



**October 2012**

# *Australia-China Friendship Society*

Victorian Branch (Inc).ABN 39 746 574 225

## **NEWSLETTER**

4TH FLOOR, ROSS HOUSE, 247 FLINDERS LANE, MELBOURNE VIC 3000

TEL/FAX: 03 9654 8099

MOBILE: 0431 155 139

E-MAIL: [ACFS.VIC@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ACFS.VIC@GMAIL.COM)

WEB: [WWW.ACFSVIC.ORG](http://WWW.ACFSVIC.ORG)

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> September just past, I had the privilege of leading a 30 members tour which travelled from Urumqi (the capital city of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in the north west of China) to Beijing. This was an exclusive ACFS trip and the tour group comprised members from most Australian States and Territories.

The special nature of the tour was that we travelled by train on the China Orient Express and followed the path of the famous Silk Road. What a trip! Without making this report into a travelogue, the following is a brief description of our itinerary:

From Urumqi we travelled to Turpan, an oasis city located in the Gobi Desert and on route visited the spectacular Heavenly Lake situated in high snow-capped mountains.

From Turpan to Dunhuang, visiting the ancient Karez underground water supply and irrigation system, the Flaming Mountains in the middle of the Turpan Depression (negligible rainfall and very little wind), oases in the middle of the Gobi Desert resplendent with grapes, corn and other produce, and ancient Jiaohe City. This was truly remarkable – a mud city located in the middle of 2 rivers, which was populated between 7,000 BC and 1,400 AD with only 3,000 people.

From Dunhuang to Jiayuguan visiting the Mogao Grottoes, a UNESCO World Heritage Site with exquisite Buddhist art and manuscripts.

From Jiayuguan to Lanzhou visiting the oldest part of the Great Wall and Yellow River.

Lanzhou to Xian, visiting the Terracotta Warriors, the Ancient City Wall and Huaqing Hot Springs. Then on to Luoyang and ending up in Beijing.

Apart from the exotic and spectacular places that we visited, the interesting national minority peoples that we met and the terrific experience of doing all this on a relatively slow moving, air-conditioned train, what fascinated me was to witness

the infrastructure development being carried out by the Chinese Government in the remote, underdeveloped provinces to the north west of Xian. I'm speaking here of modern multi-lane freeways criss-crossing the vast and barren Gobi Desert, tens of thousands of wind powered electricity generators also in the desert, the construction of a high-speed rail line (straight through the mountains), and massive housing developments in the north western cities.

On the last night of our trip, I led a 7 members delegation to the Beijing headquarters of the Beijing Association for the Friendship with Foreign Countries. After detailed discussion about future activities to be arranged between our two organisations, we were treated to a wonderful dinner with our hosts.

I have travelled to China on 6 or 7 occasions in the past, but this trip was perhaps the most eye-opening and amazing one.

I hope to see our members and supporters at our luncheon on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2012 and also at our Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2012 at 7.00 pm.

John D. Breheny  
President

### **2012 CHINA INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP**

#### **CITIES CONFERENCE, CHENGDU**

*11-13 September, 2012*

CITY POSITIONING AND INVESTMENT, by Robin Matthews

Your Excellences, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, Ni Hao (knee how)

Greetings to you all from the Australia-China Friendship Society.

I would like to thank the People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries for inviting us



and the Chengdu Municipal Foreign Affairs Office for organising this conference, along with the China International Friendship Cities Association. It is an honour and privilege to visit this great city and I look forward to seeing more of your places of special interest.

I have worked as senior adviser to government for many years, so I would like to share with you a number of conclusions I have drawn about Sister City relationships in Australia.

Sister Cities were created in the 1950's to promote peace and goodwill by developing cultural ties with cities and towns of different nations. This is still important today - positioning cities and towns across the globe as friendly and peaceful neighbours is the best investment for the future.

My home state (meaning 'Province' here in China) is Victoria and has 79 municipalities. Many have one Sister City and some have several.

