

## Marking Time: Transforming Australia-China Relations 1937-1945

What pasts do we commemorate and what pasts do we forget when we commemorate? We commemorate the significant contribution of Chinese-Australian servicemen and women in the Second World War. However, the role of relief funds and the aid they sent to China, as well as China's strategic role as an ally in the Second World War, is a largely forgotten part of the accepted story of Australia's war in the Pacific.

There is also another meaning of "Marking Time" which is relevant - "waiting for something to occur", which is exactly what happened after the Second World War. The vision of a new relationship with China that was formulated in the early 1940s by politicians, academics and leaders of business, and widely discussed in the media, was not realised straight after the war. It was delayed.

The presentation will include archival photographs, documents and newspaper articles to be used in a publication to tell the story of one of many relief funds. The NSW Chinese Women's Relief Fund registered as a charity in 1937 and accepted donations of goods and money, shipping aid to China including medical supplies, food and clothing for refugees and orphans. But for a fundraising movement to be real a success, mass entertainment and spectacle are needed. All was provided – including Chinese pageants and festivals, with a 43-metre dragon and massive displays of fireworks. Among the celebrities to visit Australia were Alice Chow, a star of the Shanghai film industry; Doris Chen who had worked on film production in Hollywood; and a leading star of Paramount Pictures, Anna May Wong.



Members of the NSW Chinese Women's Relief Fund

29th October 1938

(Collection of Wailum Simpson Lee)

Original: black and white

DATE: Saturday, 7th September 2024  
TIME: 2.30 – 4 pm  
VENUE: The ACETCA Boardroom  
Level 8, Harbour Plaza  
25-29 Dixon St  
Sydney NSW 2000  
COST: \$10 CHAA members, \$15 non-members  
BOOKINGS: Peter – peter.hack6@bigpond.com  
Tickets may be paid by direct deposit  
BSB: 032-716 Account No: 435583  
or by card or cash on the day

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Tax deductible donations to support the publication can be made through the Australian Cultural Fund at: [Artist Project: The NSW Chinese Women's Relief Fund: Australia's Engagement with China \(australianculturalfund.org.au\)](#)