

China an 'opportunity' to seize

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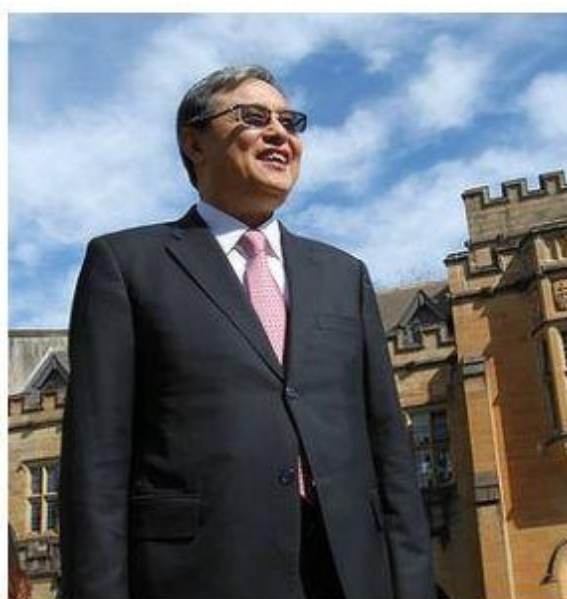
ONE of Beijing's top diplomats has urged Australia to see China's growth into a world power as an opportunity, and not to lose out because of "suspicions" over its strategic intent.

Zhou Wenzhong, China's ambassador to Australia from 1998 to 2001, said Australia and the broader international community should welcome and support China's "peaceful development, instead of being afraid of it or seeking to contain it".

"Those who see China as an opportunity and seize it will benefit from it, and those who are suspicious of China's strategic intentions will lose the good opportunities to co-operate," Mr Zhou said yesterday at a business lunch attended by former prime ministers Bob Hawke and Malcolm Fraser.

Mr Zhou is secretary-general of the Boao Forum for Asia, considered the Chinese equivalent of the annual Davos World Economic Forum. His comments come as Canberra puts the finishing touches on the Asian Century white paper, led by former Treasury secretary Ken Henry.

He is in Melbourne for Chambers & Company's launch of China House, a consultancy mandated with a multibillion-dollar war chest of Chinese state-owned and private funds to invest in Australia.



China's former ambassador to Australia, Zhou Wenzhong.