

# David Thomas

## *CEO of Think Global Consulting & China Expert*

David Thomas is the founder and CEO of Think Global Consulting, a China expert speaker, thought leader, author and facilitator. David is well known in the Asia Pacific region for his experience, credibility and passion for identifying, building and facilitating business and investment relationships between developed and emerging countries.

Over the past 20 years, David has inspired, motivated and educated global business leaders, entrepreneurs and investors to pay attention to the massive growth potential offered by modern China as the financial engine of Asia and taken them on a journey to identify and build long-term business and investment relationships.

David lived in Hong Kong in the 1980s and 90s with his father, Michael Thomas QC, who was the Attorney General for Hong Kong (1983-88) and intimately involved in the negotiations between Britain and China to design and implement the new Basic Law of Hong Kong to take effect from 1997.

In addition, his step-mother, Baroness Lydia Dunn, was a senior political leader in Hong Kong and worked with Deng Xiaoping and Margaret Thatcher to negotiate the future of Hong Kong under Chinese sovereignty post 1997. These unique insights and high level family connections provided David with a fascinating perspective on China's ambitions for the future which prompted his first visit to Beijing in 1989 and a life-long interest in China's role on the global stage.

David is regularly asked to speak in conferences, seminars, workshops and board meetings around the world on a wide range of topics, including 'Future Trends', 'Innovation', 'Leadership', 'Disruption' and 'Globalisation' with a particular focus on China and its changing role and impact on the global economy.

As a China expert speaker and thought leader, David is a charismatic, passionate and warm presenter with a unique ability to demystify a country that has long been hidden to the western world. He is bold in questioning the myths that many people in the west have about embracing a view to China, and at the same time empowers audiences with clear take-aways enabling them to successfully see the opportunity for what it is.

Having worked on the ground for over 30 years, in a wide range of industry sectors, he has practical examples, case studies and anecdotes to bring his presentations to life, making David an



easy choice for companies and entrepreneurs looking to learn about engaging and doing business with China.

As a regular follower of news, business trends and commentary from China, David Thomas is the publisher of *China Bites* ([www.china-bites.com](http://www.china-bites.com)) a daily newsletter in which he shares his take on what's happening in China, and why it matters, plus some of his own views gathered from his daily activities.

*China Bites* is carving out an important niche as a "must read" piece at the start of every business day. In addition to his regular *China Bites*, David has published a number of books, blogs and opinion articles on China, including: *My China Insights: How Business Gets Done*, *Three Cups of Tea - a practical guide to building long term sustainable relationships in China* and *Eight Critical Steps for your China Market Entry Strategy*.

David is the Founder and CEO of Think Global Consulting, a consulting firm which facilitates business and investment between developed and emerging markets, particularly in China.

Think Global works with individuals, entrepreneurs and business leaders to build viable, sustainable and powerful connections by leveraging experience, networks and relationships in the Asia Pacific region.

He has worked with businesses of all sizes across many industry sectors to deliver a wide range of cross-border projects and assignments, including research, market entry strategies, capital-raising, joint ventures, business development and facilitating long term commercial relationships.

Think Global's approach is open, collaborative and focused on delivering results.

Over the past 20 years, David has led and organised many missions, study tours and business delegations to China and the other "BRIC countries" which, in addition to enhancing his reputation and influence within the Asia Pacific region, has provided him with a unique opportunity to stay ahead of the trends that are redefining business between China and the rest of the world.

As a well known speaker, influencer and business leader in the Australia-China investment and trade relationship, David Thomas holds a number of prestigious and high profile appointments, including:

- President of the Australia China SME Association (ACSME)
- Former Vice President of the Australia China Business Council (ACBC) in NSW
- Honorary Adviser to the Australia China Economic Trade and Cultural Association (ACETCA),
- Chairman of Australia China Business Week

- Board Member of the Australia China Friendship and Exchange Association
- Australian Alumni of the inaugural Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business CEO Program
- Australian Thought Leaders Expert of the Year 2009

### ***David Thomas Speaks About:***

#### **1. Geopolitics - USA, China and Australia - What's happening and why it matters?**

We live in the Asian Century. In the coming years, China, India, Japan and Indonesia will become the largest economies in the world, driven by innovation, productivity and domestic consumption from their large and fast growing middle class and high net worth populations. Smaller Asian countries like South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines are also emerging as economic powers in their own right, as the World tilts towards Asia and business leaders, entrepreneurs and investors seek access to the high growth markets of the region.

