

Association for  
Learning  
**MANDARIN**

**汉语**

in Australia Inc

## ALMA NEWS DECEMBER 2023

### 2024 YEAR OF THE DRAGON 龙年

The Chinese and the broader Asian community will welcome the Year of the Dragon in February 2024. The dragon (龙, pinyin: lóng) is the fifth animal, and the most popular one, in the Chinese zodiac. Dragons represent power and authority and were used by emperors in ancient China as a symbol.

According to Chinese legend, dragons are very powerful creatures, with supposed control over the weather and rain especially. They live at the bottom of seas, rivers and lakes and can fly among clouds.



[Dragon Dance 舞龙](#)

龍

Traditional

龙

Simplified

### UPCOMING CHINESE FESTIVALS

- Winter Solstice 冬至 – 22/12/2023 (Friday)
- Laba Festival 腊八节 – 18/1/2024 (Thursday)
- Chinese New Year 农历新年 – 10/2/2024 (Saturday)
- Lantern Festival 元宵节 – 24/2/2024 (Saturday)

Association for Learning Mandarin in Australia Inc (ALMA) 50 Ainsworth St, Mawson, ACT 2607  
A non-profit community organisation "Helping Australians to learn Mandarin" ABN: 99 625 121 550  
Website: <https://www.learningmandarin Canberra.org/>

## NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Holiday greetings to all, and allow me to introduce myself, Adelina Tan; 我的中文名字是陈莉娜。I was elected President of ALMA for the coming year at the association's Annual General Meeting on the 24th of October 2023. Also elected at the AGM were:

- Vice President: Tina Jong
- Treasurer: Rachel Que
- Secretary: Margareta Sugianto
- Assistant Secretary: Jenny Eather
- General committee members: Cassandra Estrin, Chiew Yi Lian, June Cheah, Shirley Lin, Cindy Lee and Ruth Chau.

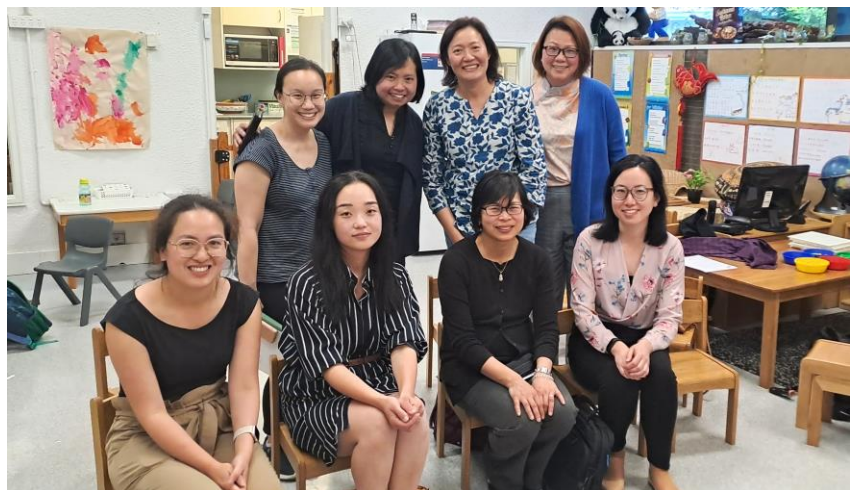
On behalf of the new committee, I would like to thank the previous committee for all their hard work and commitment over previous years.

I came to Australia when my family migrated from Malaysia when I was eight years old. I am a pharmacist and moved to Canberra to join the Australian Public Service in 2005. My son is currently in the preschool room in CAECC. I am passionate about healthcare, cultural exchanges and promoting bilingualism.

As incoming President, I would like to restart some of the engagements ALMA has had with the community in teaching and learning Mandarin as it has lapsed due to the pandemic. I hope to reinvigorate some of these activities and continue to promote opportunities for parents to create a learning environment for their children to learn Mandarin.

I look forward to working with the new committee and getting to know other ALMA members and friends over the coming year. Please feel free to contact us at [canberraalma@gmail.com](mailto:canberraalma@gmail.com) with any ideas or comments you may have about future directions for our association.

**Adelina Tan 陈莉娜**  
**ALMA President**



### A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Tina Jong** - first joined in 2022/3 and has two kids in both the infant/toddler room and preschool room, who are both thriving at the childcare centre. She is excited to be helping out in advocating for Mandarin learning in Canberra.

