining the future character of the Australia–China relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing Australian exports to China</td>
<td>Highly influential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bilateral or multilateral climate-change agreement with China</td>
<td>Highly influential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Free Trade Agreement with China</td>
<td>Highly influential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China’s emergence as a stakeholder in global/regional affairs</td>
<td>Highly influential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rights of Falun Gong Practitioners in China*</td>
<td>Highly influential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The enforcement of intellectual property rights in China*</td>
<td>Highly influential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The character of Chinese diplomacy in the South Pacific#</td>
<td>Highly influential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The political status of the Republic of China/Taiwan#</td>
<td>Highly influential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The political status of Tibet^</td>
<td>Highly influential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia’s Human Rights Dialogue with China</td>
<td>Highly influential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China’s demand for energy resources and raw materials#</td>
<td>Highly influential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* At least one respondent marked moderately to marginally influential; # At least one respondent marked highly to marginally influential; ^ At least one respondent marked marginally to not influential.
Postscript

… Every time I’m in China, they say ‘We’ve just had a delegation here from Mr Rudd … But you know, I wouldn’t say that he is doing something that the Prime Minister hasn’t done. Or a whole host of Australian leaders. So I mean he’s going to China. That’s good and I’m not critical of that, but he’s not Marco Polo, not the first man to have gone to China.

Peter Costello, April 2007

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In February 2007, when asked to nominate his greatest strength as an alternative prime minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd emphasised his in-depth knowledge of China. Rudd spoke of having lived in China as a diplomat during the 1980s and of returning more than fifty times; he went on to suggest that this familiarity would be critical to engaging a nation destined to be at the centre of Australia’s strategic and economic ‘gravity’. In the following weeks, Treasurer Peter Costello sought to draw capital from Rudd’s claim, making Rudd’s China-literacy a subject of derision. This was played out in his Marco Polo quip—and here we assume that Costello meant to say Rudd was not the first westerner or western man to have gone to China—and during Question Time in early March 2007, when Rudd was attacked for meeting with the disgraced former premier of Western Australia, Brian Burke. To the great mirth of his Liberal and National Party colleagues, Costello rose to parody Rudd’s inadvertent meeting with Brian Burke. SBS political correspondent, Karen Middleton, described the theatre in the following way:

‘Brian Burke!’ Costello continued in mock mimicry. ‘What a coincidence—down here at Perugino’s on the first of August 2005! I didn’t know you were going to be here, Brian. And while I’m here I will make a speech on China.

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76. ‘Interview with Peter Costello’, Insiders, ABC television, 1 April 2007. In response to a caller to John Laws’ program on Southern Cross radio in which it was suggested that Julia Gillard—an alleged communist who did not own a skirt—would ultimately run the country while Mr Rudd was off in China ‘jabbering’ in Mandarin, Rudd claimed, ‘If I can use whatever language skills I have got to boost the exports of Australian farmers to major emerging markets like China, let me tell you, I will yabber my way through any lunch speaking whatever language I can’. ‘Rudd declines comment on Gillard skirt’, Australian Associated Press, 15 November 2007.


78. Former Premier of Western Australia, Brian Burke was imprisoned in 1994 for rorting travel expenses and again in 1997 for misappropriating campaign donations. For years Burke had exercised influence both within the ALP and broader parliamentary circles.

In what followed, the triumvirate of Costello, Abbott and Howard were vicious in their attack: Rudd was derided for supping with the devil; accused of entering into Faustian pacts with convicted felons; and lampooned for his snooty prolixity on China. For the first time since his election as Leader of the Opposition, Rudd encountered the full force of an acerbic Coalition struggling in the polls. And, after initially feigning disinterest, Rudd eventually recoiled from the venom that tacked its way across the chamber.  

Having been variously labelled an ‘elite’ and a ‘Manchurian candidate’, unable to disagree with the latest dictum from Beijing, Rudd’s China-literacy was put in the closet, where it remained until September 2007. Then, in something akin to a political coup, Rudd stood before the Chinese delegation at the 15th Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation leaders’ meeting in Sydney, on the eve of the 2007 Federal Election, and offered a narrative about his family’s affection for China, in Mandarin. As the first Australian political leader to address a visiting head of state in a language other than English, Rudd stole the show from Prime Minister John Howard; Rudd won praise from the Australian and Chinese language media and he received, from President Hu Jintao, a personal invitation to attend the Olympic Games in Beijing. Above all, however, Rudd’s diplomacy strengthened his credentials as a new generation leader and future prime minister of Australia. As News Limited’s Doug Conway suggested, the effect of Rudd’s address—so different from the one offered by John Howard in October 2003—’could not have been greater had the family’s precocious nine-year-old played a Chopin prelude perfectly for the visiting relatives after Christmas lunch’. Nevertheless, the praise was not unanimous and Foreign Minister Alexander Downer labelled Rudd a ‘parading’ ‘show-off’ before going on to promote his credentials as a speaker of French and student of Latin.

