



DR IAN MACLEAN AND DR MANDY SCOTT CUTTING THE 30 YEAR CELEBRATORY CAKE

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

Dear families and educators of children attending the Chinese Australian Early Childhood Centre (CAECC) and other members of the Association for Learning Mandarin in Australia Inc (ALMA), welcome to this special edition of ALMA News, which is commemorating and celebrating 30 years of the Centre's operation.

Astute parents founded this Mandarin/English bilingual centre 30 years ago, and as a result, hundreds of young Canberrans have been fortunate enough to experience this fantastic educational opportunity.

We are truly lucky to have in our employ caring, yet highly skilled and experienced educators. It is extremely desirable that those educators whose first language is English speak English to our children, and those whose first language is Mandarin speak only Mandarin to our children (where appropriate).

Children's brain development is at its peak in the first 5 years of life. Instilling a second language during this time will establish vital neural pathways to set them up for lifelong learning and enhanced educational and occupational opportunities. Such bilingualism at an early age also embeds cultural and linguistic diversity, tolerance and understanding which can only make the world a better place!

As a result of its positive outcomes, the Centre has received many high profile visits from politicians such as ex-Prime

Minister, Kevin Rudd, Senator Kate Lundy, and ACT Minister Joy Burch. Other educators and students have also attended the Centre to experience the unique bilingual education provided to the children who attend. All visitors leave impressed with the quality of care and our bilingual model.

The Centre benefits from close links to Mawson Primary School, where the majority of CAECC graduates go on to continue their Mandarin learning in a familiar environment. The Centre also benefits from the use of the school facilities, such as the playgrounds and the hall for the end of year concerts. According to Ian MacLean (former ALMA President), many graduates of the CAECC and Mandarin Immersion Program (MIP) of Mawson Primary School have gone on to be some of the highest achieving students at Melrose High School (which also teaches Mandarin).

As well as running the CAECC, ALMA promotes Mandarin education more broadly. A long-standing and valuable member of the committee, Dr Mandy Scott, facilitates a community tutoring program where interested individuals are brought together to practice their Mandarin and English. ALMA also organised a forum on Mandarin Learning in the ACT, where teachers, academics and students discussed how to improve pathways, including initial interest and access, to learning and maintaining proficiency of the Mandarin

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Association for
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MANDARIN
汉语
in Australia Inc

澳大利亞學漢語協會

language. The forum generated much enthusiasm to follow up on the ideas that emerged from the discussions. It is hoped a follow-up meeting can be organised in the not too distant future.

ALMA, and thus the Centre, can only operate with the support of the wonderful and dedicated Director, Judy, and volunteer committee members. I am so thankful to have the support of enthusiastic ongoing and new committee members.

With no personal background in Mandarin, or any other language than English, I have witnessed our children flourish and thrive at this Centre and have become a complete evangelical convert to bilingualism and all the associated benefits. To any parent interested in volunteering on the committee, or just coming along to meetings occasionally, you would be very welcome; it really is a worthwhile institution to support.

Ideally, in the next 30 years, we will see the Centre expand to enable not only a separate safe play space for babies from toddlers, but expansion of our centre, or perhaps other similar centres, to enable a greater proportion of children to experience bilingualism in their earliest years of life.

Congratulations to ALMA and CAECC on the Centre's 30th anniversary.

Kelly McGorm
President of ALMA



IN THE BEGINNING EX ALMA PRESIDENT DR IAN MACLEAN

The Chinese Australian Early Childhood Centre began operations in the YWCA building in Corroboree Park, Ainslie, in November 1984 with 14 children and a staff of two.

After a few weeks of operation the centre received a visit from the government people who licensed child care centres. They were horrified. "You can't operate a child centre here", they said. "There is no fence around the building."

The ever-resourceful Director (aren't they always!) called a working bee to build a fence over the next weekend. A new fence was duly constructed.

A few weeks later the Parks and Gardens people arrived. "You can't put a fence in the middle of a public park", they said. "You will have to remove it."

The doughty Director replied that she couldn't move it because she had been told to put it there by the licensing people.

"If you don't remove it, we will, and we will charge you", the Parks and Gardens people said.

"If you remove the fence, I would appreciate some advance notice, so I can arrange the TV cameras", the feisty Director said.

The Parks and Gardens people went away. I suspect there were some interesting discussions in the lead-up to, and immediately following, Christmas 1984.

Early in the New Year of 1985, the Chinese Australian Early Childhood Centre was offered, and accepted, the use of a building in Mawson Primary School, where it remains to this day. The building had been constructed specifically for teaching hearing-impaired children, but had fallen into disuse when educational practice changed from having special settings for these children to integrating them into mainstream classes.

