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June 2025 Newsletter

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The ALMA committee needs you

Each year, the Association for Learning Mandarin in Australia (ALMA) is overseen by a committee made up of people interested in the promotion of the Mandarin language, many of whom are parents of children currently or previously attending the Chinese Australian Early Childhood Centre (CAECC). ALMA is the licensee for the CAECC, so without the ALMA committee, the CAECC would be unable to continue operations.

We are always looking for new members to support the important work of the committee, and we welcome new members at any time. ALMA will also be holding its Annual General Meeting in October 2025 and forming a new committee for 2025-26.

Even if you are unable to join the committee, we are also looking for people who can support ALMA and CAECC by volunteering their expertise in areas such as:

- Corporate governance;
- Business operations;
- Risk and assurance;
- Information technology; and
- Communications.

Please consider joining the committee or volunteering in some other way. Please contact canberraalma@gmail.com for further information.

Note from the ALMA President

It is a very significant time of change and transition for our community. We're saying farewell to some wonderful people who have given so much to our organisation, whilst welcoming new leadership that will guide us into the future.

Farewell to Annette Chemin

After six years as Centre Director, Annette Chemin will retire at the end of June. Annette's dedication to the Chinese Australian Early Childhood Centre has been extraordinary. Under her leadership, the centre has dramatically improved utilisation rates, and fostered a culture of excellent care and bilingual education. She has guided us through challenges including the pandemic, helped us achieve consistently high ratings against the National Quality Standards, and created an environment where the children thrive.

Annette's commitment to providing quality early childhood education whilst nurturing each child's connection to Mandarin language and culture has been unwavering. Her warmth, professionalism and genuine care for every child and family at the centre will be deeply missed.

We wish Annette all the very best for her well-deserved retirement. Thank you, Annette, for everything you've given to the centre and the community.

Welcome to Juliana

We're delighted to welcome Juliana as our new Centre Director. Having worked alongside Annette during the handover period, Juliana will bring fresh energy and ideas whilst maintaining the high standards of the centre. Her passion for early childhood education and commitment to bilingual learning means the centre is in very safe hands. We look forward to working with Juliana as she leads the centre into its next chapter.

Farewell to Adelina Tan

I also want to pay tribute to our previous president, Adelina Tan, who has recently stepped down from the role. Adelina has been a driving force within ALMA for years, serving on the committee before taking on the presidency for the past 18 months.

Note from the ALMA President (continued)

Adelina's leadership during this time has been remarkable - from navigating the complexities of centre management, improving the policy framework to dramatically improving the centre's financial position.

Adelina's tireless work ethic, strategic thinking and genuine passion for promoting Mandarin education have strengthened ALMA immeasurably. She has always put the needs of the children and families first, working countless hours behind the scenes to ensure the centre and the organisation continues to thrive.

I have big shoes to fill in taking on this role. Adelina's contribution to our community cannot be overstated, and we are all deeply grateful for everything she has given to ALMA. While she steps back from the presidency, I know she remains committed to our mission and we're fortunate to have her continued involvement in the community.

Looking Forward

These transitions mark an exciting new phase for ALMA. We look forward to continuing the excellent care the centre provides under Juliana's leadership. Beyond the centre, we're committed to our broader community outreach through programs like our weekly Mandarin radio show on 2XX and upcoming cultural events. The partnership between the management committee and the centre remains strong, and together we'll keep working towards our shared goal of providing excellent bilingual education for Canberra's children.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support ALMA through volunteering, participation in events, and simply being part of our vibrant community. As always, we welcome anyone interested in volunteering to get in touch.

If you are interested in joining the ALMA Committee, please email canberraalma@gmail.com, as we warmly welcome any new members.

Matthew



Meet the new CAECC Director Juliana Teaurima

All about Me

I was born in the Cook Islands and moved to Australia in 1992 with my husband and two children. I had my third child in Canberra Australia, and while he was still young, I met some wonderful families in the community. This is where I started working with young children. I am fluent in Cook Island Māori and English.