80. Ultimately the attack backfired resulting in the resignation of Liberal Senator Ian Campbell, who had also met with Burke.


Chapter Four: A Virtuous Circle?

In an interview conducted with journalist Greg Sheridan shortly after APEC, Kevin Rudd outlined his foreign policy vision for Australia and sought to make it clear he does not view China through rose coloured glasses:

Everyone knows Rudd’s personal and political investment in China. But the view he expresses of China is balanced.

‘I’ve been studying China for 30 years. Over that time the transformation has been great. It is much more liberal than it was domestically, but human rights abuses continue. On the economic front, the statistics speak for themselves’.

Rudd is concerned, however, by China’s military force modernisation and he suggests the Asian power and the US begin nuclear strategic arms talks ‘on the future of their strategic nuclear weapons programs’.

‘I don’t view China through rose coloured glasses but I am fully prepared to accept, recognise and be positive about the changes that have occurred”, he says. ‘Any student of the Chinese cultural revolution, contrasting 40 years ago with today, understands we’re dealing with chalk and cheese”.

Rudd rejects the idea that he will be excessively sensitive to Chinese concerns or unable to disagree with Beijing. He points out he has twice met the Dalai Lama: ‘This would not have been entirely welcome in Beijing’.

On human rights diplomacy, he says: ‘When representations need to be made to the Chinese on human rights abuses I’ll be making them’.

The advantage of his knowledge of China, he believes, is that it helps allow robust differences to be expressed within a framework of mutual respect.  

On his first visit to China as Prime Minister, in April 2008, Kevin Rudd put ‘(t)he advantage of his knowledge of China’ and his commitment to human rights diplomacy into practice. In a speech to an audience at Beijing University, Rudd stated that while Australia recognises China’s sovereignty over Tibet, Australia also believes that there are ‘significant human rights problems in Tibet’. In again using his China-literacy to great strategic effect, Rudd sought to position his remarks as those offered from a friend, with a long-standing interest in Chinese history and culture. After citing the contributions of Beijing University’s alumni (Lu Xun, Cai Yuanpei and Chen Duxiu et al.) to the May 4 Movement, Rudd situated himself as a zhengyou to China—a sincere


friend who is prepared to offer ‘unflinching advice’, a true friend who is prepared to disagree. In publicly criticising China, from within China, zhengyou Rudd had differentiated himself from those friends of China who, for the sake of harmony and self interest, turn a blind eye to subjects which may provide grounds for disagreement.

In locating the expression zhengyou within the context of modern Chinese friendship politics, China scholar Geremie Barmé explains:

… ‘friendship’ (youyi) has been a cornerstone of China’s post-1949 diplomacy … To be a friend of China, the Chinese people, the party-state or, in the reform period, even a mainland business partner, the foreigner is often expected to stomach unpalatable situations, and keep silent in face of egregious behaviour. A friend of China might enjoy the privilege of offering the occasional word of caution in private; in the public arena he or she is expected to have the good sense and courtesy to be ‘objective’, that is to toe the line, whatever that happens to be. The concept of ‘friendship’ thus degenerates into little more than an effective tool for emotional blackmail and enforced complicity.

Rudd’s comments were made within the context of the international Olympic torch relay. While the opportunity to host the Olympic Games was intended to symbolise China’s modernisation, its global reach and its emerging status as a responsible member of the international community, in the lead up to Rudd’s address, the preparations for the ‘Friendly Games’ had degenerated into farce. As it moved across the cities of the world, the torch relay became synonymous with violence as protesters battled flag-bearing Chinese students and the blue track suited ‘guardians of the flame’. Moreover, in mobilising its citizens as part of the counter-demonstration, the Chinese Government reverted to the bellicose rhetoric of the Cold War era, speaking of a ‘reactionary clique of Dalai splittists’, ‘the infiltration of anti-China elements’ and the ‘Western spoilers and enemies of the Games’.

85. ibid.


87. For examples of such rhetoric see Rowan Callick, ‘Inflamed passions’, Weekend Australian, April 26–27, 2008, p. 20 and Rowan Callick, ‘Forbidding city’, Australian, 6 May 2008, p. 11. During the Canberra leg of the torch relay, there were accounts of flag-smothering Chinese students intimidating Australian nationals who were lawfully exercising their right to protest. Some 10,000 Chinese students came to Canberra
Chapter Four: A Virtuous Circle?

