



**Anniversary**

**40<sup>th</sup>**

**CASS 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Souvenir Book**

Your Rental Guru



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# Foreword

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According to Wikipedia, an anniversary is the date on which an event took place or an institution was founded in a previous year, and may also refer to the commemoration or celebration of that event. On 8 March 1981, CASS was founded by a group of ordinary but enthusiastic volunteers to provide community services to the people who were in desperate need for those services then. When we celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CASS in 2021, we are not only marking this special day forty years ago but celebrating the occasion with a series of commemorative programs. This Souvenir Book is a written record of the history and achievements of the remarkable development of CASS over the last four decades.

When we celebrated our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2011, we presented the milestones of six broad areas CASS had achieved, namely, family and children services; health, ageing and disability services; settlement and miscellaneous services; cultural and artistic work; social and recreational activities; and community capacity building work. Ten years on, CASS has continued making progress on these six service areas but with significant changes in focus and extension, reflecting evolution in community needs.

In Australia, as in most of the world, ageing population is a critical social issue. As such, aged care has become an essential service for many people in the

community. Meanwhile, the introduction of NDIS by the Federal Government in March 2013 recognised the importance of providing disability services, paving the way for an increase in demand for a range of disability services and support. Under these circumstances, CASS has experienced significant growth in these two service areas.

At this historic moment of 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we take this opportunity to salute all our volunteers and express our heartfelt appreciation for their commitment. CASS has been founded on the principle of volunteerism. Many volunteers have contributed selflessly and tirelessly towards the growth and accomplishment of CASS over the last forty years and will continue to be the key to success of CASS in years ahead.

One significant change during the period is the conversion of CASS from a cooperative to a company limited by guarantee in July 2011. Since then, CASS has been run like any other public company with professionalism and compliance of requirements, ensuring CASS to be operated sustainably in the long-term.

CASS is determined to provide more diversified and quality services to the multicultural communities to meet emerging demands. With our dedicated volunteers and professional team, CASS will achieve an even brighter future.

*CASS 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Publication Team*

March, 2021 in Sydney





Dr Bo Zhou

## *Message from Chairperson of CASS*

When we celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CASS in 2011, we said that CASS had grown “to become a young adult”. Ten years on, this young adult has certainly grown further, with no signs of pausing, and actually at an accelerated pace. Impressive results have been achieved with the concerted efforts of hundreds of enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers and staff members, together with successive government support, assistance and policies.

To name a few achievements, we built a residential aged care facility (RACF) from scratch, providing quality services to 63 seniors; we increased the number of clients using our home ageing services from about 110 in 2011 to over 1,300 currently; our disability services are now serving more than 200 participants with various NDIS programmes whereas in 2011 we had 10 participants only. Indeed, we provide a comprehensive range of services, including residential aged care, home care, disability care, child care, settlement and health, vocation and training, community language classes and many more. Over 3,500 families of multicultural backgrounds access our services or activities weekly, including Korean, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Chinese, etc. CASS is now a truly multicultural services provider, achieving one of

the goals we set in 2011.

At the core of our success is volunteerism. It has always been our founding principle. CASS was established by a group of enthusiastic volunteers forty years ago. Over the years, thousands of dedicated and passionate volunteers have joined CASS and contributed tirelessly and selflessly to its growth, including members of our Board of Directors and Council of Elders, who are all volunteers with deep benevolence.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to one person, Mr Henry Pan OAM, the founding chairperson and currently serving as the Honorary Executive Director, as the shining example of this volunteerism. His dedication, enthusiasm and contributions have undoubtedly made the outstanding achievements and success of CASS possible. People say it is easy to do one good deed, but it is difficult to do good deeds all the time. Henry is just such a person who has been doing good deeds all the time over the last forty years for CASS.

As CASS grows, a critical issue is how to ensure its long-term sustainability. For this, the

Board changed the registration of our organisation from a co-operative to a company limited by guarantee on 1 July 2011, enabling CASS to be run as a public company where no surpluses can be distributed and must be reinvested in the provision of services. This measure has ensured the sustainable and significant growth of CASS in the last decade.

To run CASS as a public company, we have a professional team, headed by Henry and the late Ms Maria Cheng as Chief Operations Manager. The team now comprises of over 400 staff members, including social and community workers, registered nurses, early childhood teachers and educators, support workers and various assorted professionals. It is this team of professional workers that provides the quality services to our clients, and even when they faced the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, their professionalism empowered them to win the battle against the virus. The success of CASS over the last decade relies on our people and our spirits, and will be the core foundation for the success of CASS in the

years beyond.

Where will CASS go from here? This is the question all CASS people will be asking at this historical moment. No doubt, we will build more RACFs; we will build more facilities for disability services; we will provide more services to multicultural communities. Most importantly, we will focus on our core commitments and founding principles, providing quality services to the community to meet the emerging demands from the community.

Ten years ago, we pledged, “the scope of services provided by CASS will be further developed, expanded and extended, that our founding principles will continue to be adhered to at all times, and that our wholehearted efforts in serving people will be given not only to people in the Chinese community but also people of other communities.” Looking towards the future, this resolution will remain; in fact, we are more determined to uphold the resolution, “let us work hand-in-hand to make further enlightening achievements.”





The Hon Scott Morrison MP



## *Message from the Prime Minister*

### **CASS 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Congratulations to everyone at CASS on 40 years of service to the community.

The pages of this souvenir book illustrate the breadth of CASS's activities; from the nurturing of our treasured young people at the dawn of their life's journey, to the care of our cherished older members of the community as they enjoy their twilight years.

You also serve people at many other life stages, covering vocational training, settlement, health, and disability.

Over 40 years, the relationships you've formed have deepened and grown, and CASS has changed alongside them. Since your early days as a childcare provider, you have adapted and expanded.

Keeping Australians together has always been a value close to my heart, and my resolve has only intensified during 2020. During times of challenge and change, we draw on our reserves of resilience and adaptability. CASS's work reminds us of just how deep and dependable those reserves are, whether we are in times of joy, or times of crisis, and everything in between.

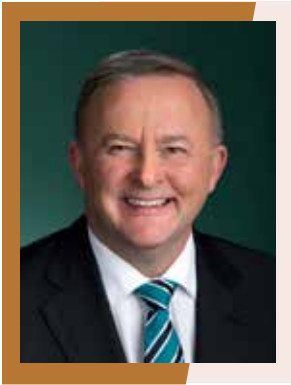
I acknowledge all of your efforts supporting the community during this pandemic.

My request to your community is to continue to do what is working: maintaining social distancing, washing your hands, downloading the COVID Safe app, and doing your share for your community and our nation – we are all in this together.

I hope this souvenir book serves as a meaningful expression of your dedication to your mission to serve your community from infancy to old age. I wish you every success for the years ahead.

A blue ink signature of The Hon Scott Morrison MP.

The Hon Scott Morrison MP  
Prime Minister of Australia



The Hon Anthony Albanese MP



## *Message from Leader of the Opposition*

### **Chinese Australian Services Society 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

It is with great pleasure that I congratulate all of you at CASS on your 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Four decades represents a truly significant milestone, one that is the fruition of so many people and organisations who have put in so much time and energy.

In the process, you have made a difference in the lives of so many Chinese Australians. The work of your members has taken on added significance during this time of pandemic as they do all they can to protect the vulnerable from social isolation.

As you've expanded your services to those of Korean background, you have further cemented your place as one of the guarantors of the health of Australia's treasured multiculturalism.

You have done so much in your four decades, but there is one of your achievements that I want to single out for praise. That is your decision to build an aged facility as the same site as a childcare centre, an innovation that makes possible intergenerational programs between children and the older residents. It is an approach I advocated recently in a speech about respecting and valuing older Australians. That you have succeeded in doing it is something we should all be drawing inspiration from.

Once again, I congratulate on your first forty years. Here's to the next forty.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Anthony Albanese'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Anthony' being more prominent.

Anthony Albanese  
Leader of the Australian Labor Party



The Hon Alex Hawke MP



## *Message from Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs*

### **40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Chinese Australian Services Society (CASS)**

I send my warmest congratulations to the Board, management, staff and volunteers of the Chinese Australian Services Society (CASS) on your 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Australia is one of the most successful multicultural societies in the world. CASS has made significant contribution over the last 40 years to this success, helping many new migrants to settle by providing a comprehensive range of social and welfare services and activities including settlement services, vocational training, childcare and disability care.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for your commitment and dedication to those you care for, particularly at this most difficult times. Your commitment and dedication has never been more important as you care for some of the most vulnerable in your society.

