

NEWS RELEASE

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BHP BILLITON PARTNERSHIP STRENGTHENS TIES WITH CHINA

The BHP Billiton Chair of Australian Studies at Peking University in Beijing, Professor David Walker, visited Melbourne today, as part of the A\$5 million partnership aimed at raising the profile and understanding of Australia in China.

BHP Billiton contributes A\$1.1 million per annum, over five years, to the Foundation for Australian Studies in China to support Professor Walker's position and to fund scholarships for Australians to study in China.

The program is run in partnership with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs' Australia-China Council, the Foundation for Australian studies in China, Peking University, Universities Australia and the Commonwealth Department of Education.

Professor Walker's appointment was announced in November 2012. During his visit to Australia, he is keen to encourage Australian students to look to Asia as their future.

"The creation of the BHP Billiton Chair of Australian Studies at Peking University is a very important educational initiative.

"The Chair sends the clearest possible signal to the already large and growing Australian Studies community in China that we are serious about wanting Chinese people to know Australia better across a wide spectrum of research fields and interests.

"There are no better or more enduring ways of doing this than through strong educational links that permit sustained intellectual, cultural and social engagement.

"The scholarship program will bring the best and brightest of our two societies together. This is a very practical way of strengthening ties between our two societies," he said.

BHP Billiton CEO Andrew Mackenzie said the Company was delighted to support this important partnership which aims to enhance research and education opportunities between Australia and China.

"I would firstly like to congratulate Professor David Walker on an excellent start at Peking University. His experience is a great asset to Peking University and in building two-way exchanges of people and ideas.

"As BHP Billiton's business with China continues to grow, we are pleased to develop closer

relations across a range of areas, including education.

“We hope the partnership fosters a deeper relationship between Australia and China, strengthening mutual understanding of social, political and economic issues,” he said.

Professor Walker will be in Australia throughout October and is being hosted by The Foundation in Australian Studies in China. The Foundation supports Australian studies initiatives in China and aims to strengthen and expand links between Australian and Chinese universities. Other supporters of the Foundation are PricewaterhouseCoopers, Allens + Linklaters and Riverstone Advisory.

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