

# Australian Academy of the Humanities



AAH-CASS Presentation Summaries  
2-3 September 2024



*Population and culture  
in nation building*

The Symposium on Population and Culture in Nation Building was supported by the National Foundation for Australia-China Relations.

The Australian Academy of the Humanities is proud to be a National Foundation for Australia-China Relations grant recipient.



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This Symposium was attended by representatives of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, to facilitate research and knowledge sharing.



**Australian  
Academy of the  
Humanities**



中国社会科学院  
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

# Symposium on Population and Culture in Nation Building

2-3 September 2024

Convened by Emeritus Professor Joseph Lo Bianco AM FAHA, International Secretary of the Australian Academy of the Humanities (AAH) and supported by the National Foundation for Australia China Relations, the 2024 symposium, hosted by the AAH in collaboration with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), was on the topic of **Population and Culture in Nation Building**.

The 2024 Symposium theme, **Population and Culture in Nation Building**, encouraged the exploration of intersection of culture and demography, topics of interest to both Australia and China. The Symposium involved four presentations from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and four from Australian Fellows and scholars. Presentation addressed:

- Urbanisation and internal migration
- Attitudes to the world/region
- Migration and population growth
- Social cohesion and diversity: communication



Australian Academy of the Humanities President, Professor Stephen Garton AM FAHA FRAHS FASSA FRSN and Professor Yu Xinhua sign the Memorandum of Understanding.

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## Topic: Attitudes to the world/region

Chair: Professor Emeritus Joseph Lo Bianco AM FAHA

### Speakers

#### **Emeritus Professor David Walker AM FASSA FAHA**

*Engaging Asia: Australia's long journey towards finding its place in the world*

Australia's engagement with Asia has often been thought of as a post-Second World War initiative. Some have even pushed the time of engagement somewhat later, to the 1980s and 1990s when the Hawke/Keating governments pressed the case for 'Asia literacy'. In fact, a growing awareness of the influence 'rising Asia' might have, has been evident from the late nineteenth century when settler Australians, isolated as they then were in six colonies, began to draw together to form a new nation.

After federation in 1901, a new state emerged, the first new nation of the twentieth century. Questions soon arose about its character and future role in the world. It had become clear that as British settlers slowly adapted to Australia's uniquely challenging environment, cumulative changes (social, cultural, and political) inevitably began to differentiate the Australians as a new people. Yet their relatives back in Great Britain and Ireland liked to think of Australia as a remote outpost of the British Empire, a place whose concerns they could readily overlook. Prominent among the concerns that they did not understand, was the fear that 'empty' Australia was vulnerable to invasion from the crowded nations to its north, notably from China and Japan. These fears pushed defense and security to the fore.

Then from the late 1920s, some Australians, while wishing to remain loyal British subjects, began to search for ways in which Australia might shed some of its old fears of Asia, to play a more constructive role among the rising nations of the Pacific. In 1935, Australia created the Department of External Affairs and later sent diplomats to Tokyo, Washington and Nationalist China. Shortly after becoming prime minister, Robert Menzies urged Australians to drop the British term 'the Far East' and to think of Asia as their 'Near North'. To drive such engagement, intellectual capacity was needed. Those with knowledge and experience of Asia emerged. Notably, Douglas Copland, Australia's last Ambassador to Nationalist China was appointed as the first Vice Chancellor of the new Australian National University, where C.P. Fitzgerald became Professor of Far Eastern History specialising in China and Professor W.D. Borrie created the first Department of Demography to be established anywhere in the world.

During the 1950s, unlike Britain, but following America's lead, Australia did not recognise the Peoples' Republic of China. Nonetheless both trade and visits to China by unionists, teachers and writers were permitted. Recognition finally came in 1972 with the election of the Whitlam Labor government. A challenge to long-established trading patterns then came in 1973 when Britain joined the European Common Market and began to take fewer Australian goods. In response, Australia turned to Asia and trade first with Japan and later with China increased markedly. By 2010, China had become Australia's largest trading partner.

