

President's Report

Dear Members,

DIARY DATES

Saturday 29

April

Softball

(details on P.2)

Thursday 22

June

Midwinter

Dinner at Iori

Monday 17 July

Goodwill Golf

Day

Tuesday 5th

September

AGM

9-10 SEPTEMBER

**BUS TRIP TO
COWRA**

11 November

Annual Dinner

We have just another Tohoku Youth Program. We were very fortunate this time to receive some wonderful publicity from the ACT Brumbies rugby club. This happened from a chance meeting between Liza Watts (Australia-Japan Foundation, DFAT) and Jaqui Larkham, wife of the Brumbies Coach, which happened at the most appropriate place, the Japanese Embassy. Once Liza had explained the Tohoku Program, Jaqui was keen to see how the Brumbies could help. This resulted in the four children (Yuto, Shingo, Chiyo and Reina) being able to attend the Brumbies Captain's run at GIO Stadium. During our time at the Stadium, we viewed the dressing rooms, met the Captain Sam Carter and watched the Brumbies doing their final training. I was interviewed by the Canberra Times and appeared on the Local News, the children were also photographed by the Canberra Times and Nichigo Press.

A very special event happened while we were at the Brumbies. The children meet Scott Fardy from the Brumbies Team. Scott had spent time in the Tohoku Region playing Rugby for a local team in the same town where the two girls, Chiyo and Reina were from and was there at the time of the Tsunami and Earthquake. He came off the field and ran over to greet all four of the children. It was a magical connection. Scott spoke to the children in Japanese (his pronunciation was beautiful) and they spent a few minutes together talking about his time with the local team and his experience in Japan. It was only a brief few minutes, but I could tell this meant so much to the children. This meeting was written up in the local newspaper, and if you haven't read the article, the following is the link:

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/rugby-union/brumbies/scott-fardy-steps-back-in-time-to-meet-children-who-survived-japan-tsunami-20170324-gv5r1u.html>

AJS Canberra, are very grateful to the Brumbies, Liza Watts and Jaqui Larkham for providing such a wonderful opportunity for the Children from the Tohoku Region.



AJS would also like to thank all the other wonderful support we receive for the program, we could not hold these programs without volunteers from AJS doing the driving in the afternoon, taking the children to their different activities planned in Canberra. We would also like to thank, Ambassador Kusaka and the Embassy of Japan, Questacon, National Zoo, DFAT, and Mr Ron Murray for their support.

On another note, check out our Event Dates for 2017, included in this month's Kakehashi. We are still working on the 'East Meets West Concert' date, but keep an eye out for it later in the year.

The next event is the Softball on the 29th April, so if you are keen to be involved, please contact: Mark Gatley: mark.gatley@cb.mofa.go.jp. Otherwise you are more than welcome to come and watch and support your team. It will be at the Hawker International Softball Centre, Walhallow Street from approx. 12:00 am till about 4:00 pm.

Lastly, I wanted to share with you an update from our Youth Scholarship, Miss Caitlin Carroll. She arrived a couple of months ago to Japan and is having a great time. Here is a photo of her with the other Rotary Exchange Students. Caitlin is fourth from the right.

For other events on the calendar, keep an eye on our Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/ajsact/>

Or you can go to our website: <http://ajsact.com.au>

With warm Regards

Dianne Fitzpatrick

President of the AJS Canberra Chapter.



TOHOKU YOUTH PROGRAM

Once again, we have had a successful TYP having received 4 young Japanese who were greatly affected by the devastating tsunami of March 2011. They returned home on 4th April after spending 16 days with us in Canberra and I was told by all that they did not want to leave and that they would return to Canberra in the future, and I truly hope they do. The most important thing that continues to come out of their participation in our program is the following comment that was e-mailed to me from the chaperone of this group Ms Moe Awakawa and I quote:

“First and most of all, thank you very much for organizing TYP and inviting students to Canberra. It was definitely a life-changing experience for each of the students. It was amazing to see their transformation day by day. Not only for students but for me, joining TYP was an appreciative experience, otherwise I have never had a chance to meet such wonderful people”

This very worthwhile program could not continue without the continued support of so many people and organizations, and I feel we must mention some of them. The host families, Radford College, Questacon, The National Zoo and Aquarium, The Symonston Nursery Farm, Murrays Bus Company and our major sponsor the Australia-Japan Foundation. Then there are all the other people who give their time freely to transport them and raise the funds required to run this program; to all, we thank you sincerely. A special mention must go to H.E. Ambassador Kusaka and Madam Kusaka who kindly invited the group to their residence for afternoon tea and Mr. Ron Murray and Mrs. Pamela Murray who invited the group to an exceptional lunch at the Park Hyatt in Sydney on their last day here. I am sure this program gives these young people many memories they will not forget.

The Society has now had 34 young people take part in this program and I hope we can continue to help more. I hope I have not forgot to thank anyone.