**Jenny Eather** - is an economist who has studied Mandarin at university and spent some time living in mainland China. As a mom of two, her oldest is already in kindergarten, after starting at CAECC in 2019, her youngest is in the toddler room. She is grateful for the lovely community at CAECC, and the great care her kids receive.

**Ruth Chau** - is originally from Melbourne. She has lived in Canberra for 12 years and works in the Australian Public Service. Her daughter has been with CAECC since 2021. Ruth is interested in language learning and aside from Mandarin, also spent some time studying German while at university.

**Chiew Yi Lian** - is born and bred in Malaysia and is proud to have inherited its multilingual heritage and would like to pass it down to her children. Now that the family has settled in Canberra, ALMA and CAECC has helped strengthen their cultural ties and preserve the continuity of the sense of belonging unique to their family. It's for this reason she appreciates being part of ALMA. Chiew Yi has been a committee member since 2021.

**Cindy Lee** - is a mum of two boys who both attend CAECC, one in the preschool room and the other one in the toddler room. She speaks a little Cantonese but does not speak Mandarin (yet!). However, she is slowly learning Mandarin from her eldest son. In her free time, she enjoys crochet and reading.

**Shirley Lin** - has made Australia her home a decade ago, transitioning from her role as the Country Manager for an international NGO operation in China supporting individuals with HIV. Currently, she serves as the Senior Manager of Research and Business Intelligence at a non-profit organization in Canberra, holding a Master's degree in Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development from the Australian National University. With both her daughter and son attending CAECC, Shirley is deeply passionate about early intervention and early years development.

**June Cheah** – has always been interested in multiculturalism and diversity in both personal and professional front across geographies. Her daughter enjoys pre-school at CAECC. In her down time, June enjoys tennis, pilates, travelling and watching foreign films.

**Margaretta Sugianto** – is of Chinese background, originally from Singapore and moved to Australia in 2008. Her son started at CAECC in 2019 and graduated in 2022 and is now in Mawson Primary. She has been a committee member since 2021. She enjoys art craft, gardening and promoting Chinese traditional customs to little people.

## CHINESE AUSTRALIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE

It's the end of year and the CAECC children and educators have been so busy doing many things.

Some of our children entered the Panda Competition organised by the Australia China Friendship Association, ACT Branch. This was so exciting as one of our students Lillian Lapworth won a prize and will go to the prize giving ceremony at the Chinese Embassy to collect her prize.

This term the Infants/Toddlers room have started a cooking program with their families invited to join them, it has been very successful as you can see by the photo.

This term we met some members of our local community, firstly some of our children who are going to Mawson Primary next year met the educators and children from Mawson Afterschool Care, some of our children visited them and some of their children came to visit us. The children were so thrilled to see some of their friends from last year.

They also have been practicing enthusiastically for our end of year concert that is taking place Friday 1 December.

Children that are going off to school next year:

Siobhan Carey, Halei Chan, Lucas Chen, Etienne Estrin, Elizabeth Greer, Joe Khiew, Mia Lamacchia, Jayden Lee, Lillian Lapworth, Kelvin Lim, Omar Muhlis, Elizabeth Naggy Moriera Gomes, Millie Paget, Merryn Robertson, Zara Stephenson, Wyatt Tang Win Sun, Lexie Wang, Ada Zhang and Feynman Zheng.

We wish them all the best at Kindy.

I would like to thank Jingjing Liu our Assistant director for her continuing support in 2023, and all of our educators who work continuously so hard to ensure a high quality education and care for our enrolled children.

Our utilisation rate continues to be strong for 2024 with only a few places remaining.

Happy Holidays 假期快乐.

**Annette Chemin**  
**Director, CAECC**



## ALMA ACTIVITIES

### **Mandarin Community Tutoring Project**

We are in the process of surveying participants about their experiences in the project during 2023. Responses from learners so far include “I think the conversational parts of the meetings and being able to ask questions and for clarification on what I was struggling with was the most helpful” and “I [found] it valuable and my Chinese definitely improved during the period we studied”. And from a tutor: “It was a very good volunteer experience, which not only helps me make friends, but also offers me an opportunity to practice English with native English speaker”.

If you are living in the Canberra area and interested in becoming involved in the project – as either a [tutor](#) or [learner](#) – you can find more details on the [Tutoring](#) page on the ALMA website. It is a voluntary project; no payment is involved. Registration is free and open to adults who are learning Chinese or have learned the language in the past and to fluent speakers of Mandarin who would like to make more local contacts and share their knowledge of Chinese language and culture.

