

(7) Developing A Diversified Range Of Community Services – Focusing At Inner West And Southern Regions Of Sydney

Confronted with internal instability within the Society, the Chairperson then, Mr. Henry Pan, and a number of the main staff members held a meeting in November 1993, analysing and discussing the Society's challenges, the community's demand and expectation plus the trend of changing government policies. The meeting resulted in an outline of the future direction of development for the Society – to explore ways to diversify the provision of community services in the Inner West and Southern regions of Sydney.

The outcomes of the meeting decisively guided the subsequent development of the Society.

December 1993

Secured a bank loan to purchase the property at 46 Sixth Avenue, Campsie and carried out modification work to make it a child care centre.

March 1994

Modification work completed and Campsie Child Care Centre (No. 2) began to provide service.

March to June 1994

Chinese citizens allowed to stay in Australia because of the situation in China began to apply for permanent residency under a piece of legislation promulgated by the Federal Government on November 1, 1993. During this period, our Society assisted more than a thousand applicants, providing services ranging from forms filling, certification of documents by JP and translation.

September 1994

The endeavour to expand the Society's service had a breakthrough - funding from the Federal Department of Immigration was obtained to employ a full-time staff to provide settlement services in both Campsie and Ashfield areas.

October 1994

An "Open Day" activity was organised to promote the Society's diversified services in the Inner West and Southern regions of Sydney. This activity had attracted a record attendance of about 3,000 people. The then Federal Minister, Hon. Nick Bolkus attended to officially open the Society's Campsie Activity Centre and Campsie Child Care Centre (No. 2).

During 1994

Began to organise English classes and job training classes in conjunction with TAFE, Adult Migrants English College and UNSW Department of Languages.

January 1995

Due to the expansion of the business of CASS, the office space at the original Campsie premises were no longer adequate. The Society decided to raise fund and borrow from the bank to purchase the property at 21 Seventh Avenue, Campsie.

Mid 1995

Established a network of Chinese playgroups in the Metropolitan Sydney. There were five groups at the beginning in five different areas, including Campsie, Ashfield, Hornsby, Chatswood and Cherrybrook.

27 June 1995

CASS facilitated a meeting between seven enthusiastic Chinese businessmen operating in Ashfield with six senior officers of the Ashfield Council. The background for this meeting was that the increasing number of Chinese residents in Ashfield have led to more Chinese shops trading in the area. Due to a lack of communication between the mainstream groups and the Chinese shop-owners, a motion was moved at the local council's meeting asking for a restriction on using foreign languages in the signs at the shop front. With the active fostering by CASS, both the Council and the Chinese shop-owners expressed the willingness to expand contact and cooperation.

25 July 1995

Through the assistance of CASS, the General Manager of the Ashfield Council invited the Chinese shop-owners to have a meeting with local councillors. Almost all the councillors attended this historical meeting. Continuous contacts helped to improve the relationship between the local government and the Chinese business community in Ashfield, and to resolve the issue of shop sign.

1 to 3 September 1995

Organised a large-scale "Inner West Cultural Exchange" event in Ashfield. Promoting mutual understanding between communities and fostering understanding of Chinese culture by other ethnic communities. The theme of this event was "Legend of the Moon". The multi-cultural performance at the Opening Ceremony of the event received partial funding from the Australia Council for the Arts.

October 1995

Due to the success in organising the "Inner West Cultural Exchange", CASS won the prestigious 1995 "Multicultural Marketing Award" (community section) of the NSW Ethnic Affairs Commission.

October to December 1995

In conjunction with mainstream training institutions, started to jointly organise small business management training courses, assisting Chinese unemployed individuals to embark on small businesses venture.

January 1996

Leased the first floor of 301 Liverpool Road, Ashfield to establish an activity centre.

May 1996

Began to organise regular bridge playing sessions in conjunction with Sydney Bridge Club.

May 1996

Received a three-year funding from NSW Government's Casino Community Benefit Fund (CCBF), enabling the employment of a professional counsellor to provide

general and gambling counselling to problem gamblers, their related family members and the general public in the Chinese community.

September 1996

Secured a bank loan to purchase a property at 48 Queens Road, Hurstville to set up the CASS Hurstville Child Care Centre.

Between 1996 and 1998

Organised several large-scale citizenship ceremonies, facilitated about 3,000 people to become Australian citizens. At one of the largest ceremonies, 550 people became Australian citizens. After 1998, CASS organised two citizenship ceremonies annually with about 120 people becoming citizens at each ceremony.

