



Australia-China Friendship Society

Victorian Branch (Inc).ABN 39 746 574 225

Newsletter

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October 2025

President's Report

There can be no doubt that relations between Australia and China have improved significantly this year and perhaps the most important event was the Prime Minister Albanese's trip to China in July. Apart from a diplomatic success for Australia, securing the highest-level meetings possible, it also was a remarkable success in terms of business. As part of the trip, the Prime Minister engaged in a meeting with Australia's largest iron ore producers and China's steel-makers, both incredibly powerful industry groups in their respective countries. It's worth noting that their power is due to an agreement made in the 1980s when Bob Hawke set up the iron ore trade with China which previously was next to nothing and is now Australia's single biggest export, worth \$116 billion in the last financial year.

This time however, the objective is different. Whilst Australia has incredible potential in renewable energy, especially solar and wind, another potential product is "green iron", that is the production of iron that does not release greenhouse gases. Instead of using a blast furnace, where iron ore and coal are combined to create the iron, with resulting carbon dioxide emissions, green iron uses hydrogen instead coal, combining iron ore with hydrogen gas. But it requires a lot of hydrogen and a lot of energy. Nevertheless, it is increasingly commercially viable. Green metals are essential global decarbonisation, as iron and steel production is responsible for 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions, with iron making up 90% of these emissions.

The most feasible way to achieve green iron is for it to be produced in Australia and exported to China to become green steel. China, for all its extraordinary efforts in renewable energy production, has sufficiently large domestic consumption that there isn't enough spare. Australia has the potential to produce that energy and, as Fortesque Metal's founder Andrew Forrest quipped, albeit in a rather mixed metaphor: "There's not a snowflake's chance in hell that China won't send its cities green and its skies blue. They are determined. And that means that its fuel industry has to go green now".

If this flows through, and it probably will, it will be even more important that the iron ore trade deal in the 1980s and with even greater benefits for Australia, China, and the environment. So that's something worth keeping a very careful eye on.

For their own part, Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan has also made a recent trip to China, where four more tunnel boring machines were ordered to help complete the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL). Not only is their open encouragement to bring more Chinese students to Australia, which is surely a very welcome move that has benefited us enormously, but also with full-time staff dedicated to encouraging exports of Victorian businesses and products to China.

Admist all this there have been delegations and celebrations which the ACFS has had the opportunity to participate in. The first was a delegation from Shenzhen city in the province of Guangdong on September 18. Then, on September 22, was the National Day reception for Chinese community organisations which was attended by some five hundred people, which came with a truly impressive

program of dancers, singers, and performances. There were, of course, speeches by several guests, including the chair of the National Day Celebration Committee, the Consul-General, the Multicultural Commissioner, a few state members of parliament, and myself.

This was followed up by another National Day event on September 23 hosted by the Consulate and attended not only by various leaders of Chinese organisations in Victoria, but also by political leaders from Victoria, again with about five hundred people in attendance. The Consul-General, Fang Xinwen, gave a speech that was as diplomatic as it was poignant, expressing the country's commitment to economic leadership and being a global citizen. The premier, Jacina Allen, having just returned from a very successful trip to China, spoke of the objectives for tourism, trade, education, technology, and especially the need to develop people-to-people connections.

Then, on September 24, a smaller (about 60 people) but incredibly enthusiastic dinner was hosted by the Fujian Association of Victoria in Docklands for a visiting delegation from said province. The head of the delegation, the Deputy Director-General of the Foreign Affairs Office, gave an impressive speech in content and the fact that it was lengthy and entirely impromptu.

Today, as I put finger to keyboard and compose this report, I also had the honour with our Vice-President to meet with a delegation from Chaoyang district of Beijing. Like the Shenzhen delegation they had a particular interest in arts and culture, and like that delegation we took the opportunity to provide our visitors a tour of the National Gallery of Victoria at Federation Square, as it concentrates on Australian art. We hope that in the future an exchange of artistic works can occur. Australian-China relations have really only just began to grow, and we are at a pivotal time in the history of our two countries which must result in friendship and integration. There is no doubt that the ACFS is one significant body which can help lead the way towards this future. So come along to our AGM and become part of this process!