Chinese had first began coming to Australia in large numbers during the gold rushes of the 1850s. Migration slowed considerably during the years of the White Australia Policy but picked up again from the 1970s as migration policies changed and Australia became increasingly a multicultural country. Today around 5.5% of Australians have Chinese heritage.

Australia's interest in China has been accompanied by China's growing interest and experience of Australia. In 2023, 154,467 Chinese came to Australia as students and many others also came as tourists. Meanwhile, nearly forty Australian Studies Centres have been established in universities across China. The Foundation for Australian Studies in China (FASIC) created the first Chair of Australian Studies at Peking University in Beijing in 2013. I held this position as the inaugural 'Chair Professor' until 2016.



**Emeritus Professor David Walker** is Fellow of two Australian academies; an Alfred Deakin Professor at Deakin University; and an Honorary Professorial Fellow at the Asia Institute, University of Melbourne. From 2013 to 2016, he held the inaugural BHP Chair of Australian Studies at Peking University, Beijing. He received an AM for his services to international education in 2018. David Walker has written extensively on Australia's relationships with Asia. His Asia-related books include: *Happy Together: bridging the Australia China divide*, (with Li Yao and Karen Walker), MUP, 2022; *Stranded Nation: White Australia in an Asian Region*, UWA Publishing 2019; *Australia's Asia: from Yellow Peril to Asian Century*, (with Agnieszka Sobocinska) UWA Publishing 2013; *Not Dark Yet*, Giramondo, 2011 (translated into Chinese as 光明行, 2014); *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia, 1850 to 1939* (UQP, 1999). David Walker is a Director and Board Member of

the Foundation for Australian Studies in China (FASIC).



Emeritus Professor David Walker AM FASSA FAHA.

## **Professor Weijia Dong**

### *Towards a Community of Shared Future for Mankind: Common values and goals of China and the world*

The world is in a period of great development, change and restructuring, with economic globalisation progressing in a tortuous manner, and a new round of scientific and technological revolutions and industrial changes bringing both opportunities and challenges. The relationship between China and the world has reached a new starting point: China's comprehensive strength and international status have significantly improved, and it can make more positive contributions to world peace and strategic stability, and its development experience can provide ideas and solutions to global problems. China and the world share common values and goals, and the traditional Chinese culture of "one world, one commonwealth", "harmony and difference, peace is precious", "Taoism and nature, unity of heaven and mankind", etc. share common values and goals with the rest of the world. etc., are in fact unified with the common values and goals of the world, such as peace, development and justice. General Secretary Xi Jinping has put forward the vision of building a community of human destiny, and in order to realise this vision, we insist on diversity, openness and inclusiveness, and win-win cooperation for development. The diversity of human civilisation not only defines our world but also drives human progress. There is no superiority or inferiority of civilisations, but only differences in characteristics and geography. Civilisational diversity should not be a source of global conflict; on the contrary, it should be an engine for the advancement of human civilisation. In the context of the anti-globalisation trend, we stress that globalisation is irreversible. We should strengthen coordination, improve governance and achieve economic globalisation so that it is open, inclusive and balanced. China stresses bilateral and multilateral cooperation and hopes to work with the world to achieve mutual benefits and win-win results.

China actively participates in global governance and works with other countries to address global challenges such as climate change, poverty reduction and public health. Among them, China's efforts in addressing climate change are evident to all. General Secretary Xi Jinping announced at the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2020 that China strives to achieve carbon peaking by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2060. Green innovation has the double externality of spillover effects and external environmental costs, which can lead to market failures, and therefore governments should be more supportive of green innovation. To achieve its dual-carbon goals, China has continued to invest in green R&D, becoming the largest public spender on energy R&D.

