Good afternoon distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

I would also like to thank the organisers of the Chinese Community Council of Australia for inviting me to speak in this session. Particularly, I would like to acknowledge Daphne Lowe Kelley for curating this important national conference, following on from the successful reenactment of the Walk from Robe, South Australia to the steps of Parliament House.

I also acknowledge Hong Lim, MP for his leadership and vision for the work of the CCCAV, which has now culminated in the apologies made both Premier Andrews and the leader of the opposition, Matthew Guy, MP.

Finally, can I acknowledge my fellow members of the Order of Australia Association, and in particular to welcome May Hu, OAM the only Victorian of Chinese descent to receive a gong on the Queens Birthday 2017.

This session is about the Contributions and Status of Chinese Australians. In the short time I have been allocated, I want to briefly look at 3 areas:
• The contributions (both current and historical) made by Chinese Australians
• Anecdotal research I conducted on Chinese Australians being conferred an award in the Order of Australia
• The steps we could take to create a pathway for achievement and advancement

So, where are Chinese Australians today?

I am a 3rd generation Chinese born in Malaysia. I came to Australia in the early 80s for my tertiary education. I have now lived in Australia for 35 years, which is now longer than I have lived in Malaysia. Australia is home. This is where I contribute to the building of our nation, like many other Chinese Australians before me.

Since the mid 1800s, Chinese Australians have contributed to Australia’s nation building despite the White Australia Policy. My research reveals there have been many unsung heroes amongst our midst. Certainly, in the last decade with reality TV, we have seen many more Asian Australians becoming well-known celebrities. I won’t go through all the names of the Chinese Australians who have contributed to our society today but I would like to name a few.

In Business

• Mei Quong Tart (1850-1903) was a 19th century merchant and philanthropist. Born in the Guangdong province, China and at 9 years old he went to NSW with his uncle. He was taught English and
converted into Christianity. At 18 years old, he has already acquired shares in gold claims and was wealthy. Quong successfully ran a chain of tearooms. He married a young Englishwoman, Margaret Scarlett, and they had two sons and four daughters. Unfortunately, Quong met an untimely death at a young age of 53 years old after he was savagely assaulted in his office.

Quong succeeded in being accepted by the NSW community and the government in recognition of his service to the Overseas Chinese community and to European-Chinese relations in Australia. Although honoured by the then Imperial government of China as a Mandarin (i.e. a bureaucrat scholar). On all accounts, Quong had adopted the dress and manners of an English gentleman. He was the first Chinese person in Australia to be initiated into the Society of Freemasons.

It is good to know one of his descendants is the Australian actor, Josh Quong Tart who acted in Underbelly: Badness and played Scar in the 2013 production of Disney's Lion King at the Sydney Capitol Theater.

- Bing Lee – famous Australian retailing company with a chain of stores in NSW specializing in consumer electronics, computer and telecommunication goods. It is the largest privately held electrical retail business in NSQ with 41 stores and a turnover of over $400m. Bing Lee died in 1987, and his son Ken Lee died in December 2007 at the age of 75 years old.

changed his surname from Tingyou to Hooker by Deed Poll in 1925. One might surmise the reason for changing his name to ‘Hooker’ as it was his way of becoming acceptable to Australians with whom he had hoped to do business. He was born post the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 and there was particular bias being directed against Asians. The sentiment expressed in one publication being that ‘no Chinaman is an Australian’.

Hooker built his empire from nothing. He was a property entrepreneur, businessman and philanthropist. LJ Hooker was at one time Australia’s largest landholder and the world’s largest cattle owner. On 2 June 1973, he was made Knight Bachelor for services to commerce. His Chinese heritage apparently remained a secret until some years after his death.

- Trevor O’Hoy was the CEO of Australia’s largest beer company, Foster’s Group, from 2004 to 2008.
- David Wang was the owner of the largest Chinese emporium store in Australia, outside of Hong Kong. He was Melbourne’s first Chinese born councilor in the Melbourne City Council.