Lev Lafayette, President Australia-China Friendship Society (Victoria)



Delegation from Chaoyang district of Beijing visiting National Gallery of Victoria at Federation Square

Friendship Exchange

Audrey is a Melbourne Girls' College student. After seven years of studying the language she had a desire to know what Chinese schooling and life is like. Arranged through ACFS she spent 3 days studying in the Nanjing International School of Languages. The following stories are herself and her mum's interpretation of that journey.

My time and Nanjing Foreign Language School

I had an amazing time at Nanjing Foreign Language School. I made many new friends, got to know the teachers and learned about Chinese culture. My buddy was very kind and patient, always explaining things I didn't understand. She would help me understand the lessons during class and also helped me study the texts and math problems they were learning. She even helped me find where their classrooms were. The class prefects were very helpful while I was there as well.

The teachers at the school were very patient, especially the math teacher who was my home class teacher. Though I can speak Chinese fluently, to ensure that I understood he would explain it in both Chinese and then English. The English teacher was also very helpful. She asked me many questions so that the students in the class could understand different English accents.

On my first day there, the students welcomed me with a round of applause and a welcoming atmosphere. In Australia if you are a new student the most you would get is a teacher saying that you were new. One thing that was different to me was having whole school assemblies every morning. At my school we have four assemblies a year.



Audrey doing equations on the board with other students

For me, the class size was quite large. Back home, my classes have 20 to 25 students, and I attend an all-girls school. So having 55 students in one class, with half of them being boys, felt quite unusual to me. Class periods are shorter than ours, but I felt I covered more content in one lesson than we do here in Australia. My classmates were really smart! Students in my class were all well-behaved and everyone respected the teachers. This is like Australia, but the teachers were very matter of fact while in Australia my teachers explain subjects with personal anecdotes.

The classes, being shorter but more in depth, made it easier to understand what we were learning and the lessons were much more informative than ours. The teachers would make sure that every student understood what was being taught during the lesson while also extending other students learning of the topics. The school was almost four times the size of mine which made navigating the corridors and the canteen more difficult for me. Instead of having about 100 people in the canteen there was most of the students at the school.

One huge culture shock for me was the length of the school day, where I start at 8.50am and end at 3.20pm, the students at this school start at 7.30am and end at 5.30pm. By the end of my week there I was used to it, but at the very beginning I was struggling to keep my eyes open at the end of the day.

This week at the school was fun, eye-opening, and helped me understand different cultures around the world. I'm very happy to have learned what Chinese schools are like and I'm very grateful for this experience. Thank you for letting me attend classes at school. I really enjoyed it and hope I can go back next time I visit China.

Audrey

Ambition in Nanjing

Audrey was clapped into the classroom by 55 other students on the first day she joined the classroom at Nanjing Foreign Language School in September this year. She had been introduced to the class teacher and she was considerably more nervous than the local students who were excitedly setting up the classroom for her arrival. The welcome was warm, loud and large ... and very special.

That morning, we had been met by Ms Huang, from the school, who had generously helped us in the period before we arrived as well as meeting us at 7am that morning to help us with uniform and introductions. While the early morning start was a jolt to our systems, it was baptism by fire to China's education system where the days are long and structured differently from ours.

We travel to open our eyes to different cultures, it helps us understand our differences and appreciate that differences can be ok. I didn't travel until I was much older than my 14 year old daughter and I hope the amazing experience she had will put her in good stead to be open to new opportunities and experiences.

In the capable hands of class teacher, Mr Tao, Audrey spent the morning settling in and doing some of her favourite subject, maths. I was kept up to date on the WeChat group and was thrilled to see Audrey engaging. Mr Tao had her doing equations on the board with other students, and she got the correct answer!

Audrey participated in the classroom activities with a "buddy" from the school and it really helped her to have someone to help her navigate around the classroom subjects as well as the school as a whole. We sometimes saw her buddy with her mother on the metro at the end of the day which was a lovely way to end the school day.

One of the best parts of such an opportunity is the immersion in the language as well as the culture. As a tourist, we visited places in China, however, the experience in Nanjing, allowed Audrey to be immersed in modern Chinese culture. The early starts at school, the large classrooms, the daily routines, the pace of learning and the expectations on Chinese children. When talking with parents in Nanjing, it surprised me to hear that after the long day at school there is plenty of homework to be done! To hear that Chinese children in higher levels are often home from school after their parents return from work was very surprising to me. Chinese parents are ambitious for their children and the educational expectations are demanding. I tried to impress upon Audrey that these children in her classroom are her peers and that competition is stiff – there are plenty of students doing the work, even if they are not sitting next to her in her classroom here in Melbourne.