There are several aspects of this that can provide the Chinese experience for global green development. First, China's investment in clean energy is far ahead of others, and renewable energy-related companies have continued to increase their R&D investment in order to remain competitive, resulting in a steady decline in the selling price of wind and solar panels, making their cost comparable to traditional fossil fuel electricity. Second, the development of clean energy requires coordination across sectors to ensure that the infrastructure is ready to support the growth of the green economy. For example, electric vehicles require charging stations, and solar and wind energy require grids and storage, which China has also invested considerably in. Thirdly, green financing was important, and China had clarified the definition of green activities and created a range of green financing tools, such as green loans, bonds and equity funds, to meet the financial needs and risks of different projects and to serve the green economy as a whole. Fourth, development finance institutions (DFIs) are crucial in the global green development process, and DFIs can provide policy support, capacity building and concessional capital for mobilising private capital into high-risk markets or technologies. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), between 2013 and 2021, the cumulative financing of DFIs globally will be about \$468 billion, of which China's DFIs will account for about 56 per cent. China has also committed to stop financing new coal projects abroad and made major announcements at the third Belt and Road Forum in 2023, such as injecting capital into the China Development Bank and the Export-Import Bank of China to emphasise green investments and replenish the Silk Road Fund. In addition, some new solar photovoltaic projects, such as complementary fisheries and photovoltaics and complementary agricultural photovoltaics, can reduce water evaporation and save land resources, and in some areas can turn deserts into grasslands. Finally, China is also actively involved in the energy

transition in Oceania, where Chinese capital will have an estimated 6,244 MW of generating capacity by 2033, 52 per cent of which will be wind and 21 per cent solar.

In conclusion, international cooperation with China, which has the capacity to successfully implement its own transition to carbon neutrality and provide international leadership in technology and energy policy development, is critical to achieving the 1.5°C temperature control target.



**Dr Weijia Dong** is an assistant research fellow at Department of International Development, Institute of World Economics and Politics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. She received her PhD in economics from Nagoya University. She has a particular interest in issues of environmental economics and development economics, especially how does technology innovation affect environmental performance in the emerging countries. She has collaborated with many other researchers and published multiple articles on *Energy Economics*, *International Review of Economics and Finance*, *Emerging Markets' Finance and Trade*. She has received the fund by the National Nature Science Foundation of China. Her writing on trade and the environment also appears in *The Routledge Handbook of Environmental Economics in Asia*.



## Topic: Migration and population growth

### Speakers

#### **Professor Bingqin Li**

*Community development for a multicultural society: challenges, resilience and the future*

Building cohesive multicultural communities is critical in societies with substantial immigrant populations to foster social harmony, mitigate conflicts, and promote mutual understanding. This talk by Professor Bingqin Li offers a nuanced analysis of the roles played by the state, community, service providers, and families in navigating the complexities of multiculturalism. Drawing on findings from three significant research projects—**Sustaining Old Age Volunteerism among CALD Populations: The CASS Community Volunteer Model** (funded by the Department of Multicultural NSW), **Overcoming Social Isolation through Old Age Volunteerism** (ARC-Linkage No. LP210200671), and the **ASSA + CASS Old Age Immigration Social Integration Initiative**—Professor Li examines how multicultural challenges can drive social innovation and create shared societal benefits.

The research highlights the interconnected efforts of families, community organisations, service providers, and governance systems in addressing social isolation among older Chinese immigrants. Families and community organisations play a pivotal role in fostering active participation and belonging among these individuals. Through culturally tailored interventions such as language programs, social activities, and volunteering opportunities, they not only alleviate isolation but also empower older immigrants to become valuable contributors to their communities. These efforts underscore the importance of grassroots-level engagement in building cohesive societies.

The shifting dynamics of filial responsibility among Chinese immigrant families further illuminate the challenges faced by service providers. Traditional expectations that adult children will assume caregiving roles are increasingly untenable due to modern realities such as limited resources, knowledge gaps, and migration-induced separations. These evolving circumstances necessitate integrating older immigrants into local social services. By addressing language barriers and providing culturally appropriate resources, service providers ensure that older immigrants can access the support they need for their well-being and social integration.

