

Australia China Friendship Society
ACT Branch Inc



澳中友好协会

PO Box 530, Civic Sq, ACT 2608

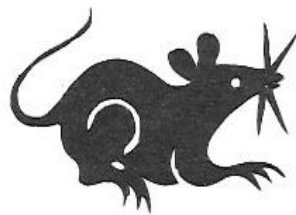
ABN: 51 554 404 306
acfsact@gmail.com
www.acfs.org.au

Bulletin

2022/12 December 2022

Coming events

Christmas dinner	15 December
Lunar New Year Celebration in Dickson	21 January
Chinese New Year dinner	23 January
Lantern-making workshop	29 January
Lantern Festival	4 February



Committee

President	Carol Keil	6247 8231 cjkeil@proforte.com.au
Secretary	Tanja Naeher	6259 5539
Treasurer	Neil Birch	6287 4602
Bulletin editor	Jean Norman	0405 617 222 jjnorman46@grapevine.com.au
Committee members	John Wong	6294 0068
	Alex Olah	0490 660 738
	Amanda Andrews	0452 323 520
	Corinne Zhang	

Promoting friendship and understanding between the Australian and Chinese people

Christmas dinner

The Christmas dinner for members and friends on Thursday 15 December will be at Jimmy's Kitchen in Dickson at 7.00pm. A banquet has been arranged at a cost of \$30 per person. Please book by emailing acfsact@gmail.com by 8 December.

~~~~~

## Chinese New Year dinner

Members and friends are invited to a dinner to celebrate Chinese New Year, which will be held at the China Tea Club in North Lyneham on Monday 23 January at 7.00pm. A banquet at a cost of \$30 per person will be arranged. Please book by emailing [acfsevent@gmail.com](mailto:acfsevent@gmail.com) by 19 January.

~~~~~

Lantern Festival and Lantern-making workshop

After all the disruption of the past two years, the Lantern-making Workshop and the Lantern Festival are returning in January and February. Please come, and bring friends, children and grandchildren to make these the joyous occasions they have been in the past.

The **Lantern-making workshop** will be held on Sunday 29 January from 1.00 to 4.00pm in the Community Hall at Cook. All materials provided, gold coin donation, bookings to acfsevent@gmail.com by 27 January. If you would like to come and help, please do!

The **Lantern Festival** for 2022 will be held on Saturday 4 February in the Beijing Garden, on the lake. This is our major event for the year and has proved very popular.

Help with setting up and lantern sales

We will be needing help with the setting up of the park for the festival. There are lanterns and lights to hang, tables to set up, lanterns to be prepared. We will begin at about 1.00pm with a view to having everything done by 5.30 or so.

