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## Albanese's Visit to China Aims to Deepen Ties Amid Global Uncertainty

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Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has embarked on a six-day official visit to China, marking a renewed push for closer cooperation between the two nations amid global economic and geopolitical uncertainty. The trip highlights the strength of the Australia-China economic relationship while exploring new avenues of collaboration in emerging sectors.

Albanese's itinerary includes stops in Beijing, Shanghai—where he arrived on Saturday—and Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province. According to a statement from his office, the visit

focuses on enhancing ties across business, investment, tourism, and other key areas of mutual interest.

## High-Level Engagement Signals Confidence

Professor James Laurenceson, Director of the Australia-China Relations Institute at the University of Technology Sydney, said the visit carries symbolic and practical significance.

“Leadership visits like this build confidence and show commitment at the highest political levels,” he told China Daily. “Businesses operating along the Australia-China corridor have already benefited from the stabilization of relations since 2022.”

Laurenceson noted that in a time of rising global tensions, the ability of Australia and China to maintain constructive dialogue—despite differences—demonstrates the importance of shared interests such as trade and a rules-based global economic order.

He added that climate change and clean energy will likely feature prominently in talks, reflecting common goals. “While both sides will acknowledge their differences, I expect the visit to be marked by a cooperative tone and a focus on practical dialogue.”

## Business Community Sees New Opportunities

David Olsson, President of the Australia-China Business Council, emphasized the strategic importance of Albanese’s visit.

“It sends a clear signal of intent,” Olsson said. “Political willingness to engage creates space for businesses to re-enter or expand their presence with confidence. Trust takes time to rebuild, but these high-level visits are a crucial first step.”

Olsson stressed that trade has always been the backbone of the bilateral relationship. As global economies shift toward decarbonization, digitalization, and regional integration, he said, both countries have complementary strengths to offer.

Beyond traditional trade, Olsson highlighted the growing significance of people-to-people links in areas such as education, tourism, sports, and the arts. These, he said, enrich bilateral ties and provide a more resilient foundation for long-term cooperation.

“We’re particularly focused on green energy, agribusiness, education, and sustainable infrastructure,” he added. “We see these as high-potential sectors where Australian capabilities meet evolving Chinese demand.”

### **Chengdu: A Strategic Stop for Industrial Dialogue**

Professor Hans Hendrischke of the University of Sydney Business School noted that Albanese’s unusually long six-day visit reflects the broad scope of the agenda.

“Direct engagement between political and business leaders is essential for stability in economic relations,” said Hendrischke, who chairs the university’s China Studies Centre business and economics cluster.

He pointed out that Albanese’s visits to Shanghai, Beijing, and Chengdu align with Australia’s trade, policy, and investment goals. Chengdu, in particular, may serve as a platform for discussions on revitalizing Chinese investment in Australia, especially in the context of industrial policy and high-tech cooperation.

Chinese investment in Australia has declined to its lowest level in decades, largely limited to small resource projects. In contrast, Chinese firms are making significant investments in Southeast and South Asia—areas that could soon compete with emerging Australian industries.

Hendrischke suggested that China might showcase Chengdu’s state-led industrial developments as models for potential Australia-China collaboration, particularly in greenfield investments and renewable energy.

### **Revitalizing ChAFTA and Exploring New Frontiers**

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA). Hendrischke noted China’s interest in updating the agreement to include provisions on artificial intelligence and foreign investment, which could enable Australia to better direct Chinese capital into sectors aligned with national interests, such as agritech, renewables, and high-value services.

Laurenceson agreed that ChAFTA remains a vital framework. “There are clear gains to be had—from mutual recognition of qualifications to harmonizing product standards,” he said.

“The benefits of ChAFTA are supported by data, especially as other countries are pulling back from trade liberalization.”

### **Toward a Long-Term, Sustainable Partnership**

Olsson emphasized that while Albanese's visit may generate momentum, lasting value will come from sustained follow-up and concrete initiatives.

“We'll be facilitating sector-specific working groups and bilateral engagement programs to translate this diplomatic progress into practical outcomes,” he said.

He added that business leaders on both sides play an active role, not just as beneficiaries of improved ties, but as partners in shaping a forward-looking, resilient relationship.

Albanese's trip will also include a CEO roundtable with Chinese and Australian business leaders—a key step toward reinforcing commercial ties and building mutual understanding through open, respectful engagement.