



# Australia-China Friendship Society

Victorian Branch (Inc).ABN 39 746 574 225

## Newsletter

October 2021

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## President's Report

I hope you are looking forward to escaping Lockdown #6.5 soon! While many have been vaccinated, we know vaccines for the vast majority are the only way of protecting society.

I had the privilege of addressing the Federation of Chinese Associations on-line function to celebrate China's 72<sup>nd</sup> National Day, where leaders of the most prominent Chinese organisations gathered to honour the great achievements of China and her leaders. While sadly this year we were unable to meet in person, it was nevertheless a great tribute from the Chinese community.

We were recently sent a long podcast by our sister organisation in Western Australia. A panel, from "The Little Red Podcast", was discussing the Chinese goldminers' bridge in Wandiligong, with its plaque reminding people of the rampant racism of the time. Within the podcast were factual errors and bizarre conspiracy theories, including the premise that the bridge was used as an instrument of the Communist Party of China to re-write history. It was further inferred that by our activities, we were willingly doing the bidding of the CPC. Moreover, it appears we (ACFS) only began operating in the 70s! I'm sure our oldest members and many of us who knew of the ACFS in the 60s (or earlier, in my case) would be amazed to hear this news - obviously for 20 years we did nothing about the Cold War and racism! The last straw was when this white Australian panel held that Premier Daniel Andrews' May 2017 apology for the racism of the 1800s was tantamount to useless because it didn't involve the direct descendants of the racially abused miners from as far away as Young (formerly Lambing Flat). Clearly, modern-day Chinese were not considered relevant. The opinions from a white, privileged outlook were disappointing.

It is precisely this sort of nonsense, misunderstanding, and misrepresentation which we must counter even more now, hence the need for a refreshing of membership.

Finally, for now, as our AGM can't be held as normal, it will be online via Zoom. You will be sent more details and a link soon, but keep Tuesday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6pm clear.

Keep safe and I certainly look forward to seeing everyone in person once restrictions are lifted and we can gather safely together.

*Anthony.*

# **Chinese president reaffirms diplomatic ties with call to King Tupou VI**

*September 27, Nuku'alofa, Tonga*



Photos: Xi Jinping (MFA-PRC), Tupou VI (Matangi Tonga).

The Chinese President Xi Jinping had a phone conversation with King Tupou VI on 24 September.

The Chinese President Xi Jinping had a phone conversation with King Tupou VI of Tonga last week on 24 September.

A report posted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, stated that, "Tonga will continue to firmly support China on issues concerning its core interests."

They reported that in the phone call, King Tupou VI had expressed his gratitude for the assistance to Tonga during the pandemic. "King Tupou VI congratulated China on the successful completion of the National Games and wishes the Beijing Olympic Winter Games a great success. He said that Chinese medical experts and agricultural and technical experts have played an important role in fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic in Tonga and ensuring the country's food security. Tonga is grateful for that. By adhering to the principle of independence and self-reliance and the One-China policy, Tonga will continue to firmly support China on issues concerning its core interests. Tonga supports Pacific island countries in strengthening their relations with China and stands ready to play a positive role in it," said the statement from China.

Xi Jinping pointed out that since the establishment of diplomatic ties between Tonga and China, the two countries have deepened political mutual trust and had fruitful exchanges and cooperation in various fields.

"Xi Jinping stressed that China is ready to expand all-round cooperation with Tonga within the framework of the Belt and Road cooperation, offer economic and technical assistance without any political strings attached, continue to carry out agricultural and technical cooperation projects, and provide necessary assistance for Tongan agricultural and fishery products' entry into the Chinese market."

China will set up a China-Pacific island countries cooperation center for poverty reduction and development, and is prepared to build an emergency supplies reserve for China-Pacific island countries and other projects.

# Address to FCA on China's 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary

28 September 2021

Before I begin, I wish to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we stand, the Wurundjeri People, and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

On behalf of the Australia-China Friendship Society Vic and our National body, I would also like to acknowledge the Chinese Consul-General to Victoria and Tasmania, Mr Long Zhou, and other Chinese Community leaders present today.

