



June 2014

Australia-China Friendship Society

Victorian Branch (Inc).ABN 39 746 574 225

NEWSLETTER

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From the President - A Busy Federal Month:



The past month was especially busy with preparations for the biennial Conference and then the Victorian people attending the (warm) friendly city of Darwin.

Special thanks must be given to the devoted work of Federal immediate past-President John Breheny and outgoing National Secretary Neil Barker, both of whose terms have expired. As for the last National Conference, Robin Matthews played an important administrative role as Acting National Secretary. I thank her for her untiring work pre- and during the Conference, as well as the follow-up which inevitably occurs.

Shu-Qin Li is to be commended on her organising ability as well as being a talented performer, as we saw on the ACFS NT Multicultural Dance Night! The Conference had very few hitches and considered important topics to carry us into the future as an organisation. This included communication, activities and membership, much of which we have discussed and begun implementing on a State level. Of note on a personal level was the day-trip to Kakadu and being shown around by a traditional owner.

Our 'new' constitution under the new rules has been capably drafted by Louise Clayton and will be circulated soon for comment, first to the Committee, then to you, the Members, for consideration. I encourage your input and opinion.

I hope the winter is treating you reasonably well and you are staying warm and comfortable. Stay tuned for our next event, which will be soon.

Anthony

2014 ACFS LTD NATIONAL CONFERENCE

During the recent Queen's Birthday long weekend, delegates from across Australia attended the biennial National Conference which was held in Darwin.

ACFS Victorian branch is a member of ACFS Ltd which is a company limited by guarantee. Member states are Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia. Each state is represented by a Director and sends two delegates to the conference. Established in 1951, an ACFS National Council consisting of all States was formed in 1972 and when this was re-organised in 2006, New South Wales (Sydney) and the Australian Capital Territory (Canberra) did not become Members of the National body.

The Victorian representatives were Delegates Tower Liu and Anthony Leong and John Breheny as a Director. I attended as Acting National Secretary.

At a National Conference, the Bill Morrow Lecture is delivered by an eminent person associated with promoting Australia-China relations. This year, Dr Fred Mitchell gave the address. Bill Morrow was a Senator of the Australian Parliament in the 1940's and 50's and was the first Australian Senator to address the importance of cultivating trade and friendship links with new China. He made his first visit to Beijing in 1953 and was an honoured guest of Premier Zhou Enlai.



Northern Territory Chief Minister
the Hon. Adam Giles

The conference was officially opened on Friday evening by the Northern Territory Chief Minister the Hon. Adam Giles MLA at a function at Parliament House.

The following day, the Conference commenced with opening addresses from the Lord Mayor of Darwin The Rt Hon Ms Katrina Fong Lim, ACFS NT President, the ACFS National President, representatives from CPAFFC (Chinese People's Association with Foreign Countries) and SPAFFC (Shanghai People's Association with Foreign Countries), Australia China Business Council NT, Chong Wah Society, Hakka Association and Austin Ache, former Administrator and Chief Justice of NT, a long-time ACFS member.

The real business of the conference started after lunch, with reports from each member state highlighting their activities.

The meeting discussed motions including topics on communications, improving relations with New Zealand, youth exchanges to China, a proposed environment tour to China in 2015 and sister city communications.

Half the Directors retire every two years, so this year John Breheny (Vic), Jan Everett (Tas) and Ross Gwyther (Qld) are halfway through their term and newly- elected Directors are Graham Bennett (SA), Ros Hanley (WA) and Chaplin Hsiung (NT).

Office Bearers are:

- President - Ross Gwyther (Qld)
- Immediate Past President – John Breheny (Vic)
- National Secretary – Norm Hung (Qld)
- Senior Vice President – Chaplin Hsiung (NT)
- Junior Vice President – Jan Everett (Tas)
- Financial Officer – Graham Bennett (SA)
- National Tour Organiser – Roz Hanley (WA)
- Assistant National Tour Organiser – Patricia Riley (SA)
- Communications Officer – Hua Qiang Zhao



Promoting Friendship and Understanding Between the Australian and Chinese People

Conference delegates attended an official conference dinner hosted by Minister for Multicultural Affairs Hon. Peter Styles MLA and the NT ACFS, plus a multicultural dance concert performed by many members of the NT ACFS.

