



In China, only about five percent of people are Christians, so most people only know a few things about Christmas. Nevertheless, Christmas is often celebrated in major cities, with Christmas trees, lights and other decorations on the streets and in department stores. More young people are celebrating Christmas by giving gifts to each other in cities where Christmas parties are becoming popular.

In Mandarin Chinese, Happy Christmas is “shèngdàn kuàilè” (圣诞快乐). Santa is known as “shèngdànlǎorén” (圣诞老人), which means Old Christmas Man.

On Christmas Eve, it is a popular tradition to give apples because in Chinese, “Christmas Eve” is called “píngānyè” (平安夜), meaning peaceful or quiet evening, which has been translated from the carol 'Silent Night'. The word for apple in Mandarin is “píngguǒ” (苹果), which sounds like the word for peace. Many stores have apples wrapped up in colored paper for sale.

People also decorate Christmas trees, normally plastic ones, with paper chains, paper flowers, and

# ALMA NEWS DECEMBER 2018

Association for  
Learning  
**MANDARIN**  
**汉语**  
in Australia Inc

## 澳大利亚学汉语协会

paper lanterns. The Christmas trees that most people would see would be in shopping malls. Some people go Carol singing, although not many people understand the songs or know about the Christmas Story. Jingle Bells is a popular Christmas song in China. People who are Christians in China go to special services.

### ALMA ACTIVITIES

#### BILINGUAL RADIO PROGRAM

ALMA continues to co-present a Mandarin language program on community radio 2XX on Fridays from 7pm -7.30pm. The program is presented bilingually and aims to help develop language and cultural understanding of both Chinese and English speaking listeners. Each program usually includes a children’s song and short story in Chinese and some community announcements.

You can hear the program live on FM 98.3 or through the ‘listen back’ system on the 2XX website: <http://www.2xxfm.org.au/>.

Look for the program on the Program Guide page and click on 'Mandarin'. For more information, contact Mandy at [canberraalma@gmail.com](mailto:canberraalma@gmail.com)

### **MANDARIN COMMUNITY TUTORING PROJECT**

This free community project brings together fluent speakers of Mandarin and learners of the language who wish to further develop their knowledge of Mandarin and/or understanding of Chinese culture. Mandarin speakers volunteer an hour or so a week to help learners improve their Chinese language skills. In return, the tutors can practice their English skills, make local friends, and learn more about language teaching and learning. For more information about the project, or to register as a tutor or learner, please visit the tutoring page on the ALMA website.

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The AGM was held on Tuesday 11 December at 6.15pm. See report from the outgoing president below.

### **NOTE FROM OUTGOING PRESIDENT**

2018 has been a hectic, challenging but ultimately rewarding year for ALMA and in particular, for the Chinese-Australian Early Childhood Centre (CAECC).

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

This year ALMA worked hard at engaging with like-minded organisations to promote the learning and teaching of Mandarin to all Australians – not only those with a Mandarin-speaking background.

ALMA worked closely with the new Principal of Mawson Primary School (MPS) – Elizabeth Courtois – on a number of matters. ALMA provided MPS with input into the design of the new Mandarin Immersion Program (MIP), including statistical information regarding average numbers of CAECC-students moving to MPS each year, to assist in resource planning. ALMA also assisted MPS in networking with other organisations to assist MPS in advertising and recruiting Mandarin-speaking

staff for the MIP.

ALMA continued to run its successful community peer-tutoring program, assisted a lunch-time conversational group at Woden Library, continued to co-present a 2XX radio program and engaged with a number of Chinese language schools and playgroups in 2018.

Notably, towards the end of 2018 ALMA commenced discussion with the Canberra Chinese School about the lack of intermediate Mandarin classes for children from Chinese-dialect speaking families and non-Chinese speaking families. ALMA has long been concerned that children from non-Mandarin speaking families who leave the CAECC have found it very hard to find classes that suitably extend their children's conversational Mandarin, rather than covering words and phrases they have known and used for many years at the CAECC. Our programs focus on reading and writing Chinese. Likewise, ALMA was also concerned that despite the success of the long-running community tutoring program, adults sometimes face difficulties accessing appropriate intermediate-level spoken Mandarin classes in Canberra.

It is hoped that in 2019 ALMA will work with Chinese community language schools to ensure that appropriate opportunities to undertake intermediate-level Mandarin classes with a focus on conversational Mandarin are available to ALMA members and former CAECC students, especially those in MIP at MPS or undertaking Mandarin at another school.

### **THE CAECC**

2018 was a challenging year for ALMA's major business operation – the Chinese-Australian Early Childhood Centre (CAECC).

