

The Australia China Friendship Society of Western Australia (ACFSWA) was formed on 29 June 1970, when seven seniors met to inaugurate ACFSWA of the Australia China Society, electing Mrs Nancy Wilkinson as president and Mrs Celia Taylor as secretary-treasurer. The Society soon linked with other branches and was given representation on the National Council. This was some twenty years after similar societies were established in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. Initially these branches were known as the Australia China Society (ACS). The pioneer branches endorsed the principles of cultural understanding, trade relationships and peaceful relations between Australia and the People's Republic of China (PRC) with a goal of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

The catalyst for the formation of a Western Australian ACS was undoubtedly the visit in May 1970 of a Chinese born qualified medical practitioner, who wrote under the pseudonym of Han Suyin. It was a time of anti-communism in the community and China was regarded with trepidation. There was little knowledge about China, or its culture. The idea of friendship with China was very contentious. The voice of support for China needed to be loud and clear. Consequently, in 1971, a less reticent John Thomson was elected president.



Dr Han Suyin

The Society's early committees reflected two lines of thinking. Some were attracted primarily to Chinese art, culture and cuisine and others to the efforts of the Chinese development through utilising Marxist-Leninism- Mao Zedong thought.

1970 Original Objects

To cultivate friendship and understanding, and peaceful relations with China, and

To make ourselves well informed about China, its people, and events there, and to spread this news to others.

We consider that accurate information assists in promoting friendship.

From its beginning, ACFSWA has focused on providing information about and generating an understanding of China. This has been achieved by showing Chinese films, forming and operating study groups, supporting exhibitions on Chinese culture and describing life in China by giving talks by way of its newsletter. It still supports people to people interactions by leading tours and delegations to China under the auspices of its National body, promotes the teaching of Chinese in Western Australian schools and co-sponsoring student visits to China, in order to help bridge the cultural gap between the two countries.

In an era of anti - People's Republic of China sentiments, the ACS was the only organisation in Western Australia to welcome Chinese scientists, journalists, sporting teams, postgraduate students, the Nanjing Acrobatic Troupe and even the crews of visiting Chinese freighters. Two of the Society's major programs consisted of operating a bookshop, distributing Chinese literature and text books and providing teachers for various educational institutions in China to teach English. For a while, other activities included language classes, and a weekly slot on WAIT (Curtin University) community radio entitled 'China Today'.

In the second year after its inception, in 1971, the ACS organised the first ever Western Australian public banquet to commemorate China's National Day. In later years, the ACS shared the banquet planning with other organisations wishing to celebrate the occasion.

1971 was therefore a landmark year. A monthly newsletter of ACS was published and distributed locally and to China and New Zealand. The Western Australian ACS joined with other branches to lobby support for the recognition of the People's Republic of China. In October the United Nations recognised the Peoples Republic of China as the legitimate China. Gough Whitlam visited China in 1971, while he was Leader of the Opposition. When the Australian Labor Party formed Government, it established diplomatic relations with the PRC on 21st December 1972.

Early members of ACS had to be quite brave when supporting China in any way during that Western-inspired era of the bamboo curtain. The Society's early members are to be commended for their courage and humanity in the face of being chided by government, the media and the general public. This attitude continued even years after the Whitlam initiatives in December 1972. After a series of firebombing of Chinese restaurants, in 1997, the then renamed ACFSWA combined with the Chung Wah Association in arranging a meeting in which the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs, the Hon. H.R. Broad MLA, addressed a public gathering about concerns regarding the racial intolerance in the Australian community.

After the establishment of diplomatic relations between Australia and China, the ACS stressed the importance of friendship and in 1983, to reflect this, the National committee and all branches changed the their name to 'Australia China Friendship Society' (ACFS) .

The Society's Objects were greatly expanded by Constitution amendments adopted at the ACS Western Australian branch Annual General Meeting on 29 April 1973. However the constitution's later revision in 1992 reflects the current friendship work and objectives which still apply today. ACFSWA commends the dedicated work of Geoff Davis and Patricia Thompson with this major undertaking.

The Objects of the Society are:

- Promote friendship and understanding between the peoples of Australia and the People's Republic of China;
- Support and assist visitors from the People's Republic of China;
- Provide assistance to educational and social welfare projects in the People's Republic of China.

When the Chinese Consulate General was established in Perth in 1994, the Chung Wah Association and ACFSWA co-hosted a welcoming banquet, which gave the first Consul General Cai Chuan the opportunity to meet members of the Society and Chinese business and community leaders. This was the beginning of a relaxed and friendly ACFS relationship in Western Australia with the then Chinese Consul General Cai Chuan, his successors and consular staff.

A major difference between our two cultures is the way in which we welcome and entertain visitors. The entertaining of the Consular staff and members of visiting delegations through a mixture of formal dinners and informal get togethers (meals at private homes, picnics and outings to various parks) creates a relaxed atmosphere for the exchange of ideas. This approach has also provided many opportunities for visitors to gain a greater understanding of Australian culture on and how Western Australians live.



