



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT
2009-2010

INTRODUCTION

Fellow members

I am proud to present my 11th Annual Report to the Annual General Meeting of the Chung Wah Society and in so doing, I am announcing my decision not to seek re-election as President or as a member of the management committee for 2010-11.

I began to realize some time ago that, with my on-going personal situation, I am not going to be able to offer the Society and its members the amount of time and dedication I feel is necessary to be an effective President. I also feel that, after eleven years in the position, I have perhaps run my race and that it is time to pass the baton to someone younger and fitter than me to lead the Society into the years ahead with fresher ideas and maybe some new directions.

I have really enjoyed my time as President, and I especially value the wonderful companionships and friendships that I made along the way, not only within the Society but in the wider community as well. I have relished meeting the many challenges that faced the Society since the year 1999 and I thank you one and all for the valued support and advice given to me during that time. There are a few things which I regret not having completed and I leave those to future Committees to complete or to discard.

I am very proud to have been the President and to say that everything I tried to do and achieve has been for the betterment of the Society and its members. How well I did these I will leave to you and others to judge but it has been to me a personally satisfying and memorable journey and one that I do not ever regret undertaking. I will continue to support and be involved with the Society and hope to be able to contribute something worthwhile in the times ahead.

It is not without some tinge of regret that I make this decision as I know I will miss the daily interaction with one and all as President but I wish the incoming President and his Committee all the very best for the next term and beyond and hope that they will find the same degree of self satisfaction and enjoyment that I did in my term of office.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2009-10

Generally speaking, the year 2009-10 has been one of moderation and consolidation after the hurly burly and high activity of the previous 4-5 years during which we saw the undertaking of the major fund raising and construction projects associated with the extension and renovations to the Chung Wah Hall and Chinese Museum. Those years stretched the Society's resources in terms of time, energy, manpower and money but in the end, the Society gained assets that will serve it well for decades.

60th Anniversary Commemorative Booklet

In last year's Annual Report, I mentioned the celebrations that were held for the Society's 60th anniversary and the functions that were held to mark that occasion in September 2009. We had planned to produce a commemorative booklet of the occasion but, unfortunately, that was abandoned because of unforeseen difficulties that arose in gathering suitable material for the booklet.



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Translation of Chinese Minutes

Progress towards the translating of the early Chinese language minutes of the Society commenced in collaboration with members of the NT Hong Kong Club. About half of the minutes have been translated and we expect the rest will be completed sometime early in 2011. The book with the original minutes is on display in the NT Chinese Museum.

Honour Boards

Further Honour Boards are being planned to list the names of other office bearers of the Society. Again it is hoped to have these Boards finished and mounted early in 2011.

Building and Site Works

The major undertakings during the year were the renovations to the kitchen and the completion of the paving of the grounds around the tennis court.

- The kitchen electrical and water supplies were upgraded and a new hot water urn was installed over the sink in the bar area. Some previous wall mounted cupboards were removed and replaced by free standing cupboards imported from China. Some modifications to the stainless steel benching were undertaken for the future installation of two new wok burners. The opportunity was also taken to purchase a range of kitchen cutlery and crockery for use at more formal functions.
- With a grant of \$48,000 from the NT Government, the rest of the site around and behind the tennis court was paved to match the existing paving in the front courtyard area. This work has resulted in an extra 5 car parking bays being made available which are in the process of being allocated to people who have been on the waiting list. This will generate further income for the Society in the years ahead.
- The renovations to the Caretaker's Residence have been completed with the installation of a kitchen sink and cupboard.
- Planning was commenced on the design and construction of a wall on either side of the Woods Street entrance with a suitable gate across the driveway. The second stage will be along the Temple frontage and Bennett Street and will include a stairway from the footpath leading up to the Temple.
- I would like to specifically mention here the valuable work that was done by our Patron, Mr. Dick Griffiths, on most Saturday mornings with his truck driver, in clearing the site of unwanted items and removing a number of trees that were hindering the paving works. I also wish to acknowledge and thank all the other members who pitched in and assisted when required to remove heavier and bulky items.

Temple Affairs

- The Temple grounds have been upgraded with the installation of a statue of Quan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy following the selection of a suitable site last year by a visiting Feng Shui practitioner from Malaysia. The statue was generously donated by Mr. Desmond Fong.



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- There has been a marked interest by schools in visiting the Temple. There were ten school excursions, numbering about 200 children in all. Most were in the year 7-9 classes.