There is also a great need for help with sales of lanterns. Tasks include handing out lanterns with LED lights and sticks, and taking payments. There is always a huge rush just before the lantern parade begins, so at least six people would be good. The more we have the more we can organise shifts so some volunteers can see some of the performances.

~~~~~

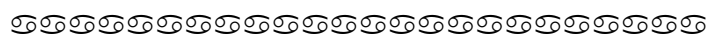
## Fast facts from the *Beijing Review*, December 2022

- The Knife Fish was once a much sought-after delicacy and overfished species. Thanks to a fishing ban the number of Knife Fish in the Yangtse River is increasing steadily since 2019 when a ten-year fishing ban to protect the species started. The fish has also been found in areas it had not been seen for over a decade.
- On 23 November a freight train fully loaded with home appliance products left Shaannxi for Europe. It was the 4,000<sup>th</sup> China-Europe freight train to depart from Shaannxi in 2022.
- Tibet now has its first airborne rescue team for emergence responses. The team has 2 helicopters and 20 people and is based in Nyingchi, south east Tibet. It was set up by the city's emergency management organisation and its forest fire brigade. It will be responsible for rescue and relief work after accidents and natural disasters.
- The world's largest all-terrain crane completed its first lift last month. It lifted 171 tons to a height of 160 metres at an onshore wind power project in Shandong Province.

**Thanks to Neil Birch for compiling these.**

## Lunar New Year Celebration in Dickson

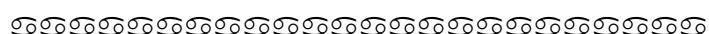
The ACT City Renewal Authority is arranging an afternoon/evening of celebrations for Lunar New Year on 21 January in Woolley st Dickson. They are keen for strong community support by all Asian communities who celebrate Lunar New Year. We have expressed interest in having a stall to sell lanterns and Chinese decorations but at this stage we do not know the cost or whether our application will be accepted.



## Talk by Kevin Magee

Former Ambassador Kevin Magee gave a talk to ACFS on 23 November 2022. He described highlights of his career with DFAT, which included postings to Beijing, Guangzhou, Taipei, Singapore, Moscow and Riyadh. We all found Mr Magee's talk entertaining and informative. He is now at the ANU's China in the World Centre and it was interesting to hear his perspective on the current state of Australia-China relations.

Thanks to Alex Olah for organising this event.



## Committee News – November 2022 meeting

Your committee's November meeting was held at the 'Beijing House' Restaurant in Hawker at the end of the month.

John confirmed further quotes for our IT purchases under the Technology grant we received, and we will now purchase the items.

The November event – a talk by Kevin Magee – was reviewed and all who attended commented on how interesting the talk was and that it was a shame not more people had participated. Brian Keil was thanked by the committee for 'coming to the rescue' – dashing home to pick up a laptop to avert a technological crisis!

The lack of participation at the talk and at the ANU Classical Music Ensemble Concert early October, was further discussed – our great publicity officer, Alex, was keen for input to how we could better target the advertising – if you have any ideas, please email them to the society.

Both the big school events – the School Awards and the Panda Competition were debriefed – both were a success, with many happy awardees at both and excited

supporters of the awardees. It was valued by all that the events could be 'live' following the two previous years where Covid had limited public events. A huge thanks to all who contributed to the success of the events – particularly our President, Carol Keil, who went beyond and above, committing many many hours to ensuring their success. Thoughts are already going to the Panda Competition theme for 2023.

We have now organised the venue and menu for our Christmas dinner on 15 December 2022 and hope to see as many of you as possible. The venue is Jimmy's Kitchen in Dickson.

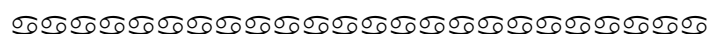
Before the end of the meeting, we touched on a number of the 2023 events – the Lantern Festival on 4 February, including the workshop on 29 January – we'll be contacting performance groups prior to early December 2022.

We also set a date and venue for our Chinese New Year dinner on 23 January 2022 and considered whether we might host a stall at the Lunar New Year celebration on 21 January in Dickson – could be useful for publicity however, logistics seem somewhat tricky.

At the end of a full agenda, we enjoyed a delicious meal – even the restaurant's signature dish – Peking Duck – can be highly recommended, but bear in mind, they must be pre-ordered.

We look forward to seeing you at the Christmas dinner!

Your Secretary, Tanja



## **Senator the Hon Penny Wong**

### **Speech to the National Foundation for Australia–China Relations dinner commemorating the 50th anniversary of Australia-China diplomatic relations, 13 November 2022**

I've just come from the Bowman Hall in Blacktown, where I gave the Whitlam Oration, fifty years today since Gough Whitlam gave his own oration there to launch his 1972 "It's Time" campaign. That anniversary is of course linked to the one we mark tonight, because it was Gough Whitlam who began modernising Australia, including turning our outlook toward the region.

Helping deliver independence for Papua New Guinea, improving ties with India and Indonesia, transforming our relationship with Japan, and, most famously, establishing diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. While it was a bold move at the time, Gough's assessment at the time that "close cooperation between our two peoples is both natural and beneficial" has been proven correct. And one of the things that has made that possible has been unity of purpose and values across the Australian parliament.

The early 1970s, for those of us too young to remember, was a time of great change and uncertainty. A time of entrenched geopolitical competition and stark divisions. It was essential then for nations to work together to ensure competition did not descend into conflict and chaos. The world found a path through.