**In medicine**
- The late Dr Victor Chang, AC who was a cardiac surgeon and a pioneer of modern heart transplantation.
- Dr John Yu, AC is a distinguished paediatrician and the 1996 Australian of the Year
• Dr Charles Teo, AM is a well known neurosurgeon

• Professor Yean Leng Lim, AM who pioneered coronary intervention in China

**Arts, Entertainment, Food**

• Jeff Fatt, AM is an Australian musician and actor and best know for ‘The Wiggles’

• Russell Goldfield Jack, AM is the founder and director of the Golden Dragon Museum in Bendigo. In 1998 he was named Victorian Senior Citizen of the Year.

• Gilbert Lau, AM was the founder of Flower Drum, one of Australia’s iconic Cantonese styled Chinese restaurants

• Tony Ayres is an award winning and leading executive producer, screenwriter and director in TV and feature films

• Li Cunxin was a former ballet dances and currently the artistic director of Queensland Ballet. His autobiography Mao’s Last Dancer received numerous accolades.

• Annette Shun Wah is a prominent figure in Australian media (TV, film and radio)

• Lee Lin Chin is best known in SBS as a TV news presenter and journalist

• James Wan

• Kylie Kwong is a Chef, author, TV presenter and restaurateur. Her great grandfather is Kwong Sue Duk

• Kwong Sue Duk was a Chinese Australian herbalist and merchant. With 4 wives, he fathered 22 children
• Adam Liaw was the winner of 2nd series of Master Chef Australia in 2010
• Jenny Kee is an Australian fashion designer
• Lisa Ho is an Australian fashion designer
• Jessica Gomes is an Australian model and actress

In the law

• William Ah Ket was first barrister of Chinese descent in Victorian and Australia.

Ah Ket was born in Wangaratta in 1876. His father, Mah Ket, arrived from Canton during the gold rush with his wife Hing Ung. He completed his secondary education in Wangaratta, and studied law at the University of Melbourne. He won a prize from the Supreme Court in 1902, although there is some debate whether this was the Supreme Court Prize or related to his articles, which were served under Richard Cross of Maddock & Jamieson in 1903.

In 1904 Ah Ket signed the Victorian Bar roll. He read with Stewart McArthur (later Justice McArthur) and was the first Chinese barrister to practice in Melbourne.

Ah Ket enjoyed an excellent general practice and was recognised as an able cross-examiner with a superb command of language.

However, the former Prime Minister of Australia, Sir Robert Menzies, who was a friend of Ah Ket and practised with him in Selbourne Chambers, observed ‘a certain prejudice among clients against having a Chinese barrister to an extent limited his practice’.
Despite this, a search of High Court cases between 1905 and 1928, shows that Ah Ket appeared before the High Court on at least 12 occasions. Many of Ah Ket’s cases involved challenges to legislation that discriminated against those of Chinese origin. He was also passionate about fighting the unreasonable conditions imposed such as the infamous dictation test.

Among other achievements, he was a co-founder and President of the Australian Chinese Association and, in 1913, was appointed as Acting Consul General for China in Melbourne. It appears that he had diverse interests, including being a founding member and Grand Master of the East Caulfield Masonic Lodge, and was a life member of the MCG, with a strong enthusiasm for cricket.

Ah Ket’s grandson is the famous classical guitarist, John Williams!

- William Lee was the second barrister of Chinese descent in Australia and first in Sydney

In politics

- John So, AO was the first Lord Mayor of Melbourne of Chinese descent, and a member of the CCCAV Advisory Council
- Wellington Lee, AM, OBE was the former Deputy Lord Mayor of Melbourne. Now 92 years old and still living, he has been a pioneer and champion of the Chinese community in Melbourne
- Alec Fong Lim, AM was the 11th Lord Mayor of Darwin
- Robert Chong, AM was a former Mayor of the City of Whitehorse
- Peter Wong, AM – Member of the Legislative Council of NSW
• Peter Wong, AM was a member of the Legislative Council of NSW

• Henry Tsang, OAM – former Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier of NSW and Deputy Lord Mayor Sydney

• Helen Sham-Ho, OAM – Member of the Legislative Council of NSW

• Marion Lau, OAM – Victorian Multicultural Commissioner, and a member of the CCCAV Advisory Council

