



June 2024

Australia-China Friendship Society

Victorian Branch (Inc).ABN 39 746 574 225

Newsletter

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President's Report

A President's Report sometimes comes with mixed emotions (百感交集) and this is one such example. On one hand, this edition's newsletter comes with a report of an excellent National Conference in the Northern Territory, along with the notification of the Global China Conference at the University of Melbourne. On the other hand, we sadly must inform our members of the passing of a founding member from 1951, Eunice Joyce Kim Oy Leong (née Chinn) life partner of another founding member, Maurice Kwok Cheng Leong, who also passed last year. To describe both as giants within the Chinese communities in Australia would be no exaggeration. As their son and former President of the ACFS (Victorian branch) Anthony Leong remarked at her service, Eunice was the diplomatic complement to the warrior spirit of Maurice. Both lived to the age of 103.

The ACFS (Victorian branch) will ensure that their contributions will be both respected and remembered. We will be hosting a memorial concert for both of these contributors to mutual understanding between the countries of Australia and China. Further, we are planning to establish a memorial award for Maurice and Eunice with a prize given to an annual essay on the topic of the best means to improve Australia-China relations. Our next newsletter will have further details on both of these events, but we can say with some certainty that the concert will also include an auction of some thirty years of Chinese memorabilia donated by Ken Smith, former Victorian State Liberal MLA and MLC. We are deeply grateful for Mr. Smith's generosity.

With requisite vigilance, the ACFS (Victorian branch) has also approached Federal MPs, including the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs concerning the suspension of Working Holiday Maker (WHM) visa (subclass 462) has been suspended for Chinese nationals. This usually occurs when a country has reached its quota. This has been applied in the case of Brazil, Switzerland, Thailand, and Turkey. However, China has been suspended despite only 406 WHM visas being issued, according to the Department of Home Affairs records. Unsurprisingly, this suspension is being perceived among the Chinese community and its friends as an unfair and unfriendly act that targets Chinese nationals. It is certainly radically reducing the opportunity for Chinese nationals to experience Australia and our way of life. This decision is in addition to recent Government policy to substantially reduce International Tertiary Student intake. It is this sort of action which leads to justified accusations of "anti-Chinese bias".

This said, the visit of Chinese Premier Li Qiang to Australia for a series of high-level talks has led to some very positive outcomes of relations between the two countries. Whilst there were important symbolic gestures of goodwill, such as the loan of two giant pandas to Adelaide Zoo, the stabilization of trade relationships, value at almost \$20 billion AUD of resumed trade, must surely be marked as a success. As too, is the Chinese offering of 15-day visa-free travel for Australians and a bilateral agreement of five year multiple-entry visas for tourism and business. Which are perhaps not receiving as much attention as it should. There was also discussion of better military communications.

All in all, one can say that the relationship between Australia and China has improved greatly in recent weeks. This, of course, is the sort of endeavor that Eunice and Maurice began with the founding of the ACFS in 1951 and what became a life's work. It is not unfair to suggest that their work contributed significantly to the improvements we are seeing today.

Lev Lafayette (President, ACFS Victorian Branch)

VALE EUNICE JOYCE KIM OY LEONG née Chinn: 22.22.1920 – 29.05.2024



*Eunice Joyce Kim Oy Leong née Chinn
24/11/1920 to 29/05/2024*

Eunice and Maurice Leong became Life Members of the ACFS in 2010, being founding members of the ACFS in 1951. They consistently engaged with the Chinese diaspora and always took a keen interest in Australia-China relations.

Eunice was born and raised in Melbourne with part of her childhood spent in Hamilton. Secondary schooling was at University High School. Her mother and siblings were talented singers and musicians with the piano being Eunice's choice of instruments.

At the outbreak of WWII, Eunice and her younger sister Valda wanted to enlist in the RAN especially as Valda was very keen to join the Navy. After passing the required examinations, to their utter disappointment, they were declined because they were "not of substantially European descent".

Undeterred, Eunice applied to the Army and was enthusiastically welcomed by the Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS), Eunice was a member of the volunteer group, the Australian

Women's Legion and had trained at RMIT as a Telegrapher. She served in the Army and travelled extensively throughout Australia training others in the use of telegraphy and communicating with coast-watchers in the Pacific. She was to recall her sadness and foreboding when one of the posts fell silent, meaning the contact had been compromised.