I extend my best wishes to everyone celebrating this important milestone and for CASS' continued success as a valued community services provider.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alex Hawke', written in a cursive style.

The Hon Alex Hawke MP





## *Message from Deputy Labor Leader in the Senate*

Senator the Hon Kristina Keneally

### **CASS 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

My warm and most heartfelt congratulations to the Chinese Australian Services Society on your 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse communities have helped build the country we all know and love and CASS has been integral to the health, happiness and ongoing welfare of these communities.

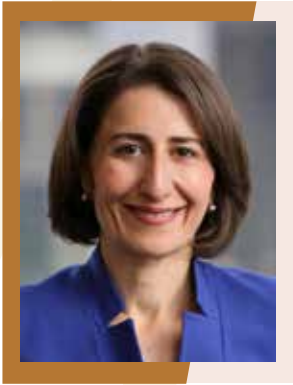
You have enriched the lives of tens of thousands Chinese-Australians and their families, expanded your services to Korean Australians, and continued to serve the community this year in the midst of a global pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic might have changed the ways we can celebrate this momentous occasion, but I want to assure you that as a Senator for New South Wales and the Deputy Labor Leader in the Australian Senate, I will always celebrate the invaluable and enduring contributions you have made, and will continue to make, to Australia.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kristina Keneally".

**Kristina Keneally**  
Deputy Labor Leader in the Senate  
Shadow Minister for Home Affairs  
Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship  
Senator for New South Wales



The Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP

## *Message from Premier of New South Wales*

### **Chinese Australian Services Society (CASS)**

It is my great pleasure to congratulate the Chinese Australian Services Society (CASS) on its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Initially established as a child care facility, CASS has developed a wide range of social and welfare services supporting more than 3,500 families a week.

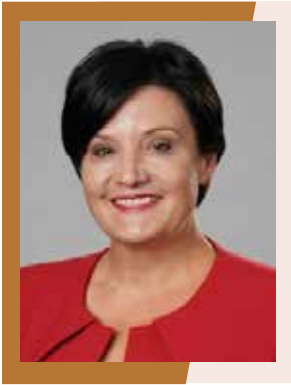
I would like to thank CASS members and staff for the support you provide to people of Chinese and East Asian backgrounds and your contribution to our harmonious multicultural society. Your efforts are particularly appreciated in these challenging times.

I acknowledge also the visionary leadership provided by Foundation Chair, Mr Henry Pan OAM, which continues today under current Chair Dr Bo Zhou.

Congratulations again and I wish you all continued success with CASS' endeavours.



**Gladys Berejiklian MP**  
Premier



Ms Jodi McKay MP



## *Message from NSW Leader of the Opposition*

### **Chinese Australian Services Society 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

I am delighted to extend my congratulations to the Chinese Australian Services Society (CASS) on the occasion of their fortieth anniversary.

CASS provides a comprehensive range of social and community services and activities to our multicultural communities.

I acknowledge the important role CASS plays in the promotion of the arts and culture, and social harmony through their various programs including language classes and activity groups for our seniors.

I proudly represent an electorate where Chinese is the single largest ancestry and understand the important role of organisations such as CASS play in providing culturally appropriate services. I am fortunate to have both the Burwood Activity Group, Ashfield Dance Group and Ashfield Environmental Care Group in my electorate of Strathfield.

I take this opportunity to commend the leadership of CASS as they continue to provide support to the community during this pandemic.

On behalf of NSW Labor, I extend my congratulations to CASS on their fortieth anniversary and look forward to their continuing success.

Yours sincerely

**Jodi McKay**  
NSW Labor Leader



# CASS - Dedicated To Serve The Community

CASS is the brand name of a group of registered charities providing a comprehensive range of social and welfare services to the multicultural communities, covering a wide geographical area including the Metropolitan Sydney and Wollongong. It consists of the parent entity, Chinese Australian Services Society Ltd (founded in 1981), and the subsidiary, CASS Care Ltd (established in 2002) which is also an endorsed public benevolent institution (PBI) by the Australian Taxation Office.

We serve people in the general community, especially those of East Asian background, including Chinese, Koreans, Indonesians, Vietnamese, etc. Every week, more than 3,500 families access our following services and activities:

## Aged Care Services

- Quality Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) for seniors of East Asian background;
- Home Care Packages (HCP);
- Short Term Restorative Care (STRC);
- Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) & Miscellaneous Services
  - Centre based respite, flexible respite, domestic assistance, personal care services and social support (group / individual) for seniors;

- Handy Helping Hand (Triple H) Services;
- Home Care Brokerage Services;
- Activity groups for seniors;
- Affordable hostel accommodation for elderly people.

## Disability Services

We are a NDIS Approved Service Provider for:

- Specialist Disability Accommodation (Group Homes);
- Day Program provided in group-based Activity Centres;
- Individual Supports: personal care, domestic assistance, community participation, shopping, transport assistance, independent living skills training, etc.
- Support Coordination;
- Plan Management;
- Carers Support Groups.





### Child Care Services

- We operate Early Learning Centres located in Campsie, Hurstville and St Leonards, providing long day care for children from birth to 5 years old;
- Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) Service: before/after school care and vacation care for primary school students;
- Family Day Care Service: professional child care and OSHC services for children aged 0-12 years at the homes of registered educators in various suburbs;
- Playgroup Network: supporting non-English speaking mothers who have children aged 0-5 years old to develop their social support network, enabling them to access various information and breaking social isolation.



### Vocation & Training Services

- CASS Family Day Care Employment Service;
- Adult English Classes, First Aid Certificate Course in Chinese, and training for those unemployed and with limited English to enable them to seek employment, with TAFE or other Registered Training Organisations;
- Work placement opportunity for students seeking relevant qualifications.

### Settlement & Health Services

- Settlement Services: assist newly arrived Chinese and Korean migrants with settlement concerns including housing, employment, education as well as health & welfare issues through face-to-face casework and referral services, WeChat, email ([help@cass.org.au](mailto:help@cass.org.au)) and hotline enquiry services;
- Information Sessions and Expos;
- Form-filling and JP Services;
- Tax Help Services;
- Health Services: provide health information or resources to the community and promote healthy life styles.

### Volunteering Opportunities

We recruit and train volunteers to assist in many aspects of our operation. In particular,

- Community Visitors Scheme;

- Connect Call Service;
- Facilitating Chinese and Korean speaking volunteers to participate in the volunteering services of mainstream organisations.

### Promotion of Chinese Language & Culture

- CASS Chinese School: Chinese language classes, STEM programs, debating, public speaking etc.;
- CASS Academy of Arts: ballet, creative arts, line dance, social dance etc.;
- Cultural classes and groups: martial arts, lion dance, Tai Chi, Chinese calligraphy, Go, etc.

### Community Activities

- Running Environmental Care Teams;
- Youth Groups: social and sporting activities;
- Interest classes and groups: dancing, calligraphy, stamp collection, etc.

### Community Capacity Building

- Advocate and lobby for the minority groups of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to safeguard and gain their rights;
- Organise fundraising activities for charities;
- Enhance the community capacity of evolving community and encourage their participation in community affairs.



## CASS HISTORY: 2011 – 2020

When CASS celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011, it was emerging from one internal crisis after another, with the latest episode beginning in late 2008, in which certain people held press conferences and approached government departments to spread innuendos and unfounded allegations about CASS operations and corporate governance, with the vicious intention of destroying CASS. Their malicious actions led to CASS being subjected to investigations by numerous government departments and the NSW Registry of Co-operatives. For details, readers are advised to visit the website of CASS at [www.cass.org.au](http://www.cass.org.au).

