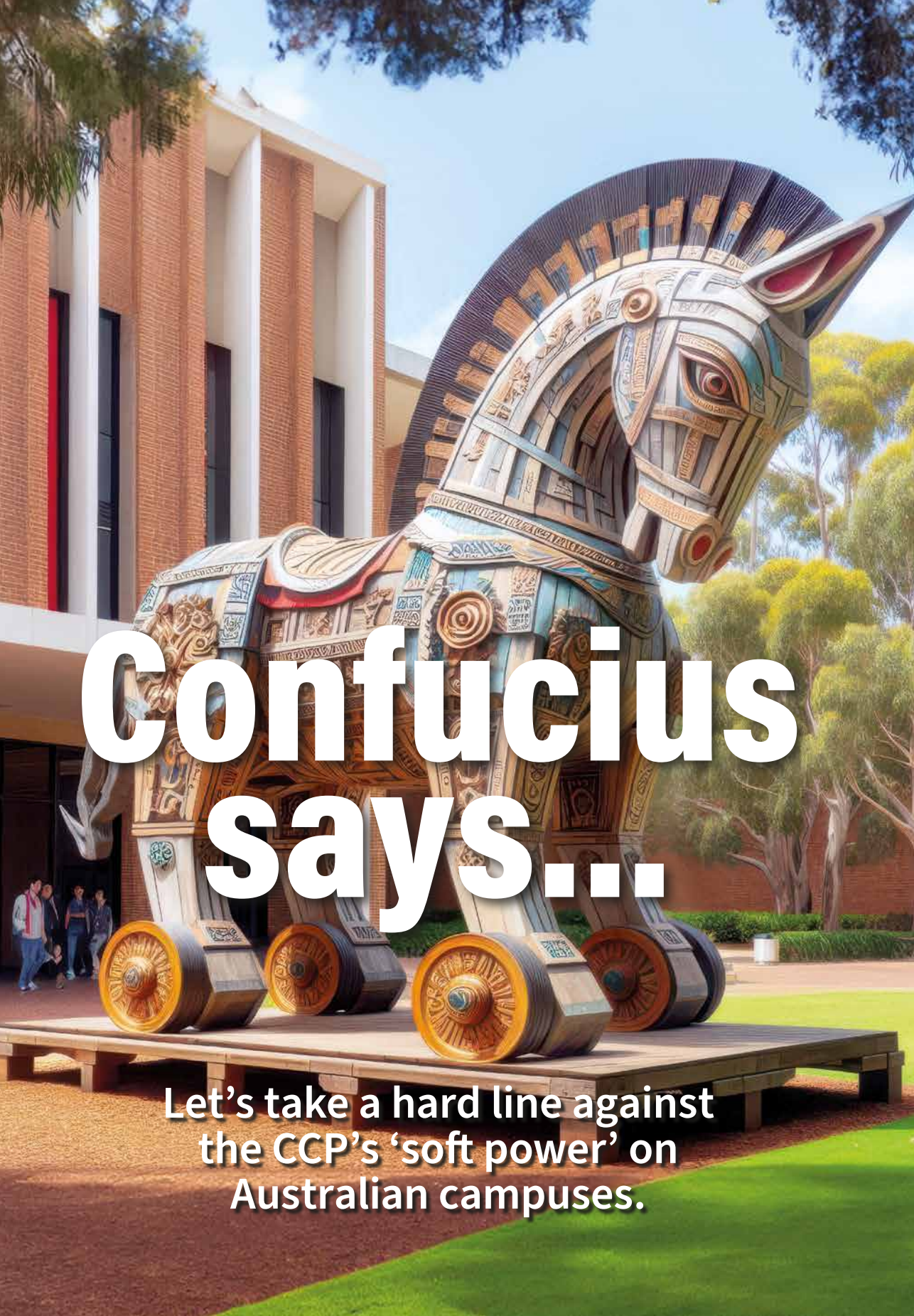


A large, ornate wooden Trojan horse sculpture is the central focus, resting on a wooden platform. The horse is intricately carved with various patterns and symbols, including a large eye on its face and a prominent mane. It is positioned in front of a modern brick building with large windows. The background features green trees and a clear blue sky. The text "Confucius says..." is overlaid in large white letters.

