MEDIA RELEASE

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Hon Julie Bishop MP

18 August 2015

APPOINTMENT OF BHP BILLITON CHAIR OF AUSTRALIAN STUDIES AT PEKING UNIVERSITY

I welcome the appointment of Professor Gregory McCarthy as the BHP Billiton Chair of Australian Studies at Peking University.

Professor McCarthy has worked tirelessly to strengthen ties between the Australian and Chinese academic communities. In his new role, announced today by the Foundation for Australian Studies in China (FASIC), Professor McCarthy will use his expertise to deepen understanding of Australia in China.

Professor McCarthy will lead the Australian studies program at Peking University. He will also provide academic leadership for over 40 Australian Studies Centres at universities and institutes across China.

The BHP Billiton Chair initiative has raised the profile of Australian studies within Chinese academic circles and increased the number of Chinese university students who have had the opportunity to learn about Australia.

The Australia-China Council, led by the Hon Warwick Smith AM, is championing the role of private sector investment to strengthen our bilateral relationship with China. The Chair of Australian Studies at Peking University, which is funded by BHP Billiton and supported by FASIC, is an important part of this initiative.

Professor McCarthy is currently the Director of International Engagement at the University of Adelaide, and has been appointed Professor of Australian politics at the University of Western Australia. He will begin his assignment in Beijing in early 2016.

I thank the inaugural BHP Billiton Chair of Australian Studies, Professor David Walker, for his contribution during his three year tenure.

Foreign Minister's Office: *Rachel Obradovic 0478 488 874*
Gabrielle Young 0408 275 340