

Short History of ACCCI

From 1976 to 2009

The Australian Government through the Productivity Commission is currently conducting an Inquiry into Australia's Anti-dumping and Countervailing System. The ACCCI Submission entitled 'Global Norms: A Context and Framework for Anti-Dumping Legislation' was presented on 19th June 2009. There are 36 submissions. The following is the background information on the Chamber.

Australia China Chamber of Commerce and Industry of New South Wales was founded in Sydney during the years 1974/76 following the Whitlam Federal Labor Government's formal recognition in December 1972 of the People's Republic of China (with Taiwan as a Province), and the Business Missions led by Trade Ministers Dr Jim Cairns and Frank Crean respectively. The inaugural Annual General Meeting took place on 16th September 1976.

Initially the Chamber sought to facilitate visits to China in any capacity and therefore established a strong Cultural Committee. Subsequently with Deng Xiaoping's launch of China's Open Door Policies in December 1978 Chamber upgraded its trade activities with the first official ACCCI Trade Mission during 1979. Throughout the 1980's extensive business contacts (*guanxi*) were made throughout the Eastern Seaboard of China and a great deal of Chamber resources in time and money were spent on assisting the establishment of Sister State Relationships from the first between New South Wales and Guangdong Province and then every State in Australia with Jiangsu, Shandong, Zhejiang, Fujian and Shanghai, and later Tianjin, Beijing and Hainan.

The concept for the famous ACCCI Key Cities Strategy emerged out of Board discussions following Chamber Trade Missions in 1986 and 1987 led respectively by then Chair of the ACCCI International Committee, Reg Torrington, and Chamber's ACT Chief Representative, Greg Burns (Greg was previously Australian Senior Trade Commissioner in Beijing 1979-83). However the 'political troubles' in China 1987/91 caused a great amount of disruption to ACCCI plans, and hence the full potential of the Strategy only emerged with the foundation Co-operative Agreement signings in Shenzhen and Xi'an by ACCCI General Secretary Laurie Smith. Subsequently these were formalised with Shenzhen City, Hubei Province and Beijing Municipality, amongst many others, culmination in the 1994 Chamber Trade Mission led by ACCCI President Michael Jones. Ultimately, prior to China's accession to the WTO in 2002, almost 50 Co-operative Agreements were signed by ACCCI with Chinese cities. Executive members of ACCCI crisscrossed China making trade and economic relations speeches and issuing invitations for Chinese business delegations to visit Australia.

Chamber policies have obviously evolved over the last 35 years. From selling the business potential of China to Australian companies, to making the necessary range of Chinese contacts at Party, Government and SOE levels, to formalising economic institutional non-government

relations, and to assisting the business integration of China into regional and global trade related bodies such as APEC and WTO, ACCCI built up extensive expertise through a range of Policy Committees covering Trade and Investment, Commerce and Industry, Public Affairs and Media and Cultural and Sport. Annual Workshops and Forums were initiated from the mid 1990s covering Urban Services, Rural Industries, Infrastructure and Commercial Culture in both Australia and China. Special Projects were launched in sectors relating to the Education, Tourism, Technology Commercialisation and Investment industries, with particular assistance to better funded organisations than Chamber.

Currently ACCCI has segmented its activities into China/Australia-Domestic and China/Australia-International. Both the China Liaison and National Liaison Committees (that succeeded the International Committee) established in the late 1980s will continue, although their institutional priorities may change. Globalisation and International Law, and particularly how China's accelerating membership of world organisations since 2002 will impact/change global norms and thereby influence Australian economic sovereignty, will become the primary consideration for the China/Australia-International aspect of ACCCI Strategy throughout the Indauspac cities. The Lowy Report has already highlighted Australia's Diplomatic Deficit. The economic implications of the Prime Minister's recent Singapore speech on the Asia Pacific Community concept and the trade and investment details of the security analysis in the Australian Defence White Paper have not received the attention they warrant. Chamber hopes over future years to improve the overall recognition of these issues with respect to China in both Australian and Regional discourse.

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