



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF
WELLINGTON
TE HERENGA WAKA

New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre

KŌMARU KURA



2021 Annual Report

About the Centre

The New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre is a national centre to promote knowledge and understanding of contemporary China through support for research, lectures, seminars, conferences, visitor exchanges and information sharing. It provides a forum for research on contemporary China and facilitates a network of China specialists and academics. The Centre strengthens ties between scholars and researchers in leading institutions in New Zealand and China. The China Centre is based at Victoria University of Wellington. In addition to Victoria University of Wellington, it has seven University Members. These are: The University of Auckland, Auckland University of Technology, the University of Canterbury, the University of Otago, the University of Waikato, Lincoln University and Massey University.

2021 in review

The public focus of the Centre in 2021 has remained online academic exchanges, research publications, public lectures, the Global China Seminar Series and responding to requests for media commentary and opinion pieces. The China Capable Public Sector (CCPS) programme remains central to the Centre's engagement with the New Zealand Government, involving extensive work preparing and running masterclasses, knowledge transfer events, cross-agency forums, and hosting forums for senior leaders across the New Zealand public sector.

As part of our ongoing commitment to academic exchange with Chinese institutions, we held a successful online symposium with our partners at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), for the first time using simultaneous interpretation in an online format. We also co-organised a successful roundtable with the Shanghai Institute of International Studies and engaged in online discussions with the Chinese Embassy in New Zealand, participated in CASS conferences, the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences conference, lectures at China University of Political Science and Law, and discussions with New Zealand posts in China. New Zealand-China relations have remained topical in New Zealand and in international media as well as in think tanks, research centres, and governments abroad.

The Director was on research and study leave during the second half of 2021 and acknowledges Dr Peter Harris for his work as Acting Director in his absence and Andrew Wilford for his support. Peter brought extensive experience and knowledge to the role and ensured the key activities of the Centre continued. During Peter's tenure, the Centre held a major public lecture, hosted six Global China Seminars and a roundtable in addition to the full array of activities in the China Capable Public Sector (CCPS) programme.

Next year marks the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China and a series of events are planned to mark the occasion. Ongoing disruptions caused by the pandemic are expected to continue and we will plan accordingly.

Activities of the Centre

Publications

[*'A Model Relationship? Chinese Media Coverage of NZ-China Relations'*](#) by Caleb Hoyle

This report analyses Chinese media reporting on the New Zealand-China bilateral relationship in the first 6 months of 2021. It identifies the following key themes:

- The economic relationship between New Zealand and China was depicted as resilient and mutually beneficial;
- New Zealand was depicted as striving to maintain an independent foreign policy;
- New Zealand's independence was presented as a concern for other Western countries;
- New Zealand's relationship with China was often contrasted approvingly with Australia's;
- The relationship between New Zealand and China was said to be a model;
- New Zealand was at times rebuked for criticism of China.

The Centre would like to thank the Asia New Zealand Foundation for funding the internship in the second half of 2021 that made this report possible.

[*'Mind the Gap: Chinese academic views on Sino—US decoupling'*](#) by Caleb Hoyle

This report reviews Chinese language academic publications on the US-China decoupling debate in the People's Republic of China. It identifies key arguments and critiques of US-China decoupling across four themes:

- Changes in the balance of power between China and the US;
- Ideology and political systems;
- Economic nationalism and globalisation;
- The impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

The paper identifies significant differences in how Chinese language scholarship in the PRC has approached the decoupling debate, trade war and shift to US-China strategic competition; highlighting the challenge of bridging the growing conceptual gap between China and the US on this issue.

NZCCRC Public Lecture

[*Rethinking New Zealand's China dilemma*](#)

11 November 2021, Wellington

This public lecture by renowned scholar Malcolm McKinnon examined and challenged views around several prominent issues in New Zealand-China relations. It asked, 'might it be possible, even if not simple, for New Zealand to have a relationship with China that is neither supine nor adversarial, and which is consistent with an independent foreign policy?' The lecture had an in-person and online audience of some 120 scholars, policymakers, and members of the public. Malcolm has agreed to publish a copy of the talk with the Centre.

Annual Symposium

Regional Trade in 2021

16 June 2021 (via Zoom with simultaneous interpretation)

Co-organised by the New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre and the Bureau of International Cooperation at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).

The Centre worked with CASS to arrange an online symposium on regional trade in 2021. The discussion focussed on opportunities and disruptors to trade and economic links across three areas:

1. WTO and Global Trade in the Covid Era;
2. Regional Integration (CPTPP, RCEP, APEC);
3. Bilateral Trade and Economy.

It was a pleasure to host speakers from the University of Auckland, the New Zealand China Council, the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research and Victoria University of Wellington for the discussions. The Bureau of International Cooperation at CASS brought together experts from the Department of International Political Economy of the Institute of World Economics and Politics, the National Institute of International Strategy and the Trade Department of the Institute of World Economics and Politics.

As the first time the Centre held an online symposium with simultaneous interpretation, we found the quality of the discussion and the breadth of speakers was enriched by using online interpretation.