Senior Citizens' Group

- The Senior Citizens Group is in its 19th year and its popularity among the seniors of our community has continued to grow with a number of people with differing ethnic backgrounds becoming regular members.
- This year the Seniors Group did not seek grant funding from the NT Government as it was felt that the Group had accumulated adequate monies from various functions to operate without government assistance.
- The Seniors Group again held a successful "Australia's Biggest Morning Tea" to raise funds for the Cancer Council. This year, \$1800 was raised. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped with donations of items for the morning tea and lunch.

Lion Dance Troupe

- Without a doubt, the Chung Wah Society Lion Dance Troupe is continuing to be the most known activity of the Society with its frequent appearances at many public and private functions throughout the year.
- During the Chinese New Year 2010, over 400 premises were blessed in Darwin and around 70 in Alice Springs. All proceeds from these blessings went to the Temple.
- The Troupe is averaging 2-3 requests for performances at various public and private activities. The major ones included
 - The opening of Mindil Sunset Markets;
 - The 2010 Defence Officers' Ball ;
 - Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities (800 delegates);
 - Moon Festival 2010.
- Training numbers during the year averaged between 20-30 every Saturday. The majority of the group are teenagers (male and female) although about 8 children aged 7-8 years are attending. It is gratifying that the younger generation are already showing keen interest and dedication to the art form and this will guarantee the future of the Troup . Congratulations to the Co-ordinators for their continuing success in recruiting and training the upcoming generations.
- In 2011, a team is being sent to Bendigo to take part in the Easter Parade. Fundraising for this trip has already raised \$2000 from a Bake Sale with a dinner being organised for November 2010 at which the current fundraising raffle will be drawn.
- Recently, I received a letter from the Office of the Chief Minister confirming that the Northern Territory Government will assist the Society in reaching the target of \$15,000 needed to fund this trip. This offer was first made by the Hon. Kon Vatskalis MLA at the Moon Festival.
- Sadly, during the year, the Troupe lost one of its stalwarts. In November 2009, Victor Jong was tragically killed in a car accident. He was a dedicated member well loved by all.



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- In March 2010, David Chin, a joint Co-ordinator for the Troupe, left Darwin to live in Kota Kinabalu following his marriage. His absence luckily is only temporary until he returns hopefully by the end of the year. His place was taken by Warren Wong who has filled the post very admirably.
- New Lion heads were purchased through the year to replace those worn out by the ever increasing workload. Troupe members purchased new special training singlets and polo shirts and these have enhanced the look and morale of the team.
- A smaller Dragon was purchased and it is hoped to resurrect the Dragon Dance as a feature at larger events at which the Troupe is asked to perform.

Chinese Museum

- This year, the Museum was open to the public on at least six days a week between the hours of 10.00am and 2.00pm. The Museum was closed during the wet season between November 2009 and March 2010, a period when visitor numbers drop considerably compared with the rest of the year.
- There was an increasing demand from primary schools for excursions to the Museum. There were over ten school visits with an average of 20-30 per visit. Schools as far away as Katherine have made the trip. General visitor numbers have remained fairly static with about an average of 4-6 visitors (mainly interstate) per day.
- The Museum's Resource Room was fortunate enough to receive, as a donation, a collection of books and printed media from Ms Glenys Dimond who was associated with the Chinese Museum from as far back as the Sweet and Sour Exhibition days. Glenys has left Darwin to live in NSW. The collection is available for reading in the Resource Room. Most of it concerns the Northern Territory and its history.
- In December 2009, the Chinese Museum received a generous donation of \$2,500 from the Kwong Sue Duk Foundation of Melbourne. This will be used to progressively enhance / upgrade items in the Museum.
- With members of the Committee covering the weekends and other members (all retirees) covering the weekdays, it was possible to open the Museum for six days per week. However, it is felt that there needs to be much greater commitment from the Chinese community to assist with the Museum in order for it to remain viable and open to the public in future years.

Major Social Events

- On Friday 30 October 2009, the Chung Wah Society held its inaugural **Halloween Party**, mainly for the younger members and the older "young at hearts". It seems that this will be a fixture on the Society's social calendar for the foreseeable future.
- The Annual **Children's Christmas Party** and the **Senior Citizens' Group** Christmas Party held on 6th December and 11th December 2009 respectively, were well attended and enjoyed by all.
- The 2010 **Chinese New Year Banquet** held on 20 February 2010 at the Chung Wah Hall was once again, a sell-out event. While guests enjoyed the evening, it was hard work for the Lion



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Dance Troupe as it had to perform not only at our Banquet but also later at the SkyCity Casino Chinese New Year function. We will try to avoid this clash next year.