Unfortunately, many focus on economic growth instead of enhancing cultural and educational links. With councillors under increasing pressure, Victoria's municipalities are becoming more and more nervous about promoting culture and education with Sister City dealings. It is easy to unfairly criticise councillors for directing attention and funds to overseas activities instead of local projects with perceived financial gain for residents and businesses. This short-term market view is to the detriment of Sister City relationships.

Let us highlight 2 case studies in Victoria: firstly, the City of Melbourne, where I was Chief of Staff for 6 years.

Melbourne is the capital of Victoria. It is the business, administrative, cultural and recreational hub of the state with a residential population of 99,000 and a daily population of 1 million workers and visitors.

Melbourne has 6 global Sister Cities. In 1980, Melbourne and Tianjin established Sister City status – the first between an Australian city and a city in China. In 1998, a Melbourne Office opened in Tianjin, a first for an Australian municipality.

A major outcome is the Tianjin Government Leaders Program, started in 2001. This is organised by the City of Melbourne and RMIT University. Since then, 14 groups of government leaders – over 240 participants – have been hosted in Melbourne.

The Deputy Lord Mayor of Melbourne believes 'these exchanges are more about people and how participants can learn from each other'.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> city to examine is the City of Greater Dandenong. Dandenong has 140,000 residents from 156 nations and covers 130 square kilometres. It is a major manufacturing hub.

In July 2002, Dandenong signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Xuzhou (soo-jo) in North China's Jiangsu Province, committing both parties to ensure positive and tangible results, knowing this also means ongoing review and negotiation.

This successful link has enabled many delegations and business visits. The visits have paved the way for greater understanding of differences and issues faced by both visitors to Greater Dandenong and visitors to China.

Despite increased media scrutiny of Council finances, real economic benefits for local businesses and residents have been shown. The focus has now shifted to business and trade delegations with opportunities for Chinese investment in the area.

The Chief Executive of Greater Dandenong believes these relations build respect and acceptance of diverse opinions. This includes changing expectations and behaviour, as well as different and evolving philosophies. In other words, relationships build friendship, understanding and knowledge of what each should expect from the other.

Local government is the closest government to the people and an excellent vehicle for fostering peace and goodwill by the Sister City model.

It is important for councils and municipalities to not be distracted by loud, short-sighted demands for immediate economic benefits. Instead, they should strive for long-lasting, peaceful and harmonious relations with all neighbours across the globe.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you and share my thoughts.

I am certain that by developing peace and goodwill amongst Sister Cities, it is the best investment for a strong, peaceful and resilient future.

Thank you, xiexieni (share share knee)



## International Friendship Cities Conference

## CPAFFC Forum, Changchun, September 2012

Anthony Leong

During September 2012, I had the pleasure of representing the ACFS Victorian Branch at the 2012 China International Friendship Cities Conference in Chengdu, the home of the Giant Panda Breeding and Research Centre. The conference provided a platform for leaders from Chinese cities, local government and people engaged in friendship city management to pursue multilateral cooperation. The conference was attended by over 600 representatives from across the world.

After a rather chaotic formal photograph of the group, this important forum settled down to the serious topics of culture, education, ecology and sustainable development.

With representatives from the South Pacific, Australia & New Zealand and the USA, a widely diverse range of topics were presented to delegates. Following an introduction by the Vice-Governor of Jilin Province during which he outlined the Province's strengths, various South Pacific nations introduced themselves and how their Friendship Societies operated.



Amongst the most salient were HRH Princess Pilolevu Tuita from Tonga and Ms Pat Tauroa, the Maori leader from New Zealand. Both spoke of shared commonalities, of teaching and learning from each other and aspirations. The newest member of the Forum group was Fiji and the leader, Mr Dixon Seeto, spoke with great feeling about the country's dedication to the

The conference served to advance the close links between the Australian delegation and representatives from our neighbouring countries of the South Pacific region. Jan Everett from Tasmania led our delegation and ably smoothed out the few hiccups along the way.

environment and because of tourism, the emphasis on sustainability. This theme was echoed by each and every Pacific nation.