• Tsebin Tchen was a former senator in Victoria State Parliament, and former member of the CCCAV Advisory Council

• Michael Choi was a member of the Queensland Legislative Assembly

• Ernest Wong, MP is a member of the Legislative Council of NSW

• Pierre Yang is a recently elected Senator in WA

• Harry Chan was first Chinese Major of Darwin

• Katrina Fong Lim is the Lord Mayor of Darwin

• Stanley Chiang was the Mayor Darebin, and a member of the CCCAV Advisory Council

• Alfred Huang was the Lord Mayor Adelaide

• Bill O’Chee – former senator in Queensland, Federal Government

• Penny Wong is a senator in South Australia, and former a member of Cabinet and Minister in the Gillard government

• Chin Tan was the former Chair of Victorian Multicultural Commission, and former President of the CCCAV

In academia

• Emeritus Professor Kwong Lee Dow, AO was the Vice-Chancellor of University of Melbourne
• Professor Max Lu, AO is a Chinese Australian Vice Chancellor of the University of Surrey, UK

Others (friends of CCCAV)

• Sam Wong, AM was the former Principal Pharmacist, TGA, Department of Health, Australian Government
• May Hu, OAM from SBS Radio’s Mandarin program received a Order of Australia Medal on the Queens Birthday 2017 for her service to broadcast media, women and the multicultural community of Victoria

Anectodal research

In preparing for this talk, I did anecdotal research on the number of Chinese Australians who have received an Order of Australia since its establishment.

The Order of Australia is an order of chivalry established on 14 February 1975 by Queen Elizabeth on the advice of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam to recognize Australian citizens for achievement or meritorious service. The Order is divided into a general and a military division.

There are 5 levels:
• Knight/Dame of the Order of Australia (AK/AD)
• Companion of the Order of Australia (AC)
• Officer of the Order of Australia (AO)
• Member of the Order of Australia (AM)
• Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM)
Since 1975 to the Queens Birthday 2017, there have been less than 200 Chinese descent recipients of the Order of Australia.

On Australia Day 2017, there were 733 recipients in the general division of the Order of Australia with only 8 Chinese Australians receiving the gong. On Queens Birthday 2017, there were 673 recipients with only 7 Chinese Australians receiving the gong.

In the last 10 years in Victoria there have been 25 Chinese Australian recipients of the Order of Australia. This is a small number in comparison to the size of the population of Chinese Australians in Victoria. It works out to be about 1% of Chinese Australians receiving an award in the categories of AO, AM, and OAM nationally.

There have been no appointments in the category of AC since Dr John Yu, AC who was appointed on Australia Day 2001 (his AM was conferred in June 1989). The late Victor Chang, AC was appointed on Australia Day 1986! He was the first Chinese Australian to be appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia.

One of the reasons proffered as to the lack of recognition in the upper echelon of Australian society is there is a lack of meritorious candidates. Despite the Chinese having contributed to our nation building during the turn of the century, it is only in the last 30 years that there has been an increased migration of Chinese people and it takes time to build the pipeline of meritorious candidates to be leaders in our society rather than mere workers.

There is no doubt that there has been greater acceptance of a
A diverse multicultural society in mainstream of Australia. This is evident, as by 1965 both major Australian political parties had resolved to abolish the White Australia Policy from their political platform, which paved the way for an increase in non-European migration into Australia. In 1973, the Whitlam government took the final steps to remove race as a factor in Australia’s immigration provisions.

In spite of these changes, there are still few Chinese Australians who have achieved high status in our Australian society.

In 2015, the Asian Australian Lawyers Association released a Snapshot of Asian Australian diversity in the Legal Profession. While Asian Australians accounted for approximately 9.6% of Australia’s population, they comprise only 3.1% of partners in law firms; 1.6% of barristers; and 0.8% of the judiciary.

In July 2016, the Australian Human Rights Commission launched its report titled “Leading for Change: A blueprint for cultural diversity and inclusive leadership”. The blueprint provided a snapshot of the cultural composition of senior leaders in Australian business, politics, education, government and civil society. The AHRC found that “cultural diversity is nowhere near proportionately represented within positions of senior leadership.”