After the war she enrolled in Journalism at RMIT and was taught by Alan Marshall of "*I Can Jump Puddles*" fame. Not wishing to pursue journalism as a career, she "went back to school" and trained as teacher of French. She had to learn French from scratch as she not learned this previously. Gaining a BA and MA Honours from the University of Melbourne, she was appointed part-time tutor in French. When the Head of Department went to Monash University she followed him there in 1963 as a full-time tutor and later lecturer of French literature. During this time, she had several study trips to France which were to remain lifelong memories of a successful career.

After retiring, Eunice continued teaching privately, joining with her lifelong friend Dr Natasha Landau

tutoring French to school students. She also taught English as a second language to people of all ages, especially Chinese visiting Melbourne for business, or Consular staff. Shortly before her 98th year, she decided had become too onerous and ceased teaching.

Eunice and Maurice were a devoted pair, she ever the diplomat to his warrior. Eunice was a supporter of equal opportunity and pay for academic women at a time when gender pay-gaps were the norm, as well as being a strong advocate for racial equality, and fiercely pro-China. As a child she had walked over bodies in Shanghai streets, the poor frozen to death overnight, and she vowed to never return. It was only after the People's Republic of China was born and then, only after many years, was she convinced to return and the almost miraculous change made her a lifelong supporter.

Eunice never sought publicity or acknowledgement, working tirelessly behind the scenes for a better world and society. She was a strident opponent of those she thought were overbearing, discriminatory or unjust, and would never be silenced for fear of being criticised.

The ACFS is all the richer for having Eunice (and Maurice) as founders and contributors to the ongoing wellbeing of the Society, and deeply mourns their loss within a year of each other. We should always look to the future, regardless of how bleak at times it may look, but learn from the past struggles of those such as Eunice as exemplars of the way forward.



Founding, and life member of the Australia-China Friendship Society; a lifetime commitment to establishing and promoting friendship between the peoples of Australia and the People's Republic of China.



ACFS National Conference 2024

This year's conference began with a 'Welcome Reception' at Parliament House on The Esplanade in



Hon Ngaree Ak Kit MLA, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, NT

our most Northern City, Darwin, hosted by the Hon Ngaree Ak Kit MLA, Minister for Multicultural Affairs. Those living and working along The Esplanade have the "envious" pleasure of looking out on the blue waters that are the entrance to The Port of Darwin. The port is Australia's closest port to the lucrative markets of Southeast Asia and is often cited as the southern-most point of the Belt and Road Initiative. Speakers included the Minister and Jan Everett, our National President. This year's Bill Morrow Lecture was delivered by Professor Colin MacKerras (direct from Beijing) and was followed by The City of Darwin Welcome Dinner at the Double Tree Hilton Litchfield Rooms.

Day two was held at the ACFS NT Centre and master of ceremonies was Australian columnist Daryl Guppy. Introduction to the conference was provided by our National President. In her address Jan focused on two important issues. First, in the current environment, ACFS is more relevant than ever and secondly, we should be using all our available resources to promote ACFS. After a brief welcome from the Hon Minister, it was down to business.



Daryl Guppy at the National Conference

The first speaker of the day was Ms. DUAN Jun, Deputy Director-general, Deputy American and Oceanian Affairs, Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. Director Jun read a letter from her president focusing on common interest and cooperation. Cooperation between both sides and working together, as well as young people in the ACFS being the future of promoting cooperation. Our second speaker (out of order because others were late) was Yang Wa Ming. Yang noted our world is facing changes and cited COVID and political instability as two examples. It has been 10 years since President Xi Jing Ping's visit to Australia and while cooperation has continued to grow, it has not been without lumps and bumps.

Then back to our MC Daryl Guppy who suggested that we cannot just talk about governments, we need to focus on relationships through the efforts of individuals. A part of ACFS's role is to engage with people who are not part of ACFS, and to counter misinformation.

After a sumptuous morning tea, our next speaker was Mr. Ji Hong FU, Vice President of the Shanghai

People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. The association recently hosted a youth delegation to Shanghai. Vice President Fu noted that China and Australia have a very long history of friendship. The youth delegation focused on cooperation in trade, Shanghai being China's geographical hub and main economic centre. It also promoted youth interactions and exchanges.

While introducing the next speaker, our MC noted that many Chinese taxi drivers spoke English, but few Australian taxi drivers speak Chinese.



Ms. DUAN Jun



Mr. FU Ji Hong



Ms. ZHEN Zhu

The next speaker, ZHEN Zhu, representing the Qingdao People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. In October 2019, Qingdao and Darwin entered into a cooperative agreement. For those who don't know Qingdao, it is like Darwin, a very northern city and home to the famous Qing Tao beer. Darwin's recent international show featured Qingdao. Although the relationship is relatively new, both cities hope to build both having excellent port facilities.