Ray Moss welcoming Consul General Mr Lei Kezhong to his home in 2016 with Arnold and Rose van Son (on the left)



Les and Anne Greive entertaining Chinese Ambassador Lin Ping at home, 27 February 1983. This is the first entry in the Greives' Guests book.

Friends to many Chinese people – Page extracts from Anne and Les Greive’s Visitors book

<i>Guests</i>			
DATE	NAME	ADDRESS	REMARKS
27-2-83	林子	中国考改大利亚大使	LIN PING
"	范国祥	大使馆参赞	FAN GUOXIANG
"	赵祥龄	中国使馆三秘	ZHAO XIANGLING
27/12/84	葛科	山东烟台	} Windsurfing Team 1984
27/12/84	陈江时	福建福州	
27/12/84	刘明书	辽宁大连	
27/12/84	方建国	安徽芜湖	
27/12/84	康山云	中国帆板队领队(北京)	
27/12/84	张小冬	广东湛江	
27/12/84	陈经芳	广西北海	
27/12/84	郝爽	中华作协总会	
27/12/84	王立	中国帆板队教练(青岛)	
1, 12, 86	Cui Jun 崔军	101, A2 Qian Majiawang Lane Xicheng District, Beijing, China	
25 Dec. 86	沈望月 (SHEN MOWANG)	Ministry of Culture Cultural Dept. BEIJING, CHINA	Merry Christmas
25 Dec 86	付利成 (Fu Licheng)	National Institute for the Control of Pharmaceutical and Biological Products, Beijing, China	" "
25 Dec 86	郭庆平 (Guo Qingping)	Dept. of Computer and Automation Wuhan University of Water Trans- portation Engineering, Wuhan, China	
25 Dec. 86	乔颖 (Qiao Ying)	Ministry of Culture, Beijing, China	Merry Christmas Seasonal Greetings
25 Dec. 86	任建伟 Zhang Jian-wei	Jiangsu Family Planning Institute	Best wishes for 1987

Welfare Support

The Society has also provided welfare support to a number of institutions in China. These included:

- the Ma Haide Foundation for the Eradication of Leprosy in YouXie
- the Zhejiang Welfare Foundation for the Handicapped
- the National Council’s support of Gung Ho movement, Hope Project
- the production of a dictionary that included Australian Chinese idioms
- the Charles Foundation (providing schools and support for women)
- the donations for flood and earthquake relief

The activities of ACFS have been recognised by both the Australian Government and by the People's Republic of China.

In 1974 committee member Renie Yuan, a most stalwart member and supporter of ACFSWA was invited with nine other delegates to take part in the National Day Celebration in China. A highlight of her trip was a meeting with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai.

In 1981 the then Lord Mayor of Perth Sir Thomas Wardle agreed to become the ACFSWA patron. Members Geoff Davis and Anita Chong were active in promoting the teaching of Mandarin in Western Australian State and Private Schools. In recognition of their work in this area, both were awarded the Order of Australia medal. They were also awarded the special title of “Outstanding Chinese Language Educator” by the Council of the People’s Republic of China in recognition of their many years work as teachers of Mandarin in WA high schools.

On 16th October 2000 a Memorandum of Understanding was agreed between ACFSWA and the Zhejiang Provincial People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.

In 2006, Mr Les Greive (ACFSWA President 1993 - 2004) was given an award by the Chinese People’s Association of Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) in recognition for his work with both the Western Australian branch and National Council of the ACFS in promoting the friendship between our two countries.

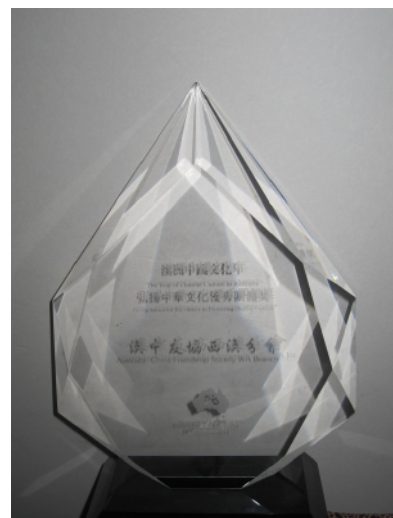


Roz Hanley was honoured to bring back the CPAFFC award following the Friendship Forum in Wuhan to present it to Les Greive in 2006. Photograph taken at the Chinese Consulate in Perth.

The Chinese Ambassador to Australia Zhou Wenzhong and his wife Xie Shumin were guests of the Society at a special dinner at the Grand Palace Restaurant. Mr Zhou Wenzhong presented President Les Greive, representing the Society, with a beautiful Chinese tapestry.



