



Association for Learning Mandarin in Australia Inc  
澳大利亞學漢語協會



## Annual General Meeting of the Association for Learning Mandarin in Australia Inc.

### *President's Report 2020-2021*

#### **Outline of ALMA's objectives**

The Association for Learning Mandarin in Australia Inc. (ALMA) is a non-profit organisation that was established in 1984. ALMA's fundamental objectives (set out in its constitution) are:

- To further the use and learning of the Chinese language in Australia.
- To promote awareness and understanding of Chinese culture and heritage in Australian society.
- To set up and operate bilingual Chinese and English educational and child-care facilities.

ALMA is a not for profit organisation, and raises funds through financial memberships to ALMA as well as through the Chinese Australian Early Childhood Centre (CAECC), which it owns and operates.

#### **Summary of CAECC related activities**

The 2020 - 2021 year has been another challenging and rewarding year for the ALMA Committee. The Committee spent a considerable portion of its time:

- Like last year, understanding government funding and the direct implications of these during the global COVID-19 pandemic. In the recent 2021 lockdown, the Federal government gave childcare facilities the option to waive gap payments for families who were keeping their children home during the ACT lockdown. This gap was not directly supplemented with grants or payments like last year's lockdown.
- Establishing an Enterprise Agreement (EA) with our educators. This is drafted and agreed in principle. However, the committee put the finalisation of the EA on hold as the ACT went into lockdown in August 2021, we waived our gap fees to ease financial strain for our families and the length of our decreased income is uncertain. The EA is ready to be signed off with the next committee once the centre's income has returned to normal.
- Supporting CAECC Director in continuing to update the policies and support for the Assessment and Rating of the centre under the National Quality Framework completed in March, receiving an exceeding rating.
- Recruitment of the Pre School room leader position and then in turn the Infant/Toddler room leader position. Both were internal promotions demonstrating our strong team and the potential for career progression at our centre.

#### **ALMA Committee Changes**

There were no committee changes during this year!

#### **CAECC Staffing**

We've had some changes to staffing this year, JingJing resigned and Sunny our Room Leader in the infant Toddlers room was appointed the Pre School Room Leader. Sunny is a Mandarin speaker and has ECT qualifications. Cynthia, an educator in the Infant Toddler room was appointed the Infant Toddler Room leader, Cynthia is also a mandarin speaker.

We currently have a full time educator position vacancy and hope to fill this as soon as a suitable candidate is identified.

Annette continues to place a strong focus on educational programming and reflection on our practises in the centre. With this renewed focused and the expectation, of many staff wanting and needing to take leave once international borders reopen, we do expect to hire an additional educator in 2022.

### **Non-CAECC activities**

Outside of the CAECC, many ALMA activities were cancelled or modified due to COVID-19 and social distancing restrictions. However, the following did occur:

- the presentation of a program on community radio station 2XX every Friday from 7pm -7.30pm that promotes the use and learning of Mandarin in the ACT and informs the community, especially the Chinese speaking community, about local events and other information of interest. Children can also enjoy a bedtime story in Mandarin.
- the Mandarin Community Tutoring project, which 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 (at no cost)
- Both the CAECC and ALMA have enjoyed a strong collaborative relationship with Mawson Primary School over the last 18 months.

### **What's in store for 2021-2022?**

I will not be continuing on with the ALMA Committee and hope to see some new committee members join some of the current committee to take ALMA into 2021-2022. Many activities outside of CAECC are dependent on the covid-19 vaccine rollout and relaxation of social distancing requirements. I hope the new committee will prioritise the following:

- Sign and approve the enterprise bargaining agreement with educators at CAECC
- Implement a sustainable online meeting platform e.g. Microsoft Teams as Google has just introduced a payment model to Google Meet's exceeding one hour.
- Maintain ALMA's assets and income to ensure the CAECC remains financially viable in the continuing uncertainties due to the COVID -19 pandemic.
- Further develop the community tutoring project
- continue the 2XX weekly radio program
- Develop a relationship with Melrose High School's leadership and teachers as they introduce advanced Mandarin in the near future.
- continue to strengthen ties with the Chinese community and
- collaborate with Chinese community language schools regarding:
  - Mandarin programs for intermediate Mandarin-speaking students who are do not have native Mandarin speakers in their immediate family and
  - After-school and school holiday programs.

### **Thank you and Committee recommendations**

We were fortunate to have a positive mix of new and existing ALMA committee members, we continued on line meetings and increased these as needed to understand the lockdown and waiving of gap fee's financial impact.

In particular I would like to thank:

- Dr Amanda Scott for running the tutoring program and starring in the weekly radio program, and her support as an extremely knowledgeable ALMA Vice President.
- Cassandra Estrin for driving the research and writing of the Enterprise Agreement.

- Cherie Rogers for chasing me for my newsletter contribution, her writing, translating and creating the ALMA newsletter.
- Charlotte Foster for her time in supporting management at CAECC
- Rosa Harber for secretarial duties and dedication to capturing accurate committee meeting minutes.
- Victor Yee for continuing the treasury duties this year.
- ALL of the ALMA Committee, they have been an incredibly calm, capable and supportive committee Thank you for getting things done this year!
- Annette Chemin for her determination in developing our educators and improving the centres standards, and her consistency in updating the centre's policies.
- Zilla Tam for her ability and willingness to learn new skills and her total commitment in putting the children first.
- ALL of our educators who have faced another challenging year! Many were again isolated from their families and continued to educate and care for our children in and out of lockdown!

I wish the next President and committee much success and hope you find the experience as rewarding and satisfying as I did!

Kate Friend

President, ALMA

12 October 2021