



The Secretary
Senate Foreign Affairs and Trade References Committee
Suite SG.57
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Dr Dermody,

Re: FECCA Submission to the Inquiry into Australia's Relations with China

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry into Australia's Relations with China. Our submission will mainly confine itself to discussing opportunities for strengthening the deepening political, social and cultural links between Australia and China.

FECCA acknowledges the significant contribution that Chinese immigrants have made to Australia from the early gold rush days. Over time, the economic relationship between Australia and China has also grown, to a point where trade between the two countries has become increasingly important.

Educational exchange has grown rapidly over the past two decades, and Chinese students now make up a significant proportion of overseas students studying in Australia. Educational exchange has been of benefit to both Australia and China.

Another area where social and cultural links are deepening is in the health sector. Health agreements are now being made between China and Australia, with Australian expertise being used to enhance China's health

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services and training for health personnel. An example of this is Australian medical professionals helping to solve problems of iodine deficiency in China.

The Global Health Institute has recently formed a major partnership with Sydney University, and is offering scholarships to Chinese students to complete a graduate training program targeting highly skilled areas in medicine. This program will help to fill gaps in medical training available for Chinese students in their own country.

Constructive partnerships are also being built in area of ethnic affairs. For over 15 years, the Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF) has been engaged in an exchange with the Department of Ethnic Affairs in China. The exchange has provided opportunities for the AMF and the Department of Ethnic Affairs in China to learn from each other and find areas of common concern. The exchange has facilitated the building of relationships between the Chinese community, ethnic minority groups in China and the Chinese Department of Ethnic Affairs. We believe that China has benefited from learning about Australia's multicultural policy framework through its long-term relationship with the AMF.

In August last year, I was involved in a delegation which visited China, and was able to see first hand community development projects that have grown from the exchange between the AMF and Department of Ethnic Affairs in China. FECCA acknowledges the important work being done by the AMF through its exchange program.

It has been drawn to FECCA's attention that Australia has the potential to constructively engage with China about human rights issues. We acknowledge the concern felt by many Australians about human rights in China. We understand that these concerns have been raised in other submissions, so we will not address them comprehensively ourselves.

I would be very happy to discuss any of the issues I have raised in this submission, either through attending a hearing, or by phone. I can be contacted on 0417 489 066.

Yours sincerely



Abd-Elmasih Malak AM
Chairperson

23 March 2005