I wish the centre all the best as it celebrates its 30th birthday. May there be many more to come.

**THANK YOU
KINDLY**
ALMA'S CURRENT
COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE TO
TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO
THANK ALL PAST AND
CURRENT ALMA
PRESIDENTS FOR ALL THEIR
HARD WORK AND
DEDICATION OVER THE
YEARS. WITHOUT YOUR
IMMENSE PASSION AND
COMMITMENT
GENERATIONS OF
CANBERRA PRESCHOOLERS
MAY NOT HAVE HAD THE
CHANCE TO LEARN
MANDARIN AND HAVE THE
OPPORTUNITY TO PERFORM
THE 恐龙舞 DINOSAUR DANCE
WITH THEIR WONDERFUL
TEACHERS AT CAECC



CHINESE AUSTRALIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE (CAECC)



澳華幼兒中心新聞

From the director Judy Kuzma

In November each year the centre holds its annual end of year concert 年音乐会节目, and this year's coincided with the celebration of 30 years operating an early education and care centre with a dual language ethos. The aim of the concert is twofold: firstly to display some of the learning and art the children have engaged in throughout their year and secondly to build resilience in children! The children performed a series of songs and little sketches in both Mandarin and English.

Providing children with an opportunity to be involved in a spectacular such as the 'end of year concert' aids in the building of resilience and self-awareness. Young children gain personal strength, self-satisfaction as well as a huge sense of pride. They become aware of their capability to perform on stage, songs that are applicable to them, in front of their parents and extended family.

This year's concert included a 'Welcome to Country' by Ngunnawal elder Aunty Susan Barry. Her heartwarming greeting opened the concert. This was followed by a welcome speech from the new President of ALMA, Kelly McGorm, who warmly welcomed Professor Michael Dodson, Indigenous Elder and advocate of multilingualism. Kelly had the honour of hosting a number of special guests at the concert including ex-President Ian MacLean and his lovely daughter Amanda Maclean, other former ALMA Presidents – Joan Knowles, Bridget O'Connor and Mandy Scott. Other special guests included Martin Hine from the ACT Education and Training Directorate; Peter Pan, Principal of Canberra Community Chinese School; Andy Cheu-An Bi, Executive Director Education Division, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, and Robyn McEwin, a former Principal of Mawson Primary School.

The evening ended with families socializing and eating a lovely array of food in the Mawson Primary School

grounds. The weather was perfect, which topped off a very successful and momentous event.



MR ANDY BI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION DIVISION AT TAIPEI ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL OFFICE IN AUSTRALIA, WAS DELIGHTED TO ATTEND THE END OF YEAR CONCERT OF THE CAECC

"I was amazed by the quality of the performances, which was excellent and represented the high levels of commitment by the young children, parents and teachers towards Mandarin language studies.

"The performers' young age and capability to adopt bilingual learning environment will be their great asset for developing the proficiency of Mandarin in the future."



INDIGENOUS ELDER PROF MICHAEL DODSON GIVES HEARTY PRAISE TO CAECC CHILDREN, TEACHERS AND PARENTS, SUPPORTING A MULTILINGUAL AUSTRALIA.

Congratulations to the Mawson Early Childhood centre's staff, students, ALMA and parents for dedicating the last 30 years to the vital promotion of language learning and teaching in the ACT.

I was exceptionally pleased to receive an invitation to the CAECC end of year concert and very impressed by the event. What really impressed me was not only how young the kids were, but also how outstanding their Chinese was. Another strong impression was the sheer multitude of different cultures speaking Chinese; you could really feel the pride in their parents no matter what their cultural, social or linguistic roots. All the staff seemed to have a special gift, extremely dedicated, really energetic and committed.

It was encouraging to see the students receiving such a bright start to their education. Multilingualism is vital, learning a variety of languages and cultures in Australia is important for peace, reconciliation and understanding. The children and staff at the CAECC are a good example of this. I honestly believe that early learners should get the opportunity to study at least one local aboriginal language coupled with an Asian language, grasping rudimentary sentences and key concepts. Aboriginal people for thousands of years were multilingual, often speaking five different languages, their own and that of their neighbours. I believe that today all children in Australia should be given the opportunity to learn multiple languages for the betterment and enhancement of Australian education.