The Northern Territory ACFS branch is a small but busy one, participating in lots of cultural activities. They successfully organized a splendid conference and were very generous with their time to assist and support the many interstate visitors.

The conference was a great opportunity to share ideas, gain new insights and renew old acquaintances.

The 2016 National conference will be hosted by the Tasmania branch.

Robin Matthews

A fundraising success with John Brumby



We were delighted to welcome former Victorian Premier and current director of Huawei Mr. John Brumby to our fund raising dinner at Quanjude restaurant on April 29.

He recalled that when he became Premier, he regarded his first visit to China in 2007 of paramount importance to our relationship. He had spent a delightful day at Government House with Party Secretary and Jiangsu Governor Mr Liang on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Victoria- Jiangsu relationship in 2008.

He was to see how significant that friendship was, when recently visiting Suzhou for the opening of a new Monash University campus. There, he was entertained by Mr. Liang, even though he was no longer Premier, or, as he put it, a powerful person. That was the significance of friendship and personal contacts, be they politicians, business or community leaders or ordinary people.

Mr Brumby emphasized that far too many who visit China still think China a third world country, a source of cheap manufacturing with an insatiable appetite for raw materials. Although this may be true to some extent, it is erroneous to believe China is only that.

China now sees itself as returning to its rightful place as a world leader and is now only second to US as an investor in research and development. Further, China is interested in world's best practice in all fields, be it business, health, building and construction, education, the Arts and alternative energy.

Despite horror stories of pollution in the cities that the media likes to point out, China is at the forefront of alternative energies implementation - solar, wind, nuclear and hydro power among others.

The talk was well received by everyone and Mr Brumby was kind enough to take questions.

We thank him wholeheartedly for giving up his time to be our guest and helping to make our fund-raising dinner a great success.

Lia Cross- committee member





“The King and I” – Princess Theatre

Despite not being a musicals fan, I went to “The King and I” last night and Shu Cheen Yu had by far the richest and most colourful voice, expressive and powerful. The costuming was amazing, the choreography exciting, the lighting creative and stunning and the staging was clever and eye-catching.

Overall, the performances were very good and it was great to see Shu Cheen after the show to congratulate her on a fine performance. If you’re a musicals enthusiast, see it before it goes to Sydney in August.

Anthony Leong

*Photo of Shu-Cheen Yu © courtesy Matt Bell
<http://standinginnovation.wordpress.com>*

DANGEROUS ALLIES - Book Review

On March 8, 1974 four ASIO agents sat among the 30 members present at the ACFS monthly meeting.

That was twice as many agents as normally attended, in fact, one for every seven ACFS members present. They recorded the names of those attending and the discussions and decisions relating to the items of business.

They then went home, wrote up their field reports and submitted them. They may not have even known each other as agents.

The reason for the increased surveillance that evening was just one item of business - a proposal to support the Long March to North West Cape.

The Harold E. Holt Naval Communication Base at Exmouth, half way up the coast of Western Australia, was hosting the new communication system along with the Omega tower in Gippsland through which contact was maintained between the US Navy and its submarine fleet.

The ACFS regarded the base – one of several US bases in Australia – as part of a hostile ring of encirclement against China.

Calling for the closure of foreign military bases in Australia was a fairly radical demand. Who would have thought that 40 years down the track, the call would be reissued by a former conservative

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Prime Minister?

Malcolm Fraser remains a conservative. In his new book *Dangerous Allies* he is a sincere apologist for the policies of strategic dependence that saw Australia relying on the British Empire (until the fall of Singapore) and the US (until the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union).

Thereafter, he says, Australia's best interests lie in following a policy of strategic independence.

Only under such a policy, he believes, can Australia steer its own course through the rivalries of the region, and in particular, maintain good relations with China despite provocative Japanese and US attempts to "contain" it.