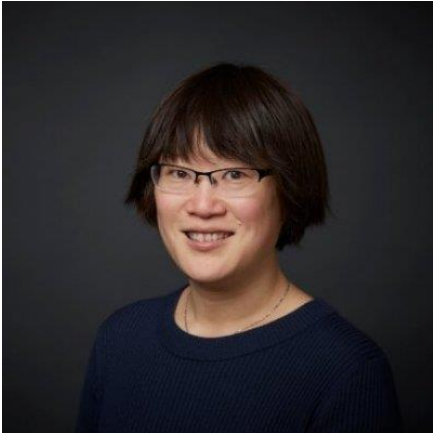
At the governance level, Professor Li traces the evolution of multicultural policies in Australia, from limited engagement in the 1980s to the participatory and co-designed approaches of today. Government-supported initiatives, such as the **CASS Community Volunteer Model**, exemplify how partnerships with non-governmental organisations can empower local communities to develop sustainable, self-governed activities. However, significant barriers remain, including the digital divide, generational differences, and institutional barriers. Addressing these challenges requires sustained effort and innovative policy responses.

A central argument of the talk is the transformative potential of integrated approach and volunteerism in fostering social cohesion. By engaging older immigrants not merely as beneficiaries but as active participants, these initiatives enhance their sense of belonging and societal value. Post-pandemic trends highlight the growing significance of addressing social isolation and promoting community resilience through state-community collaboration and culturally responsive governance.

Professor Li concludes by emphasising the importance of investing time, resources, and innovative strategies in building inclusive communities. The temptation to prioritise expedient solutions at the expense of long-term community-building efforts must be resisted. Instead, fostering environments where all members, irrespective of their background, can meaningfully contribute to the common good is essential.

This talk offers a compelling vision of how multicultural challenges can catalyse social innovation, with profound implications for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars. Rooted in empirical findings, it not only contributes to theoretical discourse on multiculturalism and social integration but also provides

actionable insights for building equitable, harmonious, and inclusive communities. The lessons drawn from Australia's experience resonate globally, offering valuable reflections for countries grappling with similar challenges, including China.



**Professor Bingqin Li** is the Director of the Chinese and Comparative Social Policy Stream at the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales. She is also an Honorary Professor at Sydney University. She is currently the Chair of the East Asian Social Policy Research Network. Her research centres around social inclusion and governance. Current projects include governance of age-friendly communities, local government motivation in delivering complex social programs, and community development for migrant concentrated societies. She conducts research on Australia and China, as well as comparative research between different countries.



Professor Bingqin Li and Emeritus Professor Louise Edwards FAHA FASSA FHKAH.

## **Professor Yang Ge**

### *The Transformation of Internal Migration in China over the Past Two Decades*

Since the 1980s, the reform of the rural land system has resulted in a significant surplus of agricultural labor force; the development of industry in the eastern region demands a substantial number of labor force. China has transformed from a rural China with low mobility to a migrant China with high mobility, emerging as a crucial factor in China's societal, cultural, economic, and other alterations. The scale of internal migration within China has experienced rapid expansion over the past two decades. The characteristics have undergone substantial changes in the following aspects: Age and sex structure, family structure; Spatial changes in the location and destination; Transformation in migratory groups.

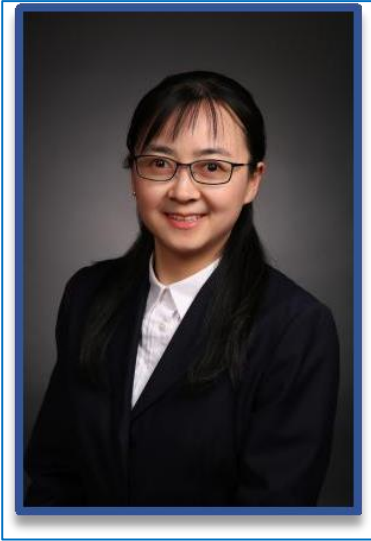
Owing to the reduction in mobility costs and the accessibility of information. The age range prone to migration is broadening. The migration probability of each age group has increased over time. The peak age remains essentially the same, while the peak continues to rise. The average and median age of migration keeps increasing. Other family members such as children and the elderly are also involved in migration, and the pattern of entire family migration is becoming increasingly prevalent. Some migrants are gradually integrating into the local society at the destination, and the environment of metropolises has become more tolerant and friendly.