In the last decade, CASS went through the following three periods:

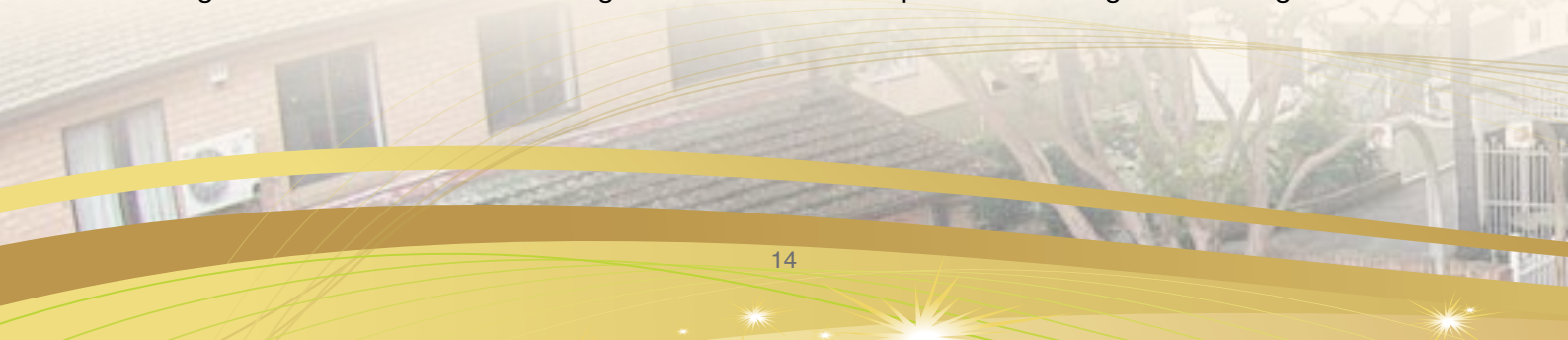
### A. Silver lining behind the dark cloud (2011 – 2014)

The turbulence within CASS between 2006 and 2008 had caused CASS to be in a bad financial position, and the investigations from various government departments and the NSW Registry of Co-operatives made the road of recovery for CASS very difficult and demanding – this was the state of affairs at the start of the past decade. A lot of staff efforts were spent on handling the investigations. However, there was always a silver lining behind the cloud and CASS came out of the investigations to become stronger and brighter.

As CASS was cleared of any wrongdoing, the investigations demonstrated to the government

departments the positive attributes of CASS – sound corporate governance and proper management practices. As a result, the clearance had increased the confidence of the government in CASS, leading to positive outcomes in terms of government approvals for funding and services, such as the Department of Health granting approval for the building of our Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) in early 2012; and the Department of Immigration continuing the provision of Settlement Grants until today, etc.

The unpleasant encounters with the NSW Registry of Co-operatives during its investigation also





stimulated CASS to review if its status as a co-operative should be continued, especially in view of the foreseeable expansion of CASS in the years to come. Legal advice was sought which indicated that the operation of a co-operative with rigid rules under Co-operatives National Law would not be suitable for future development of CASS. The process of corporatisation was then conducted in full force, including the holding of a postal ballot in June 2011, involving all members of our parent entity, the Chinese Australian Services Society Ltd, and a Special General Meeting (SGM) on 22 June 2011 for members to ask questions before the closing of the postal ballot on 23 June 2011.

With overwhelming support of the members of our parent entity, it was officially registered with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) on 1 July 2011 as a company limited by guarantee, and followed by the approval to be a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC) on 3 December 2012. The change of status has opened up new horizons and enabled CASS to engage in new business ventures.

While CASS was cleared by departmental investigations, the malicious innuendos spread during the period through press conferences against CASS had affected the confidence of people in the community with negative views towards CASS. The Board of our Society resolved in March 2011 that there would be a need to take legal action against the five ex-directors involved, suing them for defamation to clear the air. The court hearing of the legal case took place in late August 2013. After 5 days of hearing, midway of the allocated hearing time, on 30 August 2013, the defendants requested to settle the case out of court, in which they agreed to issue an unreserved public apology for spreading incorrect information

about CASS and our Honorary Executive Director, Mr Henry Pan OAM. The public apology was published widely in the media.

With the legal case over, the CASS Team directed all its efforts to work unceasingly hard in developing CASS and providing quality services to the community. The confidence of people in the community towards CASS was gradually restored and enhanced.

We focused our efforts on the building of the RACF in Campsie, and a series of fundraising events and activities for the RACF Project were held. Getting a loan from the bank of the time was met with unforeseen delay and red tapes, threatening the progress of the construction works. We had to seek alternative funding resources to get through the dire financial situation. Fortunately, some of our members provided timely support with personal loans, and we were able to continue the building works without any delay.

**TERMS OF APOLOGY**

To: CHINESE AUSTRALIAN SERVICES SOCIETY CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED & HENRY PAN

We, the undersigned, unreservedly apologise to CASS and Mr Henry Pan for the ~~unreserved~~ <sup>incorrect</sup> statements that we have made in the Chinese Media about the operations of CASS. We are also sorry for the hurt and upset that we have caused to Mr Pan by these statements. We have much respect for the work that Mr Pan and CASS have performed in the Chinese Community in Australia.

HELEN SHAM-HO                      ANDREW LAU                      THERESA KWONG  
SIMON HO                      JOSEPH LEUNG

致歉  
敬:

华人服务社和潘南弘

我们下列署名者向华人服务社和潘南弘致我们在中文媒体发表关于华人服务社运营的误导性陈述表示毫无保留的歉意。我们还为我们的声明给潘先生造成的伤害和困扰道歉。

我们非常尊重潘先生和华人服务社在澳大利亚华人社区所做的工作。

何沈慧霞    刘瑞威    廖秋婉芬    何柏新    梁锡洪

  
COUNSEL FOR  
PLAINTIFFS  
Mr Kieran Smark SC

  
Counsel for the  
defendants  
Mr Tom Blackburn SC

（本聲明書係由本會法律顧問代為草擬，特此聲明。） (Version: English) SC: 被告方律師: Mr Tom Blackburn SC



## B. Embarking on a new venture – A rugged start and lessons learnt (2014 -2016)

After intensive efforts in fundraising and working on the building project, our first RACF commenced operation on 9 February 2015. Within a short period of about 3 months, all 63 beds were filled with residents. On 14 August 2015, our RACF was presented with the prestigious Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) NSW Meriton Award of Excellence Architectural Design for Seniors Living.

Notwithstanding the pleasing results - as this project was a brand new venture for CASS and our team was inexperienced in running such a facility - it was a huge learning curve for us, and when coupled with series of hurdles and other incidental episodes, the situation became very challenging. We had to ride through storming seas confronted with unexpected obstacles one after another.

The problem first appeared at the Board level. “Small circle” was built among some Board members and staff members rather than having a united and concerted CASS Team as a whole. The revelation of this situation started to create mistrust within the Board. On the issue concerning the further development of CASS, some key Board members were holding very narrow view out of personal interest rather than for the interests of CASS and the community.

At RACF, a Director of Nursing (DON) was employed to oversee the overall operation. As the Board and the management team had limited experience in this area, we had to rely on the expertise of the DON. Regrettably, the DON took advantage of our trust and goodwill, and tried to manipulate the operation of RACF.

In January 2016, the Board discovered that the DON was not forthcoming with essential operational information, including reportable incidents of RACF, and keeping the Board and management team in the dark. During the same period, complaints were received from staff members regarding bullying by an active RACF volunteer who had been assisting the DON since March 2015. When the majority of the Board members intended to sort out the bullying issue, unexpected episode occurred, and it led to the Board Meeting scheduled on 28 April 2016 aborted shortly after it was convened. A few days after the incident, the Chairperson and 2 Directors of the Board resigned one after another, all citing personal reasons, placing CASS in a very precarious situation. By 16 May 2016, Dr Bo Zhou was unanimously supported by those remaining members of the Board to be the new Chairperson of CASS.

A staff member was sent in to audit the operations of RACF in July 2016. Unusual and inappropriate



practices were then discovered. Two written warning letters were issued to the DON seeking her explanation. In August 2016, in order to strengthen the management of RACF, a Facility Administration Manager position was established. The DON was re-designated as Care Manager, but the DON resigned after a few days of taking up the position.

Prior to the resignation of the DON, it was known that most of the Registered Nurses (RNs) employed at RACF at the time would resign en masse as all of them were employed by the DON and they had strong affiliations with the DON as well. Fortunately, the Assistant DON came forward to expose the wrongdoings of the DON and she chose to stay in her position after the DON's resignation. She became the Acting Care Manager, however not long after her appointment, she resigned in November 2016 as well.

A new team of Registered Nurses was gradually recruited and it took shape by December 2016. However, the troubles for RACF did not end there. Starting from 16 November 2016, anonymous letters were received by various government departments and some people in the community, spreading rumours about mismanagement in RACF and also against our Honorary Executive

Director, Mr Henry Pan OAM. In the following 3 and a half years, over 80 versions of anonymous letters were known to have been received by various people/organisations in the community. The police was informed in mid-2017 about this matter. After gathering enough evidences, CASS, Dr Bo Zhou and Mr Henry Pan jointly began a defamation case in mid-2018 against the former DON. The hearing for this civil case was held over four days, including 16 – 18 October and 1 November 2019. The judgment was handed down by the presiding Judge on 1 February 2021, ruling that the defendant to be a totally unreliable person, and the former DON was ordered to pay huge compensation to the three plaintiffs.

