



CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE CHUNG WAH ASSOCIATION

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE CHUNG WAH ASSOCIATION IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Rich in history, the Chung Wah Association was inaugurated by early Chinese settlers in Western Australia in 1909.

Under the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 which banned non-Europeans from entering Australia, the social implications of this Act upon the Chinese communities at that time were inevitably adverse. Fear and prejudices by the locals often gave rise to harsh living conditions, society isolation, despair and loneliness within the Chinese community. These difficult times stirred a few good men to bond and form a lifelong camaraderie. Consequently, within this tense environment, it was an ambitious decision to register the Chung Wah Association on 12 July 1910. The core values for the Association were simple – its leader to take care of its members in terms of their welfare, promotion of the Chinese culture and goodwill between the Chinese community and the local community.

The late 1950s saw attempts by Australian government to temper local concerns for its immigration policies by encouraging students from Asia through the Colombo Plan. The Colombo Plan occupies a prominent place in the history of Australia's relations with Asia. It is best remembered for sponsoring thousands of Asian students to study or train in Australian tertiary institutions. Perth, Western Australia received its shares of these students mainly from former British colonies. Many of these students stayed behind or returned to settle in Western Australia. The end of the White Australian Policy in the 1970s resulted in a significant increase of Chinese migrants arriving predominantly from the South East Asia countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam as well as China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Burma, etc. With the continuing influx of Chinese migrants over the years, the Association's membership has swelled from a few founding members in 1910 to about 3000 family members currently. Membership of the Association is open to all Australians regardless of their religious, political beliefs, social standing or educational background.

Over the 100 years of its history, the Association's leaders have lived up to their founding members' values, not just within its own community but have also successfully spread the goodwill fellowship through the wider community. In fact, for many, it is viewed as the de facto institution representing the Western Australian Chinese community, hence, serving as the main link for business and social networking between the Chinese community, governmental agencies and the business fraternities.

The Chinese Australian community in Western Australia is respected in the local business fraternities, professional fields and the cultural arena. With Australia forging ahead to cement closer ties with its Asian neighbours, this pool of entrepreneurs and professionals have played and undoubtedly will continue to play a significant role in promoting Western Australia to the rest of the world.

The many achievements of the Association have so far included:

- Chung Wah community and aged care 'daylong respite centre' for the aged.
- Chung Wah home care services for the aged and non-English speaking senior members.
- Chung Wah Chinese Schools promoting Chinese education, and upholding cultural awareness.
- Chung Wah cultural and youth group activities incorporating lion dances, Chinese orchestra, operas, dance troupe, cultural exchange groups and radio broadcasting.

The Association acknowledges that these achievements have been possible with the continuing support from the State and Federal Governments.

With a history spanning 100 years, the Association is proud to celebrate its centenary this year and looks forward to continuing its contribution to Western Australia and the country.

More details on the Chung Wah Association can be obtained from its website on www.chungwah.org.au or email to chungwah@chungwah.org.au

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The Chung Wah Association Inc
[Founded in 1909]