The teacher's WeChat photographs documented Audrey's experiences and it was incredible to see her on the sports field with thousands of other students as she held up the classroom's sign.

On the last day, a journalist and photographer came from the newspaper and interviewed Audrey – another new experience. Audrey answered the questions and she later said she found the talking and the questions ok; it was when they followed her to the canteen and took photos that it was a bit too much – her buddy had brought her own lunch that day and so she went alone.

Everything in China is big to me – the cities, the buildings, the subway, the sheer number of shops and eateries, even the bubble tea seems bigger in China. The school had thousands of students and for Audrey, who is quietly reserved, I knew this experience would take her out of her comfort zone. In manageable amounts, personal growth can be the result of this kind of adventure and Audrey is better for that week in Nanjing. It was a big step for her to be the only one in this situation, we know at times, she found it overwhelming. We are proud that despite her reservations, she embraced the novelty of the experience and I think she would try it again.

We owe enormous gratitude to Mr Liu who helped us patiently navigate this connection and helped us make this happen. We are also grateful to Ms Huang and the teachers and staff at the Nanjing Foreign Language School who helped her during her time.

Anna

Chinese Movie Review:

Caught by the Tides (2024) (风流一代, "Romantic Generation")

by Lev Lafayette

A combination of documentary and fiction, Jia Zhangke's "Caught by the Tides" was released in 2024 and nominated for a Palme d'Or at Cannes. The film combines footage dating back to 1999 when Jia owned his first DV camera with a plot intertwined with this fascinating historical footage assembled over 22 years and, as a result, includes many of Jia's previous characters and settings from other films, such as the Golden Lion winning film, "Still Life" (2006), "Unknown Pleasures" (2002), and "Ash Is Purest White" (2018), and involves character's that naturally age, including the lead character, Qiao Qiao, who is played by Jia's wife, Zhao Tao.

The initial setting is the northern industrial city of Datong in 2001, where Qiao Qiao a singer and model, forms a romance with her manager, Gua Bin. Gua Bin is a bit of a colourful character and leaves for another province, texting Qiao Qiao that he will come back once he's made some real money. Years literally pass with no news for Qiao Qiao, whilst Gua Bin attempts all sorts of money-raising ventures,

including with a corrupt politician. Qiao Qiao leaves home with little information to find him and after a series of adventures of her own finally tracks him down, but decides to break up with him. Many years later in the COVID-era they re-unite, aged but tragically wiser.

The historical footage is absolutely fascinating, an honest and captivating time capsule of an earlier era and one which draws attention to the significant changes that have occurred in the past two and half decades, with all the social disruption, opportunities, technological changes, and economic developments. As for the story, it is a melancholic story of star-crossed lovers with a strong sense of character development. Qiao Qiao starts as somewhat naive, then becomes dedicated, then a determined seeker, and as a result finds her inner strength and independence. On the other hand, Gua Bin starts as a cad, undergoes a downward trajectory hurtling toward increasingly dubious associations, before discovering, all too late, a sense of responsibility towards others that he should have had in the first place.

Mention must be made of the range of technologies used in producing this film, given the time period. Kodak Vision 2 and Vision 3 film stock was used Sony DSR-PD150, Sony Betacam, Sony HDV, Arricam LT 35mm, and Arri Alexa 35 cameras, with editing and colour correction using more contemporary technologies. Putting it all together was quite a marvel in its own right and it all runs surprisingly smoothly, giving both a sense of the passage of time and a change of style, but without losing a sense of technical continuity in production.

Resurrection (2025) (Chinese: 狂野时代; 'Wild Times')

by Lev Lafayette

The winner of the 2025 Cannes Prix Spécial "Resurrection", directed by Bi Gan, is a rich and challenging film which will appeal to some and will be deemed too difficult by many. Release for Cannes in May 2025, the film will see its initial screenings in China in late November and France and the United States in December. Melbourne was fortunate enough to see it as part of the Melbourne International Film Festival in August at the Astor Theatre, whose styling proved to be a very appropriate part of the immersive experience.