Confucius says...

Let's take a hard line against
the CCP's 'soft power' on
Australian campuses.

With the lives of Australian Defence Force personnel regularly endangered by the actions of the Chinese military in and over international waters, surely it is time to treat China for what it is: an adversary rather than a friend.

As a good start, Australia should close every Confucius Institute operating on Australian university campuses. Styled innocently by the universities as centres for the study of the Chinese language and culture, that might once have been the institutes' purpose. But under the leadership of Xi Jinping, China no longer makes a secret of its strategic ambitions and the institutes need to be viewed in that context: as a means to indoctrinate the gullible and monitor the dissenting.

Australia currently has 12 Confucius Institutes, each the product of different contractual arrangements with Beijing and, as revealed by the *Sydney Morning Herald* in July 2019, some of these are more forelock tugging than others.

The *SMH* report, by Fergus Hunter, examined 11 of the then 13 contracts signed by the universities. Significantly, the University of Adelaide and RMIT declined to provide their contracts to the journalist.

At least four universities signed contracts which explicitly stated their institutes must defer to the Hanban, the Beijing-based education authority which funds them, on issues of "teaching quality". Unsurprisingly, the curriculum of the institutes does not run to the repression of peoples in Tibet, Xinjiang or Hong Kong, nor to Beijing's apparent determination to subjugate the people of Taiwan.

Those universities with the most supine contracts have attempted to deflect criticism by pointing out their institutes are not degree conferring, but this argument should be taken with a grain of MSG. University campuses—in their entirety—should defend academic freedom.

Academic freedom counts for nothing of course when weighed against the greed of university administrations. In fact, the wokeness of the administrations—regularly measured by the IPA in our outstanding *Free Speech on Campus Audits*—dovetails nicely with this greed, producing perhaps China's most useful idiots.

In the United States, the Government Accountability Office reports that the number of Confucius Institutes fell from about 100 in 2019 to fewer than five in 2023. This was due to threats of the withdrawal of federal funding from universities hosting the institutes, and the pressure brought to bear by congressional and state legislature representatives (a.k.a. patriots).

In contrast, successive Australian governments have acquiesced in these strangest of arrangements, whereby the Chinese Communist Party not only determines what is taught about China in our universities but has the perfect opportunity to identify, monitor, and intimidate those students who dare to question the 'correct line'. In 2019, pro-China students physically attacked students who had occupied the Confucius Institute at the University of Queensland and were questioning the university's ties with Beijing. This violence was by no means an isolated incident and proves that Chinese 'soft power' can quickly turn very hard and nasty.

Five years on and nothing seems to have changed. The Albanese Government trumpets its (somewhat successful) attempts to 'restore' relations with China, but apparently at the cost of retaining Confucius Institutes. Universities still readily accept the financial support—and teaching staff approved and supplied by the Hanban—in return for allowing the Chinese Communist Party a propaganda platform on our campuses. One would have hoped, at the very least, that the classicists on campus could have warned of the danger of Greeks bearing gifts.

You have just read an article from the *IPA Review*



The Institute of Public Affairs ('IPA') is an independent, non-profit public policy think tank, dedicated to preserving and strengthening the foundations of social, economic and political freedom.

Since 1947 it has published the *IPA Review*, making it Australia's oldest continuously published magazine covering politics and public affairs. Articles and book reviews are authored both by IPA staff and by a wide range of contributors from Australia and around the world.

If you become a member of the IPA you will receive *IPA Review* four times a year, as well as range of other benefits. To learn more and join, go to the link shown below.

JOIN THE IPA
ipa.org.au/join

 **Institute of
Public Affairs**