He believes that Pine Gap, the so-called "joint facility" outside Alice Springs, should be closed. Not only is it involved in signals interception (including, incidentally, all of our emails and phone calls), it is also actively involved in identifying and targeting people in Pakistan and elsewhere for attack by US unmanned drone aircraft. He maintains that Australian personnel at Pine Gap are vulnerable to charges for war crimes. He says we have no sovereignty and independence while the US uses our territory for offensive military actions.

He also criticises the integration of Australian defence personnel and defence equipment within the US military, and calls for the cessation of such ties.

The US marine base outside Darwin, established during Gillard's Prime Ministership, should also be closed.

He clearly does not want Australia drawn into another disastrous US military engagement, and sees potential for just that in the US "pivot towards Asia" and the US encouragement of Japanese provocations over the Diaoyu Islands, and US support for nations contesting Chinese sovereignty over the South China Sea.

He regards China's expansion of a blue water fleet as perfectly understandable and acceptable.

In fact his evaluation of China and its presence in the region is realistic. I would highly recommend that Australian friends of China read this book. In Fraser's own words:

China is not an imperial power, in the sense that the Soviet Union was an imperial power, or in the sense that major European states and indeed, the United States, have been imperial powers. On the contrary, China has been totally consistent in condemning hegemony. China opposes powers that seek to dominate or unduly influence the policies or attitudes of other states. It was the Soviet Union's pursuit of hegemony that led to the major break between the Soviet Union and China. Today, China would regard the United States as a hegemonic power, as the one who seeks to determine rules that others should follow. This is a major difference between the Soviet Union and China. It is also one of the reasons why policies of 'containment' are utterly inappropriate in relation to China.

Michael Willis

Aust Women diplomats in China

Women of China English Monthly (WOC) recently interviewed four impressive women from Australia. They are Australia's Ambassador and three Consuls-Generals to China. Frances Adamson, Australia's Ambassador to China, told WOC, "This is the first time in 41 years of diplomatic relations with China that the heads of Australia's mission and posts on the Chinese mainland have all been women. We have followed our own individual career paths to get here... so what brings us together is really our love for China and the desire to further the China-Australia relationship."

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Frances Adamson, Australian Ambassador to China

Frances Adamson first visited China during the winter of 1997. “It made a deep impression on me then. I traveled from Hong Kong, where I was studying Chinese, and our main visit was to Beijing ... From that very first visit, I have felt a strong connection between our two countries, and a strong personal connection with the people that I was meeting,” Adamson says.

“Bilateral ties have strengthened immeasurably, and so have China’s knowledge about Australia and knowledge in Australia about China”.

“What hasn’t changed, I think, is the friendliness of the Chinese people, the strong connection they feel with Australians, and of course, the pride Chinese people take in their history and culture, but also their openness to outside ideas,” she says.

“Australia’s interaction with China has deeply intensified across every area of the commercial relationship, and across every area of public policy... My job is really to support the commercial aspect of the relationship, to foster and to encourage the people-to-people aspect of our relationship, to ensure that there is culture in that relationship, as well as to maintain high-level interactions with all relevant ministries and departments of the Chinese Government. So in a typical day, I may have 10 or so appointments or activities.”

As the mother of four children, Adamson says, “I think, certainly for all of our children, the opportunity to live and to go to school in Beijing has been the experience of a lifetime ... Understanding other cultures and being respectful of other points of view and valuing cultural diversity are all important things ... I think the world is definitely a better place when there is a high level of cross-cultural understanding, and for future generations, one needs to start with children.”



Alice Cawte, Australian Consul-General, Shanghai

Alice Cawte first visited China, as a backpacker, in the late 1980s. “My first impression of China was that China was big, and the distance between places was far. China is still very big, but the distance is not as far. For example, the first time I came to China, one had to take half a day to get to Shanghai from Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, by train. Now, you can travel from Beijing to Shanghai within half of a day. You can eat small steamed buns in Shanghai for lunch, and have roasted duck for supper in Beijing,” Cawte says. She adds that she has been amazed by the quick development of China’s high-speed trains in recent years.