- The Annual **Sartee skewering** event in preparation for the 2010 Darwin Show was held on Sunday 18th July 2010 and again proved to be a great social get together for young and old.

Membership

- During this year, the Committee approved the implementation of multiple year memberships as from 2010-2011. A maximum of three (3) years paid up membership may now be taken out by members. Extended memberships will be exempt from any yearly increases that may occur during that period.
- The number of memberships (family and single, all categories) has remained fairly static at about 230 for the year. This represents about 700 individuals. The unfortunate thing from this is that, while we have shown an increase in new members, they are just barely replacing those who have chosen to leave the Society.
- I urge those with family memberships to encourage their children who have reached 18 to become members in their own right.
- A further initiative by the Committee was to introduce a "Couple without Dependants" category to differentiate them from the "Family" memberships which include children up to the age of 18.

Newsletter

- The Newsletter is now available to members by email, if they so choose. This initiative not only results in quicker delivery to members but also reduces the cost to the Society in postage. Members are encouraged to take advantage of this by registering their email with the Newsletter sub-Committee.
- Those members without computers will, of course, still receive their Newsletters by post.

Shared Use of Established Community Facilities

On 18 August, the Society received a letter from the Department of the Chief Minister advising that the NT Government proposed an incentive scheme to promote the sharing of existing multicultural facilities. The draft proposal includes a grant to the multicultural organisation of up to \$10,000 to share its facility with another multicultural organisation. The grant would be utilised for the maintenance and repair of the community hall (including the associated costs of hiring). It is voluntary and, if endorsed, trialled for one year.

The Management Committee considered the proposal and decided not to participate in the proposal, if endorsed, on the basis that :-

- There is insufficient space for the storage of the other organisations' equipment and other items let alone storing items that belong to Chung Wah Society that we did not want others to use;



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- The difficulties in managing the times that the hall is needed for Chung Wah's activities and those of the other organisation eg 3-4 major events; 4-6 meetings; use of sporting and recreational facilities etc.
- We would not agree to weekends being made available on a regular basis as most weekends are already used for CWS activities eg Lion Dance training etc and are the most hired out times;

The Committee advised the Department of the above and other pertinent issues relating to the proposal as the reasons for not participating.

Registration of Kitchen

Following the 2009 Royal Darwin Show, the Department of Health and Families required the kitchen to be registered under the Foods Act as a place of food manufacture. This arose from a query by Environmental Health officials during the Show regarding the manufacturing and preparation of the sartees on sale. I am pleased to note in this Report that, following further representations with the Department and subsequent inspections and renovations, the kitchen is now fully registered but will still be subject to inspections by the Environmental Health Officers in June each year to ensure the facility and its services are up to standard.

Appreciation

In this my last Report, I would like to again acknowledge the huge contributions made by our many valued sponsors over the years. In particular, I would like to gratefully thank

- the **Northern Territory Government** for its past and continuing financial assistance in all its different forms for our on-going programs and individual projects. Without that assistance, the Chung Wah Society would not have been able to achieve many of the constitutional objectives, club facilities and services that we and the community at large now enjoy;
- the **Commonwealth Government** for its contributions to some of our major projects and acquisition of equipment in recent years;
- **Sony Australia** for its sponsorship support and generosity in assisting our funding raising efforts in more recent years;
- the **numerous local businesses**, too many to list individually, for their unconditional and generous donations of material and in kind support; and, last but not least,
- the **many individual members and friends** who gave up their time willingly and without reward to help in the multitude of activities to imbue this wonderful organisation with the true feeling of community and camaraderie.

Vale

It is with sadness that I note in this Report, the passing of the following Life Members of the Society:-

- Mrs Pam Con Foo;
- Mr William (Bill) Wong OAM; (General Secretary 1953-1993; Temple Officer 1994-2005).
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It is also with regret that we record the passing of Jimmy Chin Hoe who was regarded as one of the senior elders of the Chinese Temple.



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Conclusion

Once again, I sincerely thank all the general members and the Management Committees for their continued support over the years. I wish you all the best of health, happiness and good fortune for all the years ahead.

I commend the Report to members.

Adam Lowe
President
24 October 2010