At a time when many were beginning to question—thirty years after Deng Xiaoping’s economic reforms—the extent to which China had completed the transition to becoming a responsible member of the international community, Rudd used the speech at Beijing University as an opportunity to reiterate that he believed that ‘the Olympics are important for China’s continuing engagement with the world’. In so doing, he suggested that those in the audience, the educated youth of China, should look to facilitate China’s integration into global society. Yet, in seeking to develop a position which allows Australia to speak openly to China about matters of pressing international concern, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd also demonstrated a belief that Australia has an active role to play in facilitating China’s engagement. In taking such a position Rudd gestures towards a new and significant chapter in the Australia–China relationship.

equipped with five-starred red flags, as part of a government bankrolled counter-demonstration. Canberra resident Annie Acton reports ‘I attended the torch relay in Canberra carrying a small sign saying China sends weapons to Robert Mugabe. I was harassed by a group of Chinese students, in particular a tall man who followed me around trying to drape a large Chinese flag over me. I walked to another part of the relay route and stood by myself with my sign. A large group of Chinese students surrounded me and nearly smothered me with their flags. I tried to run away from them but they wouldn’t let me go, they just made a tighter circle around me. In the end a policeman had to rescue me from them …’. ‘Seeing red: freedom of speech under attack from Chinese’, Canberra Times, 26 April 2008.

Conclusion

This monograph has explored the historical, political and cultural foundations of the Australian Parliament’s dealings with China. In so doing, it has offered an account of the profound transformation that has taken place in the way Australian parliamentarians have viewed ‘China’. The anxieties about economic competition and genetic corruption that prompted the first Parliament to pass legislation that sought to exclude the Chinese and other non-Europeans from Australia, was eventually replaced by one in which ‘China’ emerged as an indispensable economic and strategic partner, positioned near the centre of Australian’s foreign policy. The monograph has sought to account for this transformation by exploring a series of landmark events in the development of bilateral relations, among them: J. G. Latham’s visit to China in 1934, the Parliament’s reaction to the establishment of the People’s Republic in 1949, the Whitlam Government’s recognition of China in 1972 and Hu Jintao’s address to the Australian Parliament in 2003.

The full extent of the change in parliamentary attitudes towards China can be evidenced by contrasting the material that appears at both ends of the monograph. At Federation, one of the nation’s first parliamentarians spoke of eschewing contact with the Chinese, for fear of electoral loss. Just over one hundred years later, the then Leader of the Opposition demonstrated his credentials—as a new generation leader and future prime minister of Australia—by addressing a visiting Chinese head of state in a Chinese language. Similarly, while Federation parliamentarians proclaimed that the more educated the ‘Oriental’, the worse man he was likely to be, education has grown to become Australia’s largest service export to China with some 90,000 Chinese nationals currently studying in Australia. Chapters Three and Four also demonstrate stages of development in Australia’s relations with China that would have been unimaginable to the members of the first Parliament of Australia. They do this by considering the two addresses by the President of the United States and the President of the People’s Republic; the commitment of the Australia–China Parliamentary Friendship Group to strengthening bilateral relations; the inquiries of the committees of the Parliament; and the recent initiatives that have created linkages between the two national legislatures.

Beyond seeking to examine the way the bilateral relationship has been advanced through the processes, practices and outputs of the Parliament, the monograph has located the changes in parliamentary attitudes within a broader social, political and national context. It has identified the role the Parliament has played as an important
knowledge producing institution, one which has variously come to reflect and affect community understandings of China. The study has also documented the role China has played, in both times of fear or friendship, in Australia’s domestic politics. The calls for the containment and isolation of China which dominated Australia’s experience of the Cold War; the spectre of international communism which helped consign the Australian Labor Party to decades in opposition; and the role that the recognition of the People’s Republic played in the Whitlam Government’s reformist policy agenda, each testify to the place accorded to China in Australia’s post-War domestic politics.

The second half of the study has outlined some of the social, economic and political transformations that have recently taken place within China. Chapters Three and Four have documented the way that such transformation has been accompanied by suggestions that China has altered the way it manages its external relations. Former Ambassador Madame Fu has been quoted suggesting that China has ‘moved on’ from the 1970s; that it is no longer ‘behind the bamboo curtain’, and that China has developed new ways of dealing with points of view with which it disagrees. Such comments have been supported by the former Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, who suggested that China has become a responsible international citizen which listens to members of the international community: ‘This isn’t the China of old. The China of new is a China that listens to its friends and its neighbours, and listens to them a lot’. 89

By contrast, however, the monograph has also suggested that this transformation is not as complete as these comments suggest. It has observed the way Chinese officials have attempted to influence the Australian media and transgress international standards of diplomacy by attempting to influence the operations of the Australian Parliament. Added to this have been examples of how the Chinese Government responds to statements made in the Parliament about the Republic of China (Taiwan); a critique of the way that the Chinese Government seeks to ‘duchess’ Australian parliamentarians; and the extraordinary reaction of the Chinese to protests against the Olympic torch relay in March–April 2008.

There is broad agreement across the Parliament that China will continue to change and change quickly. However, there is less certainty about the character of this change. Some parliamentarians interviewed for this study suggested that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) will embark upon a program of major liberal political reform.

