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**Mandarin word of the issue**

**节** jié - Festival

Festivals are an important part of Chinese culture, linking tradition with modern life.

**Upcoming festivals in 2025**



*Tomb Sweeping Festival*

April 4<sup>th</sup> - 清明节  
Qīngmíngjié

This festival is a day to honour and remember our ancestors. To prepare for this festival, many people will take time to care for their ancestors' graves or burial urns in the days leading up to Qingming Jie. It is also a popular day to fly a kite, which is both fun and may bring good fortune.

**DRAGON BOAT  
FESTIVAL**



May 21<sup>st</sup> - 端午节  
Duānwǔjié

This festival is held to prevent bad luck and disease. Occurring on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, this traditional event sees people eating zongzi (rice dumplings) sprinkled with sugar, drinking rice wine containing realgar (a yellow mineral), and holding dragon boat races.

## Note from the ALMA President



Since the last update, we have celebrated Lunar New Year and welcomed the Year of the Snake. I hope everyone has had a good summer break and is now getting back into the swing of things.

The Chinese Australian Early Childhood Centre (CAECC) continues to be the main focus for the Committee. Recruitment activities are underway for the Centre Director role with the impending retirement of Annette Chemin in June this year. While we will say a proper farewell to Annette when the time comes, I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her dedication and hard work as the Centre Director for the last 6 years. Her leadership and tireless efforts have made a significant impact on the centre, ensuring its growth and success as a centre that is recognised for exceeding the National Quality Standards and delivering a high standard of care and education.

The Committee and the management team are also working hard on rebranding the centre with a refresh of the logo design as well updates to the Centre's social media presence. Some families may have already noticed an increased presence on Facebook and the recent advertorial in the Canberra City news. We anticipate the increased focus on marketing the centre will support us to maintain the high enrolment rate for the centre into the future.

Lastly a warm welcome to our new members who have joined since our last newsletter.

There are numerous ways you can get involved in ALMA's activities and we welcome all your input and support to maintain our strong commitment to Mandarin education and quality early childhood care. Please get in touch via the ALMA website or email.

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

*Adelina*



## Note from the CAECC Director

Welcome to the first newsletter of the year. We have exciting incursions and excursions planned for this year, and have already started our new Magic Moo music program.

In our second term, the preschoolers will do physical activity with Kelly Sports, while the Infants/Toddlers will continue music with Magic Moo.

We have an excursion to see “Witch on a Broom” at the Canberra Theatre on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March. Another exciting excursion is planned for the preschoolers in May to visit Birrigai Outdoor School, at Birrigai, which is an important place for the Ngunnawal People. This will give the children the opportunity to experience First Nations culture and stimulate their sense of wonder and inquiry.

We have had quite a number of young children starting this year and we are continuing to support them as they settle in. We have done this by temporarily increasing the staff to children ratio, which will help the children in building secure and trusting relationships with their educators.

The children are continuing to immerse themselves in the Mandarin language. This is continuously demonstrated as the children become effective communicators in both Mandarin and English and start to recognise various sounds and words in Mandarin.

Our Centre is nearly full for this year, and there is considerable interest in our current families obtaining additional days for their children.

I will be retiring this year, and my last day will be on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June. I will miss CAECC very much and I am so grateful that I have had the opportunity to work here. This is truly a quality service where the staff work so diligently to ensure that the children receive the best early education and care.

*Annette*

## **New ALMA members**

We welcome the following new ALMA members

- Johannes Paul Lehmann and family
- Phoebe Black and family
- Yufei Jing and family
- Yu Chung Vincent Tang and family
- John Lee and family
- Nicole Watkin and family
- Timothy Dangerfield and family
- Lusi Zhang and family
- Yifang Wu and family
- Mathias Sinning and family
- Alexander Seccombe and family
- Melyn Roberts and family
- Ailene Ang and family
- Fangzhou Zhu and family
- Wai Kitt Cheng and family

## **Meet the committee members**

Each edition, we will introduce two members of the ALMA committee.