Not surprisingly, this massive shift in the projection of global power, influence and leadership is causing major disruption in the world, especially in the US and Europe who are threatened by the rise of powerful authoritarian countries disturbing the existing rules based world order, challenging old and well defined borders and creating conflict in faraway places.

How should we think and react to all of this in Australia? How do we feel about China, the rising economic, military and investment super-power on our doorstep? How do we navigate the complexities of being a 'western-leaning' country, a trusted and reliable friend to the US, UK and Europe and, at the same time, remain relevant as a trading partner with China and our Asian neighbours?

#### **2. Innovation and Technology in the Asian Century - The importance and relevance of Hong Kong and Singapore**

China's major challenge is to deal with the massive deficit in its GDP caused by a traumatic, deep and far-reaching property crisis and the longer term impacts of the global pandemic. Consumer confidence is severely impacted and it would seem over-optimistic to believe that this gap can be filled by a rise in domestic consumption.

As a result, China is rapidly investing in its advanced manufacturing sector to boost domestic growth, stimulate exports and create new jobs for their highly educated and youthful workforce. Much of this innovation will come from overseas, at least in the short term. The innovative and high-tech companies of the future now need to commercialise, capitalise and scale their technology and products into the Asian region, starting with the traditional investment and logistical hubs of Hong Kong and Singapore, and moving north into southern China and south into ASEAN.

Australian entrepreneurs with access to innovative technology (especially in health, AI, fintech,

food, agtech and others) now have a unique opportunity to access funding and investment in Hong Kong and Singapore.

### 3. Understanding Asian culture - Crossing the Nine Bends Bridge

Despite some of Asia's significant economic advances in recent times, their approach to doing business remains refreshingly similar to the way they've done business over the past one thousand years i.e. they only do business with people they know, like and trust.

Business executives, entrepreneurs and professionals need to deal with people of other Asian backgrounds to deliver successful commercial outcomes, and it's become critical for leaders to learn how to communicate, negotiate and connect with senior decision-makers and business leaders from both sides of the cross-cultural divide.

Working with Asians can be rewarding and highly lucrative but it can also throw up cross-cultural differences and challenges which can cause frustration, stress and even conflict on both sides. Addressing, understanding and resolving areas of difference, especially when communicating and negotiating with Asian investors, entrepreneurs, partners and employees, is a skill that can be learnt and applied in high stakes situations, as well as in everyday interactions.

#### Client testimonials

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“ David Thomas gave a remote presentation to our members on the topic of “Hong Kong and China” in early 2021 and the level of engagement was fantastic. Feedback from his presentation confirmed that, whilst not everyone agreed with his position on controversial topics, the audience enjoyed listening to him and found his presentation intelligent, very thought-provoking and valuable. We highly recommend David to audiences around the world who need fresh perspectives and observations about China and the Asia Pacific region.

**- Founder & Executive Director - Private Wealth Network**

“ I couldn't recommend a better chairperson and expert speaker, after having worked with David on New Retail 19 where he both chaired and spoke as one of our keynotes on our China and Beyond themed day. I enjoyed his personable attitude, as well as his knowledge - helping audiences to understand why we should have a China strategy.

**- Senior Producer & Event Manager - Akolade**

“ David was the highlight of our recent real estate event for business owners. He provided loads of practical tips on how to embrace the opportunities in China. His talk was highly relevant, entertaining and everyone walked away with ideas they can use immediately in their business to make the most of the Chinese market.

**- Head of Customer Experience - L J Hooker**

“ David Thomas is such a dynamic, engaging speaker. His keynote was very well received by our audience as “very good to excellent.” The material truly resonated with our audience of Real Estate agents, many of whom have had little or no experience with dealing with Asian clients. In his lively, thought provoking session, David gave them clear tips - and most importantly, actionable suggestions — on how to implement these valuable strategies. Well done David, I would highly recommend.

**- Property Profile Group - CEO**

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