89. See discussion in Chapter Four and specifically footnote 31.
Some suggested that without liberal political reform the CCP may go into crisis. Others were more circumspect about predicting China’s future political character. However, in spite of this divergence in opinion, there was agreement that managing the Australia–China relationship would continue to be something of a balancing act for Australian legislators.

When asked how they would like to see the bilateral relationship change or develop in the future, parliamentarians surveyed for this study made the following suggestions:

- increasing cooperation between the two nations to reduce the adverse impacts of climate change and the environmental impact associated with China’s development;
- improving the capacity of Australian educators to understand the needs of Chinese students;
- using ‘sports diplomacy’ to facilitate deeper cultural and business links;
- formalising the role of the Australia–China Friendship Group to involve the Group in matters of policy (possibly through developing specific sector-based study tours that focus on matters such as trade, education or the environment);
- increasing parliamentarians’ knowledge of China (this may be done through sending an annual delegation to China, possibly when the National People’s Congress is meeting; or through encouraging parliamentarians to visit areas outside Beijing, Shanghai, Xian and Guilin);
- giving ‘adequate’ attention to alleged human rights abuses taking place in China;
- developing more exchanges between the two legislatures and other policy makers; and
- establishing a ‘more realistic’ approach to China which does not result in the neglect of other North Asian relationships.

In closing, it is also worth returning to J. G. Latham’s caution to the House of Representatives in 1934. While Latham’s comments are confined to matters of trade, they gesture towards developing a specialised knowledge which would facilitate Australia’s engagement with China:
Conclusion

It has been usual in Australia to regard China as offering great potentialities for the marketing of Australian goods. This arises, no doubt, from our habit of thinking of China in terms of China’s population … But perhaps no other market offers more difficulties, and no other market requires such specialized knowledge of local conditions and sales procedure. It can also be said that in no other eastern market is competition so keen, or is there such a concentration of international commercial representation, both business and official. Most countries have recognized the necessity for official trade representation, and the trade representatives are, generally speaking, men of extraordinary ability and acumen.90

Appendix 1: Address by the President of the People’s Republic of China

Mr Howard (Bennelong—Prime Minister) (10.08 a.m.)—Mr Speaker and Mr President of the Senate, on behalf of the government and on behalf of all members, I extend to His Excellency Hu Jintao, the President of the People’s Republic of China, a very warm welcome to our national parliament. I extend that welcome to his wife, Madame Liu, and to all the other members of the Chinese party.

It would be no exaggeration to say that 10 years ago an event such as this would have been seen as not only unlikely but indeed highly improbable. Equally, I would not have thought 10 years ago that as Prime Minister of Australia and as the leader of a Western, Centre Right political party I would have—as I did in 2002—addressed the cadres of the Central Party School of the Chinese Communist Party in Beijing. I think that says a number of things. It says something of the way in which our world has changed. It says something of the commonsense character of the relationship between Australia and China, because that event in 2002 occurred and this event today occurs without either of our two nations in any way abandoning their distinctive but different traditions.

I would characterise the relationship between Australia and China as being both mature and practical and as being a relationship that is intensely built on growing people-to-people links. We are different societies. We have different cultures, we have different traditions and we have different histories. No purpose is served in pretending otherwise. But might I say that that has never blinded successive Australian governments of both political persuasions to an endeavour to draw from the relationship those things that can be of great and enduring mutual benefit to our societies. So in those senses it is a very mature and practical relationship.

The people-to-people links are immensely important. I can describe it this way: the most widely spoken foreign language in Australia today is a dialect of Chinese, and three per cent of the Australian population, no fewer than 550,000 people, claim Chinese ancestry. Speaking personally, 13.3 per cent of my own electorate of Bennelong in Sydney claim Chinese ancestry. There are 34,000 students from China studying in Australia. China is now Australia’s third largest trading partner. Last year the signing of the natural gas contract for the supply, over 25 years, of natural gas to the Guangdong province was a veritable landmark in the evolution of the economic
relationship between our two nations. Two-way trade between Australia and China has trebled since 1996.

Let me take the opportunity today of recording, on behalf of the government, our appreciation for the constructive, practical and wholly positive approach that China has taken in helping, in partnership with others, to resolve the challenging issue of North Korea’s nuclear capabilities. No nation has more influence on North Korea than China. The resolution of that issue, which must necessarily involve other nations as well, is very important to the stability and the peace of our region.

Finally, it is self-evident that the relationship between Australia, the United States and China respectively, on a two-way basis—that is, our relationship with the United States and then again our relationship with China—will be extremely important to the stability of our region. Our aim is to see calm and constructive dialogue between the United States and China on those issues which might potentially cause tension between them. It will be Australia’s aim, as a nation which has different but nonetheless close relationships with both of those nations, to promote that constructive and calm dialogue.

Mr President, you and your wife are greatly welcomed to our country. We thank you for coming. We wish you well. We know that you will receive a warm reception from many people in this country who will demonstrate their affection for the important relations between our two peoples.

