

Association for
Learning
MANDARIN

汉语

in Australia Inc

ALMA NEWS
MARCH 2022

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Welcome to 2022 – the year of the tiger. Many in Canberra, and around the world, were thrilled to usher in a new lunar year on February 1 – a chance for new beginnings following a difficult few years.

The year of the tiger was celebrated around Canberra with food, dancing, music and decorations. Dickson came alive with roving performances, dancing, live music and workshops.

At the Chinese Australian Early Childhood Centre (CAECC) the children danced and sang “Happy New Year” in Mandarin, among other songs. They also made dumplings and decorated the centre. The Australian National University (ANU) celebrated having international students back on campus with a special belated event at the start of the new academic year.



Lunar New Year celebrations at ANU



Canberra's Prosperous Mountain Dragon and Lion Dance Group

NEW ALMA MEMBERS

We are very pleased to welcome the following new members:

- Neeraj Bhatia and family
- Brigitta Osterburger and family
- Millicent Weber and family
- Mahmoud Konfu and family
- Angel Adams and family

Association for Learning Mandarin in Australia Inc (ALMA) 50 Ainsworth St, Mawson, ACT 2607
A non-profit community organization “Helping Australian to learn Mandarin” ABN: 99 625 121 550
Website: <https://www.learningmandarincanberra.org/>

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy New Year of the Tiger!

I hope everyone had a happy new year celebration with friends and family.

This year is continuing to throw unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I would like to thank all our families for continuing to keep unwell children at home and having their children COVID-19 tested when they are exposed to the virus. I would also like to thank our dedicated educators for all of their continued hard work and care during this challenging time.

This year we are hoping to have more events for both the children and their families, including the upcoming open day evenings.

I hope everyone has enjoyed the rather interesting weather we have had of late. Our boys have particularly enjoyed playing in the rain recently!

Cassie Gleadhill
President, ALMA

CHINESE AUSTRALIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE (CAECC)

The Chinese Australian Preschool is proud and happy to announce our new Assistant Director/Educational Leader, Jing Jing Liu. Jing Jing previously was CAECC's preschool teacher, she left for a short while and came back to start a new role.

Hopefully this year we will be able to resume some of our connections with the wider community such as visiting Mawson Primary School and other local members of our community.

Our children enjoyed their Chinese New Year celebrations learning experiences with a number of craft activities making fans and lanterns, Chinese dancing and singing, the lion dance, learning the song “两只老虎” (*two tigers*), children love this song. With the lyrics, the children learnt two words: 耳朵(*ear*), 尾巴(*tail*), they made dumplings and ended the celebration with the making of sticky rice balls.

We are continuing to ensure that our Centre remains at a High Quality education care standard by reflecting on our practices and obtaining feedback from our families.

Annette Chemin
Director, CAECC

ALMA ACTIVITIES

Mandarin Community Tutoring Project

In January, we sought feedback from Mandarin learners and their volunteer tutors in this project to help us with future planning. The participants who replied reported some challenges due to the COVID situation, but all agreed that being involved in the project had been enjoyable and helpful. Here are some of their comments.

From tutors:

- *“My partner wanted me to talk to him in Mandarin and correct his errors. The most frequently discussed topic is the difference between Australia and China. These discussions do also help me to get to know Australia better!”*
- *“I hold this project is a win-win. It provides Mandarin learners with a wonderful stage to learn and practise Mandarin with native speakers and also gives Chinese in Australia a chance to make friends and learn Australian culture! I hope I can continue to participate in this project!”*
- *“We always focussed on her assessment, and she practiced English with me also.”*

From learners:

- *“I had a lovely time with my tutor. We managed to set up semi-regular meetings around uni and other commitments, and I feel that I gained much more fluency in conversational Mandarin. I became quite good friends with my tutor, and we saw each other socially as well, which was really nice!”*
- *“[We] met on Zoom consistently most Friday or Saturday nights. Having someone with the patience to engage in long conversations in Chinese with me was very rare. I could tell my speaking ability improved a lot just from the few months speaking with her.”*
- *“Very happy about the project. Not sure how I would have found such a helpful person to practice speaking with without it!”*

For more information about this project and how to get involved, as either a tutor or a learner, visit the [Mandarin Community Tutoring page](#) on the ALMA website.

Mandarin radio program on community radio 2XX

One of the main aims of our weekly program is to promote the use and learning of Mandarin in the ACT area, especially among young families. We do this by playing and discussing a short story in Mandarin each week and playing fun songs. The program is presented bilingually by Mandy from ALMA and Xiaohui from the ACT Chinese Australian Association. You can listen live on Friday evenings from 7pm to 7.30 on 98.3 FM or online at www.2xxfm.org.au If you miss a program or want to listen to one again you can access recordings of previous programs through the ‘On Demand’ link at the same web address.

We welcome recordings of your children singing a song or reading a short story or poem in Mandarin for inclusion in the program. Hearing themselves on the radio is a great way to encourage children to speak and practice the Mandarin they are learning at home, preschool or school. Just send the recording (MP3 preferred), with a transcript or summary of the content, to canberraalma@gmail.com.

ALMA gratefully acknowledges community radio 2XX and the Community Broadcasting Foundation for supporting this weekly Mandarin language program.

OTHER NEWS

Mandarin Friendship Hub 中文之友会

Learners of Mandarin with at least intermediate proficiency may be interested in this free conversation group that meets online on Thursday evenings from 8pm to 9pm. Founded in 2021 by a group of Mandarin teachers from various cities in Australia, the organisers see it as a community project to give back to the society using their expertise. With more than 50 years of teaching experience collectively, they aim to provide a safe and supportive space for intermediate and advanced learners of Mandarin to continue practising oral language with professional guidance and feedback. The name of the group, 中文之友会, is designed to be taken literally. This is a place where "friends of Mandarin gather".

For more information see <https://themandarinhub.wixsite.com/zhongwen>

Collecting Chinese Australian stories

The National Library is looking for Chinese Australians who would like to share their stories for the library's oral history project. This is part of a larger project collecting experiences, images and voices of Chinese Australians in a series of activities focusing on how different migrant communities have made lives for themselves and have made our country richer for their contributions. The aim is to make sure vibrant, diverse and continually evolving cultures are properly preserved and recorded for future generations.

For more information about the project see

<https://www.nla.gov.au/stories/blog/collecting-chinese-australian-stories>

The library also holds many digital resources in Chinese, including a range of subscriptions to databases and digitised collections

China in the World (CIW) at the ANU 中华全球研究中心

The Australian Centre on China in the World (CIW) provides a wealth of interesting news, discussions and information about all things Chinese. Most events are free and open to the general public.

To join their mailing list to keep up to date with their activities email: ciw@anu.edu.au

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO CONTRIBUTE TO ALMA NEWS?

Please email items for the next newsletter to canberraalma@gmail.com by 15 May 2022.