We are here to celebrate the People's Republic of China's 72 years of toil, achievement and development. China has always been famous throughout the world for roaming diplomacy and trade. It began in the period of Alexander the Great in 300BC, when China traded in spices, silk, and sandalwood, continuing beyond the 13<sup>th</sup> century, with the establishment of Western trade routes. Two years ago, former US President Jimmy Carter observed that China is a peaceful nation, devoted to its people and growth, not war. China has never had a taste for conflict, and friendly links worldwide over millennia prove this.

However, every nation has a duty to protect its citizens inside defined and secure borders. China has a right to defend herself from bullies and those who seek to regain colonial power and dominance. The only conflict has been with those infringing on her borders and the heroic expulsion of exploiters and invaders. From Liberation in 1949, China has built a country based on people, commerce and peaceful coexistence.

The Belt and Road Initiative and the Maritime Silk and Maritime Pearl Roads demonstrate China's peaceful international links through people-to-people exchanges and provision of trade & tangible material aid to emerging nations. Millions worldwide have benefited from China's aid, and as China grows in strength and prosperity, so too will the world prosper because of it.

On behalf of the ACFS Nationally and in the State of Victoria, I congratulate China on its 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary and may it long continue on the path of peace, prosperity and strength.

Thank you.

*Anthony Leong President, ACFS (Vic Branch)*

# Defence or Defenestration?

Anthony Leong 16 September 2021

*Dumping Australia's French submarine contract, then awarding it to the USA and Great Britain, whilst establishing a new "AUKUS" alliance, has many consequences, mostly problematic.*

It is axiomatic that any government has a moral obligation to defend its citizens and borders. That citizens must be safe and secure is without question. Related to this is by what methods that is met, for it is not just physical, but also economic and environmental security. Any country has the right to exist within safe and secure boundaries, but there are also responsibilities and obligations, where activities carried out in the name of defence should not be seen as provocation, threat, or belligerence to others.

## ***Sinking a contract.***

Australia has had a chequered past in defence materiel acquisition. Notorious examples of lack of due diligence have found parts which don't fit, project cost and time blowouts with delivery dates way into the future, and electronic programs and componentry which don't work or require extensive modification.

Two years ago, Australia and France signed a multi-billion-dollar contract for submarines, to be built and delivered in the next decade. Following a series of bungles, cost blowouts and delays, there were rumours of rescinding the contract.

On September 16, in a video hook-up between President Biden of America, Prime Minister Johnson of the UK and Australian PM Morrison, a two-pronged announcement was made: the establishment of a tripartite alliance named AUKUS, and an agreement to award contracts to the UK and USA to build several nuclear-powered submarines, revoking the French agreement. Motives for this are several-fold, but the effects are far-reaching.

## ***Nuclear non-proliferation.***

For decades, Australia has been ambivalent about nuclear power and to date, after much controversy, there is only one small nuclear power plant at Lucas Heights, NSW, to service the medical industry, nuclear power itself being banned in Australia at the end of the 1990s. Thus, the plan to build nuclear-powered submarines has reignited fierce debate over whether this breaks the ban in spirit if not the letter, plus concerns about efficiency, initial and ongoing cost and maintenance, and safe disposal of radioactive materials when necessary.

Australia is moreover a supporter of the non-proliferation treaty between nuclear powers, permitting certain uses and prohibiting supply of weaponry or such ingredients to manufacture them, to countries not nuclear weapon-enabled. While the putative submarines in question will not be armed with nuclear weapons, they will have the capability of carrying them, as they are specifically built with such use in mind specifically for America.

Importantly, Australia is signatory to the Treaty of Rarotonga, protecting the Pacific region and nations. It is an accord to prohibit production of any nuclear weapon, to not possess any nuclear weapon or weapons-grade material, to not facilitate in any way production of all or part of nuclear weaponry and, vitally for the Pacific, to forbid the dumping of any nuclear waste material whatever. It is this last point which is the most fraught in military, economic and ecological terms.

### *International ramifications.*

Breaking any contract with a friendly country is perilous, particularly given the sudden nature of this about-face by Australia. It is especially so in the field of defence. President Macron of France was blindsided in this move and the French are appalled and angry. This could give rise to economic and other sanctions and sew mistrust elsewhere outside of France, which would take decades to rebuild. For a party to break a contract without warning sends a message of unreliability and economic perfidy, one whose word cannot be relied upon. International bad faith is normally associated with pariah states and illegal regimes.