From a business perspective, 2018 saw increased local competition resulting in falling enrolments and revenue. As a result, the ALMA Committee engaged in a re-structuring of the staffing arrangements at the CAECC to ensure its long-term financial viability. Whilst painful, the restructure was both necessary and ultimately successful. Whilst projections for 2019 enrolments are in-line with the 2018-19 Budget, the Committee

is working with the CAECC Management team to market the Centre aggressively over the next year, and is working hard on raising its profile within not only the local community, but also the Mandarin-speaking community where awareness of the existence of the CAECC has been very low.

Whilst 2018 was a challenging year business-wise for the CAECC, it was successful educationally. The Committee was pleased to see the results of recruitment and staffing decisions made over the last couple of years bearing fruit, with unsolicited positive feedback about the programs, activities and staff at the CAECC steadily increasing – especially in the last quarter of the 2018.

In that regard, as the outgoing President I am pleased to see the hard work put in by my fellow Committee members – be it into recruitment processes, staff – Committee dialogue sessions finally paying off. Likewise, the hard work of the CAECC Management team over the past year to 18 months in terms of focusing on professional development, performance management, mentoring, coaching, team-work – as well as developing shared goals, visions and understandings between staff at the CAECC – has also begun to noticeably pay off in terms of the quality of the in-room experiences, education and care being provided to children at the CAECC.

### **COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE**

2018 was a year in which I worked hard with the Committee to lock-in good governance practices.

This included having a Committee Member designated as the official ‘delegate’ between the Committee and CAECC staff, to streamline communication and reporting lines. This was shared between Committee Members on 3-month terms. This enabled the entire Committee to have visibility of the CAECC’s operations in an efficient manner.

I also worked on creating clearly delegated responsibilities, roles and approvals. For example, the Committee approved various spending-limits for the CAECC Director and Committee members to enable spending (e.g. equipment repairs) to be efficiently dealt with whilst also ensuring

appropriate oversight. Another example was establishing community-relations and Marketing sub-Committees.

### **THE YEAR AHEAD – A HANDOVER PERIOD**

As I flagged in previous newsletters, in 2018 I turned the Committee’s attention to succession planning.

With the notable exception of ALMA’s long-serving Vice-President, Dr Mandy Scott, the majority of the ALMA Committee for 2018 was comprised of parents of children attending the CAECC in the pre-school room. Many of those Committee members – including myself – had been on the Committee for a number of years (in some cases, over 5 years) and, as their children were leaving the CAECC at the end of the year, were looking to stand aside from the Committee in 2019. This meant that many years of collective ‘corporate knowledge’ about the CAECC in particular will not be available to the ALMA Committee in 2019.

Without a Committee, ALMA – including the CAECC – cannot operate. Whilst such ‘generational changes’ are an almost inevitable aspect of Community-run organisations (and childcare centres in particular), such changes pose real governance risks to ALMA if not managed properly.

As such, I worked with the Committee to try and get new Committee members – especially those with younger children at the CAECC who are likely to have a long association with ALMA – to join the Committee. I would like to thank Syndy and James Marr, and Amy Mao for responding to my calls by joining the Committee in late 2018.

As such, after 4 years on the Committee –two of which I have served as President, I feel the (safe) time has come to step back, and begin handing over to a ‘new’ generation of Committee members.

Kristyn Worner – who has served on the ALMA Committee for three years, most recently as Treasurer, was elected President at the AGM. Kristyn, along with out-going Secretary Amelia Tandy and Committee Member Aurore Chow, worked with the CAECC Management team to guide the CAECC through its recent re-structure.

As a qualified CPA, with substantial management experience in various industries, she is well-placed to lead the ALMA Committee in a new era that is less focused on driving operational changes and dealing with 'legacy issues' at the CAECC, but rather on its efficient operation, quality improvement and sound management.

I was elected as ALMA Secretary, and will focus my attentions in 2019 on working with Mandy Scott, who is again the Vice President. Community-relations matters we will look at include ensuring there are appropriate opportunities for CAECC-graduates to continue their Mandarin education and learning journeys, and lobbying the ACT Government in relation to Mandarin programs in both primary and secondary schools.

We had no nominations for Treasurer, but the new Assistant Treasurer is Phil Harber. Other Committee members elected at the AGM were Amy Mao, Claire Hennessy, James Marr and Syndy Marr.

I will also work with the new Committee and President to continue to 'lock in' and build on the governance measures we have introduced to ensure appropriate oversight of the CAECC by the Committee continues in a steady, professional and collaborative manner.

Kristyn and I hope that together with Mandy Scott, the three of us, representing the final members of the most recent long-serving 'cohort' of the ALMA Committee, can use 2019 as a hand-over and capacity building year for the ALMA Committee.

As such, I would encourage any parents – especially those with children in the toddler room – and also ALMA Members who do not have children attending the CAECC – to consider joining the Committee as, without a Committee, ALMA cannot operate and the CAECC would cease operations.