At the Tenth Chinese Culture Ambassadors Award Presentation Ceremony held in 2011, ACFS WA was recognised for “Excellence in Promoting Chinese Culture” in the Group Achievement Category. The Award Trophy and the Honorary Credential (certificate) were received on behalf of the Society by Roz Hanley, ACFS WA honorary life member and ACFS National Tours Organiser.



ACFSWA celebrations of the 40th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between China and Australia

In 2012 at the Chinese Consulate reception to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between China and Australia, five Society members were recognised for their contribution in improving Australia China relations. Les Greive, Dr Wolfgang Frick Geoffrey Davis, Ann Begg and Rosalind Hanley were presented with the China Australia Friendship Award.

China Australia Friendship Award

On the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, we avail this opportunity to award you for your great contribution to the China-Australia friendship relations.

Consulate General of People's Republic of China in Perth 21 December 2012



Anne Greive, representing Les Greive, Dr Wolfgang (Wally) Frick, Geoffrey Davis, Ann Begg and Rosalind (Roz) Hanley receiving their awards with 2012 ACFSWA President William Chi

In recognition of ACFSWA activities and the 40th anniversary of the establishment of Diplomatic relations between Australia and China, Australia Post issued a special commemorative postmark dated 21 December 2012 for the Society and its members to use on stamped envelopes.



ACFSWA contributions to National ACFS

ACFSWA has also strong participation in the National Council (ACFS Ltd), the over arching organisation for the state branches. The Society's office bearers have served terms on the National Council as State Directors. In addition ACFSWA member, Roz Hanley has acted as the ACFS Tours Organiser for many years.



William Chi opening the 2012 conference

ACFSWA hosted the biennial Conferences in 1992, 2002 and 2012. The biennial conference incorporates the Annual General Meeting of ACFS Ltd, meetings of its executive and an opportunity for the various participating states to exchange experiences, views and ideas.

Consul General Madam Wang Yiner in her address to the 2012 conference remarked:



“A good relationship between China and Australia does not come easily. We have experienced beautiful sunshine, as well as fierce storms during the past 40 years. But, what makes us so delighted is the fact that the Australia China Friendship Society always displays a friendly attitude towards Chinese people, and promotes cultural exchanges, no matter what happens. This enhances the mutual understanding between our peoples and helps to promote bilateral relations. Therefore, I would claim that the ACFS has made a substantial contribution to the development of Australia-China relations during the past 40 years.”

“Harvest of Endurance” Scroll

ACFSWA contributed to National Council’s commissioning of the “Harvest of Endurance” Scroll. As part of the celebration of the Australian Bicentenary in 1988, the Australia China Friendship Society commissioned and sponsored the creation of a 50 metre long scroll portraying two centuries of Australian Chinese participation in, and economic contribution to Australian Society. Artist Mo Xiangxi, assisted by Wang Jingwei, painted the scroll, Mo Yimei carried out the historical research.



Multiculturalism: Grassby, William Liu and Arthur Calwell are shown at centre right, signifying the end of the White Australia policy. At centre left, Wang Guoquan, the first Chinese ambassador representing the People’s Republic of China, is meeting members of the Australian Chinese community.

Image and caption from National Museum of Australia website. Rights to the Scroll belong to ACFS.

ACFS National Logo

Another first for WA was the development of the national logo for ACFS Ltd. It was designed under committee member Roz Hanley's guidance who commissioned Sinead Hanley, a graphic artist to finalise it. The impressive design combines blue for Australia and red for China. A full symbolic interpretation and meaning of the ACFS logo is featured on the back of the cover page.



Today, the Society continues to focus on friendship and understanding between the two countries by promoting the study of Mandarin, hosting delegations and organising cultural tours to China, supporting exhibitions of Chinese culture, and using significant Chinese and Australian dates to further promote mutual friendship.

ACFSWA Friendship Award

ACFSWA has introduced the ACFSWA Friendship Awards designed to honour and thank those organisations and individuals that make a significant contribution towards the promotion of friendship between China and Australia. In 2017 Professor Chu Xianhua of the Confucius Institute at UWA was the first recipient of the award.



Deputy Consul General Madan Sun Anlin, Inaugural Award recipient, Professor CHU Xianhua and ACFSWA President Nancy Chen,

Views from Cunderdin

Friendship is epitomised by Terry and Lois Willis, farmers from Cunderdin who have taken the Chinese student pilots from China Southern Airlines under their wings. They support the students with English classes and social activities. They also entertain the parents visiting their student pilot children there.

The attached photos of the farm were taken over the last 10 or 12 years. Grain is planted at seeding time and as you can see it grows nice and green. The students tell us that it gives them a warm feeling in their hearts as they fly over the wheat fields. The word " Ping An " in Chinese characters was chosen by them for us to write. There was a mistake once when An Ping was written. They said it didn't matter because classical Chinese was read backwards.



Preparing the message



A view in Winter



This way to the farm



Ping An or An Ping