When Cawte began working in China, in the early 1990s, there was limited foreign trade between China and Australia. “China was eighth among Australia’s trading partners back then. Now, China is Australia’s largest trading partner,” she says.

She says she is impressed by how much Chinese, especially college students, know about Australia. Last year, the Australian Consulate-General in Shanghai hosted a contest on Australian history, and many Chinese college students participated. “They knew a lot about Australia. Australians, even me, might find some of the questions very difficult to answer. The contestants answers were outstanding,” she says. “I am honoured to have the opportunity to be an Australian Consul-General in China. It has given me many unforgettable experiences.”

Even though China and Australia have different cultures and histories, Chinese and Australian women face the same challenges in their efforts to achieve equality, especially when it comes to education, between men and women.



Jill Collins, Australian Consul-General, Guangzhou

Jill Collins first visited China in 1987, to study Mandarin. The first city she visited was Guangzhou, in Guangdong Province. She travelled from there to Nanjing, where she studied for a few months.

“China was completely different in those days ... Now, everyday life is easier, but it is also much more complex ... I was impressed by the way you could keep in contact with people in China over the years. You could form very good connections,” she says.

Collins has had many interesting experiences as Australia’s Consul General in Guangzhou. “The highlight for me is being able to make things happen between Australia and southern China. We have just set up a business council in Guangdong, between Australia and Guangdong. It is the first time that we have done this kind of activity with a province in China, and it is really important and of great significance.”

In addition to working on various commercial projects, Australia’s Consulate-General in Guangzhou also promotes projects related to women and children. “We recently established a volunteer program with Guangdong Women and Children’s Hospital, because Sydney Children’s Hospital Network provides teaching (e-learning) to the doctors and nurses in Guangdong Women and Children’s Hospital. It’s all for child-health education. We set up the volunteer program at the Consulate-General, so a lot of us now go to the hospital once a week and help care for babies and look after children.

Collins has worked in various cities in China, including Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. She says she prefers the weather in Guangzhou, likes the food in Beijing, and likes the bustle of Shanghai.

“Guangzhou has been transformed in the last three or four years. It has become a very liveable city. The connection between Guangdong and Australia is very strong, for example, more students go to Australia from Guangdong than any other province in China and more tourists go from Guangdong than any other province in China,” she says.

Nancy Gordon Australian Consul-General, Chengdu

Nancy Gordon made her first trip to China in 1998, when she arrived to study Chinese. She went to Shanghai, and she was immediately struck by the blend of the old and new buildings and traditions.



“I stayed in Shanghai for four years. Now I’m back (in China). I arrived in August last year to take up my position as Australia’s first Consul-General in Chengdu,” she says.

“Chengdu is now at an interesting stage of development ... I think probably the most striking thing is the blend. Chengdu still manages to keep a lot of its old charm and character, while also developing very fast.

When talking about gender equality in the diplomatic service, Gordon says, “I think around 27 per cent of Australia’s heads of missions ... are women. It’s becoming more and more. Maybe one day it will be 50 per cent.

Gordon says, “Australia is an immigrant country, so our culture is very varied and diverse ... When we talk about Australian culture, Australian culture is really a mix of many different cultures. That makes us Australian.

“But I am also very interested now, while I am in south-western China, in discovering all the varieties in China ... I know many people think that China is mainly Han Chinese, but since I am in south-western China, I see many different minority groups. There are Tibetan communities, and the Yi, Hui and Naxi people in Yunnan. I think that variety is something that has helped to make Chinese culture so strong, and so interesting.

“Really, the more I travel what surprises me is that cultures are very, very similar. So the similarity strikes me, rather than the differences.”

Article abbreviated from the Women of China magazine

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.

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VICE PRESIDENT: John Breheny
Mr Tower Liu

SECRETARY: Ms Robin Matthews

TREASURER: Mr Dong Chen

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