The disparities in regional social and economic development are narrowing, which has led to changes in flow direction and return migration. The migration from the five central provinces and Sichuan province to the developed coastal areas of southeast China is a typical characteristic of China's domestic migration. However, some central cities with rapid economic growth have emerged in the traditional emigration areas, where emigration is no longer prominent, and even back migration has occurred. The emigration center expanded to the southwest and northwest.

The educational and vocational characteristics of the migrating population are also undergoing alterations. The education level of migrants has risen; The education level of intra-provincial migrants is higher than that of inter-provincial migrants. With the improvement of living standards, the demand for the service industry is gradually increasing, which will promote the transformation of migration from the manufacturing sector to the service sector.

Migration has both positive and negative impacts. It can increase migrant income, facilitate industrial development, and accelerate the dissemination of culture. However, it also heightens the risk of family separation, contributes to the decline of rural areas, and exacerbates the excessive concentration in urban areas.

## Yang Ge



- PhD. of Demography, graduated from Renmin University of China
- Associate researcher, The Institute of Population and Labor Economics (IPLE), Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).
- Master's Supervisor, University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (UCASS).
- Research interests: Migration, Fertility, Family Support.

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## Topic: Social cohesion and diversity: communication

Chair: Professor Tang Zhengda

### Speakers

#### **Professor Emeritus Joseph Lo Bianco AM FAHA**

*The critical and underappreciated role of language policy in nation building.*

While the role of languages in national consolidation, and more broadly in nationalism, is well studied and theorised there is little comprehensive research on this within the Australian context. When we look closely however, we see that Australian language policy has traversed a series of stages and phases in its response to national communication challenges. The changes and developments suggest shifts in ideology and in the national imaginary. This is best revealed through a broad historical overview of key phases in Australia's language policy, and this should include both implicit and covert language policy, and explicit and deliberate language policy. In my own analysis the following overview of phases and the shifts, for the colonial and national periods reveals the following, though the pre-colonial ancient history of Australia is a period of immense language diversity whose valorisation is of immense importance but is relatively under researched. The five stages do not imply abandonment of the ideologies and aims as one succeeds the other but, to a varying extent, the co-existence of all of these.

- Britishism. From the establishment of the British colonies the dominant language ideology (whether declared as policy or implied) involved adherence to S. British norms of English, repression of immigrant and Indigenous languages, promotion of elite foreign languages according to British geography, inauguration of White Australia Policy, such as its adoption in the dictation test for migration exclusion.
- Australianism. Contesting British was the assertion of native Australian norms of English, which co-existed with persistence of generally anti-multilingual policies, and persistence of White Australia Policy and dictation but also the admission of the first teaching of Asian languages for strategic reasons and the beginnings of community-based minority language maintenance efforts.
- Multiculturalism. Emerging as a repudiation of assimilation was the 1970s advocacy of community languages in preference to foreign languages, Australian English, and its expansion into explicit and formal language policy declarations.
- Asianism. Succeeding and replacing a dominantly multicultural focus on language policy this phase, from the mid 1990s, involved preferencing of a small number of trade and geo-politically significant languages of the Asian region.
- Economism. This involved the reassertion of English around problematization of literacy standards but also for export of education services, via the medium of English.

Occasionally Australian public policy development in language and literacy has been world-leading, innovating in experimentation with multilingual delivery, but then oscillating towards more restrictive positions stressing Anglophone attachment or the commercial repercussions of the global power and presence of English. In this work the principal voices and interests that have shaped the content of various policy determinations and the discourses which have prevailed at critical junctures in Australia's national development is explored. These language policy ideologies reflect the nation's sense of itself in and of the world, but also its accommodation to purely domestic questions of population management and cultural evolution, minority inclusion, Indigenous reconciliation, service delivery efficiency.

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**Dr Joseph Lo Bianco**, AM, FAHA, is Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne and Vice-President (International) Australian Academy of the Humanities. He researches and advises on language and literacy policy, intercultural education and peacebuilding and language rights for minority populations in conflict affected settings in SE Asia and is author of Australia's first national language policy, the National Policy on Languages, adopted by the Federal and all state governments in 1987.