Our first speaker after lunch was Hon Kon Vatskalis, Lord Mayor of Darwin. Kon, as did other speakers, emphasised the relationship between people. A strong advocate of "sister city relationships", he noted that Darwin's port is larger than that of Sydney and is the closest Australian port to world markets. Darwin's biggest – and sometimes controversial – export is cattle, while its sister city is Guang Zhou, which also boasts a very large port.

The Lord Mayor was followed by Dr Adam Lam of Charles Darwin University. His focus was on the exchange of intellectual ideas, and as he said, this is what universities do. CDU is working on building relationships with Chinese Universities. This would build on the very long history of Chinese peoples in the NT.

On to Peter Styles who, as well as wearing many other hats, is ACFS NT's patron. Peter suggested that Darwin is Australia's most multi-cultural city, noting that volunteers, such as ACFS people, add \$110bn to the economy. As an organisation we need to speak to the youth of Australia. It is these people-to-people relationships that will help to address issues at a political level. Peter also offered his encouragement for Darwin and other Australian cities to maintain relationships with sister cities.



Mr. Peter Styles

Back to Daryl, one of the issues we face is those in both Australia and the US who don't want Australians to learn more about China.

This undermines our ability to learn from these relationships and accelerates disengagement from China. We have a tendency to follow the US in attacking things Chinese. He said the powers-that-be

have little desire to improve Australia's understanding about China and this fosters fear and ignorance.

Ms. Amy Vatskalis, Director of Charles Darwin University Confucius Institute, then spoke on helping people to see things with Chinese eyes. CDU Confucius Institute does this through the development of Chinese language and culture programs.

Mr. Edwin Joseph JP, President of the Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory. The most important observation that Edwin made was that unlike other Australian cities where different ethnic groups tend to live together, Darwin's immigrants are spread throughout the community.

The next speaker was Lie Shang Guan (standing in for Ms. Felicity Person, Deputy Principal of Haileybury Rendall School Darwin). Haileybury schools are located in greater Melbourne, of course in Darwin and in Tianjin, China. The Haileybury program is tailored to suit each educational stage, building resilient and independent learners, with a strong work ethic and critical skills in decision-making, leadership and enterprise, preparing students for life on the global stage and with the drive to be active and contributing members of society.

Next up, Roland Chin AM, president of the Chung Wah Society NT. By 1888 Chinese immigrants out-numbered European immigrants. The Chung Wah Society promotes strong relationships between Darwin's Chinese community and other groups. The Society has a museum displaying Chinese history and artefacts. In addition, its members care for the adjacent temple. Damaged by cyclones in 1879 and 1937 and bombing raids in WW11, the temple was rebuilt in 1977 after being destroyed by Cyclone Tracy.

Our final guest for the day was Amy Zhao ACFS NT, together with young performers from the previous Shanghai Friendship Youth Camp. The magnificent performance was a musical demonstration of the Mandarin language.

At the conclusion of day two, we transferred by bus to the Chuang Wah Museum and Temple. As far as I could see, this has the only tiled roof in Darwin, with everything else appearing to be corrugated iron. Then, it was on to the Aquascene Fish Feeding Sanctuary and café. Day two concluded with a dinner at the Double Tree Hilton, Darwin City Ballroom. Following a speech by the Hon Mark Monaghan, Minister for Education, we enjoyed a performance of traditional dance by the adults and children of ACFS NT.

Day three was ACFS's annual general meeting the minutes of which will be posted at later date.

Ian Parker



Pretending China is a threat is based on a misplaced fear of its rise and a declining west

By Joe Montero



Western media is loath to say anything positive about China. Australia is no exception. China is presented as a threat to the nation's security. Just a week ago there was an allegation of a major Chinese spy network by security spooks, which we may suspect are eager to justify a big increase in the money handed over to them. No credible evidence was provided to back this, although the allegation was made public.

It comes as no surprise, coming at the end of a conga line of other baseless allegations which media and the political class are happy to endorse. We must ask why this has been happening.

One thing is certain. Australia is not surrounded by Chinese battle ships. Troops are not coming down to invade. The Chinese haven't bought up Australia. But Australia has joined the Five Eyes and AUKUS, providing land to be militarised by Washington, and indulging in joint military exercises in the South China Sea and elsewhere.