And since then, as the Prime Minister has noted, China has grown to become one of the world's largest economies, and Australia's largest trading partner. That trade, and those links, accelerating from fifty years ago, have delivered benefit to both countries. Hundreds of millions of people today do not live in poverty as a consequence of China's development – a unique and historic achievement.

Nevertheless, the past fifty years have had their challenges. It is in the interests of Australia, China and our region for the relationship to continue to be stabilised. We aim for a relationship of mutual respect and mutual benefit. Our approach will be calm and consistent. We want to engage in our national interest. We are ready to cooperate where we can and we are prepared to disagree where we must. We will continue to speak out as necessary on the issues that matter to Australians and take decisions in line with Australia's national interests.

Just as China does.

We will maintain our bipartisan One China policy, deepening engagement with the People's Republic of China and our unofficial relationship with Taiwan, focused on economic and people-to-people ties. As an open, trading, nation, Australia has welcomed foreign investment, including from China, while applying a national interest test. We know foreign investment will continue to contribute to Australia's growth and Australian jobs.

The people of both of our countries – and our region – have prospered thanks to the certainty, equity, and stability that rules-based trade provides. We believe the removal of impediments to Australian exports and the full resumption of our bilateral trade would greatly benefit both Australia and China.

Yet there is much to our relationship beyond trade and investment. The long-standing friendships that have been established between the peoples of our two countries. Prime Minister Whitlam knew this – after leaving office, he served as Chair of the Australia-China Council from 1986 to 1991. That Council has been succeeded by the National Foundation for Australia-China Relations – our hosts this evening, and I thank you – Peter Cai and Pru Bennett – for putting on this important event. These friendships are also a feature in the Australia China Stories book the Prime Minister spoke of, and which we are launching tonight. These contributions, whether they be in science, culture, academia, politics, business, or sport, have enriched Australia as a country, making us a better and stronger nation. I thank all of you.

These stories also reflect the rich diversity of modern Australia. A nation whose people share common ground with so many of the world's peoples, where half our people were born overseas or have a parent born overseas – including me. Both of our countries have grown immensely in the past fifty years. As much as today is an opportunity to reflect, it is also an opportunity to look to the future.

Fifty years on, we find ourselves – once again – facing dire threats, including Russia's illegal, immoral and unjustified invasion of Ukraine, a global food and fuel crisis, supply chain shocks, and climate change. Australia will continue to work with our partners to build a region that is peaceful, stable and prosperous, and where sovereignty is respected. We will look for mutual opportunities to cooperate with China, including in clean energy transition and other areas.

The National Foundation will play a vital role building bilateral links across community, business, education, health and science, climate change, and culture and the arts. Growing our bilateral relationship need not be in conflict with upholding our national interest, if we both navigate our differences wisely. To this end, we welcome renewed dialogue between our countries and look forward to it continuing.

Even when we have differences, by working together, and with mutual respect, we can help ensure our people, those of the countries in our region, and the wider world will enjoy the stability, peace, and prosperity we have been privileged to share over the past fifty years.

**Source:** <https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/penny-wong/speech/speech-nfacr-dinner-commemorating-50th-anniversary-australia-china-diplomatic-relations>

# Getting the Australia-China Relationship back on track

by Stephen FitzGerald

John Menadue's Public Policy Journal Pearls and Irritations

Link: <https://johnmenadue.com/getting-the-australia-china-relationship-back-on-track/>

While we should not yet abandon hope for a more realistic, nuanced and sophisticated China policy under the Labor government, Prime Minister Albanese's initial statements from Tokyo in response to an overture from PRC Prime Minister Li Keqiang are not encouraging.

Instead of waiting to respond diplomatically and privately to Li, he picked up the megaphone and spoke defiantly of Australian values in the way Morrison used to, uncalled for by the tone and content of Li's conciliatory message and running up the trademark flag of the Morrison/Dutton duo, which they flew in chest-thumping self-aggrandisement and justification of their 'being out in front' of the world with their anti-China stand. Not a good first message from the new government. If you believe in the uses of diplomacy, that is.

Prime Minister Li's message is not the first indication of a conciliatory preparedness on China's part. When the new PRC Ambassador to Australia, Xiao Qian, arrived in January this year, he immediately set about seeking a reset of the relationship. And even before that, high-ranking PRC officials had been indicating privately and often through back channels, that China was ready to reset relations. And how to do this? In subsequent statements Ambassador Xiao has said 'China is willing to work with Australia to meet each other halfway'. To Scott Morrison, meeting halfway meant we'd have to compromise our principles and values, although how he worked that out without listening to what Ambassador Xiao Qian had to say is hard to know, given that he refused to receive the Ambassador, claiming, astonishingly, that this would be a sign of weakness. Labor in office has nothing to fear from responding positively to the PRC's message, because it no longer needs to keep looking over its shoulder as it did in opposition.

