

Comment by Michael C H Jones
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In many respects ACCCI has been one of a small number of trail blazing organisations not only in Australia but worldwide. The issues of Governance at all levels. - district, city, provincial, national, regional and global - have gradually crystallised in the minds of citizens in all countries with protest movements in ever increasing and greater diversity as per this link. At the international level it is Peoples Diplomacy, domestically it is Citizens Action, but both mostly outside traditional government structures and very usually at least in the initial stages beyond the established NGO networks.

Since its formation in September 1976 the Australia China Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCCI) has functioned by way of structure and activity in ways more familiar to the world of post GFC re 2008/09 then with the era of the Cold War until the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s and the admission of the PRC to the WTO in late 2001.

The Chamber was founded in Sydney by representatives of companies with collective business and political experience from as early as pre 1914. ACCCI never sought to expand nationally but rather to cooperate with all like minded commercial organisations throughout Australasia and China, including Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Chamber sought membership by company only, although in recent years much of the intellectual backbone has been via retired business men and women, trade officials and economists. Nevertheless ACCCI continues to adhere to its strictly non-government traditions - it must be some sort of record for an Australian organisation in existence for nearly 40 years to never have sought nor received any government largess at any level. Chamber remains steadfastly financially independent throughout Australasia, China and in its Peoples Diplomacy Special Projects over the last 10/15 years throughout the world.

This has facilitated the ACCCI ability to link up with China's "going global" especially since 2001 and accelerating post 2008. Given the size of Australian business, and the small number of companies in each sector re the absence of critical mass, so much of ACCCI work has been with American and European companies and their understanding of China and its return, not rise, to global economic leadership. Just as important has been the advice to Chinese companies as they enter world markets, in a much smaller way Chamber has played a role akin to London in the historical expansion of US companies post 1945. But always at arms length from governments, if not the assortment of political parties through which legislative change is generated.

The governance themes have been transparent re Corporations (including SOE) and Human Rights re the just signed TPP, Political Parties and Democratic Forms re the CPC and the Australia China FTA, international Commons and Property Relations re gene ownership and climate change, and Fundamentalism (including forms of exclusivity) and a multicultural society/world.

In all the protest movements that have mushroomed across the world during the recent decade there is the commonality of technology facilitation re the availability of information

and new organising techniques that did not exist 40 years ago in the 1970s, as well as the worldwide but uncoordinated resistance to entrenched/exclusive power and corruption whether post colonial or communist, or via the various religious fanaticisms. The hegemony of US corporate free enterprise is being challenged on a myriad of fronts by government sponsored state guided free trade, and the increasingly understood new Great Game of Global Economic Relations which tends to cordon off regions re Eurasia and SCO, whilst economic alliances become exclusive re Pacific Rim and TPP.