HIS EXCELLENCY Mr Hu Jintao (PO) (10.21 a.m.)—(Translation) The Hon. Neil Andrew, Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Hon. Paul Calvert, President of the Senate, the Hon. John Howard, Prime Minister, distinguished members of the federal parliament, ladies and gentlemen: I am delighted to have this opportunity of coming to the Parliament House of Australia to meet with you and address such a distinguished audience.

Let me begin by expressing, on behalf of the Chinese government and people, my best wishes to you and, through you, to the courageous and hardworking Australian people. Though located in different hemispheres and separated by high seas, the people of China and Australia enjoy a friendly exchange that dates back centuries. The Chinese people have all along cherished amicable feelings about the Australian people. Back in the 1420s, the expeditionary fleets of China’s Ming dynasty reached Australian shores. For centuries, the Chinese sailed across vast seas and settled down in what was called ‘the southern land’, or today’s Australia. They brought Chinese culture here and lived
harmoniously with the local people, contributing their proud share to Australia’s economy, society and thriving pluralistic culture.

More than three decades have passed since China and Australia established diplomatic relations. Our bilateral ties have stood the tests of time and international vicissitudes and made steady headway. To consolidate and develop its all-round cooperation with Australia is a key component of China’s external relations. We have always viewed our friendly ties with Australia from a strategic and long-term perspective. To cultivate a deeper and all-round cooperation between the two countries is the common aspiration of the two governments and peoples.

This afternoon I will have an in-depth exchange of views with Prime Minister Howard on bilateral ties and regional and international issues of mutual interest. We will also sign a series of bilateral documents on cooperation. This shows that China-Australia cooperation in various fields is going deeper and broader. I am convinced that China and Australia will shape a relationship of all-round cooperation that features a high degree of mutual trust, long-term friendship and mutual benefit—a relationship that makes our two peoples both winners.

How should countries go about their relations with one another in this complicated and diverse world? It is a question that is very much on the minds of many people. We are of the view that, for smooth conduct of state-to-state relations and for lasting peace and common prosperity, all countries should act in compliance with the following principles. First, politically they should respect each other, seek common ground while putting aside differences and endeavour to expand areas of agreement. Our world is a diverse place, like a rainbow of many colours. Civilisations, social systems and development models, different as they may be, should respect one another, should learn from each other’s strong points, amid competition and comparison, and should achieve common development by seeking common ground while shelving differences. By mutual respect politically we mean that the political system and the path of political development chosen by the people of each country should be respected.

Democracy is the common pursuit of mankind, and all countries must earnestly protect the democratic rights of their people. In the past 20 years and more since China embarked on a road of reform and opening up, we have moved steadfastly to promote political restructuring and vigorously build democratic politics under socialism while upholding and improving our systems of people’s congresses, multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party, and regional ethnic autonomy. We have advanced the process of scientific and democratic decision
making and promoted grassroots democracy, protection of citizens’ rights and freedoms, democratic elections, and democratic decision making, democratic management and democratic supervision by the people in our country’s political, economic, cultural and social life according to law.

We have stepped up the building of the legal system in China, making sure that there are laws to go by, that the laws must be observed and are strictly enforced and that violators must be prosecuted. As a result, the enthusiasm, initiative and creativeness of the Chinese people of all ethnic groups have been galvanised, providing an immense driving force for the country’s development. In future, we will continue to move forward our political restructuring in a vigorous and cautious manner as our national conditions merit, improve our democratic institutions and legal system and build a socialist political civilisation.

True, China and Australia are different in social systems. This is the result of different choices made by our people in light of their national conditions and the two countries’ different historical evolution. As China-Australia relations prove, so long as they understand and treat each other as equals and respect their respective national conditions and circumstances, countries with different social systems may very well become partners of friendly cooperation with constantly increased common ground.

Second, economically they should complement and benefit one another, deepen their cooperation and achieve common development. With economic globalisation developing in such depth, no country can expect to achieve economic development goals without going for effective economic and technological cooperation with other countries and actively participating in international division of labour, bringing in capital knowledge, technology and managerial expertise needed for development at home and in return providing products and know-how with comparative advantages for the development of others. This is how countries achieve common development through mutually beneficial cooperation.

Right now, China has entered into a new stage of building a well-off society in an all-round way and accelerating the socialist modernisation drive. We are engaged in developing a socialist market economy and opening the country still wider in more areas, with a higher level of sophistication. While speeding up strategic economic restructuring, we are vigorously implementing the strategies of revitalising China through science and education, of sustainable development, of development of the west and of renewal of the old industrial base of north-east China. China enjoys a vast market, abundant labour, social and political stability and a vibrant momentum for
development. A stronger and more developed China will bring growth opportunities and tangible benefits to other countries in the world.

