

Comment by Michael C H Jones

For nearly 40 years ACCCI has been Sydney based. Chamber was founded in the years 1974-76 on a concept - that Sydney not China was the middle kingdom and center of global civilization. Our attitudes have not changed. In the early 1980s Founding President Darcy Carter and his Board declined to disappear in a so-called national organisation, arguing for a confederation of China Chambers based on cities/states which was consistent with Australian economic conditions and political traditions. The Chamber was the successor organisation to the NSW China Chamber of Commerce established in the early Federation years. Three generations of the Liu family - Billy, Bo and Richard - were central to that vision and they were supported by executive members Reg Torrington and Greg Burns, Arthur Chang and King Fong, Roy Dismeyer and Laurie Smith, amongst many others prior to Tiananmen Square in June 1989. Again we declined to join the ACBC when that breakaway group tried to control/unify all China business groups in 1996. Nevertheless Chamber assisted throughout the 1980s the formation of all Sister State Relations in Australia and most in New Zealand as well as supporting during the 1990s the establishment of Australia China Chambers in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

However our independence was always closely guarded by a range of structural and organisational methodologies. The framework of Chinese city activism launched by the ACCCI International Committee in the mid 1980s continued into the 1990s despite trade sanctions and was consolidated by the publication of the Blue and Green Booklets in 1995 and 1996 respectively. The culmination of this strategy occurred during the many ACCCI China delegations of 2001-2004 following the PRC's admission to the WTO and only ended in late 2008-09 with the GFC. Since then Chamber has transformed into a 'China in the World' Think Tank - although our world is Global Economic Relations in Indauspac. But the tradition of activism has continued with ACCCI Special Projects related to China throughout Asia, particularly ASEAN and the Pacific Islands as well as the USA and EU - with many business visits to these regions since 2003. In 2011-12 Chamber has firmed up its vision and framework for policy formulation and implementation with among other activities two email submissions to the Australia in the Asian Century Inquiry.

The 'Sydney - A Place of Learning' section on this website has been a recognition of Sydney's relative decline - now out of the top 10 global cities - in international standing due to abysmal policies of both State and Council governance across Greater Sydney. The technological possibilities are available for Sydney to lead Australia and for Australia to realise its potential as a 'Great Power' second only to the USA and PRC unless compared to regional groupings such as the EU and ASEAN. This would be according to the Foreign Policy 2012 Global Cities Index criteria of " five dimensions: business activity, human capital, information exchange, cultural experience, and political engagement". Melbourne has just entered the top 50 at 32.

Most interesting, apart from the Emerging Cities Outlook (ECO) which places both Beijing and Shanghai at the top but just below Sydney, is the concept of 'Relational City Thinking' - " A city's very *raison d'être* is its link to the world economy, particularly in making connections with other global cities". NYLON re New York and London, PARFRANK re Paris and Frankfurt, LATOK re Los Angeles and Tokyo and HONGSING re Hong Kong and Singapore. Why not, if we are talking about strong economic relationships between cities re "triads" - SYDMELBRIAUC or Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Auckland as a 10-15 million mighty engine for global growth in the Western Pacific? Auckland has rationalised its city structure and governance, Brisbane has always been a City, and Melbourne and Sydney have started thinking about their economic futures. One way would be for both the Victorian and NSW State Governments to commit to a Minister for Greater Melbourne and Greater Sydney. In Sydney our 43 mayors could remain as Heads of their Districts, with the ROCs playing their regional

roles, but the Minister would be responsible for all things Sydney especially its economic dynamism and representation globally. Europe has its financial-economic problems, the USA its political Congressional 'deadlock', China its massive social instability and Australia - everywhere and particularly in Sydney/NSW it is a mentality challenge.

I am reminded of one of my visits to Chengdu China many years ago when I was briefed by their Town Planning officials. Apparently the city had been built on sinking land and so a large part of the metropolis was to be rebuilt down the street - a bit like transferring Circular Quay to Sydney University a few miles up the Parramatta road. No problems - they planned it, paid for it and did it. And now Australia has opened a Consulate and the city is the venue for the 2013 World Chinese Entrepreneurial Convention (WCEC).on (WCEC).