

Apr 6-7 Feb 2016



Chairman of Yuhu Group Xiangmo Huang, the Chinese ambassador to Australia Zhaoxu Ma, Malcolm Turnbull.

## Liberal cash has Chinese strings attached

### Lobbyists Anti-Taiwanese group donates to Liberals

Primrose Riordan and Su-Lin Tan

A Chinese company whose executives lobby against recognition of Taiwan is tied to at least \$200,000 worth of donations made to the Liberal Party under different names last year.

The company, Yuhu Group, which together with a Chinese state-owned company agreed to invest \$2 billion in Australian agriculture in a deal endorsed by Trade Minister Andrew Robb, has high level connections with members of the Chinese and Australian governments.

The head of Yuhu Group, Xiangmo Huang, is also the director of Chaoshan No. 1 Trust - which donated \$50,000 to the Liberal Party and \$50,000 to Liberal fundraising body the Bayside Forum, in 2014-15.

He has previously made donations in the hundreds of thousands to the Labor Party and stepped in to pay a legal bill for Labor senator Sam Dastyari.

Fu Ocean, whose director Zhaokai Su is listed as manager at Yuhu on his LinkedIn profile, handed \$30,000 to the NSW Liberal Party and another \$50,000 through the Bayside Forum.

Yuhu itself donated \$20,000 to the NSW Liberal Party during the last financial year.

By comparison, James Packer's

mother, Ros, furnished \$100,000 for the Liberal Party.

Mr Huang is the head of the Australian Council for the Promotion of Peaceful Reunification of China which hosts Chinese government officials in Australia.

He has given speeches urging Chinese Australians to oppose Chinese and Tibetan independence and met with politicians in his capacity as head of the council.

NSW Labor MP Ernest Wong, a friend of Mr Huang, is also involved in the council.

The donations come as Australia is forced to take diplomatic positions on issues such as the tensions between China and Taiwan following the election of pro-independence Prime Minister Tsai Ing-wen, territorial disputes in the South China Sea and growing concern in Hong Kong about Chinese political influence.

Professor Richard Rigby from ANU's Centre on China in the World said the organisation was likely Beijing-backed.

"It's an assured fact that anybody who's engaged in activity promoting reunification with Taiwan would have some level of official backing from the PRC," he said.

Chinese dissident Wei Jingsheng has previously accused the council of being a front for the Chinese government, used to maintain support for the government among overseas Chinese.

Professor Rigby said Chinese business people might align with the cause of reunification in order to attract

investment from the mainland, such as from SOEs.

Mr Huang donated \$1.8 million to set up a new Australia China Relations Institute at the University of Technology which has also been recently gifted an entire library from the Chinese government as part of President Xi Jinping's China Library program, according to a UTS statement.

Mr Huang also donated \$3.5 million in December to the University of Western Sydney for a new institute devoted to Chinese arts and culture.

Yuhu recently hired former deputy premier Andrew Stoner as an adviser.

The Australian Financial Review tried to reach Mr Huang through the Yuhu Group but he was not available for comment.

Yuhu Group was contacted for comment on whether Mr Su still worked at the company but did not respond by deadline.

Overall, political donations to the main parties dropped in 2014-15, with financial receipts totalling about \$179 million - a \$100 million drop on the previous year.

The largest single donation to Victorian Labor was from Jianping Fu and Min Zhang, a couple from Brighton, who donated \$200,000.

Meanwhile, on Friday, Aspen Medical declared a donation made to the Liberal Party in 2013-14 worth \$62,845. In 2014 the government awarded Aspen Medical a \$20-million contract to manage and run a 100-bed field hospital in Sierra Leone.