## Professor Tang Zhengda

*Harmony in diversity: Mutualism between dialectal preservation and Putonghua popularization*

**Abstract:** Studies concerning immigrations in European countries and US tend to suggest a negative association between ethnic diversity and social cohesion (Putnam 2007, Morales 2013, etc.). Different stories are told in China, which is boast of the areal and historical richness in language and dialect variations, where cultural and linguistic diversity generally benefits cohesion and goodwill between communities, neighbours and nationalities. The harmonious coexistence is made possible by the multi-linguistic mode of daily lives which prove effective in preserving local culture and traditions while embracing efficiency and wellbeing resulted from modernization and opening-up. Firstly this speak-more- rather than speak-another-language/dialect strategy meets both the theoretical and experimental linguistic findings that different languoids, along with different social settings, spoken by certain people are mutually complementary rather than competing, let alone contradicting. Studies show that Children especially can use different dialects or languages almost equally fluently in accordance with differing time, place, and participants switched from one to another. And with only minute and transient grammatical errors kids tend to speak Putonghua so naturally as if they forgot all about the accents and word choice of their vernacular a moment ago. besides, a tendential division of labour is found between Putonghua and dialects in which the former is mainly used in more formal or public settings and the latter more local and personal, with complementary lexicons and genres. Secondly, the population of Putonghua and the preservation of local cultures and languoids benefit each other in many ways. One of the most notable is embodied by the National Language Preservation Project through with thousands of dialects and languages are recorded and documented in systemic manner by researchers, dialectologists and anthropologists. The metalanguage applied in the nationwide activities is associated with Putonghua and annotated in IPA system which run effectively with the dialects and languages in such a manner that the values, types, features are highlighted, as well as recorded, in lexically more enriched Putonghua. The involvement of linguists and anthropologists under the national funded projects de facto sharpens the local people's awareness of their own cultural and linguistic identities, and of strengthens their own understandings and interpretations of traditional values.



**Tang Zhengda**, Ph.D. and Professor of Linguistics at the Institute of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Editor of the Editorial Board for The Journal of the Chinese Language, Supervisor for graduate students at the Graduate School of the University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Deputy Secretary-General of the 9th Council of Beijing Linguistic Society. His interests himself in, and publish papers concerning, morphosyntactic and pragmatic approaches to grammar, linguistic typology, and Chinese dialectology. His research achievements have won the second prize of the 19th Lü Shuxiang Award for Linguistics of CASS. He presided over the Social Science Fund project (07CYY020) and completed the project with the grade of excellence and participated in a number of other projects of the Social Sciences. He has visited the University of Tokyo, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, and the Institute of Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences for collaborative research and presented his studies. In addition, he has had more than sixty academic talks and lectures at many universities or research institutions.

# Topic: Urbanisation and internal migration

## Speakers

### **Professor Neil Argent**

#### *Urbanisation and internal migration in Australia: Drivers and implications*

Australia's population has a highly distinctive geography, characterised by a mixture of sparsity, concentration and fragmentation. The nation has relatively high population concentrations along the eastern and south-western seaboard, yet simultaneously a highly fragmented settlement structure with substantial distances between capital and major cities, and low population densities between these macro-region and across much of the rest of the continent. The product of complicated interactions between a complex of historical, geographical, political/economic and environmental factors, the structure of the national urban system has changed little since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and continues to be shaped by the same set of forces today. However, it is important to recognise that the Indigenous population possesses quite a contrasting spatial distribution to that of the non-Indigenous population, being more likely to reside in very remote and remote areas than the rest of society and less likely to live in major and capital cities (ABS, 2021). In this presentation, I provide an analytical perspective on the evolution of the Australian settlement system, focussing particularly on its increasing urbanisation and the complex of factors leading to and reinforcing this condition. Beginning with the nation's characteristically high degree of metropolitan primacy (see Rose, 1967), I examine some emergent forms of urban settlement, and discuss the role of internal migration in shaping but also challenging the predominant urbanisation trends and trajectories. In spite of the tenacious hold of rural (and masculine) imagery as cultural motifs putatively describing Australian society in the eyes of some, the nation's society is overwhelmingly urban and has been for many decades. At the 2021 Census, two-thirds of the nation lived in capital cities, that share increasing to 85 per cent if the measure is expanded to those living in major cities and towns as well as the capitals. While urbanisation is regarded as the dominant dynamic within the Australian settlement system, there is considerable geographical heterogeneity in the settlement and migration dynamics of the nation, with the fastest rates of population growth occurring within so-called second- and third-tier cities and major regional centres (see Smalles, et al., 2019), often located within the expanded commuting and trade shadows of the capitals. As emphasised by McGuirk and Argent (2011), migration has played and continues to play a fundamental if somewhat contradictory role in influencing Australia's urban system. International migration dominantly supports the growth of the capital cities – particularly Melbourne and Sydney – yet internal migration processes (i.e. counterurbanisation) have historically been a net drain on the cities, redistributing population to centres and regions further down the urban hierarchy (Centre for Population, 2022; Argent and Plummer, 2022, 2024). The presentation considers major public policy and planning implications of the current trajectories in urbanisation and in internal migration trends for the provision of key infrastructure and services for the nation's metropolitan and non-metropolitan places and regions.