I was honoured to be able to speak to the conference on City Positioning and Investment. My presentation centred on two case studies including the relationship between the Cities of Melbourne and Tianjin and Greater Dandenong City Council and Xuzhou in Jiangsu Province. I highlighted the importance of developing peace and goodwill amongst the friendship cities by fostering education and cultural exchanges and not to have these important elements over-looked by economic development. I emphasized that by developing peace and goodwill amongst Sister Cities, is the best investment for a strong, peaceful and resilient future.

The final speaker was the head of the Changchun high-tech zone, who outlined plans for the area for the next decade. This includes the building of a 200 sq. km research and development city, to further their expertise in fibre optics, LEDs and motor vehicles.

As a newcomer to this Forum, I was particularly struck by the friendliness and co-operation between nations and delegates. Of note was the friendly rivalry between the Kiwis and our Australian delegation and the abundance of food at every turn (too much, in fact!).

I would like to express our appreciation to Ms Gao, our volunteer minder, who is studying at present in Seattle and came home for the holidays. She stayed with us the whole trip and was untiring in her work.

Robin Matthews





2012 美大地区友好论坛 2012.9.7中国·长春



Finally, thanks must go to our leader, Jan Everett, who ably led us through the traps and pitfalls of an international conference with so many participants and logistical difficulties. Jan solved problems and gave timely, wise advice when it was needed, making the fora enjoyable and informative.

## China Challenge art prizes, Ballarat

16 October 2012

Now in its 16<sup>th</sup> year, the China Challenge art prize-giving was held in the Ballarat Town Hall. Open to school students and auspiced by the City of Ballarat and the Ballarat China Community Committee, the ACFS has supported this event for many years and again this year, donated a major prize.

Councillor John Phillips represented the Mayor of Ballarat and spoke of the long historical links between China and Ballarat and the importance of China in our region.

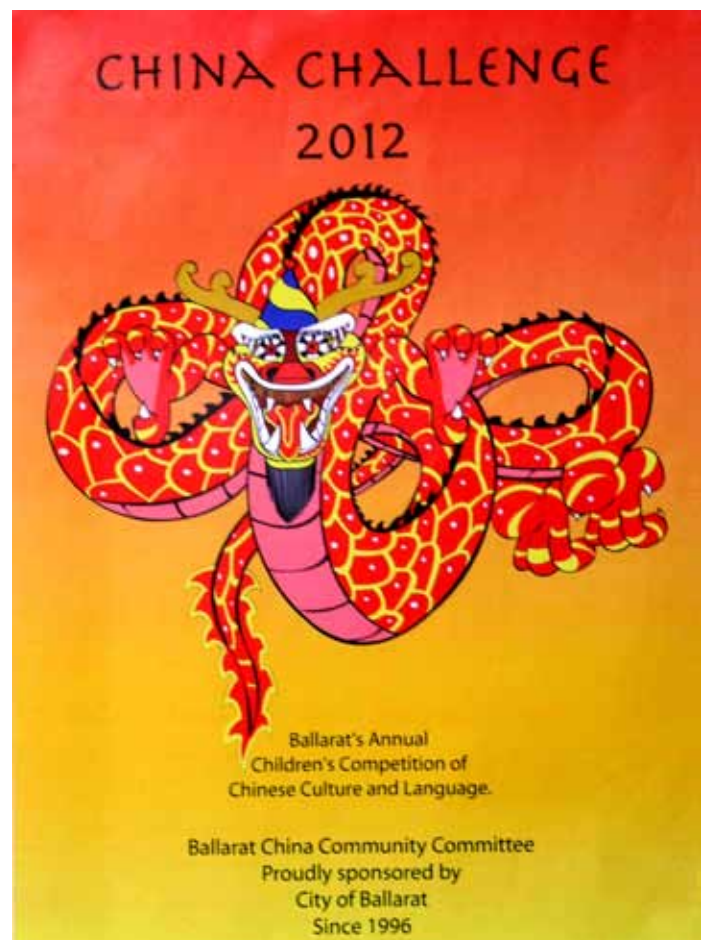
Working on the theme "Dragon", entries were made of mixed media as diverse as embroidered fabric, ping pong balls and even cut paper plates.