Photo : Prof Michael Dodson, Director of CAECC Judy Kuzma , ALMA Secretary Glynnis- Anne Buckley with children Mary and William



INTERGENERATIONAL MANDARIN LEARNING PROFESSOR RICHARD RIGBY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ANU CHINA INSTITUTE

My family's involvement with the CAECC began in 2010, but we have a long history with bilingualism dating back to my meeting my wife Taifang when I was studying Chinese in Canberra in 1970. To improve my Chinese, we spoke it exclusively and following marriage and children (Alison, Sophie, Nick) continued to speak both, but with more Chinese than English, at home and particularly with the children. We felt this was one of the best gifts we could give them. Through my work as a diplomat, our family had 3 postings in China. Alison and Sophie went to Chinese schools, which helped to cement their Chinese language skills. Alison also attended Jiaotong University in Shanghai.

Having had to work hard to learn Mandarin, I was delighted that my children had the opportunity to pick it up so easily and naturally. Taifang and I were further delighted to see Alison

keen to maintain Mandarin in her own kids. During her posting to China a few years ago, Alison enrolled her son Max at a local kindergarten and spoke to him exclusively in Chinese. On their return to Canberra in 2010 she enrolled 3-year old Max and 1-year old Harry in CAECC.

Both boys loved CAECC, making great friends and forming close bonds with the educators. The additional Mandarin language exposure at CAECC has helped them to keep up some Mandarin, which they would otherwise have lost. It was heart-warming to be greeted by the boys in Chinese when I picked them up, and although around government and university circles I may be known for one or two other things, at Mawson I am, and always will be, most famous for being Max and Harry's Gonggong 公公 – and I take particular pride in that.

Whilst her boys' attended the Centre, Alison joined the ALMA Committee,

participating in ALMA and CAECC events such as fundraising, supporting a visit to the Centre by former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, and helping to organise a forum on Mandarin learning as well as preparing this newsletter.

My first direct contact with the Centre came in December 2010, when I attended the end of year performance. Seeing the happy, confident children, speaking and singing in both Mandarin and English, brought home to me once again how lucky they are to have this opportunity to pick up a second language from such a young age.

Although Alison and her family are now overseas and her two boys have left the Centre, I know that we will pick up our association again when they return, as their 3rd baby will be 3 years old by then, and they have every intention of her also attending CAECC.



MANDARIN TEACHERS CORNER

INTRODUCING AMY FROM THE CAECC PRE- SCHOOL ROOM

I commenced working at the CAECC in February of 2009, almost 6 years ago, and at that time only knew how to say 'Nihao' in Chinese. Although the predominately Chinese speaking environment was initially a challenge in the first year, it didn't take too long before I could pick up a few phrases that were really useful. The children and I would turn learning into a game and race to see who could answer the question first.



I love learning Mandarin alongside the children and fellow teachers. I love singing and teaching in Chinese now, especially at this time of year around the end of year concert. We translate the songs from English into Mandarin ourselves and vice versa. We also teach maths and art in Chinese, which helps the children to learn fast and really consolidate their knowledge. We even teach some songs in sign language along with Chinese, and of course all our signs around the centre are in both languages.

What's really special about the centre is its multilingualism. The centre attracts families from so many different cultural backgrounds, all with a common interest in learning Mandarin. It is really wonderful

to watch so many non-Chinese heritage children develop their proficiency in Mandarin. As they are so young they pick up Mandarin very quickly and many are able to converse in Mandarin relatively fluently after a short period of time. Because we have so many cultures we learn and teach about them in Chinese, be they Indigenous Australian, African, Malaysian, Chinese, European or Indian. We always try to teach Chinese to incorporate culture.

Another thing I really love about the centre is we get to meet so many amazing people. One day we had someone from the Chinese Embassy come to visit, and they bought some Mandarin learning tools along for both staff and students. We also had a visit from ex-Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, which was wonderful. That day was quite funny as a little girl about 4 years old went up to Kevin Rudd and, in perfect Mandarin, asked 'Are you here to give us some money?' which, of course, sent everyone off into fits of laughter.

Being able to speak Mandarin, Kevin Rudd of course spoke to all the staff and students in the language, which was lovely, and made the staff and students' year. What was really surprising was that the children, especially those whom I didn't think had the Mandarin capability, were actually able to hold a conversation with him in Chinese.

I hope in the coming year that the South side of Canberra can introduce more Mandarin classes for students, staff and parents, so that more non-native speakers could have a chance to learn Mandarin and the Chinese culture. It's really wonderful learning about the different festivals, Chinese New Year, the dragon boat festival, Qing Ming festival etc. I wish more and more people get the opportunity to learn Mandarin. I find that from learning and teaching Mandarin I often incorporate some aspects of Chinese culture into my own daily life and certainly bring Chinese festival customs home to my family.