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**Dr Neil Argent** is a Professor of Human Geography in the Division of Geography and Planning at the University of New England (UNE), Australia. Trained at the University of Adelaide, Neil's research focusses primarily on the geography of rural economic, demographic and social change in developed world nations. Since 1996 he has been involved in a series of Australian Research Council Discovery-Project grants as lead, sole or joint Chief Investigator in these fields of enquiry. A passionate geographer, he is an honorary Fellow of the Institute of Australian Geographers Inc., and served on the National Committee of Geography for several years until recently. A regional development practitioner, he has been an active member of his local Regional Development Australia committee (Northern Inland) since 2009. Since 2023 he has also served on the Federal

Government's Urban Policy Forum and is currently helping to shape its national urban policy. Neil is also an editorial board member and associate editor of the international *Journal of Rural Studies* (Elsevier) and an editorial board member of the international *Journal of Rural Community Development*.

## Professor Fu Wei

### *County-Level industrialisation and the urban-rural integration in China*

#### **Abstract**

Following the reform and opening-up period, many counties in China have harnessed county-level industrialization to establish a distinctly Chinese pathway of urbanization that integrates both urban and rural development.

Firstly, this process embodies a unique form of industrialization, characterized by "off-farm yet hometown-bound" (离土不离乡). This model has been cultivated by farmers who strategically utilize the land, labor, and other resources within the county, thereby creating an industrial structure that remains deeply embedded in local society.

Secondly, a distinctive model of urbanization has emerged, based on the county as the fundamental unit. In this model, industrial production is generated internally within the county society, circumventing the need for large-scale migration of farmers to urban areas. This has enabled industrial production to maintain a close connection with rural society, fostering the development of various forms of industrial activity that reflect localized characteristics.

Thirdly, this industrialization model is positioned to significantly influence and shape the trajectory of modernization with Chinese characteristics. It implies that county-level societies will continue to function as relatively stable and cohesive unit of social life, thus paving an industrialization and urbanization pathway that diverges from that of Western societies. Moreover, as a self-contained social unit, the county also facilitates the integration of traditional Chinese cultural values and interpersonal relationships into modern society in China.



**Fu Wei** is Associate Professor, Vice Director of Department of Sociology for Economy, Sciences, and Technology at Institute of Sociology of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). He also serves as Executive Director of the Research Center for Private Entrepreneurs of CASS (RCPE-CASS), and Research Fellow at the Institute of Digital China, University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. His research focuses on economic sociology, technology sociology, and rural sociology. He has published monograph *Rural Industry in the Integrated Urban-Rural Development Process: History,*

*Practice and Reflection* (book) and many papers on top peer-reviewed Chinese journals including *Social Sciences in China*, *Sociological Research*, etc. He has led several national/provincial-level research projects included a project funded by the National Social Science Fund. He has also received numerous honours and awards, including national youth top talent, the "Lu Xueyi Outstanding Achievement Award in Sociology", the Fei Xiaotong Outstanding Paper Award, etc.



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