

China Accuses Australia of Hypocrisy over Cancelled Belt and Road Deals

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Beijing says it will “respond firmly and forcefully” if Canberra fails to reverse its decision to [cancel two deals agreed between China and the Australian state of Victoria](#) as relations between the two countries continue to simmer.

“Australia says it wants to open up cooperation with China and increase our high-level dialogue, but it says one thing and does another,” foreign ministry spokesman **Wang Wenbin** said at a press briefing.

“The Australian side’s actions this time have again shown that they are not genuine in wanting to improve [China-Australia relations](#),” he said, urging Canberra to “immediately repeal its incorrect decision”. Australia’s Defence Minister Peter Dutton said on Thursday that foreign affairs were an issue for the federal government and that Canberra was concerned about “state governments that enter into compacts with the [Chinese] [Communist Party](#) that are against our national interests”.

“We can’t allow these sort of compacts, these sort of arrangements and friendships to pop up because they’re used for propaganda reasons, and we’re just not going to allow that to happen,” he said.

The Belt and Road Initiative – China’s plan to boost interconnectivity and trade – encompasses infrastructure developments around the world but has been criticised by some as forcing host nations into a debt trap, a charge Beijing rejects.

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Featured image: Canberra has cancelled a belt and road deal agreed between Victoria’s Premier Daniel Andrews and China’s ambassador to Australia Cheng Jingye in 2018. Photo: Handout/SCMP

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