It would be a helpful start if it were first to interrogate its own position that the dive in relations is solely because China recently and under President Xi Jinping has changed. This is a loose catch-all formulation, mostly unexplained, not in all respects accurate, and not a sound basis for development of an effective China policy. Much of the change attributed to President Xi, for example, began with his predecessor Hu Jintao, particularly a more assertive stance in the South China Sea. And Hu stepped down in 2012! And yet, after that time we entered into a variety of high-level endorsements of the relationship, including an agreement for a strategic partnership with China in 2014, a China-Australia Free Trade Agreement in 2015, participation in the China-initiated Asian Infrastructure Bank, and praise for the subsequently-reviled PRC Belt and Road initiative for economic cooperation.

Labor needs a critical re-examination of its proposition about China's change and of Australia's own contribution to causing and sustaining the current freeze. If Australia's QUAD partners – the United States, Japan and India – as well as South Korea, Singapore, New Zealand (which actually upgraded its FTA with China in April 2022 – an event which went unreported in the Australian media), and a dozen other countries in our region see maintaining a relationship with China as serving their national interests, we have to ask 'why not us?' It is demonstrably in our interests that we have a working relationship with China as these countries do and set about securing that now.

How, then, can the Labor government respond to the PRC initiative? What can we offer that would meet the PRC half way without compromising on matters that are of concern to us? The answer lies in initially working around the most difficult issues rather than putting them up front as a precondition, or excuse, and finding common ground on others, a practice not exactly unknown in international relations.

As Henry Kissinger argued recently on the subject of Taiwan, in a statement to the World Economic Forum: "Taiwan cannot be the core of negotiations between China and the United States....For the core of these negotiations, it is important that the United States and China discuss principles that affect the adversarial relationship, and that permit at least some scope for cooperative efforts." (my italics).

Australia under a Labor government must now return to diplomacy, talking with the PRC, for which it is clearly ready, and putting away the megaphone of gratuitous criticism, insult and condemnation which were the hallmarks of Morrison's China policy. If we can do this, there will be many issues on which we can have constructive engagement.

An obvious issue for us is climate. PM Albanese has flagged working together with others for more effective international cooperation. To include China in this is an opportunity and to exclude it would be self-defeating. And through climate, we can engage constructively with China in the South Pacific, abandoning Morrison's self-appointed role as pater familias and ceasing to cast our relations with those countries in a framework of 'standing up to China'.

A sore point for China has been the often sudden and arbitrary prevention of PRC-based investments in Australia, frequently not by the FIRB but through the intervention of the Treasurer. We don't have to change these decisions but we can ameliorate the negative impact through direct and frank and forthright discussion with the PRC government.

Another sore point, for both sides we must remember, is the imposition of anti-dumping measures, and while this is a tough one, diplomats are trained and skilled in being able to handle such issues, where soldiers and intelligence officers are not. Let's go back to diplomacy and work through these measures, and where possible address the domestic pressures that have brought them about.

Positive engagement with China in regional organisations is another opportunity, notably in the case of RCEP, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

There are countless other matters on which we can engage with China, from health including Corona and the role of the WTO, and science and technology and university collaboration, to trade, and also cultural exchange, an important connection when political engagement fails. Through all of these we can resume the habit of dialogue, which is fundamental.

And in conclusion, a Labor government must repudiate forthwith all policy, statements and actions which lent credence, encouragement and support to the scapegoating and demonising of Chinese Australians under the Morrison government. That would not only have a positive effect on the relationship, it is a right thing to do for the good of our society.

*Stephen FitzGerald AO is a Board Member of China Matters, Distinguished Fellow of the Whitlam Institute, Associate Professor at the Australia China Institute for Arts and Culture at WSU, and Vice-President of the Museum of Chinese Australians. He was the first Ambassador of Australia to the PRC.*



# Letter from Zhanjiang – Roger Arnold

## A home on wheels

Ten years ago, RVs (motorhomes, campervans, caravans) of any description were a very rare sight here in China. Not surprisingly, one day when a motorhome type RV appeared in the parking lot of a hotel out front of the institute where I worked, there was much curiosity, discussion and



speculation among my colleagues and I. After work a few of us even ventured to knock on the door to see if anyone was inside; but to our disappointment there was no answer, leaving us to wonder as to their travels and roads ahead. The next day that RV vanished, leaving us to speculate about its' driver and inhabitants cum passengers, and their journeys.

That RV encounter out front of my workplace wasn't the only one back then. But, as my RV sightings here in China were few and far between back then, on the rare occasion when I did see one, I would share a report of my glimpses (and sometimes even a snapshot) with a Canadian friend cum RV enthusiast (and owner of one back home in Canada) who also lives in Zhanjiang. Some evenings over wine and local Cantonese cuisine when we'd meet together, we would speculate and dream of the potential joys and freedom of being able to explore China's spectacular mountains and remote, picturesque western regions in RVs.