In a future where most of humanity has lost the capacity to dream and has attained immortality instead. Some rebels, "Fantasmer" who, in the words of Gan, "bring chaos to history" and "make time jump", continue to engage in this rebellious act. Of course, they must be hunted down as they become monstrous. The hunter in this case is Miss Shu, a "Big Other" that can tell truth from illusion, who chases the Fantasmer across different epochs and, in Bi Gan's homage to 20th century film, different genres. As a result the film explores silent film, German Expressionism, Andrei Tarkovsky, Alfred Hitchcock, Wong Kar-wai, Tsai Ming-liang, and Ridley Scott. As but one example, there is particularly clever shoot-out scene which follows "The Lady from Shanghai" (1947).

The film, which demands continuous engagement with its heightened visual richness and detail, consists of five vignettes, each corresponding to the senses and each corresponding with an era of film (starting with the silent), with a sixth conclusion representing the mind. Jackson Yee plays the Fantasmer in each setting, a movie monster adopted from German expressionism e.g., "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (1920) and "Nosferatu" (1922) with Shu Qi playing the Big Other, a "Blade Runner" (1982) style hunter. The film plays with surreal concepts and experiences; initially the body of the Fantasmer opens to reveal a projector, later there is a murderous quest for a suitcase and theremin, then a derelict Buddhist temple haunted by a spirit of bitterness, then a child is taught how to predict cards through smell, and finally, a strange romance between a young man who has never kissed and a vampire who has never bitten anyone.



There is so much in this film that it is easy to be both entranced and overwhelmed. It has a mind-bending, time-tripping where movie escapism merges with dreams, it has a fractured sense of reality, it has a baroque level of visual richness, it has subtle dialogue, explosions of violence, and all the time appealing to true art-house cinephiles that spans a century of movie-making. It is strange, it is beautiful, and it requires multiple viewings for those who wish to delve into its nuance, and that ensures that it will become recognised as one of the great films of this decade.

China home to 5.08 million ancient and famous trees

Source: Xinhua Editor: huaxia

GUANGZHOU, Sept. 29 (Xinhua) -- China is currently home to approximately 5.08 million ancient and famous trees that are preserved, as announced at a national ancient and famous tree protection event in south China's Guangzhou city on Monday.

The country's third comprehensive survey on ancient and famous trees has been launched to strengthen conservation efforts, according to the event aimed at related science popularization.

Building on previous surveys and aligning with certain regulations, the new survey is set to document the distribution, growth status, and historical significance of these trees, forming a precise database to support targeted protection measures.

Highlighting regional efforts, Guangdong Province, host of this year's event, manages more than 85,000 ancient trees using digital IDs and smart monitoring systems.

According to China's ancient and famous trees protection regulations implemented this year, the term "ancient tree" refers to trees with an age of 100 years or more, excluding trees artificially cultivated for the primary purpose of timber production in commercial forests. The term "famous tree" refers to trees that possess significant historical, cultural, scientific, or landscape value, or are of important commemorative significance.

ACFS need your help

We have set up a charity within CDS Victoria for recycling of cans and bottles. This will allow you to direct your refund to The Australia China Friendship Society.

It is rather a simple process:


1. If you haven't already downloaded the CDS Victoria app to your trusty mobile phone.
2. Locate your nearest return centre at this location <https://cdsvic.org.au/locations>. There are three zones in Victoria East North and West.

CDS Vic is made up of 3 zones, North, East and West.


Each zone is managed by one of our Zone Operators who manage payments and refunds in their zone.

For more information about each of our Zone Operators, you can visit their websites by clicking the links below.


North Zone
Operated by [Visy](#)

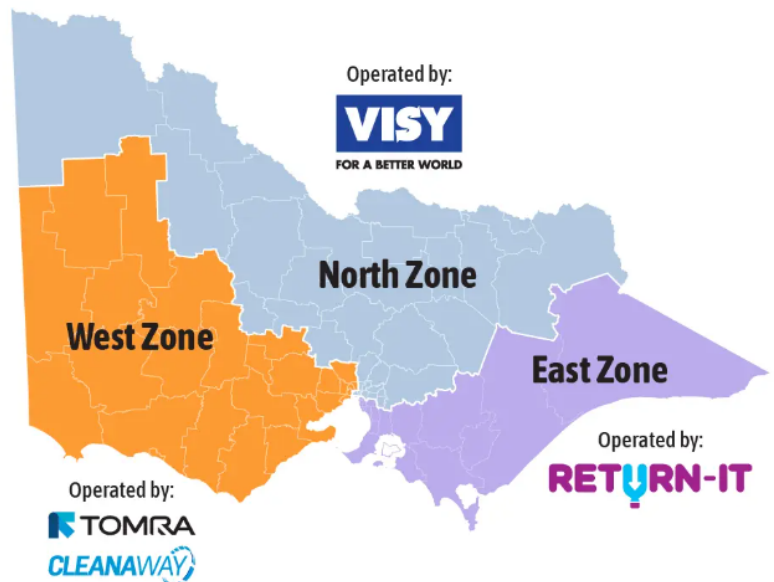


East Zone
Operated by [Return-It](#)