Further, importantly, the new alliance and military build sends an unsubtle signal and overt challenge to China. By the establishment of AUKUS where there is already in place a plethora of similar groupings both economic and military, the participants are throwing out a warning to China, Australia's major trading partner, to keep within guidelines set out by the coalition, or there will be consequences. Exactly what penalties exist is left unsaid, but the threat is present, even if not spelled out. The political meaning is clear, and AUKUS' sabre-rattling is blunt.

China's reaction educes the Cold War and admonishes the new alliance for promoting such posture through these actions. While some may defend the AUKUS pact as merely enhancing Australia's submarine capabilities into the future, the nature of the membership of this grouping clearly targets China by virtue of past behaviour and standpoint. It also inflexibly places Australia in the Anglosphere, walking back any constructive dialogue with other interlocutors.

### *Racism.*

Many Australians still claim Great Britain as "the Mother Country" and hark

back to those roots as reasons to reject immigration and any coloured diaspora. Allying Britain with the Americans who have viewed Australia as the American “Deputy Sherriff” since 2003, white Australians unsurprisingly see their life through a white, Anglo-Saxon lens.

Australia has an unfortunate, enduring reputation for racism, especially against the Indigenous and Chinese. This was manifest against both groups during the Gold Rush, then specific anti-Chinese immigration policies of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, then with the (First) Cold War, and now against modern Chinese (and China) in a second wave of ill will and racism. With Chinese forming around 5% (about 1.5m) of Australia’s population, it is little wonder there is deep concern amongst them at the palpable rise in Sinophobia and bigotry. Following the backlash over COVID-19 and the egregious blame attributed to the Chinese, this AUKUS union will add fuel to an already-burning pyre. However, there are additional disquieting factors around this incipient racism, encompassing neighbours in the Pacific region.

In 1863, indentured labour was brought into Queensland from seven Pacific nations, often by force. Some 63,000 mostly male workers were paid subsistence wages and lived in squalor while working long hours. Many suffered beatings and other forms of punishment for minor infractions and about one third died at work on plantations from malnutrition or disease. When this practice ceased in 1906, workers were then subject to deportation, with any money earned impounded to defray the costs of such expulsion. This was due to the establishment of the infamous White Australia Policy, a part of which was The Pacific Island Labourers Act, 1901, to eject those who did not meet stringent criteria. This was concomitant with Papua New Guinea being annexed by Australia as an Australian territory in 1906 and the spread of Australian influence with near Pacific neighbours, specifically Fiji and New Zealand. Great Britain’s Colonial Office had plans to ensure its sphere of influence radiated from colonial Australia to other areas for Empire and Commonwealth.

For the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, colonialism and paternalism in the Pacific was fostered by Australian and British interests, with America a late comer to the game, their proselytising religious groups vying for a piece of the influence other missionaries had achieved for Britain. As with other colonial incursions (French, Dutch, Portuguese et al), there was predictably a great amount of local unrest at the imposition of other cultures, and inevitably, spread of foreign disease.

As the various Pacific nations gained independence, the sense of self and freedom from shackles became more pronounced. Once more, indigenous culture was revered and not relegated in favour of white, Christian values. Citizens spoke their own language without censure or a conqueror’s demand to speak a foreign tongue. Antipathy for colonialism still runs deep.

Distressingly for many of the Pacific, in one act, the creation of AUKUS puts Pacific nations' clock back over a century, giving rise to the very fears they thought had been banished—major white powers exerting might and influence by flaunting military dominance. While AUKUS cannot take sovereign independence from them, it is subjugation by other means, casting aside any illusion of Pacific neutrality or freedom of choice.

For all the talk and appearance of equality and 'mateship', Australia has essentially nailed its colours to the mast, exposing itself to criticisms of warmongering, bad faith, white privilege, racism and tugging of the forelock to colonialists with vested interests. By this important military deal and refreshed alignment, Australia has shown the world myopic, tunnel-vision partisanship and soured relations with many Asian nations for decades to come. Indeed, years of diplomacy and careful thought have been thrown out the window, bringing to zero sum peace efforts of generations.

