

(4) Early Stage Diversification

As the operation of Campsie Child Care Centre gradually stabilised, the Society began to pay attention to matters outside its usual scope. Owing to the change in Australian immigration policy, the opening up of Mainland China and the impending return of Hong Kong to China, the number of Chinese-speaking migrants increased significantly in Sydney, which led to corresponding increase in demand to various social services. The Society was frequently getting enquiries and requests from families using our services then to expand the scope of services. However, as at that time our Society was basically run by volunteers with no paid staff members and only a limited increase in the scope of our services was possible. It included the participation to promote aged services, increasing child care services, providing some assistance in settlement matters and organising cultural activities. Meanwhile, the increase of Asian migrants led to the emergence of an anti-Asian undercurrent in the mainstream. Our Society resolutely took an active role in rallying communities to counter this noxious wind.

17 May 1987

In conjunction with two other community organisations (Chinese Youth League and Sydney Chinese School), the Elderly Australian Chinese Homes Co-operative Ltd (EACH) was formed to cater for the welfare of Chinese elderly people. The first task was to establish an aged hostel in Croydon. When this task first began, the Chinese Youth League played the leading role and the Society gave assistance by utilising its experience in dealing with government departments.

15 August 1987

The Board of Directors of the Society passed the first five-year corporate development plan.

February 1988

Ron Casey, broadcaster of Radio 2KY, expressed his opinions on air in his program which insulted Asian people. The Society resolutely started a campaign to encourage people in the Chinese community to lodge complaints to the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal. This was the first time that the Chinese Australian community collectively took action to defend its rights. The Tribunal received a total of about 1,200 complaint letters. As there were widespread complaints, the Tribunal set up an inquiry to examine the case, which led subsequently to the suspension of Ron Casey from broadcasting for three months.

March 1988

Due to the achievement in managing the Campsie Child Care Centre, the Federal Government entrusted the Society to establish and manage Darling Harbour Child Care Centre.

May 1988

As the Society had a good reputation amongst the government departments, the application lodged by EACH requesting funding for the aged hostel project was approved within a short period.

June 1988

The Society, Chinese Youth League and the Sydney Chinese School jointly organised a charity walk titled “Eighty Thousand March”, to raise fund for the aged hostel. A total of \$6,500 was raised.

July 1988

Some Society members and directors participated in the performance, “Dragon Down Under”, organised by the Chinese Youth League, to raise fund for the elderly home project.

August 1988

Held seminars to discuss the Immigration Policy Review Report prepared by Dr. Steven Fitzgerald, released by the Federal Government. CASS lodged a submission to the Government to present the views collected.

February 1989

Not long after the Government approved funding for EACH to establish an aged hostel, differing opinions emerged amongst the directors of its Board in relation to the approach to be taken regarding the project. In order to minimise conflict, since mid-1988, the Society had effectively ceased its participation in the work. In early 1989, the relevant Government department pressed EACH to commence work on the project. At that time, several key directors of the Board of EACH considered a number of options to resolve the stalled project development. The only option considered to be viable and practical was to have the Society undertaking the development of the aged hostel. In order to preserve the funding by the Government to the Chinese community and benefit Chinese-speaking elderly people, the Board of the Society reluctantly agreed to undertake the project.

19 March 1989

In view of the gradual diversification in the Society’s business, the Annual General Meeting of the Society passed a motion to change the name to “Chinese Australian Services Society Co-operative Ltd”, with “CASS” as its brand name.

2 June 1989

Cabled the Consulate General of the People’s Republic of China in Sydney and also released a press statement to urge the Chinese Government to avoid using the military to curb the protest by the people, and listen to their request and seek a resolution through peaceful negotiation.

6 June 1989

Cabled the Prime Minister, Hon. Bob Hawke, supporting his decision to allow the Chinese students to stay in Australia.

21 July 1989

Along with other Chinese organisations went to meet the then Minister for Immigration, Hon. Robert Ray, to discuss the issue regarding resident status for Chinese students. The Society made a written submission to the Minister to urge the Government to allow PRC students to stay in Australia.

7 October 1989

Started a drama class for children. This was the beginning leading to the formation of the CASS Academy of Arts.

February 1990

Darling Harbour Child Care Centre formally commenced operation to provide services.

February 1991

Construction of the Campsie Activity Centre at No. 48 Sixth Avenue, Campsie was completed. Part of the capital for this construction was raised from fundraising activities and the remaining capital was from a bank loan.

July 1992

Responding to the need of parents, CASS Chinese School was established.

October 1992

In view of the strong need of FDCDS caregivers, the Society entered into an agreement with St John Ambulance to run first aid training courses in Chinese.