### **Mandarin radio program on community radio 2XX**

ALMA continues to coordinate this program, which aims to promote the use and learning of Mandarin and to keep Chinese-speaking listeners informed about local events and other information they may be interested in. There are usually two presenters, one a native speaker of Mandarin and the other a Mandarin language learner. Programs typically include a short story, which can be a fable, a child’s story, or an idiom (成语). The presenters usually discuss the vocabulary - in English and Chinese – before the story is read in Mandarin, and then discuss the content to aid language learning and comprehension.

The presenters welcome recordings of children in Canberra singing a song or reading a short story or poem in Mandarin for broadcasting on air – a great way to encourage them to speak and practice the Mandarin they are learning at home, preschool or school. Just send the recording (MP3 preferred), with a transcript if possible, to [canberraalma@gmail.com](mailto:canberraalma@gmail.com).

To hear the program, tune into Community Radio 2XX on 98.3fm every Friday evening from 7pm to 7.30pm. You can also listen online - live or later as a podcast - at [www.2xxfm.org.au](http://www.2xxfm.org.au).

# MANDARIN TEACHING AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

### Volunteers to help with reading at Mawson Primary School in 2024

Mawson Primary School welcomes native speakers of Chinese who could help each week during term times with children's reading. The students are in the Mandarin Immersion Program (MIP), where fifty percent of the curriculum is taught in Mandarin and fifty percent in English. Mawson Primary is the only public school in the ACT with such a program.

For more information contact Constance at [Constance.Chen@ed.act.edu.au](mailto:Constance.Chen@ed.act.edu.au).

### Community language schools in the ACT region

1. Australian School of Contemporary Chinese: <http://www.standardchineseschool.act.edu.au/content/>
2. Canberra Chinese School: <https://www.canberrachineseschool.net/>
3. TACA Mandarin Language School: <https://www.facebook.com/TACAMandarinSchool>
4. FCCCI Chinese School: <https://fccci.org.au/chinese-school/>
5. Queanbeyan Chinese School: <https://qbnchinese.jimdofree.com/>

### Chinese conversation for intermediate and advanced-level speakers

Weekly at Canberra Southern Cross Woden, 10am-11.30am on alternate Fridays and Sundays. Free and no obligation. Native speakers welcome.

For details, phone Claire at 0412 305 538.

### University of the Third Age (U3A)

Beginning and Continuing Mandarin classes for adults aged over 55.

Contact Claire for more details on 0412 305 538.

### Mandarin Friendship Hub 中文之友会

A free online conversation club for learners of Mandarin who have at least intermediate proficiency. It brings together learners from all walks of life who share a passion for connecting with others around the world through Mandarin.

Anyone interested needs to contact the coordinator, Stanley. He will then arrange a time for a 15-minute interview in Mandarin to ensure you have an appropriate level. More details at <https://themandarinhub.wixsite.com/zhongwen/join-us>.

## NEWS AND EVENTS

### Canberra Lunar New Year Celebration 2024

After the successful 2023 event, the ACT Government has announced the return of Dickson's Lunar New Year celebration in 2024.

When: Saturday, 10 February 2024, 11 am to 11 pm

Where: Woolley Street, Dickson

Link: <https://www.act.gov.au/cityrenewal/places/dickson/lunar-new-year>

### ACT Multicultural Festival 2024

The festival is an iconic 3-day event that brings together more than 170 multicultural communities to share their culture, history and heritage through food, art, song and dance.

When: Friday 16 to Sunday 18 February 2024

Link: <https://www.multiculturalfestival.com.au>

### 2024 Chinese New Year Celebration Gala 海鲜大餐，美酒大奖，精彩节目

An evening of fun and celebration. Enjoy a New Year seafood feast, fine wines, prizes, entertainment and games. Organised by the Fujian Townsman Association of ACT and the Australian Capital Wine Tasting Club.

When: Saturday 3 February 2024 5pm – 9pm

Where: Hellenic Club of Canberra, 1 Matilda St, Phillip ACT

Cost: \$65/pp

Bookings required by 25 January 2024.

More details form Mimi at [mzhang@iinet.net.au](mailto:mzhang@iinet.net.au) or 0402 399 637.

### Australia China Friendship Society ACT Branch events

Lantern making workshop Sunday 18 February 1-4pm and Lantern Festival Saturday 24 February 6.30-8.30pm.

More details at <https://acfs.org.au/events/>.

## DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO CONTRIBUTE TO ALMA NEWS?

Please email items for the next newsletter to [canberraalma@gmail.com](mailto:canberraalma@gmail.com) by 15 February 2024.