



## Museum of Chinese Australian History Education & Learning Policy

### 1. Introduction

The Museum of Chinese Australian History Inc. (hereafter referred to as the 'Chinese Museum' or the 'Museum') is a community-run not-for-profit national institution that was established by the Chinese Australian Community in 1985. Its roles are to **document**, **preserve**, **collect** and **research** the history and culture of Australians of Chinese descent. In doing so, the Museum endeavours to **display** and **promote** this history and culture along with general appreciation of Chinese arts and culture to a wide as audience as possible in Australia and overseas.

The Chinese Museum has a charter to present the history of Australians of Chinese ancestry, which now number almost 700,000 of the Australian population. By presenting the history of Chinese Australians in Australia the Museum seeks to broaden Australian society's understanding of this significant sector of the community in the areas of communal values, cultural identity, diversity, social development and equality.

### 2. Education Mission Statement

The Chinese Museum strives for excellence in its education programs and considers that the role of the education program is to support the mission of the Museum by:

*“promoting the understanding of community values, cultural identity, diversity and equality, for the social development of all Australians – young and old.”*

Through our formal and informal educational and public programs, the Museum aims to raise awareness and understanding about the richness of the Chinese contribution to Australia's history, promoting harmony, culture, understanding and multiculturalism to the community at large.

Working with primary and secondary school groups as a priority audience, we aim to provide information and learning experiences to students which are accurate, relevant, interesting and engaging, thereby helping them to develop an appreciation for Chinese history and culture, the valuable contributions made by Chinese people to our multicultural society and a love of history in general.

The Museum has an Education Advisory Sub-Committee which oversees policy and program development, tour guide training and general business related to the education program. The Sub-Committee includes experienced professionals within the education sector who provide advice and recommendations to the Museum staff and Committee of Management relating to the education program.

## 2. Principles

The Museum commits to:

### *Audiences*

- Engaging with communities through education and learning activities
- Promoting continuous, lifelong learning as an organisation-wide principle
- Providing formal and informal educational/learning opportunities for a range of audiences including school students, families and adult visitors

### *Access*

- Encouraging access to the collection and curatorial resources by schools, tertiary institutions and community groups for the purpose of study and scholarship
- Developing approaches which cater to the diversity of learning styles and special needs which exist within the community
- Using the world wide web to reach international and national audiences unable to physically visit the museum
- Ensuring that physical and intellectual access to the collection is available to as many age, ability, gender and cultural ranges as possible

### *Research and evaluation*

- Regularly evaluating our programs to improve effectiveness and be responsive to audience needs and suggestions
- Keeping abreast of current education theory and advances in the sector of museum education
- Liaising with appropriate professional education bodies such as the state Education Department, the History Teachers Association of Victoria, Museums Australia Education National Network, Chinese Teachers Association of Victoria and LOTE Teacher Associations and relevant museums

### *Training*

- Providing training to our staff in the Museum's educational mission and programs
- Recognising the key role of guides as the primary interface between the Museum and our audiences, the Museum commits to providing quality guide training with a focus on continuous improvement
- Encouraging volunteers and work placements at the Museum to fulfil our responsibilities towards training the next generation of museum professionals
- Providing resources and professional development opportunities for teachers and trainee teachers

### 3. Audiences and current education and public programs

The Museum plays an important role in educating the wider community. Over the past decade the schools program has grown to be the Museum's core audience and revenue generating stream. More than 28,000 primary and secondary students visit the museum each year. Their ages range from 9 to 15 years (grade levels 4 to 11).

School groups participate in:

- On-site: Guided tour of the Museum, and/or Cultural Workshop
- Off-site: Guided tour of Chinatown
- Off-site: Workshops delivered in schools

The popularity of the Museum's school tours results from the personal interpretation given by Museum guides and the breadth of subjects and live performances and activities offered.

Subjects explored include:

- Australian history
- Social equality
- Multiculturalism and cultural identity

These themes illustrate the heritage of a segment of the Australian community that has been a long term contributor to the Australian way of life.

Another focus of the education program is celebrating Chinese intangible heritage. Performances, demonstrations and hands-on workshops are offered on-site in the following activities:

- Appreciating Chinese cuisine (tea ceremonies and moon cake making)
- Art and craft making (lantern and kite making and Chinese knot tying)
- Calligraphy and Chinese painting classes
- Penjing (Chinese Bonsai) growing
- Storytelling and writing
- Traditional folk dancing
- Wing Chun (traditional Chinese martial arts)

Traditional Chinese cultural festivals such as Mid-Autumn Lantern Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Chinese New Year and the Hungry Ghost Festival are celebrated annually and/or bi-annually and educational and public program activities are scheduled to complement these events.

The Museum also manages an outreach program for primary and lower secondary students which consists of a travelling suitcase filled with Chinese 'Cultural Treasures' and learning activities for teachers to use in their own classrooms. Predominantly marketed to Victorian schools, the Museum hopes to see this resource taken up by schools nationally.

A range of web-based resources such as education kits and teachers notes on exhibitions are available at <http://www.chinesemuseum.com.au/education.html>

The Museum is developing a series of 'incursions' which will see Chinese artists and performers delivering off-site cultural workshops in Victorian schools from 2010.

Anecdotal evidence shows that children visiting with their school do return with their parents to experience the Museum further. Family groups are thus catered for during school-holiday periods. The Museum offers:

- On-site: A range of worksheets and activities relating to exhibitions, designed for use on self-guided visits
- Off-site: A range of scheduled activities (calendar related events such as Kite Festival and Children's Week)

The Museum also caters for adult special interest groups such as English as a Second Language learners (ESL) and senior citizen activity groups including U3A and Probus.

On-site programs available to adult learners include:

- Calligraphy and Chinese painting classes
- Guided tour of Museum
- ESL Interactive Learning Tour
- Evening lectures on subjects of Chinese Australian history
- Chinese Australian Family History Centre

Off-site programmes available include:

- Cultural Bites (a heritage tourism adult learning program)
- Dragon Festivals at Chinese New Year and Moomba
- Guided Tour of Chinatown Remembering Chinatown Audio Walk

#### **4. Policy Evaluation**

The Museum's Education Policy will be reviewed annually by the Museum's Executive Committee.

Date adopted by Committee of Management: 3 December 2009