

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Chinese-Australian Community in Challenging Times**

Chinese-Australians are committed to the ongoing values of equality, prosperity and security, shared by all Australians, regardless of their ethnicity or background. This was the key takeaway from a national roundtable hosted by the Chinese Community Council of Australia, in conjunction with its branches in Victoria and New South Wales.

The half-day virtual conference entitled *Chinese-Australian Community in Challenging Times* was held on 7 August 2021. More than 50 community leaders, scholars and current and former elected representatives across the country participated in the event.

The major themes, for ongoing discussion and policy development, agreed upon were:

1. Chinese-Australians are proud Australians, and equally proud of their cultural identity and heritage;
2. Chinese-Australians are concerned about the increase in racially-motivated incidents targeted at their community;
3. Chinese-Australians are deeply concerned about the anti-Chinese rhetoric and acknowledge those who defending their community; and
4. Chinese-Australians consider the questioning of their loyalty to this country or any “guilt by association” unfair, unjust and hurtful.

The conference was conducted in three sessions sequentially with each session ending with Q&A.

**Session One “Racism in Media and on Street”** was moderated by Sam Wong AM.

Councillor Li Zhang (from Glen Eira City Council) shared her experience successfully running for local council in 2020. Cr Zhang was viciously attacked on social media —attacks based on her racial background—and these had significant impacts not only on her professional life but on her health.

Founder and National Convener for the Asian Australian Alliance (AAA) Erin Chew provided an overview of the recently released *“Covid-19 Racism Incident Report Survey Comprehensive Report”*.

There were more than five hundred racist incidents recorded during a 15-month period. This initiative driven by the Alliance found that nearly half of those Asian-Australians who'd suffered abuse, in which perpetrators referenced China and Covid-19, were in fact not of Mainland Chinese origin.

Independent journalist Marcus Reubenstein, editor of APAC News, spoke on freedom of speech issues, Chinese-Australians who are targeted for online abuses, and his ongoing action in the Federal Court following allegedly defamatory publications made about him.

### **Session Two “Government & Chinese-Australians”**

Guest speaker, Regional Director NSW/ACT of the Department of Home Affairs, Sneha Chatterjee spoke about the role and objectives of the Department in building the relationship between government and the communities and promoting social cohesion.

She was followed by Sydney University Professor David Brophy, author of the recently released *China Panic: Australia's Alternative to Paranoia and Pandering*. He provided an academic insight into the ambiguity of many aspects of the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme and its impact on the Chinese-Australian community.

**Session Three “Public Positions and Community Voices”** was moderated by Tony Pang, former President of Chinese Australian Forum.

State Member for the inner-city Sydney seat of Newtown, Jenny Leong spoke of her experience coming from Chinese heritage and growing up in Australia. Former Victorian State MP Hong Lim talked about the contribution of international students to this country and the case to welcome them back when the situation permits.

Peter Cai of Lowy Institute discussed the findings of the Lowy Institute’s “Being Chinese in Australia: Public Opinion in Chinese Communities” report that was released in March this year.

Finally former Queensland State MP Michael Choi spoke of the marginalization of the Chinese community in the name of national security.



**Contact:** [kingsleyliu3@hotmail.com](mailto:kingsleyliu3@hotmail.com), [cccav.committee@gmail.com](mailto:cccav.committee@gmail.com)