

Reflections - A New Start

The professional layman, highly educated or otherwise, is relentlessly bombarded with learned information such that his thought processes are scrambled and his abilities to write insightfully and critically with certainty is profoundly diminished in this digital age. However, those who can put pen to paper face almost insuperable barriers to in-depth analysis of issues and trends linking the past, present and future. A sense of history has become anachronistic. Scholars such as E. H. Carr in his 1961 "What Is History" would be horrified - his definition of history as "an unending dialogue between the present and the past" might be extended to an attempt to anticipate and/or respond to future events.

However when writing we must always reflect on our readers/audiences - academics with their pages of footnotes, politicians and their 30 second media grabs, journalists suffering time constraints and owner pressures, and the general public in all the diversities of heritage and aspirations.

To be intellectually honest, Chamber and myself must reflect on previous pronouncements/articles since foundation in September 1976 and Presidential statements from November 1989. Similar for other Board and Executive Committee members - particularly the Chinese newspaper contributions, internal member newsletters, website governance analysis and Observations/comments amongst other media and conference/seminar participations both domestic and international.

The past can be viewed in a myriad of ways but from a Chamber perspective: a) pre US President Carter recognition of the PRC China from 1st January 1979, b) pre Tiananmen in June 1989; c) pre WTO China admission in December 2001, d) pre Beijing Olympic Games and GFC in 2008, and e) the last decade of the rise of PRC President for Life Xi Jinping.

The future for an Australasia Narrative might be anticipated/predicted in the short-term: a) 2018/19 with a NSW State election (March) and Australian Federal Election (May?); or b) referendums in New Caledonia and Bougainville? Yet medium and long-term anniversaries may also be significant - an ACCCI China Mission looks to the 100th celebration of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in 2021, and the 500th acknowledgement of globalism with the first circumnavigation of the world in 2022. Further out will the PRC celebrate its 100th year in 2049 - is a democratic China in whatever form possible? Again Australia, arguably already a Great Power of the second rank, might well be the global centre of the world based on the Indauspac oceans perspective on its 200th anniversary as a Commonwealth in 2101.

Over the last almost two years since my retirement after nearly 28 years as ACCCI President in July 2016 on the election of Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, there has been an avalanche of internal Chamber and supporters email debate; as my colleague of more than 30 years since the late 1980s webmaster John Zerby humorously states the "carpet bombing" strategy distribution of information (keeping all levels of governance on message). Recognising that ACCCI strategy and tactics must mirror reform in China as well as international developments such as a) Australia-China trade and investment promotion 1979/89, b) maintaining open-door free trade 1989/2001, c) Global Economic Relations or the rivalries of free trade agreements 2001-2009, and d) post 2010/12 governance issues resulting from a Regional assertive PRC/CPC with the advent of Xi Jinping as President/General Secretary and his dramatic reforms of the Chinese Government, Party structure and PLA military.

The Australasia Narrative is about Australia's future in its sphere of influence, Indauspac including the South West Pacific ocean nations, whilst the China Mission is directed to the governance of the

key institution of the Peoples Republic namely the Communist Party of China, ruling a country so economically dynamic and numerous as to culturally challenge all regions, countries, institutions and peoples simultaneously. The new international fault lines are centred on values and traditions, attitudes and aspirations wherein the contests are multinational and multilevel, external and internal. As the USA withdraws as the world's policeman, the vacuum opens up and the PRC will be tempted to fill the void if only inadvertently via a creeping economic and social penetration of Eurasia, Africa and South America thus challenging the norms and conventions of the Anglo-sphere trans-atlantic 20th century neo-imperium.

ACCCI REFLECTIONS will be complimentary with new social media comment via Face Book, Twitter etc. The China Mission and Australasia Narrative are Government/Political Party/National Sovereignty focused; whereas Social Media advocacy will be directed to educational/strengthening Democratic Institutions from a Cities/Urbanisation perspective. Both will analyse the impacts of multilevel governance at seven levels - global, regional, national, provincial, municipal, council, precinct - plus the relationships to corporate governance at national and international levels.

It is anticipated, short of regional wars and global economic disruptions, that this Chamber strategy commitment is a decade project at least - what are likely to be the situations for Australia and China in the late 2020s or late 2030s? China has Returned to global leadership and Australia transforms to Great Power status. Political and Economic change, Social and Cultural evolution, means new Rules for Democratic Forms and the way in which peoples respond to the processes and procedures for ordering/regulating power relations between countries, institutions, groups and individuals.

There will be a systematic approach to the project, by necessity somewhat repetitive reviewing past materials on the website and internal member discussion, accepting errors of judgement and lauding our brilliant observations where identified, but above all advocating possible reform/activism at all levels of governance/democratic institutions within the context of always trying to understanding the Australia - China Relationship.

Michael C H Jones
Chairman - ACCCI Board
30th April 2018