West Zone
Operated by [TOMRA Cleanaway](#)





3. Take your cans etc. to the centre, open the app on your phone and scan the barcode at the return machines. Make sure your phone is on the brightest setting so the machine can see the barcode.
4. When you have finished, tap the "Bank Transfer" button and search Charities, Select donation, and search for Australia China friendship Society Victorian Branch Inc,
5. Choose to transfer your refund to this account.
6. Easy as that.

Thank you very much for your support

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF AUSTRALIA-CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY VICTORIAN BRANCH INC

Notice is given that the Annual General Meeting of the Australia-China Friendship Society, Victorian Branch Incorporated will be held on:

1-3 pm.Sunday 30 November 2025 At 4th Floor, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane

Door Code is 7116

The Ordinary Business of the Meeting will be to confirm the Minutes of the last AGM, to receive the financial and other reports for the last financial year and to elect the Officers and Committee Members of the Society.

ACFS Victorian Branch NOMINATION FORM 2025/2026

All financial Members of the Society are eligible to nominate for the Office of - President, Vice President, (2 positions), Treasurer, Secretary and ordinary Committee Members (up to 6 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:

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

SIGNATURE OF NOMINEE:

CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: **Mobile:**

Email:

This nomination form must be delivered to:

The Secretary, ACFS Vic Branch, Ross House, 4th Floor, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000

OR email: secretary@acfs-vic.org no later than seven (7) days before the date fixed for the AGM. All nominees are required to enclose a brief written introduction about themselves, (maximum 150 words) with the nomination form. In the event of an election, the introduction will be circulated to Members.

If you have any queries, please contact Edith Wilson on 0405 287 484.

Special concert for ACFS members and friends



Join **acclaimed, multi-Award-Winning opera singer Shu-Cheen Yu** and **Lotus Wind Choir** for a **special afternoon concert** on **Saturday, February 28 afternoon** at **St. John's Anglican Church, Toorak**.

Presented with pride by **ACFS**, this concert celebrates Australia's multicultural spirit through song – uniting voices and hearts across cultures. Enjoy an unforgettable musical journey featuring beloved tunes and treasures melodies, both old and new, sung in multiple languages – blending the best of East and West.

All proceeds from tickets sales and Ms. Yu's CDs sales will be donated to **ACFS** in support of community initiatives.

After the concert, please join us for **refreshments**.

Date: Saturday 28 February 2026 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM (UTC+10)

Address: St John's Anglican Church, 86 Clendon Rd, Toorak VIC 3142

Tickets are \$40 for non-members and \$30 for members, available via the ACFS or <https://www.trybooking.com/DFFGF>
Pay directly into the ACFS Victoria Branch Account, Commonwealth Bank BSB: 063-019, Account number: 10040625 Please put your name in the subject line & email REFERENCE to:
treasurer@acfs-vic.org



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

PRESIDENT: Lev Lafayette
VICE PRESIDENT: Tower Liu
SECRETARY: Edith Wilson
TREASURER: Ian Parker
COMMITTEE: Lia Cross, Joe Montero, James Doery, Charlotte Hall

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 secretary@acfs-vic.org

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

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Family Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms) Given Names
Address P/code.....
Phone Email

VICTORIAN MEMBERSHIP RATES

Family \$40.00 Single \$30.00 Concession \$15.00
Life Membership Single \$300 Life Membership Household \$400
Corporate on Application

I/We support the Society's aims:Signature/s
I/We enclose the sum of \$.....for my/our membership subscription.

Pay directly into the ACFS Victoria Branch Account, Commonwealth Bank
BSB: 063-019, Account number: 10040625

Please put your name in the subject line & email REFERENCE to secretary@acfs-vic.org
You may send cheques to the Treasurer at the ACFS office address YOUR DONATION
WOULD BE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED

Promoting Friendship and Understanding Between the Australian and Chinese People