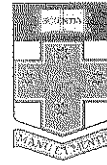


UNSW



EMERITUS PROFESSOR
MARK S WAINWRIGHT AM



18 January 2007

Dr Kathleen Dermody
The Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Suite S1.57
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Dermody

Re: Inquiry into the nature and conduct of Australia's public diplomacy

Please find attached a hard copy of a submission prepared by me and the Deputy Chair Ms Dinah Dysart on behalf of the Australia-China Council.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mark S Wainwright'.

Emeritus Professor Mark S Wainwright AM
Chair
Australia-China Council

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A submission from the Australia-China Council to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade inquiry into the nature and conduct of Australia's public diplomacy.

The Australia-China Council

The Government of Australia established the Australia- China Council (Council) in 1978 by an Executive Council Order to nurture the relationship between the two countries.

The Council currently consists of a Chair plus eight appointed members and an ex-officio member representing the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. These members meet formally three times a year to determine Council business. The members of the Council provide a wide range of expertise and interests which is used to great effect in sub-committees which handle the diverse activities of the Council's work. The work of the Council and its subcommittees is very effectively handled via email and informal meetings. The Council and its subcommittees are extremely well supported by an excellent secretariat provided by DFAT.

The Council receives an annual budget of around \$740,000 from the Commonwealth. This modest funding is used to seed numerous and diverse projects which frequently become supported by external funds.

By far the largest proportion of the budget, and of the efforts of the Council, is directed at the activities involving young people as it is the Council's view that the future relationship with China depends on educating the youth of both countries to understand each others' cultural mores.

There are three major themes in the activities supported by the Council. These are:-

- (a) Encouraging Australian knowledge of and interest in China
- (b) Encouraging Chinese knowledge of and interest in Australia
- (c) Broadening and deepening bilateral contact and exchange.

Within these three broad areas of activity are programmes that cover Youth Exchange; Australian Studies at Universities in China; Residencies and Awards; Culture; Sport and Heritage; Publishing and Media; Commerce, Science; Technology and the Environment. There is also a Special Projects Category.

a) Encouraging Australian knowledge of and interest in China

Youth Exchange programmes

Young Business and Professional Scholars in China Programme

This is a year long programme designed to encourage university graduates who have both work experience and high level of Mandarin language proficiency to develop a career in Australia – China business relations. The programme which typically takes in four (4) Australian graduates per year involves an initial Mandarin refresher course followed by a semester of business studies at one of China's leading universities (from 2007 Tsinghua University in Beijing). This is followed by an internship with a company based in China.

Year in China Programme

This is a "gap year" of study in China for Year 12 graduates who have a high level of Chinese language skills and an outstanding level of overall achievement.

China Experience Programme

This programme enables young Australian secondary school students in Year 10 who are studying Chinese language at school to visit China for one month during their summer school break. Their activities include home stay with Chinese families, attendance at Chinese secondary schools and cultural activities in Beijing and Shanghai.

The Council supports other projects on a case-by-case basis on the recommendation of the sub-committees.

b) Encouraging Chinese knowledge of and interest in Australia

Australian Studies Programme

Australian Studies Centres at universities in greater China are supported through the Council's Australian Studies Programme. There are two types of projects. The first involves the competitive funding of projects of academics in tertiary institutions in China. The projects cover a wide range of Australia – related topics including, for example, literature, history, culture, business, trade, comparative law, aboriginal art, the media etc. The second supports a very strong network of Australian Studies Centres in Chinese tertiary institutions. The level of support is determined by the outputs of the various Centres including research and teaching outcomes and professional and community activities over the previous academic year.

The Council, together with DFAT and the ANZ Bank (Shanghai) continue to support an up-to date collection of books and journals as a key resource for Australian Studies at the Shanghai Library. Australian Studies Centres at Chinese universities all have their own small libraries which attract some funds from the Council for acquisitions.

Every two years an Australian Studies Conference is held at a different Chinese university which has an Australian Studies Centre.

