



Chinese Community Council of Australia Inc

澳華社區議會

Call for Papers

The Chinese Community Council of Australia will be hosting a conference in Sydney Saturday/Sunday Weekend 8-9 April 2011. The venue will be decided in February 2011.

Conference theme: finding the Chinese Australian voice.

We are interested in papers which address one or more of the issues listed hereunder.

1. The need to have a CA voice: why? For instance, by looking into recent events where the CAs fail to have a voice when we should; or examples of “others” speaking on our behalf without our consent; or examples of CAs acting as willing dummies for their cultural and political puppet masters.
2. The voices of community leaders: hundreds of Chinese community leaders in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and elsewhere, all jostling for recognition by “VIPs” through Chinese festival banquets and personal contacts. Does this situation cause the mainstream powers that be to continue to patronize us as “ethnic leaders” who are to be pampered, and subsequently made use of as political pawns?
3. The nature of current CA voices: what are they about? Settlement issues, rights, slights, pulling more than our weight ...? Do these voices hold us back from becoming vital citizens? Or make our native-born descendants look askance?
4. When is it appropriate for a CA voice to be projected? Any CA is free to speak as a citizen, on any issue, at any time. When and under what circumstances should we speak out with the CA badge? On other occasions because of our distinctive identifiers, name, accent others would often see us as CAs even if what we say has nothing to do with our being a CA, for instance, when we speak up about the homeless or the mentally ill.
5. What are the barriers to finding our voice: the three wise monkeys, the remaining rearguards of white Australia, the lack of acculturation, the inability to leave behind the millstones of our past ...?
6. Is there a last frontier? For instance when will we see a judge, a human rights activist, or a public intellectual who is a CA?
7. What should our position be in relation to China? Especially in terms of what is appropriate and helpful from the perspective of our native born descendants?
8. What is the role of first generation CAs in paving the way for their children to become vital citizens of Australia?

Abstracts

Abstracts of 200 words with a bio of 50 words would be most welcome. Please send to Chek Ling: ccling@aapt.net.au by 12 Jan 2011. Before Christmas would be fantastic!



Acceptance or otherwise will be notified by 24 Jan 2011.

Format of conference

Papers required by 18 March 2011, and circulated soon after to all participants, to pre-prime the conference to flares of creativity and flights of imagination.

We prefer papers which are succinct, well-argued, and provocative. Academic formalities are not expected. Please keep to an upper limit of 3000 words.

Presentation: 15 minutes. Respondent: 5 minutes. Open discussion 10 minutes.

Please direct any enquiries to Chek Ling.

Background

The idea of having a national Chinese Australian voice, a “united voice”, has been niggling us for quite some time.

The first national conference was held in Sydney in 1986, thanks to Blainey’s 1984 campaign against Asian immigration, with high hopes and great excitement. (perhaps 200 people, from all States and Territories). It was not a success - dissension, mistrust, and timidity of leadership from the very start. A second one was held in Melbourne in 1992, (less than 100 attended, with WA’s previous large contingent absent, and many fewer from SA). A glimmer of hope was resurrected, but not followed by progress. A third one followed in 1998 in Melbourne with just a handful of the original participants in 1986. It was then largely attended by recent PRC immigrants in Melbourne. About 50 people attended. The idea then died, quietly.

Since then a few individuals have attempted to establish a Chinese Australian voice, with patchy outcomes. This is a watershed: “unity” is no longer regarded as practical or necessary.

The Chinese Community Council of Australia is the most recent attempt. It has made some headway, and is determined to establish a robust intellectual and cultural foundation for the development of a Chinese Australian voice.

This National Conference will give us a rigorous start.

Please do pass this on to whoever you think may make a contribution to our undertaking, a serious Chinese Australian undertaking that for once will not be seeking (perfunctory) endorsement from politicians, career multiculturalists or Chinese Embassy officials.

Expressions of interest to attend this conference would be very much appreciated.

Chek Ling

Convenor 3 December 2010