Global China Seminar Series

The Global China Seminar series is a regular academic seminar on an aspect of China Studies. This year, we have had a series of high-quality speakers and a good turnout at all seminars, with audiences ranging from 30 to 60 academics, policymakers, media and the interested public. Most have been online, hybrid offerings, which has enabled scholars and students from other centres to participate

1. Professor Yiyang Wang (Professor of Chinese at the School of Languages and Cultures, Victoria University of Wellington), *'Modern Art for a Modern China: A Chinese Intellectual Project'* (25 March 2021).
2. Associate Professor Nicholas Khoo (Associate Professor, Politics Programme, University of Otago) *'The Trump Administration and the United States' China post-1972 Engagement Policy'*, (9 April 2021).
3. Lucy Craymer (Journalist, Stuff formerly WSJ in Hong Kong) *'National Correspondent'*, (18 May 2021).
4. Emeritus Professor John Minford (Emeritus Professor of Chinese, ANU) *Hong Kong, The Best China, the survival of the civilised Chinese literature of leisure and sentiment, the biji tradition*, (postponed to 2022 due to COVID).
5. Ford Hart Jr. (Former National Security Council China/Taiwan Director at the White House (2002-04), US Consul-General to Hong Kong and Macau (2013-16) *Taiwan and U.S.-P.R.C. Relations: A Former Practitioners Views*, (16 September 2021).
6. Duncan Campbell (Adjunct Fellow, Victoria University of Wellington) *Living in Dangerous Times: Huang Zongxi and his Friends*, (30 September 2021).

7. Associate Professor Jason Young (Director, New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre) *Power and Authority: People's Daily Writing on the US-China Trade Dispute*, (14 October 2021).
8. Dr Pauline Keating (Adjunct Fellow, Victoria University of Wellington) *The problems of Gung Ho: Rewi Alley and the Chinese Industrial Cooperatives (CIC) Movement, 1938 – 2021*, (28 October 2021).
9. Professor Yiyang Wang (Professor of Chinese, at the School of Languages and Cultures, Victoria University of Wellington), *The Chinese Diaspora in New Zealand: Conditions and Contestations of Cultural Citizenship*, (18 November 2021).

Roundtables

1. The Centre co-hosted an online roundtable with the Shanghai Institute of International Studies and the Asia New Zealand Foundation on 'The Asia Pacific Region 2021 and Beyond' (19 March 2021).
2. The Centre hosted an online roundtable discussion with the Chinese Embassy on the recently released 14th Five Year Plan (15 March 2021).
3. The Centre hosted representatives from the Chinese Embassy for a discussion of New Zealand China relations and regional affairs (19 June 2021).
4. The Centre hosted an online roundtable discussion with the Chinese Embassy on the New Zealand-China bilateral relationship with opening remarks from Ambassador Wu Xi and Minister Counsellor Wang Genhua (30 September 2021).
5. The Centre hosted representatives from the Chinese Embassy for a discussion of the outcome of the Sixth Plenum and the *Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Major Achievements and Historical Experience of the Party over the Past Century* (November 2021).

China Capable Public Sector (CCPS)

The Centre continues to work closely with the CCPS programme to deliver quality programmes on China for the New Zealand public sector. In 2021 we have delivered:

- Three 5-day Masterclasses on China.
- Twelve Knowledge Transfer events
- Two Cross-Agency Forums.
- Two day-long Senior Leaders Forums on China.

The Centre will continue to deliver the CCPS programme into 2022.

External Engagement

The Centre actively provided comment for New Zealand and international media (print, online, television and radio) as well as maintaining a social media presence through its Twitter account and regular op-eds for domestic (Newsroom, Stuff) and international media and think tanks (East Asia Forum, RUSI, LSE Ideas). Staff at the Centre have engaged in roundtables hosted by the Asia New Zealand Foundation (with Taiwan and Indian counterparts) and the Centre for Strategic Studies (with Russian and Australian counterparts). Staff have contributed to the China Story

Yearbook published by the Australian Centre on China in the World at ANU. Aside from the Chinese Embassy, the Centre has held discussions this year with diplomats from Australia, the EU, Germany, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Staff were also recently involved in online discussions with New Zealand posts in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Seoul. Finally, the Centre has been represented at online conferences in China, including the 9th World Forum on China Studies in Shanghai and with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, as well as a keynote lecture for the 24th NZASIA Biennial International Conference on ‘China Studies in the age of Xi’ (25 November 2021).

Planned Activities for 2022

50th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations with the PRC

New Zealand and the People’s Republic of China established diplomatic relations on the 22nd of December 1972. Next year marks 50 years since the signing of the joint communiqué at the United Nations in New York. As such, the Centre plans a series of activities to mark this occasion, including publications, a symposium with CASS, public lectures, and discussion panels.

Publications

The Centre plans to publish this year’s public lecture by Malcolm McKinnon in the first half of 2022. We are also looking to support the publication of *Encountering China*, a book that draws on fifty contributors to mark the anniversary.

A View to the Future

The New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre was established 12 years ago to promote research and knowledge-sharing on China in New Zealand. 12 years is a long time and during that time there have been significant changes in the demand for the type of China expertise and discussion in New Zealand, both in terms of the questions asked and the knowledge needed to answer them. Discussion of China is becoming mainstream, and the Centre has played an important role in promoting and guiding that shift.

It is time to reflect on these changes and consider the programme of activities and organisational structure of the Centre to ensure they remain fit for today’s requirements. Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Jennifer Windsor has initiated a review of the Centre for 2022 as part of a broader review of Centres at Victoria University of Wellington. The review terms, reviewers, and scope will be established in early 2022.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the continued support and encouragement that the Centre receives from Victoria University of Wellington and from PVC Professor Jennifer Windsor as well as the ongoing contributions and input from the Centre’s Associate Directors representing our New Zealand university members.

Jason Young
NZCCRC Director
November 2021



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