If you are interested in filling the Treasurer position, please contact us as soon as possible at [canberraalma@gmail.com](mailto:canberraalma@gmail.com)

On that note, I want to sincerely thank all the ALMA Committee Members who worked with me as President for the past two years. It has been an

honor to serve ALMA, to work with you all, to resolve our differences respectfully and appropriately and to stand united on difficult issues and questions.

Jaan Murphy

President of ALMA October 2016 – December 2018

## CHINESE AUSTRALIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE (CAECC)

澳华幼儿教育中心新闻



**From the Director Ms. Bao Qin**

### MPS 50TH ANNIVERSARY FETE

On 3 Nov 2018, Mawson Primary School (MPS) held a Fete to celebrate their 50th anniversary. The MPS P&C invited the CAECC to join in their celebrations and arranged a bookstall for us to sell donated books. The ALMA Treasurer Kristyn, Delegate Aurore and CAECC educators, Jingjing, Tina, Yanli, Qiuping, Alyce and Qin contributed to the celebrations. Thank you to the families who supported our bookstall, which raised about \$500 in sales.

### END OF YEAR CONCERT

On 23 Nov, CAECC had a dress rehearsal for the End of Year Concert in the Mawson Primary School Hall. The Centre invited Mawson Preschool children to watch.

The concert was held the following Friday, 30 November, from 5pm to 6pm. We were honoured to welcome several distinguished guests: Gai Brodtmann, Member for Canberra; Caroline Le Couteur MLA, ACT Greens; Fuxing Li, Principal Australian School of Contemporary Chinese and President of the ACT Community Language Schools Association; David Smith ACT Senator and Ms Sylvia Wang (representing Elizabeth Kikkert MLA, ACT Liberals).

As usual, it was a lively and colourful event and the

toddlers and preschoolers delighted all. After the concert, children, families and special guests were invited to stay and enjoy some refreshments.

We thank Mawson Primary School for allowing us to again use the school hall for the dress rehearsal and the concert.



### CAECC EDUCATORS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT MAWSON PRESCHOOL

CAECC management set up a PD schedule for Preschool Room educators take turns at the Mawson Preschool to learn from their professional skills. The teachers gave highly positive comments to our educators during the PD training period. The Preschool Room educators also gave very positive comments and shared their learning experiences with the Mawson Preschool educators and applied their new knowledge at the Centre.

Based on the positive outcomes, CAECC management will set up a schedule to continue PD training in the Mawson Preschool next year.

### PRE-SCHOOLERS GRADUATION

The Preschool Room had a graduation on 7 December, followed by light refreshments. Preschool Room children's parents and grandparents were invited to attend.

### CHRISTMAS SHUTDOWN PERIOD

The closure dates for the Centre over the holiday break are:

- Shutdown date: 21 Dec 2018
- Reopen date: 7 Jan 2019

### CAECC MARKETING

With the increasing numbers of childcare centres in Canberra, the CAECC is facing serious competition. ALMA is therefore actively taking measures to expand the CAECC market share in Canberra, including using Facebook to regularly upload some Centre information, publishing articles in WeChat to introduce the Centre to Chinese families, sending flyers to Chinese local communities, setting up advertising signs along main roads and updating the CAECC website to be more interactive for young families.

We welcome any suggestions from CAECC families and other ALMA members to help our marketing efforts.

### FOLLOW CAECC ON FACEBOOK

To keep up to date with CAECC news and activities, follow us on Facebook. You can find us by searching for @chinesechildcarecanberra

### WELCOME TO NEW ALMA MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members:

#### Individual members

Qin Bao, Yanli Yang, Laura Cai, James Gustus

#### CAECC Families

Yan Sheng and Family, Shi-Jie Jude Phoon and Family, Charlotte Foster and Family, Natalie Torres and Family, Cassie Cullen and Family, Wei Mao (Amy) and Family

### OTHER NEWS

#### NEW PROGRAM AT CANBERRA CHINESE SCHOOL (CCS)

The CCS is one of six community language schools that offer a variety of Mandarin language programs in the Canberra area. Since its establishment, the CCS has based its weekend programs on Ma Liping textbooks, which are specifically designed to assist children who already have basic oral communication skills in Chinese, and have family members who can speak, read and write Mandarin, to improve their reading and writing.

In 2019, the school is opening a new program on Saturday mornings at Radford College to provide both beginner and intermediate level Chinese classes.

Importantly, the intermediate classes in particular will be suitable for children with previous exposure to Chinese (for example, children who are attending the CAECC, used to attend the CAECC, are in the Mawson Primary school Mandarin Immersion Program or do Mandarin at school) even if they do not have family members who can speak, read and write Mandarin.