While issues with the DON were being tackled, the team at RACF continued its best efforts in operating the facility. We passed one accreditation of commencing services, two assessment contacts, one re-accreditation, five unannounced assessment contacts and one unannounced re-accreditation.

Even though our RACF had a rocky start, a lot of valuable lessons had been learnt from the experiences. The new model of splitting the DON position into two has proven to be appropriate.





### C. Big leap forward – Opportunities for growth and new directions (2016 and beyond)

In view of the strong and growing demand for residential aged care, in early 2016, we bought a piece of land consisting of seven adjoining properties in Asquith, aiming to build a RACF with an adjacent block of independent living units. The Development Application for the Project was lodged in early 2017, however, the approval process was very slow, and until 23 December 2020, our Development Application was finally approved. At the start of 2021, which is the beginning of a new decade for CASS history, we are preparing application to apply bed licenses from the Federal Government for this proposed RACF. This Project will certainly be a major development for CASS in the coming years.

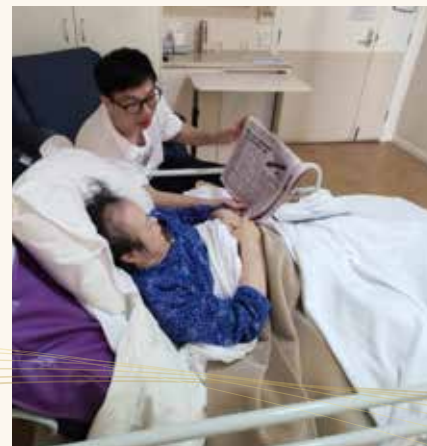
2017 was the beginning of a new era that came with changes in government policies and deregulation of restrictions in aged care and disability services, giving CASS the opportunities to expand services in both areas.

The roll-out of the National Disability Insurance

Scheme (NDIS) in our geographical area in 2017 signalled the end of State and Federal Government control over the funding of disability services, enabling CASS to take on new developments in this area. Apart from our two Group Homes and Centre-based Day Programs, we began providing other disability services, including Individual Supports, Plan Management and Support Coordination.

In February 2017, home ageing services also entered a new era with the Federal Government deregulating restrictions for the services. Initially we took the approach to observe how the sector would operate. By February 2018, following an in-depth review of the situation, we started taking a proactive approach. This big leap of faith paid off, resulting in considerable expansion of our home ageing services since then.

With persistent efforts of nearly a decade to address a number of issues, in 2018, the operating licenses of all of our child care centres





were successfully transferred and registered under the subsidiary CASS Care Ltd, improving the management of our child care services. To enhance the image of our operation, we gave our centres a new group name, "CASS Gumnut Early Learning Centre".

Besides the Asquith venture, we bought a property in Yagoona in early 2020 with the aim to develop another RACF in the future. This property was previously a nursing home but is no longer in operation. In the interim, we are operating the place as an Elderly Hostel after some renovation.

With the operation of our RACF in 2015, together with the expansion of home ageing and disability services since 2017, our annual financial turnover has increased significantly. By the end of 2020, the annual turnover figure exceeded \$31 million, a remarkable result, as compared to a decade ago, when the figure was \$7.4 million at the end of 2010. No doubt, by the end of next decade of CASS history, the annual turnover will further increase.

The changes in government policies brought new opportunities for CASS, such as expanding our services in the multicultural communities. Nevertheless, the positive developments have also brought new challenges as we are operating in an environment with fierce competition, strongly market driven with clients having the rights to choose the services they want, hence, our proactive promotional efforts are essential to gain market shares. It is vital for us to maintain and ensure the quality of our services. There is also a constant need to recruit sufficient qualified support workers to deliver quality services.

With concerted efforts of our CASS Team, we maintained good operating results in 2020 under the COVID-19 pandemic environment, resolving all issues and challenges. With our dedication and spirit of serving the community as evidenced throughout the CASS History, we will continue achieving outstanding results in the years to come.







## Achievements of CASS: 2011 – 2020

“CASS”, is our brand name, and is commonly known in the community nowadays to be a social and welfare services provider catering for the needs of multicultural communities. CASS consists of a group of registered charities, with its parent entity, the Chinese Australian Services Society Ltd, established in March 1981, i.e. CASS is 40 years old in March 2021.

From the humble beginnings in 1981 solely wanting to provide child care services, to its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2011, CASS has developed various services delivering a comprehensive range of social and community services, including child care services, home ageing and disability services, running Chinese language schools and other cultural programs, settlement and a multitude of other communal services. Each service has undergone different milestones during the first three decades of CASS. Readers can recapitulate and learn more about the different milestones by going to the CASS website.

Over the last decade, CASS has further grown and evolved from a co-operative, and transformed into a thriving services provider, expanding in terms of geographical locations, diversification of services and the mass increase of the number of people accessing its services. The expansion of services and increased human resources brought with it the need for an improved human resources management and financial management.

Before we peruse the highlights of the achievements that CASS has made in the past decade, we should remember when CASS celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary ten years ago, it was still amidst an internal crisis period, beginning from late 2008. During that period, certain people held press conferences and approached government departments to spread innuendos and unfounded allegations about CASS operations and corporate governance, with the vicious intention to destroy CASS. Their malicious actions led to CASS being subjected to investigations by numerous government departments and the NSW Registry of Co-operatives. As the allegations were baseless, CASS came out of the investigations stronger and brighter, proving to the government departments the sound corporate governance and healthy management of its affairs. As a result, the clearance increased the confidence of the government departments in CASS, leading to positive outcomes in terms of approvals for funding and services. Then, during the past decade, coupled with changes in government policies in the deregulation of Disability Services and Home Ageing Services, CASS has seized the opportunities and made significant developments in various areas.

Highlights of the achievements made by CASS in the past decade are presented below. For more details about the achievements, readers are advised to visit the websites of CASS at [www.cass.org.au](http://www.cass.org.au).



## I. Enhancement of Financial Management

Looking over the last decade, CASS Group has been able to maintain a sustained period of steady and robust growth. It is expected the growth trajectory would continue unabated in the years ahead. The results have been achieved in the backdrop of growing financial challenges and competition faced by businesses, particularly in the aged care and child care services sectors.

Over the last few years, with the unceasing drive of CASS to diversify and expand its scope of services in the multicultural communities, these initiatives have broadened our revenue streams, which augur well for our continued future growth and development.

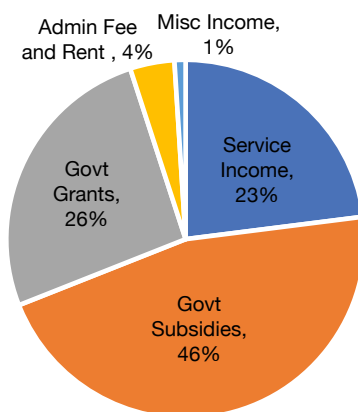
The following charts provide a bird's eye view of the financial performance of CASS over the past decade.

At the beginning of this decade, for the calendar year ending 31 December 2010, the revenue turnover for the CASS Group was \$7.4 million, comprising two key service units, namely, Child Care and Home Ageing Services. Since 2016, the services have expanded and diversified to include disability and residential aged care services; by the end of the decade, at 31 December 2020, the revenue turnover reached over \$31 million, an impressive growth of about 320% over 10 years.

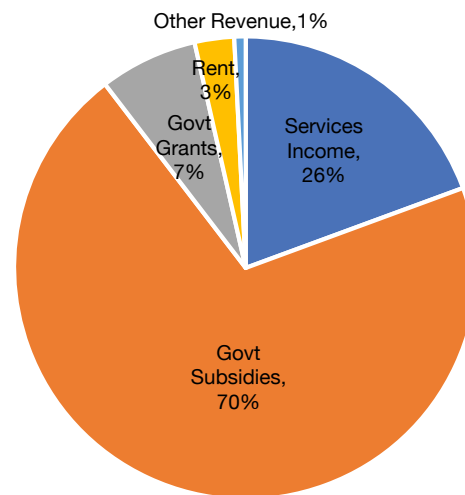
Over the same comparable periods for the decade, the sources of revenue for CASS have changed and shifted, with government fee subsidies showing significant increase, from 46% at the end of 2009, to 70% at the end of 2020; whilst government grants showing noticeable drop from 26% to 7% for the comparable periods, as shown by the two pie charts below.

