

# [***China's foreign minister meets New Zealand counterpart, beginning trip that also includes Australia***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BK7-2JX1-JC5B-G0C0-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Monday that his country is ready to work with New Zealand to deepen trade and economic ties and address climate change.

Wang met his New Zealand counterpart, Winston Peters, at the start of a tour that will also include Australia.

China is willing to hold talks on reducing barriers to investment in the service sector “at an early time” and build new drivers of economic growth with New Zealand in the digital economy and through technological innovation, Wang said, according to a statement from China's Foreign Ministry.

Peters, who is also deputy prime minister, met Wang in Wellington, New Zealand's capital.

“There have been some significant developments since we last met, not least a global pandemic that impacted both our countries," Peters said in his opening comments in their formal meeting at New Zealand's parliament house.

“Today is a valuable opportunity to reflect on the challenges and opportunities that are now before us,” he said.

Wang is the highest-ranking Chinese official to visit the country since his own previous visit in 2017. He called for the creation of better conditions for exchanges including education, tourism and youth programs, citing the example of Rewi Alley, a 20th-century New Zealander who was a member of China's Communist Party.

New Zealand has had strong economic ties with China in recent years and was the first developed country to sign a bilateral free trade deal with Beijing in 2008. The two countries expanded that trade agreement in 2022.

Wang also had a brief meeting with Prime Minister Christopher Luxon on Monday and also is to meet Trade Minister Todd McClay while in Wellington.

Wang arrives in Canberra, Australia, on Wednesday to meet with counterpart Penny Wong, with talks between them expected to include the case of detained Australian [*Yang Hengjun*](https://apnews.com/article/yang-hengjun-china-australia-espionage-d8ebca29783d0eae30a99b55f11c5b61).

It will be the first time the two foreign ministers have met face-to-face since Yang was found guilty of espionage in a closed trial and sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve in February.

Also on the agenda will be the removal of the last remaining trade tariffs that were imposed by China in 2020 and were widely regarded as punishment for the previous Australian government's passage of laws that ban covert foreign interference in domestic ***politics***, for [*barring Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei*](https://apnews.com/article/technology-china-sydney-australia-037521cd9d6e09854c98b4acf1acbf20) from rolling out Australia’s 5G network due to security concerns and for calling for an independent investigation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The trade tariffs cost Australia's economy an estimated 20 billion Australian dollars ($13 billion), but have since been wound back on most goods except wine, rock lobsters and some abattoirs.

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