Clearly, much work is required to ensure that Chinese Australians are fairly represented in leadership positions in all facets of Australian society.
In conclusion, we ought to proactively consider what we do and how can we can contribute? I proffer 5 suggestions for our continued reflection:

- We must Turn Up. Come together to Give Voice and Inspire Change. Conferences such as this help us to connect with one another. It is about *Connecting to Influence* as opposed to superficial Networking.

- We could change our mindset and culture. We have become transactional rather than relational. By that I mean we Give something in exchange we Take something in return. We could learn about “Giving unconditionally and Receiving unconditionally”. Getting involved with philanthropy is a great way to help change our mindset and develop a culture of giving. No ‘strings’ attached. No ‘favours and obligations’. No ‘I scratch your back. You scratch my back’. This is hard because in the Chinese culture, we tend to be ingrained with concepts of *Mianxi* (i.e giving Face so as to receive Face).

- We could learn to applaud and celebrate our fellow Chinese Australian’s successes rather than be filled with jealousy and envy. There are many more things that unite us than divide us. We do not write enough notes of ‘Congratulations’ and ‘Thank You’.

- We could improve ourselves. There are many people who are ‘Able’ but not ‘Willing’ to give or get involved. There are those who are ‘Willing’ but no ‘Able’, either because they do not care; have
no experience, qualification or training; or simply have no passion.

Be ‘Able and Willing' to practise leadership and engage in the wider community rather limit yourselves to your own community. Get to the top of your profession or area. Aim for a seat on the table

• We could Nominate, Mentor and Sponsor others
William Lye, OAM (黎威廉先生)
BSc (Computers), LLB, LLM (Mon), M Ent Inn (Swin), MAICD
Barrister at Law

Also admitted to practice in:
High Court of Australia  Northern Territory of Australia
Australian Capital Territory  New South Wales  Tasmani
South Australia  Western Australia  Queensland

e: wemlye@vicbar.com.au  www.williamlye.com  wechat: wemlye

威廉先生是在马来西亚槟城出生的第三代华裔，而他从1982年开始便定居在墨
尔本并生活至今。威廉先生先是在莫那什大学完成了本科教育，随后在澳大利亚企业家研究学院取得了企业管理以及创新的研究生学位，并取得了毕业生中
的最高学术成绩。与此同时，他也取得了知识产权的法学硕士学位以及计算机
科学的学士学位。

从2010年起，威廉先生便担任维多利亚商业大律师协会亚洲部的主席并大力发
展维多利亚和亚洲之间的战略合作。他也担任着澳亚律师协会的全国副主席，
而澳亚律师协会则是促进法律业界的多元文化的机构。威廉先生本身是从事商
业法以及企业法领域的大律师。他同时也是有着专业认证资格的维多利亚大律
师协会的调解员以及协调员。

威廉先生在之前曾担任维多利亚华人职业商业协会主席，维多利亚省中华联合
协会的荣誉法律顾问；目前正在担任澳大利亚澳华社区议会的荣誉法律顾问。
与此同时，他也在澳大利亚社区语言管理处与维多利亚政府发起的教育计划中
担任着语言大使。

威廉先生热爱并大力支持教育，而他目前担任着莫纳什大学法律议室的合同法
主考官，在莱奥库森学院担任教授商业法，企业法以及知识产权法的学期讲。
与此同时，他也是斯文本科技大学企业管理以及创新研究生课程的咨询委员会
的成员，泽尔曼考恩中心的会员。

威廉先生本身也在为多家公益机构提供服务以及帮助，他目前是全球儿童慈善
机构-澳大利亚星光儿童基金会维多利亚州咨询委员会的一员。他也是澳亚基
金会的创始者，汇集了澳亚社区的资源，为能力建设，教育和艺术等领域进行
慈善反馈。威廉先生也是世界华商峰会全球商业委员会的一员，以及澳大利亚
WCES首席代表。

在2017年澳大利亚荣誉日，威廉先生因在法律服务，商业服务以及促进多元文化
上做出的杰出贡献，被授予澳大利亚荣誉勋章。