The following bar chart shows the revenue growth trend over the last 10 years from 2010 to 2020.

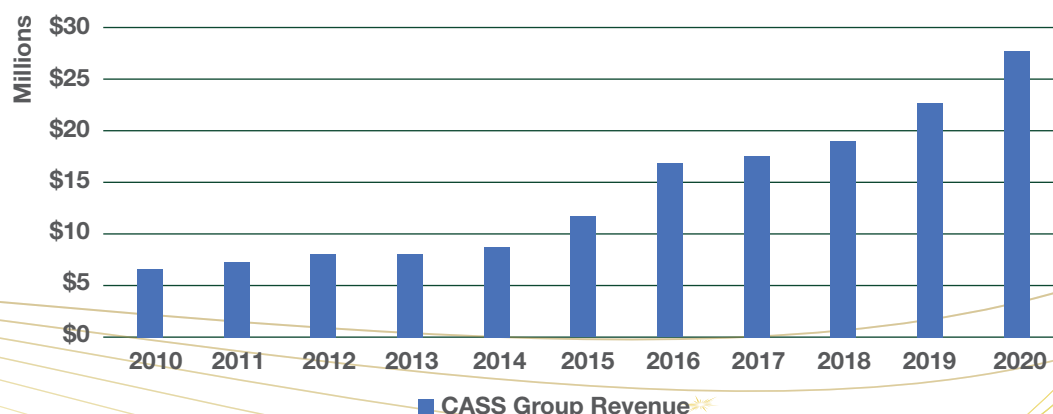
**Sources of Income for CASS**  
For the year ended 31 December 2009



**Sources of Income for the year ended 2020**



**CASS Revenue Turnover 2010-2020**



### Overcoming Difficulties and Challenges

In the financial area, the journey over the last decade has not been without challenges. CASS has encountered great difficulties along the way, and came out at the other end stronger and more confident.

When CASS was under investigation by various government departments, our financial management practice was subjected to relentless and extensive scrutiny over a fairly considerable period of time, putting enormous strains on our personnel and resources. Our staff members and volunteers patiently and confidently attended to all queries and questions, clarifying and resolving all issues raised.

In late 2013, the building work of our first residential aged care facility (RACF) in Campsie commenced. We faced enormous financial challenges due to the scale and intensive capital outlays required for the project in which we had no prior experience. By February 2015, RACF started operation. Like any new venture, it was a steep learning curve, and we faced many operational challenges along the way to ensure we comply with the myriad of government regulations and prudential requirements as required by the Aged Care Act. Looking back, we have performed well relative to our peers in the challenging landscape of the aged care sector.

### Change of Auditors

In 2017, the Board of Directors of CASS reached the conclusion that as our business continued to grow in sophistication, it would be appropriate to look for a new auditor who, besides having an extensive experience in not-for-profit sector and community services space, also had the capacity and background to provide value-added advice to the Board and management in the sectors we operate in. Through an open tender selection process, the Board appointed the audit firm StewartBrown in May 2017.

### New Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System

We undertook a review to search for a new accounting system to replace the legacy MYOB accounting system that had not kept pace with the increased transactional volume and its time consuming management reporting generation. At the same time, there were disparate systems in use by the business units, together with their heavy reliance on multitude of spreadsheets for cross-system reconciliations; overall the business processes had been suboptimal and inefficient.

We eventually selected the cloud-based ERP system, called Epicor. The ERP system, besides its accounting and financial reporting functions, has the potential to integrate future business processes and operations, like services for HCP, CHSP and NDIS, thereby supporting the organisation's business expansion and growth into the future.

We commenced the ERP implementation project in late 2018, and went live in July 2019. The modules currently in use include Financial Management, Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable, and Senior Living Solution for residential aged care. Being an ERP system, we will continue to explore its feature-rich capabilities and to build on its functionality to cater for business units like Home Ageing Services and Disability Services in the near future.





## II. Enhancement of Human Resource and Payroll Management

In the last decade, CASS underwent continuous expansion with increasing number of services provided to the community. By establishing the Human Resources Management (HRM) Unit in mid-2016, its core focus on development for individuals and the company has achieved improved effectiveness and efficiency.

The aggregate staff members increased 275% from 148 personnel in 2010 to 407 quality individual members by the end of 2020. The aggregate hours worked has dramatically increased nearly 5 times, from 104,000 hours in 2010 to 514,000 hours in 2020.

Given the significant increase in our staff levels, a new payroll system was introduced in 2014 which is featured with more complex functions in managing payroll data. The HRM Unit initiated and implemented the process of splitting payroll in two batches from August 2018, thereby enabling a more manageable payroll processing and strategic financial management.

CASS endeavours to provide greater work flexibility, better working conditions and remunerations to our employees. In view of this, the HRM Unit began drafting our first Enterprise Agreement (EA) in 2017. After eight negotiation meetings with employees and Union representatives and three briefing sessions held by the HRM Unit to explain key changes

and benefits provided in the EA, 96% of eligible employees voted in favour of the EA. Subsequently, the EA application was lodged with the Fair Work Commission and was successfully approved in February 2019.

## III. Corporatisation of the Society – Reforming the governing structure

Responding to the rapid expansion of our company, operating under the structure of a Co-operative and rigid rules under the co-operatives national law was no longer suitable for the development of our company. It was decided to restructure our Society from a co-operative to a company limited by guarantee. A postal ballot involving all Society members was conducted in June 2011 to obtain feedbacks. A Special General Meeting (SGM) was held on 22 June 2011 for members to ask questions before the postal ballot was closed on 23 June 2011.

The parent Company of CASS, the Chinese Australian Services Society Limited, was officially registered with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) on 1 July 2011 as an Australian public company, limited by guarantee. Our Company also became a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC) on 3 December 2012.

In 2016, the Constitution of CASS was amended to outline clear roles and responsibilities of the Council of Elders to strengthen the corporate management. The role of the Council of Elders is to observe but not vote at Board meetings. The Council has specific powers to convene general meetings to enable members to consider any Board proposal to sell significant asset or any Board proposal to commence significant litigation. In addition, the Council has certain powers to deal with material non-compliance with the Constitution and to act as arbitrators should any conflict arise between the Board and any member.





#### **IV. Commencement of Residential Aged Care Services**

In late 2014, CASS successfully established its first Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) located at Fifth Avenue in Campsie. The Facility commenced operation on 9 February 2015. It has 63 single rooms serving frail aged seniors of East Asian background, with the aim of meeting their cultural, linguistic and customary needs; enabling them to live in a familiar, safe and pleasant environment; and continuing to enjoy a quality and meaningful life.

In the late 1980s, CASS had noticed the strong demand for residential aged care facilities in the communities due to a rapidly ageing population. In 1987, CASS and two organisations jointly formed the Elderly Australian Chinese Homes Co-operative Ltd (EACH) to establish an aged hostel in Croydon. In this collaborative project, CASS unreservedly contributed our experiences, skills, human resources and financial assistance to support the project. After years of hard work, the Croydon Hostel was officially opened on 4 December 1994. Regrettably, the divergence of views between CASS and the other organisation of EACH had eventually led to the separation of the two organisations.

CASS has never regretted making such significant contributions to the Croydon Hostel project. Rather, the success of the project has made the Team become better, stronger and more determined. Thus, since 2002, CASS has gradually acquired five adjoining properties at Fifth Avenue, Campsie, with finance provided by the bank. In

early 2012, the application for building a 63 bed RACF was approved by the Federal Government through the Aged Care Approval Round.

The building of the Facility would cost about \$16.5 million. Apart from securing a low interest loan of \$8.63 million from the Federal Government, CASS needed to raise the balance. For this reason, CASS organised a series of fund raising activities for this Project.

On 21 June 2013, an Earth Turning Ceremony was held on the site where the planned RACF was going to build. The occasion denoted the official commencement of the construction of the building, and was an important milestone in the development history of CASS. Many guests attended the Ceremony, with a strong presence of Members of Parliament and councillors and well known community leaders. A total of over 200 guests attended the Ceremony, reflecting the strong support and high expectation of the community for CASS and its RACF Project.