The new program aims to equip students with the vocabulary and common expressions for everyday interactions in Chinese by focusing to a greater extent on conversational Chinese compared to the Ma Liping-based program. This means the new program is suitable for both Chinese and non-Chinese children, and especially well-suited for CAECC-students in the pre-school room and children attending Mawson Primary, as it will aim to extent their vocabulary and comprehension skills.

For more information about CCS, which also operates after-school Chinese programs at Red Hill Primary and Harrison School, see their website at <http://www.canberrachineseschool.net/> or email [admin@canberrachineseschool.net](mailto:admin@canberrachineseschool.net)

### **FCCCI CHINESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL**

The FCCCI is organising a 12 days root-seeking Cultural Camp to China for students aged between 12 and 18 years. The School has run this highly successful program every year for over 10 years. Students have visited Inner Mongolia, Harbin, Beijing, Xi'An, Guangzhou, Shanghai and Chongqing. This year, two groups will take part, going to Jiujiang in Jiangxi and Huizhou in Guangdong respectively.

For more information about the school's cultural camp in 2019, please contact Deputy Principal Xiaoli at 0413 288 021.

The FCCCI Chinese School is also planning to open a new campus in Gungahlin in 2019. For enrolment information, please contact Deputy Principal Moran at 0432035129

For general information about the School's Chinese classes and cultural programs for both children and adults, please contact Deputy Principal Shirley at 0412177218 or see the school website at [www.fcccichineseschool.act.edu.au](http://www.fcccichineseschool.act.edu.au)

### **TACA MANDARIN LANGUAGE SCHOOL**

The school will have a stall at the National Multicultural Festival (NMF) on Saturday 16 February 2019. At the 2018 NMF, TACA provided bookmarks of Zodiac animals and an art activity for participants to experience the culture of Taiwan. At the 2019 NMF, TACA Mandarin School will again present Taiwan art elements and offer some interesting programs. Please come and visit us at our stall.



Photo from 2018 NMF

For more information about the TACA school, visit their [Facebook page](#) or email [tacaschool@gmail.com](mailto:tacaschool@gmail.com)

### **OTHER CHINESE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS IN THE ACT REGION**

For more information about these and other community language schools which offer classes in Mandarin in the Canberra area, plus playgroups and other Chinese language learning opportunities, please visit the 'Learning Mandarin in Australia' page on the ALMA website.

## BILINGUAL STORY TIMES AT ACT LIBRARIES

ACT libraries are running a series of Bilingual Story Times in December and January.

They are all free and held from 10.30am to 11.30am. Here are the details:

### Gungahlin Library:

- Thursday 13th December: Mandarin
- Thursday 10th January: Mandarin

### Belconnen Library:

- Saturday 12th January: Vietnamese

### Woden Library:

- Saturday 15th December: Farsi;
- Saturday 19th January: Cantonese

For more information: Joanna Bragg at [joanna.bragg@act.gov.au](mailto:joanna.bragg@act.gov.au)

## CHINESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA (NGA)

You can access a Chinese Language Resource produced in collaboration with the Modern Language Teachers Association to encourage students to engage with language and culture through art.

This resource was developed in relation to the NGA's Infinite Conversations exhibition and invites discussion around social issues, migration, and inter-cultural experience. This curriculum resource was designed to develop successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active, informed citizens. It is available under the 'Learn' tab on the NGA website.

Chinese Language students are encouraged to communicate, reflect and create using works of art as a stimulus. Through exploring and responding to this selection of works students can notice, question and develop awareness of how language and culture shape identity.

## LIVING WATER: JOURNEYING IN INKS

An exhibition at the China in the World (CIW) gallery at the Australian National University (ANU).

Fuelled by a passion for ink and paper, and intrigued by the rich visual languages of Chinese painting and Chinese calligraphy, the exhibition is a response by Ella Whateley to immersion in Taiwanese culture during her residency at National Taiwan University of Arts.

Dr. Whateley gained her doctorate in practice-led research, Painting, at the School of Art and Design, ANU, where she is currently a Visiting Fellow.

- Mondays to Thursdays, 9am–5pm until 10 January (Note: closed from 25 December 2018–2 January 2019 inclusive)
- Gallery, CIW (Building no.188), Fellows Lane, ANU

This exhibition is generously supported by the Ministry of Education, Republic of China (Taiwan).

For more information about this exhibition and other events at CIW see their website at <http://ciw.anu.edu.au/events/>

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO ALMA NEWS WELCOME



Please email items to [canberraalma@gmail.com](mailto:canberraalma@gmail.com).

NOTE: Decisions on publication remain at the discretion of the editor.

For more information about ALMA and to see past ALMA newsletters visit our website at <https://www.learningmandarincanberra.org/>