There are many other projects supported by the Council. One which has attracted wide interest in China is Australian Children's literature. A programme was held at the Taipei Book Fair in 2006 which will be repeated in 2007. It is planned to take this programme to major cities in China including Hong Kong in 2008. In this way an understanding of Australia is brought to young Chinese children.

Again, the Council continues to support numerous cultural, sport and heritage visits and activities by Australian groups and individuals to promote Australia to the Chinese people.

c) Broadening and Deepening Bilateral Contact and Exchange

Residency programmes

The Council supports residencies in Beijing, Hong Kong and Taipei that are offered on a competitive basis to Australians undertaking projects that will enhance the bilateral relationship. Projects may be in the field of the arts, scholarship, science, business or any other area that can be demonstrated to enhance the relationship. The Council also provides a number of subsidies for travel and accommodation costs anywhere in mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau or Taiwan. These grants are particularly important in ensuring support for projects in provincial cities or for activities that involve several cities.

Key Points Relating to Programmes Supported by the Australia – China Council

(i) Chinese Regional Breadth

The programmes of the Council are designed to cover as much of China as possible and so its reach includes Taipei, Hong Kong and Macau as well as many cities and provinces on the mainland. For example, The Year in China Programme has traditionally been conducted at a university in Beijing but for the past two (2) years it has been offered at Liaoning University in Shenyang Province.

(ii) Effective use of the Government Grant

With its limited budget of around \$740,000 the Council is very efficient in the allocation of those funds. In 2005 – 2006 around sixty separate projects were funded and several hundred Australian and Chinese individuals received those funds. In its General Grants Programme the Council funds seed projects which are intended to become self-reliant by attracting future funds from other sources.

The Council takes a major role in developing and managing major initiatives and then allowing other organisations to take them over and support them. Typical of this is the Young Business and Professional Scholars Programme

which has been taken over and extended by the DEST – funded National Centre for Language Training (NCLT) at the University of New South Wales.

(iii) Human rights

The Council established the Alice Tay Human Rights Award in honour of Professor Alice Tay AM a former member of the Council. The award is offered annually to an Australian who has contributed significantly to human rights in China.

(iv) Recognition of the Contribution of Chinese Australians

The Council is always keen to support projects which focus on the contributions that Australians of Chinese origin have made to this country. A typical example is the documentation of Chinese cemeteries in Australia and the publication of the histories of the Chinese people living in Australia in the nineteenth century.

(v) Alumni Organisations

The various programmes funded by the Council over the past almost 30 years has led to the development of a vast number of people who foster the relationship between our two countries. These people are fine ambassadors and it is important that their experience is well utilized. As an example, the Council has provided \$5,000 in its current budget to develop an alumni group for former Youth Exchange students. There is also the proposal for the Council to provide a leadership role in establishing a Chinese alumni chapter for the thousands of Chinese graduates from the Australian universities. These graduates are very important ambassadors for Australia and its higher education sector and many will achieve very senior leadership roles in government, politics, business, the professions and the arts in China.

(vi) People-to-People contact

An important role of Council members is in meeting with members of visiting Chinese delegations to cultivate friendships and demonstrate an interest in the activities of the delegates. The broad range of backgrounds of Council members and their distribution between major cities is important in meeting with delegates on fact-finding missions from China as well as those attending bilateral cultural, scientific and business symposia and meetings.

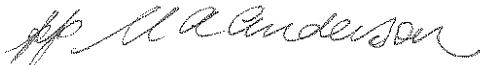
In Summary

The Australia-China Council believes that its many programmes, particularly those with an emphasis on encouraging and educating the youth and young graduates of today, are making very major contributions the Australia – China relationship.

The Council has a very keen and dedicated membership that wishes to maintain and expand its proven programmes and develop innovative new ones. However, without a significant increase in the annual budget many opportunities will be lost. The Council is very willing to seek funding from the private sector but additional government funds will be necessary to leverage those private sector funds.



Emeritus Professor Mark S Wainwright AM
Chair
On behalf of the Australia China Council



Ms Dinah Dysart
Deputy Chair
On behalf of the Australia China Council