

Message from the Vice-Chancellor and President

After the unacceptable actions of a small number of people inflamed what had been a peaceful student protest on 24 July, the University's relationship with China has been the subject of considerable discussion.

There has been speculation by a few individuals that has no basis in evidence about our engagements with China. Their inference and unsubstantiated innuendos are a misrepresentation of UQ's position.

As a global top 50 university, we are concerned with facts.

I, along with the University, have always been transparent about our engagements with China, and at all times have acted with integrity and autonomy. UQ strongly rejects any suggestion that our engagements with China have compromised our academic freedom, or are not legal – they have not been the subject of any form of investigation, nor have they breached any Australian legislation.

I am on the record, as Chairman of the Group of Eight universities in 2017, saying that any political pressure from China would be unacceptable. I stand by that position today.

By their nature, universities bring people with differing views together to exchange ideas and learn from one another. UQ, like other Australian universities, encourages the respectful and lawful expression of views, and makes every effort to provide a safe environment for mature debate. We do not tolerate hate speech, racism, violence and intimidation, and it would be disappointing if the unacceptable actions of a few detracted from the open and inclusive nature of our university communities.

Australian universities are teaching students to negotiate a changing world and a global jobs market, with all the uncertainties of global politics, technology and shared environmental challenges. To support UQ on this mission, we have more than 450 institutional partners in 56 countries.

The University believes, that everything else being equal, it is very much in Australia's interests to have close engagements with other nations and organisations in as many areas, and on as many levels, as possible. Such relationships, based on mutual interest and respect, are in the strategic and economic interests of both Australia and the University.

In a climate of declining federal funding as a share of total university funding, international students subsidise our universities, especially our research programs. They also deepen our regional and international links, broaden the horizons of students, and strengthen Australia's own 'soft power'. History shows that many international graduates from Australian universities go on to significant positions overseas, and their time in Australia gives them a greater understanding of our perspective as we work together on some of the world's greatest challenges.

I hope that the following facts can address questions you might have, and provide reassurance that the University continues to operate with autonomy and integrity, and in line with [UQ's values](#).

Professor Peter Høj AC