My career started working as a nanny to two beautiful children who soon became an extension of my family. When the opportunity presented itself to work in one of the early childhood centres on the ANU Campus, I went for it. While working in the centre, it ignited my thirst to learn more and study towards CERT III, Cert IV and Diploma in Early Education. I continued my study and with the knowledge gained I then put theory into practice. In 2018 I commenced my Bachelor's in Teaching at Charles Sturt University, graduating in 2020.

I strongly believe that “Early Education” guides a child’s learning in a positive way and sets children up for success at an early age. I am a strong advocate for children and view them as capable and involved learners. I believe that supporting a child’s development should be a collaborative partnership between the family, community, the child and their educators.

I have had the privilege of working in organisations with strong mentors and leaders. I have worked in the Belconnen Early Childhood Centre as a centre director, and Northside Community Services in various positions and in 2016 took on the position of centre director. With my varying experiences in the workplace, it has taught me to be very flexible, adaptable and approachable towards each child, families, educators and the community.

I am excited to be working in the Chinese Australian Early Childhood Centre as the centre director. I share with the educators the vision of giving our children the best start in life. I have respect for the culture and the language that is being encouraged, spoken and taught to children; this is another way of valuing children’s voices, culture, identity and strengthening their ties/connections of who they are and their cultures.

Note from the CAECC Director Centre Updates.

Hi all

“Kia Orana” and Welcome to the June newsletter from CAECC. Since starting at the Centre on the 7th of April 2025 I have seen a lot happening, building connections with everyone and the community, observing with children’s learning, the afternoon tea get together, incursions and excursions plus more. Our great team of educators are calm and professional in their dealing with our beautiful children and families. I spent time in the Infants and Toddler room observing and participating in the music program (Magic Moo). It was great witnessing children involved, happy, learning and sometimes trying to take over from the teachers.

In the preschool room I observed children busy in their spaces, creating, conversing with each other and challenging their peers and their teachers, which I think is great. Children are curious and eager to learn about the world they live in, and I understand the importance of children being included in finding out.

Preschool excursion

The Preschool children had an excursion on 14 June 2025 to Birrigai Outdoor School, which gave them an understanding of the First Nations Culture, also experiences of engaging in some of the activities they had prepared for the children. We were warmly welcomed with our centre name displayed on our arrival. The children, families and the educators enjoyed the excursion and learned so much about the first nations culture. If you have access to “Story Park”, you can read more about the excursion at Birrigai in there.

Photos

We are grateful to Julian Lumb who took all the children’s photos. The children were eager participants in the photo shoot, while our educators supported the children and Julian.

Note from the CAECC Director (continued)

Students

We are excited to be hosting students for Early Childhood Education and Care work experiences. We had two of these students undertake their practical experiences with us in May. Norah our educational leader was busy guiding the educators with support from the team, and the children enjoyed having extra helpers.

Utilisation

The Centre is now fully occupied except for Wednesday in the Preschool room. We are aware that there are families looking for spaces to put their children in care. We also have families on the waiting list ready to put their children in care once a space becomes available. I will continue to monitor this to ensure that when space becomes available it is given to families on the waiting list.

Outgoing Director

I am grateful to have met Annette, spending some quality time with her before her retirement. I wish her all the best.

Juliana



ALMA Activities

Mandarin Community Tutoring Project

This free project coordinated by ALMA is open to all adults who are currently learning Chinese or have learned the language in the past and would like to keep up their skills. We introduce learners to fluent speakers of Chinese who have volunteered to share their knowledge of Chinese language and culture. Tutor and learner then make their own arrangements to meet, usually one-on-one, once a week, at a time and place to suit both sides.

For more information about the project and how to get involved, as either a tutor or a learner, visit the Mandarin Community Tutoring page on the ALMA website <https://www.learningmandarincanberra.org/> or email us at canberraalma@gmail.com

Mandarin radio program on Community Radio 2XX

I have recently joined the Mandarin radio program as a volunteer presenter.