China and Australia are highly complementary economically. Blessed with vast territory and rich resources, Australia boasts economic and technological successes. The potential for China-Australia economic cooperation is immense. Past, present or future, we see Australia as our important economic partner. China-Australia trade has grown rapidly in recent years, from $US87 million in the early years of our diplomatic relations to $US10.4 billion in 2002. China has become Australia’s third largest trading partner and fourth largest export market and, in fact, the fastest growing one. Australia is China’s ninth largest trading partner and biggest supplier of wool. Over the years China has purchased large amounts of iron ore and aluminium oxide from Australia, which has such energy and mineral riches. Last year the two countries signed a 25-year, $A25 billion deal on the LNG project in Guangdong, thus laying a solid foundation for our bilateral energy cooperation.

Also expanding steadily are the bilateral exchanges and cooperation in science and technology, agriculture and animal husbandry. By June 2003 Australia had invested in a total of 5,600 projects in China, with an actual investment exceeding $US3.1 billion. China has invested in 218 projects in Australia, with a contractual value of $US450 million. We are ready to be your long-term and stable cooperation partner, dedicated to closer cooperation based on equality and mutual benefit. The trade and economic framework between China and Australia which will be signed today will mark the beginning of a brand-new stage of our trade and economic cooperation. I am convinced that this framework will help steer our bilateral cooperation in economic, trade and other fields to continuous new highs.

Third, culturally countries should step up exchanges and enhance understanding and mutual emulation. Diversity in the world is a basic characteristic of human society and also the key condition for a lively and dynamic world, as we see today. The proud history, culture and traditions that make each country different are all part of human civilisation. Every nation, every culture, must have its strong points and advantages. All should respect one another, draw upon each other’s strengths and strive to achieve common progress.

China has a 5,000-year civilisation. Its people, of 56 ethnic groups, have worked together to shape the magnificent Chinese culture. The Chinese culture belongs not only to the Chinese but also to the whole world. It has flourished not only through mutual emulation and assimilation among its various ethnic groups but also through
interactions and mutual learning with other countries’ cultures. With reform opening up and a modernisation drive pressing ahead in full swing, we are all the more eager to draw upon the useful achievements of all civilisations. We stand ready to step up cultural exchanges with the rest of the world in a joint promotion of cultural prosperity.

Cultural pluralism is a distinctive feature of Australian society, a feature that embodies ethnic harmony in this country. Just as the national anthem goes, Australian people have come across the seas. Cultural exchanges have long served as important bridges for enhanced understanding and deepened friendship between our two peoples. Last year was the 30th anniversary of diplomatic ties between China and Australia. While Celebrate Australia 2002 delighted Shanghai citizens, Chinese performing artists had their debut in the famous Sydney Opera House. In recent years people-to-people exchanges between our two countries have grown rapidly, with annual visits well over 100,000. China is the biggest source country of foreign students in Australia now. We should continue to expand our cultural exchanges, giving fuller play to culture’s role as the bridge and bond in the building of friendship between the two countries and their peoples.

Fourth, in security, countries should strengthen mutual trust, cooperate on an equal footing and endeavour to maintain peace. Peace and development remain the dominant themes of our times. Uncertainties affecting world peace and development have been on the rise. Traditional and non-traditional threats to security are mixed together, rendering some regions unstable and turbulent. Terrorism attacks from time to time and cross-boundary crimes have become more pronounced. How to meet these challenges, secure peace and development in the world and create a stable and harmonious homeland for all is a critical question that calls for serious consideration and effective solution.

China advocates a new security concept featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation and strives to resolve disputes peacefully through dialogue and cooperation. We believe in democracy in international relations. The affairs of the world should be handled through consultation on an equal footing by all countries. Members of the international community should reaffirm their commitment to multilateralism and give full scope to the important role of the United Nations and its Security Council in maintaining world peace and security.

China and Australia respect each other’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and they stick to noninterference in each other’s internal affairs and enjoy a growing mutual trust in the security field. Recent years have seen increasing exchanges between the two
militaries, as evidenced by the annual defence strategic dialogue for six consecutive years and frequent port calls by naval ships of both countries. China and Australia have shared interests in keeping the South Pacific and Asia-Pacific stable, easing regional tensions and promoting peaceful settlement of hot-spot issues. We are both against terrorism and hope for stronger counter-terrorism cooperation. We are both key participants in the ARF and other regional security mechanisms. China welcomes and supports a constructive Australian role in regional and international affairs. We, on our part, will stick to our independent foreign policy of peace, acting forever as a strong defender of world peace and a persistent proponent of common development. We are ready to join Australia and other countries in cultivating a secure and reliable international environment of lasting stability.

Ladies and gentlemen, Taiwan is an inalienable part of Chinese territory. The complete reunification of China at an early date is the common aspiration and firm resolve of the entire Chinese people. A peaceful solution to the Taiwan question serves the interests of all the Chinese people, including our compatriots on Taiwan. It also serves the common interests of all countries in the region, including Australia. The greatest threat to peace in the Taiwan Straits is the splittist activities by Taiwan independence forces. We are firmly opposed to Taiwan independence. The Chinese government and people look to Australia for a constructive role in China’s peaceful reunification.