The truth is that Australia, the government and not the people, has put its chips on a declining empire. The problem with China is its economic and social successes. It doesn't take a genius to see a declining Washington and Brussels axis, suffering a declining economy and social division. Governments are becoming increasingly isolated from their populations. Australia is caught up in this.

In contrast, China has asserted its independence from and succeeded in mobilising its resources and people to create the fastest economic and social development in human history. This can't be denied. But it can be feared by those not wanting to lose their dominance. Unable to compete successfully by

economic means, and increasingly, diplomatic pressure, there is increasing resort to fearmongering and sabre rattling.

China leads in most fields of high-end technology. The reply to this has been accusations of technology theft. Why bother to steal when you are leading in the field of research? China's transport systems are unmatched. China now accounts for some 60 percent of global green energy production and is the manufacturing centre of the world. Its citizens now travel the world like the citizens of no other country, which is testament to how far living standards have risen.

These are the Chinese crimes. The objective of those who want to rail against China is to put a stop to these and other developments, and if possible, reverse them.

The rise of the BRICS alliance is another testament to the rise old China and the growing will of many nations to assert their sovereignty and willingness to cooperate. It is part of the growing unease with the global financial and trading system that becomes increasingly problematic with the Washington – Brussels decline, and the domestic needs to move forward towards greater prosperity and liveability.

Australia is faced by these same problems. Our choice is whether to stay with the sinking ship or tie our fortunes with the emerging future. China is our biggest trading partner. Even for those who have a different political bent, it makes far more sense to cultivate a good relationship with the people of that country.

Our current Labor government shows aspects of obedience to Washington and aspects of tilting slightly towards China. The Coalition, at least for the present, doubles down on its aggressive posture. The politics is testimony to the real situation of Australia. Some interests want all the way with the USA, and others want more trade and a better relationship with China. The second accords to the best interests of our nation, and we should encourage its blossoming at every opportunity. There is nothing to fear.

Global China Conference

About the conference

This conference seeks to bring together scholars, policy makers, and experts from diverse fields to exchange and share their experiences and research findings, with a particular emphasis on grounding Global China. What we mean by this is understanding the on-ground dynamics of Global China in specific places and making space for complex relations and a multiplicity of actors.

When: 8–10 December 2024

Where: The University of Melbourne

CCCS Conference 2024: Grounding Global China

China's presence is now felt in almost every aspect of the planet. From its commodities and culture to its population and politics, "Global China" is increasingly reshaping our world.

This conference will be held by the Centre for Contemporary Chinese Studies (CCCS), which plays a vital role in shaping an Australian approach to the study of contemporary China and serves as a significant source of research-based information on China, Chinese societies and Chinese economies in the 21st century.

Proudly sponsored by the Faculty of Arts at the University of Melbourne, the 2024 CCCS Conference will provide a welcoming and engaging platform for scholars to share, discuss, and debate the dynamics of “Global China”. We particularly welcome PhD students and early career academics to join the discussion.

We invite original papers on “Global China” broadly defined, as well as other issues related to China, including but not limited to:

Belt and Road Initiative local-level impacts
The making of Chinese expertise
Global China and extractive industries
Telling Global China stories
Ecological civilization goes global
South-South development cooperation
Chinese NGO and civil society engagements
Transnational entrepreneurship
Transnational Chinese diaspora
Transnationalism from below
Digital transnationalism
Chinese culture and linguistic impacts overseas

Submissions for the Global China Conference are due 30 June 2024. You only need to submit your proposed title, abstract (200 words max), and a brief biography.

We invite scholars who are interested in participating in the conference to submit a proposed title, abstract (up to 200 words), and brief biography on or before 30 June 2024. We will let you know the outcome of your submission by 30 July 2024.

If you're interested in presenting on a panel, forming a workshop, or hosting, please contact us with the topic you're interested in.

<https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/centre-for-contemporary-chinese-studies/cccs-global-china-conference#contact>

More information at:

<https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/centre-for-contemporary-chinese-studies/cccs-global-china-conference>

Ticket types and prices

Presenter (non-grad student) Early Bird: \$230 AUD

Presenter (graduate student) Early Bird: \$120 AUD

Observer (one day): \$30 AUD

Observer (two days): \$50 AUD

Tickets at:

<https://unimelb.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=7ceb1fbd86771f74a3dd720a&id=2cb5636d5f&e=6175adaac6>

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

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

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VICTORIAN MEMBERSHIP RATES

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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

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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
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Promoting Friendship and Understanding Between the Australian and Chinese People