After 18 months of unceasing hard work, the building works progressed smoothly and the RACF was completed and started operation in early 2015. The Facility soon became full house within 3 months. In August 2015, our RACF was presented with the prestigious Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) NSW Meriton Award of Excellence architectural design for seniors living. Under the guiding principle of “continuous improvement” the management structure of our Facility was reorganised after 18 months of operation. In August 2016, a Facility Administration Manager position was



established, and the then Director of Nursing was re-designated as Care Manager.

In the past five and a half years, we have received positive feedbacks from government authorities and our service users. We have passed one accreditation of commencing services, two assessment contacts, one re-accreditation, five unannounced assessment contacts and one unannounced re-accreditation. The quality service provided by our Facility is widely acknowledged and there is a long queue on our waiting list.

In view of the strong demand for residential aged care services, in 2018, we announced that we would commence the endeavour to raise fund for the building of our second RACF in Asquith. The proposed Project would have 97 single rooms with ensuite, and an independent living unit development was also planned, next to the proposed RACF. The Development Approval (DA) for the Asquith Project was granted by the Northern Region Planning Panel on 23 December 2020.

In early 2020, we acquired a property in Yagoona with finance provided by the bank. The building used to be a RACF with two floors and a large outdoor area. After careful consideration, the Board resolved to provide affordable accommodation service at the site for the interim period, with a long-term plan to develop a new RACF with no less than 120 beds. After 5 months of preparation, in August 2020, the Yagoona Elderly Hostel commenced operation. It provides 33 single rooms and 4 double rooms to people aged 55 or above. The rooms are spacious and bright and they give the residents a safe and

comfortable home environment.

Australia will continue to face a rapidly ageing population in the coming decades. We will continue to address the needs of older people to ensure quality residential aged care services are provided to them.

## V. Home Ageing Services

### – developing the best choice for customers

During the last decade, the Home Ageing Services (HAS) of CASS experienced tremendous growth in the number of customers, the types of services provided, geographical regions where we provided the services as well as the backgrounds of our customers. At the same time, there was strong development in the quality of our services, including the strengthening of governance, quality assurance, and a strong and robust team of workforce.

In 2020, we were serving a total of over 2,700 seniors every week. The majority of our customers were seniors from East Asian backgrounds, including Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and Indonesian, however, we also serve elderly people of the general public. While most of our customers were from Metropolitan Sydney, we also had customers residing in Wollongong, Canberra and as far as Western Australia and Queensland.

The service unit has seen an increase of over 130 staff members over the past decade due to an increasing number of customers.

The types of services we provided also became more diversified. As at the end of 2020, the



wide range of services HAS provided included the Commonwealth Home support Program (CHSP); Home Care Packages (HCP); Short-Term Restorative Care (STRC); Community Visitor Scheme (CVS); Handy Helping Hand (Triple H); and Day Centres supported and coordinated by CASS with our own resources.

With the rapid development of technology in the last 10 years, we also actively and innovatively used the latest technology in our services to improve the quality of our services and work efficiency. These included the use of the Telstra Health Information Management System, emergency alarms, fall detectors, and online training packages for staff members.

We also participated actively in research opportunities. In 2018, CASS supported the Griffith University's research on the benefits of intergenerational activity between seniors and children in our early learning centres. The final report of the research released in February 2020 confirmed that intergenerational activities had a lot of benefits to the seniors, the children and also to the workers.

CASS also acted as a voice for the seniors and advocating for them, especially those from the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community. In 2020, we expressed the needs of the multicultural seniors in aged care to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety through our participation in Aged and Community Services Australia (ACSA) meetings,

our representation in the Home Care & Community Advisory Committee of ACSA, and by writing directly to the Royal Commission.

During the past 10 years, the HAS Unit of CASS worked tirelessly with different levels of Government bodies and other community organisations to support the seniors in our community. In 2020 alone, despite the COVID 19 pandemic, we received funding from Councils, the NSW Government, the Federal Government, and Dementia Australia to run special projects or provide direct service to the seniors. With the support from Ryde City Council, about 20 staff members of HAS moved to work at a community services centre in West Ryde together with staff members from some other service units of CASS. The venue also provided space for meetings and group activities.

The vision of CASS Home Ageing Services is "CASS is always the best choice for consumers in aged care." We have endeavoured, and will continue, to work closely with all stakeholders to enable seniors to enjoy quality life at home.

#### **Day centres running on 'self-help' principle**

In June 1993 CASS started operating the Hua An Seniors Group in Campsie targeting the local Chinese speaking seniors. It aimed to break language barrier, facilitate access to information, promote healthy lifestyle and active ageing, and encourage social support among members. Since the Government did not provide on-going financial support to the well-aged seniors, CASS used its





own resources to employ a worker to support the day to day operation of the group.

More day centres were gradually developed to meet community demands. In 2008 we adopted a new “self-help” principle in running day centres supported and coordinated by CASS with our own resources.

In 2011 CASS operated a total of 11 day centres with an average of about 500 people attending the regular activities each week. As at the end of 2020, CASS was supporting 27 day centres with its own resources in the Inner West, St George, Western, South Western, South Eastern and Northern Regions of Sydney and Illawarra. On average over 1,300 seniors from the Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and Indonesian communities participated in the regular activities of these groups each week.

## **VI. Development and expansion of multicultural services, particularly services for the Korean community**

### **Home Ageing Services for the Multicultural Communities**

CASS started providing Home Ageing Services to the multicultural communities in 2002. We are extremely pleased that during the past 10 years, despite the various challenges, there has been tremendous growth in the services that we provided to the multicultural communities in Sydney.

In early 2011 we were approved by the

Government to provide 22 home care packages targeting the Korean seniors residing in the Inner West, South East and Northern Regions of Sydney. We also ran with our own resources a Korean seniors group in Ashfield, which aimed to promote healthy lifestyle, wellness and community participation.

In 2014 CASS received Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) funding to provide support to the seniors, including the seniors in the multicultural communities who had entry level care need.

The lifting of restrictions in the aged care sector with government policy changes in 2017 has led to significant growth in the number of HCP and CHSP customers. There was also an increased number of seniors from the Korean, Indonesian and Vietnamese communities attending the social support groups run with our own resources.

### **Services for the Korean Community**

CASS Korean services have expanded significantly over the past decade, particularly





during the last five years.

In 2015, CASS launched the Korean Project Development Team to identify the needs of the Korean community and to support the community to meet the demands. Since then several CASS programs, events and information sessions targeting the Korean community have been organised. CASS and its services were also actively promoted to the Korean community at the same time.

After the project 'Save Our Hearts' funded by the Heart Foundation was organised by CASS to both the Korean and Chinese communities in 2016, people in the Korean community became gradually aware that CASS Korean services were not limited to the Home Ageing Services but other community services as well. Several Korean senior groups approached us and asked if CASS could support them. The Oriental Classic Reading Group and the Korean Calligraphy Group were established in 2016 and 8 more CASS Korean senior groups were launched by the year 2020. CASS currently supports 11 Korean senior activity groups with its own resources under the principle of self-help.

In 2017, the number of clients of our Home Ageing Services in the Korean community was

dramatically increased. CASS Disability Services Korean Team was also formed and started to serve the Korean community in the same year.

In 2018, the Korean Services Development Team was established. CASS Korean Home Ageing Services, Disability Services and Services Development Team grew rapidly during the year with the efforts and dedication of our Korean colleagues.

The CASS Korean Settlement Services Team was formed and started to serve the community in 2020. The Team provided casework and referral services to the Korean community at CASS Ryde Community Services Centre (RCSC) in Ryde.



In the same year, the Korean services team also started a volunteer service. By the end of 2020, we had over 50 volunteers supporting the provision of services and activities to the Korean community including Home Ageing Services, Disability Services and Settlement Services.

## VII. Provision of CASS Settlement Services

Over the past decade, more and more people with Asian background have migrated to Australia. Mandarin has become the second most-spoken



language at home after English (ABS, 2016). CASS understands the crucial roles we are playing as one of the leading ethno-specific organisations to serve newly arrived migrants and acknowledges the importance of addressing the needs of vulnerable migrants, and assist them in integrating into Australia and promote social cohesion.

CASS has become the only Chinese organisation to provide settlement services in Sydney in July 2012. In January 2019, the Department of Home Affairs implemented the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) Program, an enhanced version of the former Settlement Grants Program.

To extend our service to the multicultural communities, CASS started to provide settlement services to the Korean community with our own resources in 2020.

