

FOUNDATION FOR AUSTRALIAN STUDIES IN CHINA

(ABN 23 151 021 037)

MEDIA RELEASE

FOREIGN MINISTER WELCOMES THE APPOINTMENT OF THE SECOND BHP BILLITON CHAIR AT PEKING UNIVERSITY

18 August 2015

Today, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Julie Bishop, issued a media release welcoming the appointment of Professor Gregory McCarthy as the second BHP Billiton Chair of Australian Studies at Peking University. Professor McCarthy will begin his assignment in Beijing in early 2016 after the inaugural BHP Billiton Chair of Australian Studies, Professor David Walker, completes his three year tenure at Peking University. Professor McCarthy was appointed by the Foundation for Australian Studies in China (FASIC) because of his strong background in Australian politics and his experience in bringing together Australian and Chinese scholars.

The Minister referred to Professor McCarthy's appointment as the second BHP Billiton Chair of Australian Studies at Peking University as another milestone in the expanding relationship between the Australian Studies Centres in China and the academic community in Australia. The Australia China Council of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has been supporting the Australian Studies Centres in China for over 20 years. Today, there are over 40 Australian Studies Centres established in Chinese universities and institutes.

FASIC, which is financially supported by BHP Billiton, was an initiative of the Australia China Council and the private sector to combine private funding for Australia China projects that will enhance mutual understanding.

Professor Greg McCarthy was the Head of School Social Science and Director of International Engagement for the Faculty of Arts at the University of Adelaide and has an academic focus on political science. At the same time as taking up his new duties in Beijing, Professor McCarthy will join the University of Western Australia as a professor of political science in the Faculty of Arts.

Professor Mark Wainwright, Chairman of FASIC, said "The appointment of Professor McCarthy follows a competitive selection process. We are confident that Professor McCarthy will be an excellent representative for the Australian educational sector in China and that he will help expand the reach of Australian Studies within Chinese universities."

The Chairman of DFAT's Australia China Council and FASIC board member, the Hon Warwick Smith, said that "The BHP Billiton Chair initiative had 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. Our bilateral relationship with China becomes stronger and more resilient when a greater number of Chinese citizens know and understand Australia."

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Tony Cudmore, Chief Public Affairs Officer, BHP Billiton said “We welcome Professor McCarthy’s appointment as the second BHP Billiton Chair of Australian Studies at Peking University. BHP Billiton values our longstanding relationship with China. Our support of FASIC, the Chair and the many Australian Studies Centres throughout China aims to benefit both Australia and China, and lead to a stronger bilateral relationship based on mutual understanding. We wish Professor McCarthy every success in his new appointment.”

Professor McCarthy said “I am honoured to be continuing the important work started by Professor David Walker as the BHP Billiton Chair of Australian Studies at Peking University. There is an enormous interest in China in the field of Australian Studies and I look forward to working with my academic colleagues at Peking University and at the over 40 other Australian Studies Centres around China.”

More information on FASIC can be found at www.fasic.org.au.

For further enquiries please contact Ms Shirley Gao at sgao@asic.org.au.