### **Dr Matthew Brazel, ALMA Vice President**

Matt is a psychiatrist who completed his medical degree in Brisbane. After working across Queensland and Tasmania, he moved to Canberra with his family, drawn in part by the CAECC and Mawson Primary School's Mandarin immersion program. His goal is to create an environment where his children can develop stronger Mandarin skills than his own (a low bar). Outside of work, Matt enjoys running and watching American football.

### **Dr Brendon Gittins, ALMA Secretary**

Brendon is a public servant who is originally from Toowoomba in Queensland. He completed his PhD in International Relations at the University of Melbourne, after which he moved to Canberra with his wife to start a family. Brendon is fascinated by Chinese history and culture.

## ALMA ACTIVITIES

### Mandarin Community Tutoring Project

This project started over 20 years ago in response to two main observations, which are still relevant today. Firstly, Mandarin is the most spoken language in the ACT after English. Secondly, the many international students from the PRC and other Chinese speaking countries studying at university or college level in Canberra often find it difficult to make local friends and contacts.

The project aims to facilitate contact between local Chinese speakers and learners. Tutors may be working in the government or private sector, international students, or retired. As these volunteers rarely have teaching experience, learners are expected to already be studying Mandarin – in a class or online – or have learned the language in the past so they can guide the tutor in what they wish to practice. Once registered, a student and tutor are put in touch with each other by email and the two make their own arrangements to meet. They then decide the frequency of meetings, how to organise the sessions and to what extent they consider the sessions to be a language exchange.

For more details about this free project and how to register – either as a learner or tutor visit ‘Mandarin Community Tutoring’ at [learningmandarincanberra.org](http://learningmandarincanberra.org).

### Mandarin radio program on Community Radio 2XX

Have you heard about the weekly bilingual radio program that ALMA helps to present on Friday evenings from 7pm to 7.30pm? The program is designed with young families and Chinese language learners in mind. Each program usually includes a short story and fun songs, as well as information about local events of interest. To hear the program, tune in at 7pm on Friday evenings at 98.3FM or online at [www.2xxfm.org.au](http://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.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO MAINTAIN OR DEVELOP YOUR MANDARIN

### Chinese conversation for intermediate-level speakers

- Want to practice your Mandarin skills?
- Have intermediate speaking and listening skills?

Come along one Friday morning to this Chinese conversation group (see photo below)

Free and coordinated by volunteers, the group - which includes native speakers - meets every Friday morning from 10.30am to 11.30am at the Canberra Southern Cross in Woden. There is no set program. The group chats about topics of interest that week.

Contact Claire for more details at [pingpingdandan8@gmail.com](mailto:pingpingdandan8@gmail.com)



### University of the Third Age (U3A)

Beginning and Continuing Mandarin classes for adults aged over 55. There are various options. An online class for slower paced learning and a face-to-face group for faster learners.

Contact Claire for more details on 0412 305 538

## OPPORTUNITIES TO MAINTAIN OR DEVELOP YOUR MANDARIN

### Mandarin Friendship Hub 中文之友会

Organised by a small group of experienced Mandarin teachers from Australia, the aim is to provide a safe and comfortable space for intermediate and advanced learners of Mandarin to come and practise spoken Mandarin with professional teachers and other learners who share a common passion for Mandarin learning.

Free and meets online every Thursday 8-9pm Melbourne time. Attendees must have proficiency level in Chinese at least HSK 4 or above.

More information <https://sites.google.com/view/zhongwenzhiyouhui/home>

### Mandarin TV programs for kids

Do you know on the ABC iview streaming service, there is a selection of Mandarin TV programs for your kids? This includes Australia's favourite Bluey as well as Peppa Pig, Luo Bai Bei, Octonauts and Moon and Me.

Access here: <https://iview.abc.net.au/collection/1298>