### *Opposition? What Opposition?*

For the most part, the ALP has been in lockstep with the Coalition in this issue and leader Anthony Albanese has been critical of cost and wastage. However, he has not addressed the downsides of the AUKUS pact and the effect of awarding a contract of this magnitude to a behemoth industrial-military complex. Australia as a seemingly independent state has vanished, as has the ability to make strategic and economic decisions autonomously. Albanese appears to have also forsaken Labor's multicultural stance by not acknowledging the dire international and Pacific consequences, including reputational damage by summarily breaking a deal.

Rather than moving to quell China's anger with Australia by a more nuanced and objective stance, his criticism has been over fiscal matters, not the cost of ruined international relations and all that entails. He has not once mentioned the appearance of racism and paternalism, nor has he even argued for Australia's objectivity, let alone spoken about the terrible "optics" of the whole matter. Moreover, he has conceded he agrees with the outcomes.

### *Quo Vadis?*

In this issue, Labor appears to have moved from constructive Opposition critic to submissive ally. By the time they are in government, it will be far too late to reverse or change substantially the negative impacts of the formation of AUKUS and the boats' contract. Unfortunately, the effects of these actions will be long-term and far-reaching, engendering malcontent, near-neighbours and further, enduring economic difficulties with Australia's largest trading partner, China. Adding to the woes, as has been seen with China sanctioning



Australian coal, iron, wool and wheat, the USA has enormously benefited from China trade, replacing its ally Australia. Thus, the USA will win both ways, economically, an ignominious after-effect.

Once Labor is in office, the least-worst option to triage this disastrous scenario is to enter protracted and intense diplomatic discussions at the highest levels. It may also be prudent to offer incentives of access and economic advantage unavailable to others, whilst not ceding sovereignty or independence. Nonetheless, as this situation unfolds, it may be impossible to regain ground lost and markets forgone. China would be within its rights to view with great mistrust any Australian actions or promises, given the track record to date. It also means a dramatic shift in Australian policies towards China and a rapprochement plan to equal or surpass that of the 1970s.

The climb back will be arduous and fraught. It may be some time...

*Anthony Leong is the Victorian President of the Aust-China Friendship Society & Secretary-General of Pacific-China Friendship Association.*



**Tom Fowdy** writes that Muslim states support China's Xinjiang vocational camps, so why is the West so furious?

Muslim states have positively embraced China's vocational camps in Xinjiang – many of which were funded by the World Bank. If Muslim nations applaud China's deradicalization and reintegration plans for its Uighur community, why is the West up in arms?

Tom Fowdy is a British-born, East Asia political affairs analyst who has lived in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Seoul and Australia. He is a graduate of Oxford University's China Studies Program, and holds an additional degree from Durham University. Tom's focus is on China and the Koreans.

Read more here: <https://thecradle.co/Article/analysis/1707>



Located at the Chinese Museum, the One Million Stories Exhibition and the Chinese Australian Achievers exhibit will take you on a 200-year journey from when the first Chinese Australians migrated to our shores in 1818 to those who have arrived recently. The exhibition endeavours to enable all Chinese Australians to find a place in Australian society and to contribute to building a progressive and multicultural nation.

This event celebrates the contribution of outstanding Australians for their ingenuity, talent, skill, creativity, hard work, conviction, and efforts to make our society a better place.

## Our Chinese Australian Achievers 2021:

- |                            |                           |                               |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| VERNON AH KEE              | Tony Ayres                | MARITA CHENG AM               |
| FRANK CHEW OAM             | ELIZABETH CHONG AM        | PR. DARRYL LOW CHOY           |
| PAUL COGHLAN AO            | JENNY MARGARET KEE AO     | KING FONG OAM RUSSELL JACK AM |
| LEE LIN CHIN               | LI CUN-XIN AO             | HONG LIM                      |
| LIN JONG                   | PR. KWONG CHIU LEE DOW AO | MAURICE LEONG KWOK CHEONG     |
| GILBERT LAU AM             | BENJAMIN LAW              | JENNIFER KEMARRE MARTINIELLO  |
| IRENE KWONG MOSS AO        | ALICE PUNG                | VIVIAN WANG                   |
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Promoting Friendship and Understanding Between the  
Australian and Chinese People

# **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.

## **The ACFS Victorian Branch**

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We are always looking for interesting stories and articles to share with our members. Any members who have great stories to tell please contact ACFS office or e-mail to [acfs.vic@gmail.com](mailto:acfs.vic@gmail.com)