The program is designed with young families and Chinese language learners in mind. Together with other volunteers including Mandy, Xiao Hui and Nancy we often featured the story reading and Chinese language song-singing contributed by students from Mawson Primary School. Well done to our fellow students and we are grateful for the support from parents.

We also had an opportunity to read poems and stories commemorating Chinese cultural events such as Qing Ming and Duan Wu. We hope by engaging the Chinese traditional literature through the radio program we will help to promote cultural identity, foster intercultural understanding and more importantly, preserve Chinese cultural heritage that values philosophical insights and family values.

To hear the program, tune in at 7pm on Friday evenings at 98.3FM or online at www.2xxfm.org.au. You can also listen later as a podcast .

ALMA thanks Community Radio 2XX and the Community Broadcasting Foundation for their support for this program.

Chiewyi

OTHER NEWS AND INFORMATION

Panda Competition 2025

This annual competition is conducted by the Australia China Friendship Society ACT Branch and is open to all preschool and school-aged students in the ACT area.

Students are asked to creatively focus on an aspect of this year's topic: Chinese Architecture. This can be through a drawing, painting, creative work such as collage, 3-dimensional construction, essay, poetry, or other creative individual effort, appropriate to the student's age and school grade.

Chinese architecture has a history of more than 4,000 years. There are many famous, interesting or unusual structures in China and they include bridges, pagodas, temples, tombs, houses, the Great Wall, the Birds Nest and the Forbidden City.

All entries should be received by 5pm 28 September 2025

For more information see <https://acfs.org.au/panda-competition/> or email andrews79@iinet.net.au

The Australia China Friendship Society ACT Branch

The society is a voluntary non-profit organization which has been in existence in the ACT for over 40 years. It aims is to promote friendship and understanding between the peoples of Australia and China through a wide range of activities, including guest speakers, films, dinners, monthly newsletter and an annual celebration of the Lantern Festival.

The society also promotes and encourages an awareness of China in schools through the Panda Competition and annual awards it presents for the best Mandarin student and the most improved Mandarin student at ACT secondary schools and colleges teaching Mandarin.

For more information see <https://acfs.org.au/> or email acfsact@gmail.com

OTHER NEWS AND INFORMATION

ANU Australian Centre on China in the World (CIW) 中华全球研究中心

CIW is a leading international institution for Chinese Studies here Canberra at the Australian National University. The Centre supports multi-disciplinary research that furthers our understanding of the Chinese world — the People’s Republic of China, Taiwan and the Chinese diaspora — on its own terms and through its own languages, addressing both its traditions and contemporary developments in a rapidly changing world.

CIW China Studies Fellowship Program

CIW recently secured a \$1 million grant from the National Foundation for Australia-China Relations 澳中基金会 to help equip the next generation of Australian leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the complex and evolving Australia-China relationship.

Over the next four years, the Fellowship Program will support 50 Australian China Studies graduates to spend one year at a university in Suzhou, China, where they will have intensive language training, expand their understanding of Chinese culture and society, and enhance their academic and professional skills through elective courses, research projects, and internships with Chinese businesses.

Public talks, seminars and exhibitions

CIW regularly offers talks, seminars and exhibitions, many of which are aimed at a broad audience and open to interested members of the public

For more information on the above see <https://ciw.anu.edu.au/>

OTHER NEWS AND INFORMATION

LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES TO MAINTAIN OR DEVELOP MANDARIN

Mandarin is a vibrant community language in the ACT as well as an important international language. According to the 2021 ABS census, Mandarin was the second most spoken language in ACT homes after English. There are thus many local Chinese organisations and opportunities to hear and practise Mandarin and learn more about Chinese culture informally in the Canberra community. ALMA encourages its members to take advantage of these opportunities to supplement more formal programs of language.

For information about formal and informal programs and initiatives in the ACT region – for children of school age and below as well as for young people and adults - see the Learning Mandarin pages on the ALMA website at <https://www.learningmandarincanberra.org>. If you notice any information that could be updated or added, please let us know at canberraalma@gmail.com