November 1996 to January 1997

The Board of Directors resolved to change the Society's auditors leading to a rare special general meeting held on January 9, 1997.

26 January 1997

The achievements of CASS in providing community services over the years received the recognition from the Governments and communities with the Chairperson, Mr Henry Pan, awarded an Order of Australia Medal honour by the Government.

June 1997

In view of the significant increase in the number of Chinese migrants in Hurstville and a lack of activities for the seniors, CASS resolved to commence regular day activities for them through the establishment of "Huakang Seniors Group". In the beginning, the activities were held at Healthpac Medical Centre, kindly made available by Dr. Ven Tan.

1 July 1997

The Federal Government made major changes to the operating legislation on children and community services, especially terminating funding to community based child care centres and limiting the hours parents could use these services. These policy changes led to significant decrease in child care placements throughout Australia. The Society's centres were of no exception. Not long after the implementation of the new policies, the occupancy rate of the Society's child care centres fell significantly compared with previous years and there were no longer waiting lists. The Board took a series of measures and the staff made collective efforts. With our foresight diversifying services, the year was ended with a financial loss of only 0.4% of the total expenditure.

April 1998

Received a two-year grant from CCBF to employ a staff to organise seminars and workshops in order to raise Chinese community's awareness on personal development and mental health.

January 1999

In order to cooperate and work more closely with the Inner West Migrant Resource Centre (IWMRC), and to optimise the use of Society's limited resources, the Activity

Centre previously set up at the First Floor, 301 Liverpool Road, Ashfield was relocated to IWMRC.

26 January 1999

The NSW Australia Day Council of the State Government appointed the Society's Chairperson, Mr. Henry Pan, as an Australia Day Ambassador for the first time. Mr Pan was appointed for four consecutive years.

February 1999

Received funding from CCBF to expand the Society's existing counselling service to include weekend telephone counselling service. As such, CASS was able to provide comprehensive professional services in areas of mental health and counselling.

20 August 1999

The Society established an internet website at www.cass.org.au. This was the first time a Chinese community organisation using information technology to provide and promote community services on the internet. The website was officially launched by Hon. Philip Ruddock, Federal Minister of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. The website provided more than a hundred pages of information in both Chinese and English. There were about 60,000 hits to the website in the period between the launch to the end of the year.

30 October 1999

The Society actively fostered cultural exchange with the staging of a dance performance entitled "The Other Side of the Ocean" at the Seymore Theatre of the University of Sydney. The dance performance was created and performed by members and friends of the Society and partial funding was received from the Australia Council for the Arts. Approximately 1,100 people watched the performance.

November 1999

In view of the increasing number of Chinese migrants in Hurstville, the Society resolved to use its own fund to employ a part-time staff to provide migrant settlement services every Tuesday morning. The office was located at the Healthpac Medical Centre.

25 November 1999

Central Sydney Area Health Service (CSAHS) used the Society's Campsie Activity Centre to launch the Chinese Health Guidebook. As the Society's website provides multicultural information and is one of the most advanced sites in the Chinese community, CSAHS especially requested the Society to publish the contents of the book on the Society's website, to allow public to read with ease.

December 1999

Received approval from the Federal Government to provide Community Aged Care Packages to care for the aged at their homes. This service had a total of thirty places, covering wide geographical areas including the whole of Inner West region of Sydney (Ashfield, Burwood, Strathfield, Concord, Leichhardt and Drummoyne), Canterbury, Marrickville, St George region (Rockdale, Kogarah and Hurstville), and

Sutherland. With the development of this service, the Society realised the aim of providing a “one-stop shop” community service to the communities.

January 2000

To support the “Principles of Multiculturalism and Community Relation Commission Bill 2000”, CASS and several other key Chinese community organisations formed a committee, striving actively to lobby the passage of the proposed Bill by the NSW Parliament. The Bill was eventually passed on 11 October 2000 by the NSW Legislative Council.

June 2000

The Society’s Chairperson, Mr. Henry Pan, was appointed by the NSW Government to the NSW Ethnic Affairs Commission as a part-time Commissioner for a period of three years. Subsequently, the term was extended to June 2006.

October 2000

The efforts of expanding community services in the southern region had another breakthrough with the Society receiving funding from DIMA to employ a part-time worker to provide migrant settlement services in Hurstville and Wollongong areas. With this development, Hurstville City Council kindly provided office space, and the Wollongong City Council organised a news conference.