Fast forward to present day China, RVs and caravans have become increasingly common sights around our part of the country, particularly during winter months for reasons explained below. And it seems, much like in Australia, the adoption and love affair with RVs seems to be dominated by retired folks.

For some retired Chinese, whose homes are in northern China, an RV provides the freedom to escape the serious cold and sub-zero weeks that their hometowns experience during winter months. They use their RVs to retreat from short days, ice, snow and frost of northern China for warm days and sunshine of the more southern provinces like Guangdong, Guangxi and Hainan. This seasonal migration in RVs echoes the lifestyle of some grey nomads in Australia who escape to more salubrious climes of northern Australia during southern winters, and also the lifestyles of 'snowbirds' in the USA (for an explanation of USA's snowbirds see <https://koa.com/blog/snowbird-basics/>).

Such adoption of RV based migratory lifestyles by increasing numbers of Chinese was particularly striking last winter in Zhanjiang. Whilst out riding my bike early in the mornings through some of the nearby parks I would encounter scores of RVs and their inhabitants parked up in some of the better situated car parks. And, just like in campgrounds in Australia, comradery and joviality was abundantly evident among these RV inhabitants – once when I stopped to sneak a photo I was welcomed by smiles and even invited to join them to chat and drink tea.



These scenes I observed in Zhanjiang have apparently become increasingly common across many parts of China over recent years. And, the market for new RVs is reported to be booming amid a growing emergence of a motorhome culture and expanding number of campsites and dedicated facilities at scenic spots.

I've read that in late 2020 there were around 130,000 RVs in China, and in 2021 the number of new RVs sold was around 20,000, apparently a year-on-year increase in sales of over 40%. But these are small numbers compared to the potential, with some speculating that the total number of RVs on the road in China could reach 400,000 by 2030.



Interestingly, this surging interest in RVs in China is not the exclusive domain of the older generations. Short holidays and touring in RVs has also been gaining popularity among younger Chinese. They see it as way to travel with freedom and flexibility, as it means they don't need to worry about booking hotels, racing to meet set departure times, or a need to pack-up hurriedly to meet fixed hotel checkout times.

Aside from adoption of RVs in China for leisure and tourism, in the course of my work in plantation forestry I've also encountered a rising interest and use of RVs for commercial/work applications. On several occasions over the past couple of years, my company has hired RVs to provide infield (or in-forest) accommodation for some of our harvesting operators – accommodation which has proved very popular with these guys as they've been impressed by their comfort and facilities whilst saving some of them long commutes between hotels and their plantation workplaces. More recently, one of our savvy field service contractors even turned up with a new, well-equipped RV that they're now using as a very



comfortable field office cum 'mission control' for their drone operations (for aerial delivery of pesticides and fertilisers to our plantations).

However, one current challenge for many recreational RV travellers in China is the availability of dedicated RV campsites and facilities. In Zhanjiang and Beihai, the places I've seen them congregating at in winter are just car parks of public parklands, with quieter locations and having toilet facilities in close proximity. As far as I know, there are no official RV parks or dedicated campgrounds in the vicinity of either of these cities.



This situation is reflected in campground numbers across in China – in 2021 the whole country had just roughly 1,400 RV campgrounds. By comparison, Australia has around 2,400 caravan parks (and 1000s more recognised bush campgrounds frequented by many RV users). Meanwhile, the USA has over 14,000 formal RV parks. But the good news for Chinese RV enthusiasts is that the numbers of such campgrounds in China are rising rapidly, thanks in part to the governments recognition of the industry's potential. Indeed, the country's 14<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan (2021-25) includes clear support for development of the tourism sector with specific mention of creating an overall RV-centric tourism industrial chain, including new campsites and tourist centres.

As for my Canadian friend and I, we're really excited by both this surge in interest and increasing availability of RVs of all sorts here in China. With the development of more facilities and RV suited campgrounds across the country, we'll soon be able to stop dreaming and turn to planning some actual RV sojourns. For us, it would be absolutely grand to be able to take to the road in RVs to roam freely through China's southwestern region such as the spectacular mountains of western Yunnan and Sichuan provinces, as well as perhaps to the roof of the world in the Tibet Autonomous Region.



## Australia China Friendship Society ACT Branch — membership application form

Annual subscriptions are due on 1 January and are current until 31 December of the same year. The monthly Bulletin is included in the subscription and is distributed by email.

Subscription rates, payable to **the Treasurer, PO Box 530, Civic Square ACT 2608** are:

Single \$20 Family \$35 Centrelink Concession Holder: Individual \$15 and Family \$25

Name(s).....

Address.....

..... Postcode .....

Email.....

Phone (home) ..... (work) ..... Mobile .....

Renewal ☐ New Member ☐

### **Direct Credit Details:**

Beyond Bank

**BSB:** 325-185

**A/C No.** 03411481

**A/C Name:** ACFS ACT  
Branch Inc

**Ref:** Your name



---

**Australia China Friendship Society**  
**PO Box 530**  
**CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608 AUSTRALIA**

ACT Branch Bulletin