

Australia China Friendship Society ACT Branch Inc



澳中友好协会

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President's report for 2022

This year marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Australia and China. To mark this anniversary we participated in a webinar with the Beijing Peoples Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries to celebrate the 20+ years we have been donating funds to support students from the Labagoumen area. A number of other commemorative events were held in Canberra during the year where I was invited and attended to represent the Society.

Our membership has remained steady. We have had several new members join but more older members are not renewing. Lynn Parry, a former committee member, sadly passed away. The memorial service for Jeff Culnane (a former president and life member) was finally held in July and I delivered one of the eulogies.

Whilst 2022 saw restrictions due to the corona virus being eased it still resulted in our main event, the Lantern Festival, being cancelled at very short notice and the deferral of some of our activities until later than usual.

Our functions during the year included a talk by Kevin Magee from the Centre on China in the World, two films at the Jamison Southern Cross Club: 'Someone to Talk To' and 'True Love' which was set in Xinjiang. The Embassy very generously paid for our dinner before viewing True Love. Members were invited to the Opening night of the Chinese film Festival in

September and entry to all the films during the following week was free. The concert by the ANU Chinese Classical Music Ensemble was again held, after an absence of 2 years, with the Society selling tickets, providing afternoon tea and helping with publicity. We share the profits with the Ensemble and they are used to help fund our Project Hope students. The attendance was disappointing and we hope to advertise more widely this year.

Our Chinese New Year and Christmas dinners and June yum cha lunch were all well attended. Our planned heritage walk in Queanbeyan was deferred again due to inclement weather.

We were successful in our application for a Technology Upgrade Grant and have purchased a new projector plus 2 microphones and are hoping to obtain a variation to the grant to use the remaining funds to replace our PA system.

We have finally moved to electronic signatures for payment of bills and have dispensed with writing cheques. The Civic Square post office, which we had used for over 40 years, closed with very little notice and we are yet to decide on our new mailing address.

The Panda competition is a very successful means of promoting Chinese culture. The Chinese language teachers are strong supporters and the topic this year was 'Chinese Personal Accessories'. 6 schools provided hundreds of entries and we awarded 63 prizes. Thanks go to Roger Arnold for generously donating many of the prizes. At very short notice we were able to hold the presentation ceremony at the Embassy with Ambassador Xiao attending and presenting prizes. It was a most heart-warming event and the parents, teachers and students were all impressed and happy.

This year, for the first time the venue for the ceremony for winners of Awards for the best and most improved students of mandarin was the China in the World Centre. The ceremony was preceded by a short lion dance

performance and Minister Song presented the awards. Most of the parents and students had not been to the CIW before and it was an excellent opportunity to promote the Centre and an awareness of China.

We continue to support 10 Project Hope students: 8 girls and 2 boys with 3 girls and 1 boy at Labagoumen primary school and 6 students at other primary and high schools. The majority of the funds to support these students again came from very generous donations from members and their families.

After a long-drawn out process we now have the ability to donate funds to the Society via recycling bottles and cans at RETURN-IT depots. Instructions were in the last newsletter and I hope members take advantage of the opportunity.

Our friendship tree in the Beijing Garden continues to flourish.

The newsletter, continues to be an important means of communication with our members. Thanks go to Jean, who is the editor, to Neil who provides Fast Facts and to Roger Arnold for his most interesting contributions on living in China.

Our website which helps us to maintain our profile is now managed by Corinne with help, when needed, from Siew-Gim McGregor and our face-book page is also looked after by Corinne.

We have enjoyed close contact with and received considerable support from the Chinese Embassy and in particular the Cultural Office. We greatly appreciated the prizes for the panda competition, gifts for the mandarin students, prizes for the lantern Festival and the polo shirts at our Christmas dinner. We value and appreciate the Embassy's support and extend our sincere thanks and look forward to continuing our very close relationship.

The Society could not function without its committee each of whom has a role to play. We all worked together very harmoniously and I would like to thank all the members for their support and hard work. I would also like to thank the Society members who have helped at our events during the year.

For a small association I think our aims of promoting friendship between our two countries were well fulfilled.

Carol Keil

President

16 March 2023