Committee Member Robin Matthews and Victorian Vice-President Anthony Leong attended and after viewing the finalist entries, presented several prizes. It was encouraging to see so many schoolchildren participating and making learning about culture and language enjoyable.

The ACFS welcomes this activity and any opportunity to engage with others in the community to spread friendship and information about China.

With the participation rate of this art show, the younger generation has shown an interest in and understanding of China's history and civilisation.

Anthony Leong,  
Vice President





## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of AUSTRALIA-CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY, VICTORIAN BRANCH INCORPORATED

Notice is given that the Annual General Meeting of the Australia-China Friendship Society Victorian Branch Incorporated will be held on Wednesday 28th November 2012, at 7pm at Ross House, 4th Floor, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne.

The Ordinary Business of the meeting will be to confirm the minutes of the last AGM, to receive the financial statement and the reports for the last financial year and to elect the Officers and Committee members of the Society.

### ACFS Victorian Branch NOMINATION FORM: 2012

All financial members of the Society are eligible to nominate for the office of President, Vice President (two positions), Treasurer, Secretary and Ordinary Committee members (up to six positions). Nominations must be in writing and must be signed by the candidate. If the number of nominations exceeds the number of vacancies a ballot will be held at the Annual General Meeting.

NAME of NOMINEE: .....

(Print)

POSITION President/ Vice President/ Treasurer/Secretary/Ordinary Committee Member (circle one only):

SIGNATURE OF NOMINEE: .....

CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel:..... Mobile:.....

EMAIL:.....

NOMINATOR: (Optional) ..... (Print)

..... (Sign)

This nomination form must be delivered to: The Secretary, ACFS Vic Branch, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, 3000, not less than fourteen days before the date fixed for the Annual General Meeting.

All nominees are required to enclose a brief written introduction about themselves (maximum 150 words) with the nomination form. Note: The introduction will be circulated to members at the AGM prior.

## THE AUSTRALIA-CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY'S AIMS

Cultivate friendly relations with the people of China by fostering the study of China's history, language, culture, social and political structure.

Promote mutual understanding through friendly exchanges between the people of China and Australia. Strengthening ties with travel, the exchange of ideas, information and trade between the two countries.

To seek to clarify misunderstandings between the peoples of China and Australia, which may arise from the misrepresentation of information.

**PRESIDENT:** Mr John Breheny

**VICE PRESIDENT:** Mr Anthony Leong  
Mr Tower Liu

**SECRETARY:** Mr Neil Barker

**TREASURER:** Mr Dong Chen

**COMMITTEE:** Ms Louise Clayton  
Mr Richard Lightfoot  
Ms Robin Matthews  
Mr Phil Parker  
Ms Lia Cross  
Mr Robert Wang

ACFS (VICTORIA) Inc. A0038007M ABN NO. 39 746 574 225

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Family Name (Mr /Mrs/Ms/Other).....

Address.....

Phone .....

Fax .....

Given Names .....

P/code.....

Email.....

#### VICTORIAN MEMBERSHIP RATES

Family \$40.00

Single \$30.00

Concession \$15.00

Corporate on Application

I/We support the Society's aims: .....Signature/s

I/We enclose the sum of \$ ..... for my/our membership subscription.

**YOUR DONATION WOULD BE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED**

Please forward cheques to the Treasurer at the address in the left corner below

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