THE ALMA MANDARIN COMMUNITY TUTORING PROJECT

This project brings together fluent speakers of Mandarin and other members of the ACT community who wish to improve their knowledge of Mandarin and/or understanding of Chinese culture. The Mandarin speakers volunteer an hour or so a week to help others learn Chinese. In return they can practice their English skills, make local friends, and learn more about language teaching and learning. Tutors and students make their own arrangements to meet, usually on a one-to-one basis, at a time and place which suits their particular circumstances.

The project began in 2001 and has resulted in more than 600 Mandarin speakers meeting over 500 people learning Mandarin. Feedback from participants has been very positive. Follow-up evaluations over the years indicate that most participants see the project as an exchange from which both sides benefit. Real friendships have been made, and much intercultural understanding gained. For more information about the project, see <http://learningmandarin.weebly.com/mandarin-community-tutoring.html> or contact canberraalma@gmail.com

LEARNING CHINESE AS A HERITAGE OR COMMUNITY LANGUAGE IN AUSTRALIA

Are you interested in the latest research on heritage language learning in Australia? The November 2014 edition of the Asia Education Foundation (AEF) Research and Policy updates focuses on this, with particular emphasis on Chinese.

One article, "Learning Chinese as a heritage language in Australia and beyond: the role of capital", examines the commitment of Chinese heritage language learners to their language learning in Australia and how this contributes to their language proficiency.

Findings indicate that cultural, social and symbolic capital significantly contributes to language proficiency and commitment to language learning.

On commenting on this article, the AEF notes that it provides an evidence base that schools can use to better understand the complex language learning commitments, goals and (perceived or anticipated) benefits of learning Chinese language for heritage learners.

SHARING STORY AND CULTURE PROJECT

The **Lu Rees Archives**, housed at the University of Canberra, enhances the appreciation of Australian children's literature. The archives include over 25,000 books, with more than 3000 in overseas translations in 53 languages, over 420 research files, and significant collections of authors', illustrators' and publishers' papers, manuscripts and artwork. These resources are publicly available, and visitors are welcome during opening hours.

The Archives received a Multicultural Grant from the ACT Government for 2015 to promote reading and enjoyment of Australian children's books which have been translated into Simplified Chinese. Books will be selected by teachers in the Australian School of Contemporary Chinese (ASCC), the Federation of Chinese Community of Canberra Inc (FCCCI), the Queanbeyan Community Chinese Language School and those knowledgeable about Australian children's literature.

After their purchase, the books will be catalogued, annotated, and listed on the schools' and Lu Rees Archives websites. The Chinese schools will determine the location of the book collection and manage their lending to children and their families as well as using the books for educational purposes in the classroom.



INTRODUCING AMANDA MACLEAN, ONE OF THE FIRST STUDENTS AT CAECC

CURRENTLY STUDYING A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN CHINESE AND ECONOMICS AT THE ANU

Amanda Mclean has a strong destiny with China. At only 22 years of age she has been to China 6 times, travelling to Shanghai, Tianjin Beijing, Hangzhou, Suzhou, Xian, and Chengdu... the list goes on. She is fluent in Mandarin and Japanese, and studies Spanish and Korean. She believes that ALMA has always been a strong part of her life and that learning Mandarin at such a young age was the precursor to her language learning success. She said she was able to change grammar structures and ways of thinking much more easily than a student who doesn't have a second language.

Amanda was the preschooler who some years ago met and danced for Jiang Ze Ming's wife at the CAECC. She remembers her kindness and the backpack she was given with a picture of the great wall on it.



Having just come back from China when I spoke to her, Amanda describes her experiences when learning Mandarin.

"Actually I can't really remember learning Mandarin, it was natural for me, it was just there, and we all learnt and communicated in Chinese. I do remember going to primary school in Mawson and thinking 'that's not right; it's in English!' Only when I entered grade three did I start to learn Mandarin again.

Of course the system has changed now; the children at Mawson Primary begin learning Mandarin from grade 1 or even kindergarten. Ideally they will learn maths and even about climate change in Mandarin. Wouldn't it be great if the

CAECC and Mawson Primary become an exemplar for schools across the ACT and the rest of Australia!

The highlight of learning Mandarin for me was actually last year when I was based in Shanghai's University of Finance and Economics and was studying and working in Mandarin. I was head of the International Students' Association, and everything was conducted in Mandarin, which I found pretty cool. As I was used to the Chinese tones and could read characters, the thing to learn on this trip was that Chinese is really nuanced in terms of colloquial language. I was always being told 'your Chinese is too good you have to deformatise it'."

