

Committee Secretariat

PO Box 6021

Parliament House

Canberra, ACT, 2600

26th May 2020

Submission to the inquiry into diversifying Australia's trade and investment profile

Dear Committee

I write this submission as a concerned citizen who opposes the scale of infiltration that Australia has reached with regards to Chinese acquisitions of agricultural industries and land. These companies have deep pockets and tend to increase overall pricing of these assets placing them outside the reach of Australian investors. It is common knowledge that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has links to most if not all Chinese investment companies, this in turn deepens their pockets allowing for higher offers giving an unfair playing field for other interested parties.

The Australian higher education sector has become highly dependent on foreign students in particular a large number of students from China. Our education sector was at one stage pushing to allow exemptions for overseas students to bypass quarantine measures and be allowed into Australia to study. I am of the opinion that overseas students are an excellent form of revenue for Australian institutions however it seems they have "all their eggs in the one basket" so to speak. We are inadvertently educating students selected by the CCP these students are gaining a foothold into our educational institutions. This leads to instances where the values of the CCP are defended by universities, as has been the case in the University of Queensland recently where a student is being chastised for holding an alternative view.

In addition to the dependence of Chinese students by our education sector is the fact they are allowed to purchase Australian properties for the duration of their studies. The fact that all Chinese students are approved by the CCP means they again have deep pockets and are willing to pay higher prices than the average Australian home buyer. This drives the price of residential properties to an unrealistic level placing the outside the reach of Australian citizens.

I am deeply concerned at how we have allowed the CCP to infiltrate deeply into our community. Recent activities such as the real estate company that purchased all the medical

supplies such as masks, hazard suits etc... sending them back to China and leaving a shortage of such items here in Australia. The links to the CCP are of no doubt with the leading figure being identified as a former People's Liberation Army official.

Finally, as a Victorian I cannot believe the audacity of the Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews and the fact he is in the final stages of signing up to the Belt and Road Initiative. I do not know how it is even possible for a state government to bypass the federal government and go ahead with this. This is despite advice from the foreign government warning against signing up to such an agreement. He has done this with no consultation or knowledge of the electorate or opposition. We are left wondering what the consequences of this action will be when considering cases like Sri Lanka and the loss of a port due to an inability to meet their financial commitments. This just enforces the methods employed by the CCP to undermine any attempts to restrict their influence throughout the world.

The CCP is growing increasingly bold by the day which is evident in their treatment of their close neighbours and total disregard for international law. The claims to the South China Sea and aggressive behavior is of great concern. Their treatment of the Uyghurs, Tibetans and practitioners of Falun Gong are atrocious and cannot go unnoticed. The recent developments in Hong Kong enforce their failure to adhere to an agreement and leave them with no credibility.

We need to break away as best we can and remain committed to historical relationships with our allies without them we are at risk of becoming just another claim by China. It has been a long time since I have had any national pride however, recently when Prime Minister Scott Morrison called for an independent inquiry into the COVID 19 outbreak I was proud. The fact that despite the bullying attempts displayed by China following the request our government persisted in calling for the inquiry.

We are all guilty of buying with our pockets and not our minds, we can no longer fund the persecution and poor human rights inflicted on the Chinese people by the ruthless regime. If this means paying a little more I for one am willing to do so.

Sincerely

Greg Smith