We currently provide settlement services over the whole metropolitan Sydney with service venues at Ashfield, Burwood, Castle Hill, Campsie, Hurstville, Hornsby, Rhodes, Parramatta and West Ryde. In 2020, we provided about 62,400 casework and referral services relating to housing, employment, education, social welfare as well as health issues. Over 2,660 enquiries were answered through telephone hotline and email since the commencement of service in July 2011.

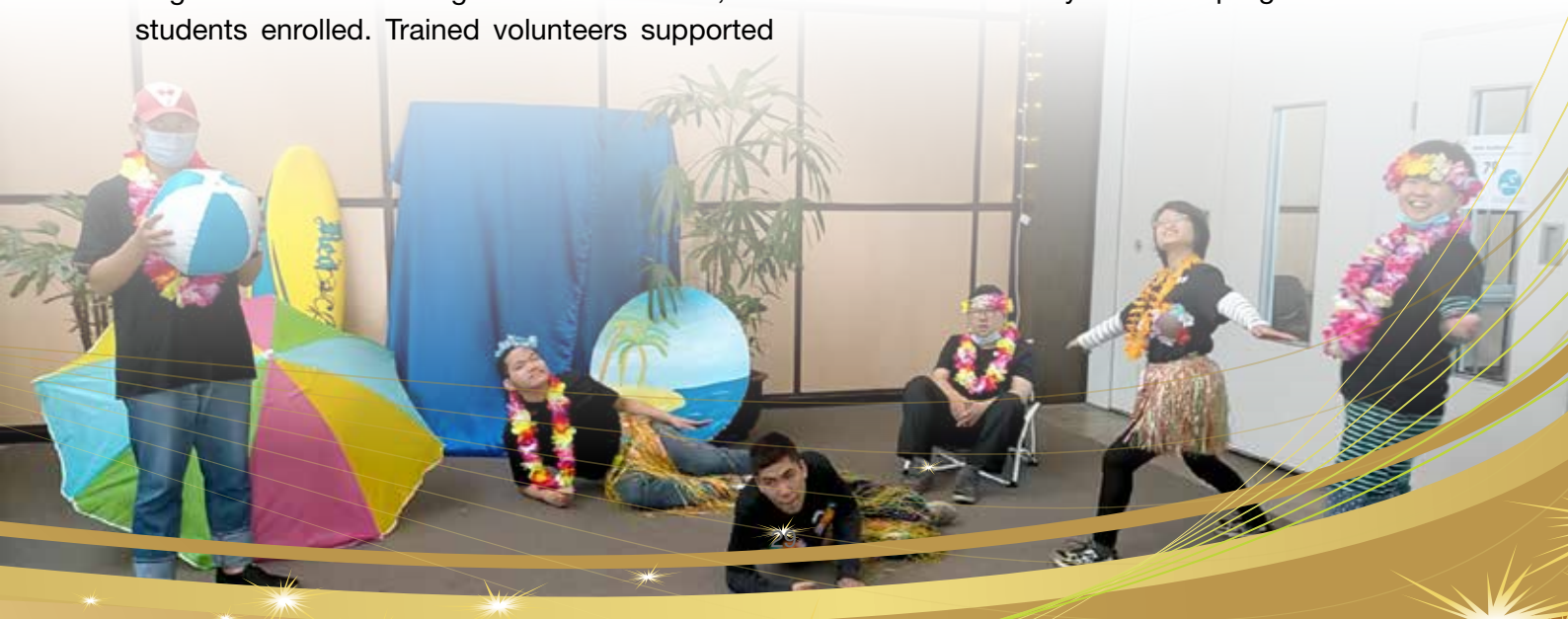
We have held over 1,045 settlement-related information sessions and more than 175 English classes for migrants with over 2,700 students enrolled. Trained volunteers supported



settlement services workers to provide free form-filling services in Ashfield, Campsie, City of Sydney, Hurstville and Rockdale. JP Service was introduced in 2013. Over 7,750 people have benefited from this service. The Tax Help Services was organised in Campsie and Hurstville serving about 3,850 people. 40 citizenship preparatory classes were organised and attended by over 5,000 persons.

Settlement Services has built a network connecting hundreds of clients via social media (WeChat, Weibo, Facebook, and WhatsApp) and e-mail. Information on settlement is dispatched weekly through the network, ensuring Chinese migrants are connected and have access to information on settlement in Australia.

In September 2020, amid COVID-19, we received a grant from Multicultural NSW to extend our service to vulnerable temporary visa holders, who were not covered by the SETS program.



## VIII. Expansion and Development of Disability Services

The range of disability services provided by CASS has been expanding gradually over the last decade. The number of participants using our disability services grew from just 10 in 2011 to over 130 at the end of 2020. By 2020, the services provided included Centre-based Day Program in Campsie and Peakhurst; Community Participation; Individual Supports; Support Coordination; Plan Management; Specialist Disability Accommodation and Supported Independent Living; and the Chinese and Korean Carers Group.

CASS was successfully registered as an NDIS provider in 2016 and has played a significant role in promoting NDIS to the Chinese community. In 2017 CASS also successfully registered both its group homes as Specialist Disability Accommodation and Supported Independent Living provider under NDIS. Together with other registered support classes which include Assist-Personal Activities, Community Participation, Plan Management, Community Nursing Care and High Intensity Assist-Personal Activities, CASS began providing supports to people with disability in a holistic approach. CASS Disability Services Korean Team was also formed and started to serve the Korean community in the same year.

In 2018, CASS started to provide Support Coordination Service. A Korean Carers Group

was formed. In 2019 CASS Disability Services went through the NDIS Certification process which was carried out by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (the NDIS Commission). CASS services were certified as consistent and responsive in supporting people with disability and promoted choice, control and dignity.

In 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, CASS Disability Services continued its steady growth in supporting the multicultural community, and improving the quality of care for the participants. The unit also began providing assistance to more individuals and their families in relation to accessing NDIS and giving supports in the application process. The most significant milestone of the year was the opening of the Campsie Centre-based Day Program in July.

## IX. Child Care Services

To provide child care service was the original purpose of setting up CASS when it started in 1981





and has been the main service provision during its first 30 years' operation. The last ten years has seen CASS focusing on diversifying its services to other areas such as aged care and disability services, and coupled with fierce competition in the child care sector, the performance of our child care services during this period has not been as significant. Nevertheless, CASS has acquired a new child care centre in Ryde in 2015 as an investment venture. We adopted a new model of operation by leasing out the Centre to a third party. The Centre has been performing well and generating stable rental revenue for CASS.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our Child Care Services initiated an online program "Play and Learn" (PAL) to provide educational programs for children while they stayed at home; and also the 'Bilingual Play and Learn' program for children wishing to learn Chinese. Both PAL programs were well received by the families.

The After-School Care Service at Harcourt Public School was moved to our Campsie Early Learning Centre in July 2019 and expanded its coverages to St Mel's Catholic Primary School and Campsie Public School.

## X. Development of CASS Cultural Affairs

### CASS Chinese School

CASS Chinese School continued receiving funding from the Community Languages Schools Program under the NSW Department of Education and

Training (DET) based on the number of students enrolled in our School. In accordance with the curriculum of DET, the classes were conducted under the arrangement where Mandarin and simplified Chinese characters were taught. CASS Chinese School currently operates in four locations, namely, Campsie, Hurstville, Kogarah and Connells Point.

In 2018, a restructure of the management practices was carried out to improve the operational performance of our School. The "Principal" position was redefined with the Head of our Cultural Affairs Unit at CASS Head Office designated to be the person. The Principal is to oversee the operation of all campuses managed by our School, including the coordination of promotion and external relationship. The previous "Campus Principal" positions were replaced by "Campus Administrator" positions with responsibility of carrying out administrative duties at campus level. The performance of our School has greatly improved after the







restructure, evident from the 2018 student enrolment and also financial performance. The growth in student enrolment for every campus continued in 2019, with the total number of students reaching over 600 by the end of 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 seriously affected the conduct of lessons and the student enrolment became very unstable, with the highest number registered to be 410 for the year.

### CASS Academy of Arts

CASS Academy of Arts consists of cultural and arts programs for children and the interest and hobby classes for adults.

Ballet Academy welcomed its new principal, Ms Yander Pan, in 2015. Ballet Academy has gradually expanded since then and has become a dance school that offers ballet and jazz to school aged children. Many students have passed RAD ballet exams, receiving Distinctions and Merits.