Smiling and confident, Amanda eloquently explains how language relates to cognition and thinking:

"Everyone has a ball of knowledge that expands all the time, and you can only see that knowledge through a mirror, or a window, and that window is your language. If you have one language you only have one mirror, thus you can only see things from one angle. The moment you start to switch to looking at things through a different language, i.e. through a different window, you see all these little things you wouldn't have seen before. Once you have learnt that technique of walking from one window to the next window, switching your step and walking along, any further window is so much easier to do.

Learning languages increases your ability to grasp nuances you would have otherwise never understood, as well as to work with and understand other cultures better".

Amanda finally congratulates ALMA on its 30th anniversary and says "if I've succeeded in anything in this last 20 plus years it is largely due to the efforts of ALMA, the CAECC and MIP at Mawson Primary". With happy tears in her eyes, she showed her appreciation by saying in fluent Chinese:

感谢大家这个二十几年来，一直帮助我，一直辅导我。一直到现在我的成功，都是因为你们的存在。我真心的感谢你们每天每月都那么努力为了实现我们的梦想。



ANU CHINA RELATED EVENTS

JANUARY-APRIL 2015

Asia and the Pacific Screens

This monthly film series offers a fresh window on social realities, cultural transformations and creative imaginings from across Asia and the Pacific, through documentary and feature films made by some of the most entertaining, insightful and uncompromising filmmakers in our region.

Screenings are followed by a short discussion, led by relevant local and invited scholars and filmmakers.

Sponsored and hosted by the Australian Centre on China in the World, the series is programmed by a team with diverse expertise in visual culture, dramatic arts, independent cinema and popular culture in Asia and the Pacific.

Convenors:

Olivier Krischer
olivier.krischer@anu.edu.au

Ying Qian ying.qian@anu.edu.au

Jinghong Zhang
jinghong.zhang@anu.edu.au

Venue:

The Auditorium, [China in the World Building \(188\)](#), Fellows Lane, ANU

Enquiries:

ciw@anu.edu.au,

02 6125 9060

Website:

<http://ciw.anu.edu.au/events/asiapacificscreens/>

Thursday 8 January
6:00pm-8:00pm

No Form 無色 and The Skywalk is Gone 天橋不見了

Two short films Directed by Tsai Ming-Liang

Mandarin Chinese with English subtitles

Wednesday 4 February
5:30pm-8:00pm

Let it be: the last rice farmers 無米樂

Directed by Yen Lan-chuan 顏蘭權 & Juang Yi-tseng 莊益增 2004, 110 mins

Taiwanese Chinese with English subtitles

Thursday 5 March 5:30pm-7:30pm

Meishi Street 煤市街

Directed by Ou Ning 2006, 85 mins

Mandarin Chinese with English subtitles

Wednesday 1 April 5:30pm-7:00pm

Survival guide for radioactive village

Directed by Liew Seng Tat, Tan Chui Mui, Woo Ming Jin, Yeo Joon-han 2011, total of 42 mins

Malaysian, with English and Chinese subtitles

Conference

Taiwan - The View from the South

During this 4 day conference, International and Australian speakers will explore conference themes from global, national, regional and local perspectives

Tuesday 6- Friday 9 January 2015

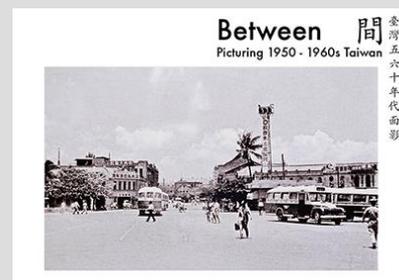
<http://ciw.anu.edu.au/events/2015/taiwanconference/>

Exhibitions

Between - Picturing 1950-1960s Taiwan

間：臺灣五六十年代面影

Tuesday 6 January - Friday 3 April 2015 9:00am-5:00pm, Monday to Friday



Politics has had complex effects on the cultural life of Taiwan in the twentieth century. These forty-four works, curated from the collection of the National Museum of History (Taipei), offer subtle observations of Taiwan in the 1950s and 1960s, from the perspectives of fifteen artists and photographers, as fresh and curious witnesses to lives in flux.

http://ciw.anu.edu.au/events/gallery/between_1950-60_Taiwan/

Public Lectures

The ANU China Seminar Series is a fortnightly seminar at which invited guests present their latest research on China and the Sinophone world. It aims at a broad audience.

The seminar series provides an arena in which to discuss China in its widest sense, to acquaint people with a range of China-related research that might otherwise lie outside their scope of contact, and to offer a social setting for discussion of matters of mutual interest.

Seminars are generally held on alternate Thursdays during the semester, from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm.

This seminar series is supported by the China Institute, the Research School of Asia and the Pacific, and the Australian Centre on China in the World at The Australian National University.

For more information:

<http://chinainstitute.anu.edu.au/events/seminarseries.php>