Ladies and gentlemen, there have been frequent exchanges between our two legislatures in recent years. The Speaker, the Hon. Neil Andrew, and many law-makers here have visited my country and have seen China’s changes and progress first-hand. Here I would like to extend this invitation to all of you: we look forward to receiving more of you in China. Looking back, I am gratified to see the fruitful past of our relations. Looking forward, I feel confident in where the relationship is headed. Let us join hands in writing a more luminous new chapter of the China-Australia relationship of all-round cooperation. Thank you.
Appendix 2: Parliamentary Questionnaire: Australia’s Relationship with China

As the 2007 Australia Parliamentary Fellow I am conducting research on the ways the Australian Parliament views, or has viewed, the relationship between Australia and China. As part of this project, I am sending a questionnaire to all Senators and Members of Parliament.

The following questionnaire seeks your response to a range of questions about the nature of the Australia–China relationship, Australia’s foreign policy priorities and the China-related matters that are raised by your constituents. Your participation is important to the success of this project and the representativeness of the data. The questionnaire should take you approximately 10 minutes to complete. In order to facilitate the compilation of data please complete and return the questionnaire by 13 July 2007.

Your responses are confidential, non-attributable and will only be presented as aggregated data.

Data from the questionnaire will be published by the Parliamentary Library as a component of the 2007 Australian Parliamentary Fellow monograph.

Please return this questionnaire in the reply paid envelope that has been supplied.

1. Please indicate the political party of which you are a member (if any):
   a) Liberal Party
   b) Labor Party
   c) National Party
   d) Democrats
   e) Greens
   f) Independent
   g) Family First
   h) Prefer not to disclose

2. Years of parliamentary service:
   a) Under 3 years
   b) 3–6 years
   c) 6–9 years
   d) 9–12 years
   e) 12–15
   f) Over 15 years

China questions—sources of information

I am interested in determining which sources you use to gain information about the People’s Republic of China and how influential each source is in contributing to your understanding of China and the Australia–China relationship.


Appendix 2

3. Please indicate which sources you access for information about China and the frequency of this access (please circle).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Regularly</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) The Australian media</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) The overseas media</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Academic/think-tank publications</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Parliamentary committee activity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Government communication (eg: cables, intelligence, press statements)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Parliamentary colleagues</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>g) Chinese language materials</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>h) Members of your electorate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>i) Department of Foreign Affairs &amp; Trade</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>j) Chinese Embassy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k) Parliamentary Library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l) Your staff</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>m) Internet sites</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n) Non-government organisations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o) Other, please specify:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

China questions—travel to China

4. (a) Have you ever visited the People’s Republic of China (not including the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region)?

   Yes [ ] No [ ] (Please go to question 5)

   **IF YES:**

   (b) How many times: ________

   (c) Did you visit during the term of the current 41st Parliament? (16 November 2004–present)

   Yes [ ] No [ ]

   (d) If you did visit during the term of the 41st Parliament, in what capacity did you visit? (Please select all that apply)

   Personal/private (eg: holiday) [ ]
   Business/trade representation [ ]
   Official [ ] (Please go to question 4(e))
(e) If you visited in an official capacity, please tick the most appropriate category (if more than one, please select all that apply):

- As a member of an official Parliamentary delegation
- With a Parliamentary Friendship Group
- As a member of a party delegation
- Individual study trip
- As a guest of the Chinese Government or a Chinese Government agency

5. (a) Have you ever visited the Republic of China/ Taiwan?

- Yes
- No (Please go to question 6)

(b) Did you visit the Republic of China/ Taiwan during the term of the 41st Parliament?

- Yes
- No

6. Are you a member of any of the following groups?

- a) The Australia–China Parliamentary Friendship Group
- b) The Australia–Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group
- c) The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet

China questions—Chinese language skills

7. Do you have any Chinese language skills?

- Yes
- No

8. Do any of your staff have any Chinese language skills?

- Yes
- No
China questions—the character of the Australia–China relationship

9. From a historical perspective, please rate how influential you feel each of the following milestones have been in contributing to the character of the current Australia–China relationship (please circle the relevant number for each event):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Highly Influential</th>
<th>Moderately Influential</th>
<th>Marginally Influential</th>
<th>Not Influential</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) The liberalisation of the Chinese economy, from 1978, under Deng Xiaoping</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) The Whitlam Labor Government’s recognition of China in 1972</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) The Fraser Government’s bipartisan approach to relations with China</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>d) The building of bilateral ties under the Hawke Labor Government</td>
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<td>e) The Tiananmen Square incident of 4 June 1989</td>
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10. Using the contemporary Australia–China relationship as a starting point, please indicate how influential you feel each of the following will be in determining the future character of the Australia–China relationship? (please circle the relevant number for each item)

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<th>Moderately Influential</th>
<th>Marginally Influential</th>
<th>Not Influential</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
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<td>a) Increasing Australian exports to China</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) China’s emergence as a stakeholder in global/regional affairs</td>
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<td>g) The enforcement of intellectual property rights in China</td>
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<td>h) The character of Chinese diplomacy in the South Pacific</td>
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<td>n) Other(s), please specify: ________________________________________</td>
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11. (a) In January 2007 Australia ratified two nuclear safeguard agreements in Beijing. These agreements were signed in preparation for the export of Australian uranium to the People’s Republic. Are you concerned about the export of Australian uranium to China?