Other cultural and art programs include: Martial Arts and Lion Dance Class, Children's Creative Workshop, Drawing Class, STEM Programs, Debating Class, Public Speaking Class, Drama Class, Chinese Calligraphy Classes, Go Class and Chess Class. These programs help children in the community to grow and develop creativity, fine motor skills, problem solving ability, communication skills and socio-emotional abilities.

Interest and hobby classes for adults continues to be organised and they receive favourable responses from the community, including Hua Jin Social Dance Class, Tai-chi Class, Line Dancing Class and Stamp Collection Club.

### XI. Development of CASS Promotions Unit

Acknowledging that many services have been deregulated and CASS had been placed in an increasingly competitive environment led to an awakening call that there was an urgency to strengthen our promotion work in order to survive in the market.

In April 2015, a CASS Media Centre was established to coordinate the promotion of CASS services and activities; and to look at other alternatives in promoting our services. In the following years, much emphasis has been placed on starting up various social media platforms which included WeChat, Weibo and



Facebook. Evidently, we have been able to identify demographics to better find and reach our target market and developed the ability to build a direct relationship with our clients via different social media and communities. Customer interaction or results were much more measurable using online-based marketing methods where we could constantly review our performance in this area of work and be better controlled by our own staff members. By the end of December 2020, there were over 20,000 and 11,000 viewers for Weibo and CASS Facebook respectively; and more than 7,500 followers for the WeChat account.

In recent years, CASS Media Centre has been renamed CASS Promotions Unit. 28 social media platforms have been created which include various websites, Facebook, YouTube, KaKao Talk, WhatsApp, and Viber; all of which are closely monitored by the Promotions Team. These platforms not only promote information on CASS' services, activities, events but also on community/local news, other providers/Councils' events, Government or health related news. Information is offered in English, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and Indonesian, as we see the importance in staying engaged and connected with our followers and viewers, especially those of our target groups.

CASS Promotions Unit has evolved to be responsible in various marketing functions that cover a comprehensive work scope which involves five main areas: production; information gathering; community relations; general and technical support; and organizing and managing events and projects.

The Promotions Unit plays a key role in developing

and managing events and projects. Since 2011, the Team managed the fundraising for the "CASS Residential Aged Care Facility" project until its completion in 2015. These were all well participated and supported by our volunteers, members, staff, other providers, working partners and the general community. The events included the following:

1. Dragon Charity Walk (2013, 2014 and 2015);
2. Charity Dinner (2014 to 2019, a total 6 times);
3. Hundred Flowers Blossom Charity Talent Show (2013 and 2014);
4. CASS Charity Concert (Cantonese Opera) in 2014;
5. CASS Charity Concert (staged by CASS Ballet & Chinese School) in 2014;
6. CASS Charity Lucky Draw in 2015;
7. CASS Charity Concert (staged by the artist Tamara) in 2016.

We also continue to raise funds for our community capacity building work. Through the CASS Charity Trust, we have been providing assistance to other community organisations in need and helping people affected by natural disasters, including:

- Queensland Flood Appeal in February 2011;
- Drought Relief Appeal in August 2018;
- Bushfire Relief Appeal in January 2019.

Apart from having expertise in organising various events, the Promotions Unit is well experienced in the running of projects according to community needs. Since the beginning of 2020, we have experienced the changes from COVID-19. Many of our services users became socially isolated and were reluctant to participate in activities. The Team took immediate action in starting up new initiatives to assist the community to stay connected with others while remaining safe, healthy and active.







## **XII. Development of management system to coordinate volunteering services**

Volunteers have been the backbone of CASS from the initial formation and throughout CASS' history. Directors of the CASS Board have all been volunteers who are benevolent and committed. CASS provided platforms for our most dedicated volunteers of 'CASS Care Volunteers' Team' to gather and share their joy of volunteering and making a difference together in the community.

All along, CASS has been self-raising funds to operate a systematic volunteer management structure, which is indeed a contribution to the community. Time has confirmed our governance ability in recruiting and maintaining a strong team of volunteers and the noble spirit of obligation promoted by CASS has made a profound impact on the community.

A CASS Volunteers' Affairs Coordination Committee (VACC) was set up towards the end of 2011 to assist the Board of Directors in supervising, reviewing and coordinating important matters related to volunteer affairs. In Australia's CALD community, CASS was one of the pioneer groups that formally put volunteer management on the right track.

Free training workshops are provided for our volunteers as well as anyone who are interested in joining voluntary work for the community. We also provide free training sessions to other community organisations. Over the years, CASS



has cooperated with mainstream voluntary groups. Through the volunteers' referral service of CASS, many volunteers have been provided with the opportunity in serving other community organisations. The contribution of our volunteers is not limited to CASS but extends to the wider community.

CASS is an approved organisation to host job seekers who are undertaking voluntary work as an approved activity with Centrelink.

CASS actively responds to the government's policy on volunteering work and provide opinions. In 2011, CASS submitted a submission on voluntary work to the government and expressed its opinions and suggestions on voluntary work as a CALD community organisation.

We value and recognise the work of all volunteers with high respect. One of the ways we express our gratitude is by inviting active volunteers to our annual Thanksgiving Luncheon. CASS collects stories of some outstanding volunteers'



experiences, and publish these interesting and inspirational short articles in newspapers and the media, both commending the work of volunteers to the community and promoting the spirit of volunteerism.

In addition to internal recognition by CASS, we nominate outstanding volunteers for volunteer awards established by the government and other community organisations.

### **XIII. Overcoming the challenges of the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 presented a lot of challenges for CASS, but it did not stop us from completing our mission. We followed closely to the various changing Government requirements. We provided lots of trainings to staff members and the community on understanding COVID-19, infection control, and how to follow Government directives. We also managed to arrange Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to our staff members, even at the time when there was acute shortage of PPEs in the market. All service units were well supported by our CASS management which strategically put in place measures very early on to share resources amongst different service units, and giving advice on risk management, COVID emergency management plan, and staff COVID health screening to maintain the continuity of our services. For colleagues that were affected by the cancellation of services, counselling and assistance were provided; more flexible arrangements on leave application were rolled out to make sure they were well supported emotionally and financially.

Responding to the community needs due to the



impact of COVID-19, in which many of our services users became socially isolated and were reluctant to participate in activities, all our service units took actions to assist them to stay connected with one another while remaining safe, healthy and active. Some of these initiatives included:

- The use of Zoom, and social media platforms like WhatsApp, WeChat, YouTube and KakaoTalk to continue providing social support to the seniors and other service users isolated at their homes.
- Zoom trainings were organised in English, Chinese and Korean in 4 locations – Campsie, Yagoona, West Ryde and Gordon. As many activities have been changed to being online using Zoom, we identified the need to help training people in the general community on how to use this software. These trainings were also promoted in the Chinese and Korean communities. Those who participated in these trainings have expressed their appreciation as it helped them to stay connected with their families, friends and others in the community.
- Providing timely COVID-19 updates in different languages – Many of our services users did not



have access to the most updated COVID-19 information in their own languages due to English barrier; therefore, CASS social media platforms continuously broadcasted COVID-19 updates in different languages to those in our network, especially those from Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and Indonesian backgrounds.

- Online competitions – “Combating COVID-19: Turning Isolation into Creativity” and “Living in the New Normal under COVID-19” were the two online competitions organised to encourage using creativity and imagination to perceive the world in new ways. They also provided a platform for ideas exchange to build up the connection in our community. Both competitions received enthusiastic interests and tremendous support from the community.
- Foreseeing the potential financial and emotional



hardship of Chinese migrants, our Settlement Services Team has immediately relocated services to our own premises in Campsie and West Ryde. This has allowed us to continue our face-to-face services as migrants, particularly



seniors, often have difficulty accessing services online. Meanwhile, we have extended our telephone and online services from 2 to 5 days per week.

- Our Disability Services also felt the impacts first-hand, including cancelation of support services, increasing fear caused by misinformation and the restrictions reducing our group home residents' activities. Our participants were informed of any updates almost instantly so that they received correct information from credible sources like the Department of Health and NDIA. Additional in-house activities were arranged so that our group home residents could take part while their usual activities were put on hold due to the restrictions. We even delivered skill development support via online platforms like Zoom and WeChat.
- Our child care services initiated online PAL programs to provide educational programs for children while they stayed at home.
- Our HAS team and volunteers participated in a special project jointly organised by Hunter's Hill Council and the City of Ryde which partnered with Harris Farm Markets at Boronia Park to deliver 100 hampers on every weekday to help those most in need during the pandemic. Our volunteers were among those assisting the deliveries to seniors of CALD backgrounds.





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