Yes ☐
No ☐ (Please go to question 12)

(b) If YES, please indicate which, if any, of the following issues reflect your concern (select all that apply)

(i) Effect on nuclear proliferation/security ☐
(ii) Effect on Australia’s international reputation ☐
(iii) Other (please specify):
______________________________________________________

12. Do you believe a Free Trade Agreement with China would:

a) Be in Australia’s interests
Yes ☐
No ☐

b) Substantially contribute to Australia’s trade deficit
Yes ☐
No ☐

c) Damage Australia’s manufacturing sector
Yes ☐
No ☐

d) Create jobs and raise Australian living standards
Yes ☐
No ☐

13. China recently overtook Japan as Australia’s largest trading partner. Given the importance of China to Australia’s economic development, do you feel that:

a) Australia is well-positioned to protect and promote Australian interests in China
Yes ☐
No ☐

b) Australia has become too reliant upon China for its economic prosperity
Yes ☐
No ☐

c) Australia’s economic reliance upon China will negatively impact upon Australia’s political dealings with China
Yes ☐
No ☐

d) The Howard Government has achieved the right balance between the economic and non-economic aspects of the relationship
Yes ☐
No ☐
14. Have you ever received representations from Chinese Government officials about:

a) The political status of Tibet
   Yes  
   No  

b) The activities of Falun Gong practitioners in Australia
   Yes  
   No  

c) The rights of workers to collectively organise in China
   Yes  
   No  

d) The political status of the Republic of China/Taiwan
   Yes  
   No  

e) Other domestic political events in China (please specify):
   _______________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________

Foreign policy questions

The following questions seek to determine what you believe Australia’s foreign policy priorities to be and the degree to which, you believe, the Opposition and the minor parties can influence Australian foreign policy.

15. Please indicate the importance you attribute to the following interests or values in determining Australia’s foreign policy:

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<tr>
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<th>Highly Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Unimportant</th>
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<td>b) Advancing democracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Defence and strategic interests</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) Advancing human rights</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>f) Strategic alliances with world powers</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

16. How much influence do you believe the Opposition and the minor parties have on foreign policy?

   Substantial  
   Some  
   Negligible  

17. The Opposition and the minor parties can best influence foreign policy through (select all that you think apply):

   Parliamentary debate/ questions  
   Policy  
   Committee work/ reports  
   The media/ public awareness  
   Non-government organisations  

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18.  a) Do you believe the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade / Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade can influence Australian foreign policy:

   Yes  
   No  (Please go to question 19)

   b) If YES, could you please provide an example: ______________________

Constituent matters

19.  Members of the House of Representatives only, Senators please go to question 22

The number of Chinese-born people in any one Australian electorate may be as high as between 10–15%. Are you aware of the percentage of Chinese-Australians in your electorate?

   Yes  Could you please provide that percentage: ______%  
   No

20.  Are the Chinese-Australians in your electorate largely (select all that apply):

   Australian-born Chinese  
   Mainland (PRC)-born Chinese  
   Hong Kong-born Chinese  
   Ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia  
   Don’t know

21.  How does the business community in your electorate consider the economic rise of China?

   a) They view it as a significant opportunity
      Yes  
      No

   b) They worry about competing with Chinese imports
      Yes  
      No

   c) They are concerned about the effect of a FTA with China
      Yes  
      No

   d) They welcome a FTA with China
      Yes  
      No

22.  a) Have your Chinese-Australian constituents raised China-related issues with you?

      Yes  
      No  (Please go to question 23)
b) If YES, do the China-related matters raised by your constituents relate to:

Policy □
Commerce/ trade □
Immigration □
Human rights □
Education □
Other (please specify): ________________________________

23. a) Do you receive representations from individual constituents or organisations about human rights issues in China?
Yes □
No □ (Please go to question 24)

b) If YES, do these representations relate to any of the following (select all that apply):

(i) Falun Gong practitioners □
(ii) Rights of ethnic and religious minorities □
(iii) The forced repatriation of North Korean asylum seekers □
(iv) Forced abortions and sterilisations □
(v) ‘Organ harvesting’ □
(vi) Other (please specify):
____________________________________________________________

24. Would you like to make any additional comments; do you feel that there are important aspects of the Australia–China relationship that have not been mentioned?
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for completing the questionnaire—please return the questionnaire in the reply paid envelope that has been supplied.
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