JAPANESE LANGUAGE & CULTURE COURSE

Kanazawa, JAPAN, 24 September- 6 October 2017

Twice each year the Australia – Japan Society (ACT) arranges participants for a two-week in-country course in Japanese language/culture - in Kanazawa, Japan. The course is run by the Ishikawa Foundation for International Exchange (IFIE) in April and September/October. We are now calling for applications for the September/October 2017 course.

The courses run for 2 weeks from a Sunday afternoon to the Friday evening two weeks later and include intensive language lessons, cultural activities and home stay accommodation with a Japanese family - this latter is one of the outstanding features of the program and certainly gives a boost to the participants' language skills.

During the course, mornings are spent in formal language classes and, most afternoons, opportunities are provided to explore the local culture, either in organised classes and excursions or course participants are encouraged to explore Kanazawa by themselves or with other members of the group.

The classes are tailored to the individual participant's language skills – participants are assessed on the first day and placed in classes according to their language abilities. Beginner classes are available in the September/October intake. There are excellent facilities and very helpful teachers at the Institute.

There is a Youtube video about the various Ishikawa Foundation's courses at <http://www.ifie.or.jp/ijsc/english/ijsp/index.html>. The AJS two week course doesn't, of course, cover the full range of activities shown for the longer courses in the video, but there are many common features.

The total course cost per participant, including all course fees, cultural activities and accommodation for the duration of the course (but NOT including fares to and from Kanazawa, Japan) is, depending on fluctuations in the \$/yen ratio, around \$900 - \$1,100. Participants are advised to allow about \$30 - \$40 per day for day-to-day expenses (bus fares, lunches, souvenirs etc) so the total cost for the two week experience, by the time you have travelled to and from Kanazawa, is usually around \$3,000.

Applicants must be at least 20 years old, must be a member of an Australia – Japan Society or an affiliated organisation (or join one) and must be prepared to stay in Japan for the duration of the course.

This is a great chance to commence, refresh, improve or develop your Japanese language skills and, if your profession is appropriate, the cost may be tax deductible as a self-education expense.

For a more detailed outline of the program and for homestay application forms contact Michael Hodgkin, the coordinator of the program at;

E-mail: ajsifecourses@gmail.com

or snail mail: IFIE Program Coordinator, c/o Australia – Japan Society (ACT), PO Box 1066, Canberra, ACT 2601

Peter Cox's IFIE Experience

Kanazawa IFIE Spring Course 2016

In September 2016 I attended the 2 week spring course in Kanazawa, which involved a home stay, cultural activities and, of course, Japanese language lessons. I had been toying with the idea for a while but never seemed to find time. In truth, although I had been to Japan a few times, it had always been with others who spoke Japanese well. I was more than a little anxious; the thought of getting from Tokyo to Kanazawa and living with strangers without causing some sort of cultural tsunami was a bit overwhelming.

Getting there was my first challenge; my biggest fear was that I would get irrevocably lost and end my days begging on a street corner in Tokyo. While I had some anxious moments and did get lost (only briefly) I managed to find someone who spoke a little English, which together with really good maps and guides kept me from being eternally entombed in Tokyo. Travelling by train proved much easier than I imagined. Probably the worst moment on the journey to Kanazawa occurred when I arrived at my destination. I left the station by the wrong exit and being somewhat directionally dyslexic managed to navigate to a quite seedy area rather than my hotel. The locals were helpful if not a little amused; google maps more than adequate; and I soon found my way to the comfort of my hotel sanctuary.

After a good night's sleep, a fantastic meal of traditional udon washed down with one or two pints I was ready for the course. I went to the IFIE centre where I met a group of people who, like me, wanted to start or improve their Japanese language skills. The first day (Sunday) was taken up with being introduced to what makes the Ishikawa Institute, Kanazawa and Japan tick and, of course, meeting my host family.

IFIE takes special care to select host families and match them up with the students and in my case it was a really good match. Living with my host family was probably the biggest highlight of the course. Terao Yuriko was gracious, fun, helpful, and very hospitable. I cannot thank her and her family enough for allowing me to stay with them in their home. I was well looked after and shown some of the highlights of the Kanazawa district. In hindsight I could have engaged more with them in practicing Japanese and doing my homework but without them the course would not have been as rich an experience as it proved to be.

On the first Monday it was on with the course after being graded into the right class. I thought language study would be difficult. In some ways it was. Very little English (almost none) was used but this proved helpful because I was forced to think in Japanese and associate Japanese words and phrases with objects and situations. The stumbling block (at least for me) was overcoming my fear of making mistakes, sounding stupid. The language teachers were fantastic patient and understanding and so were my class mates. I looked forward to each day and enjoyed each class. Bit by bit my confidence grew even to the point where I could ask directions and order a beer in Japanese "biiru futatsu kudasai"!!. I soon learned biiru futatsu is two beers not one – an expensive but enjoyable mistake.

The course was not just about language study, it also included being introduced to the culture of Japan. The activities vary for each course and my course included gold leaf painting, sweet making, calligraphy, and paper making. I enjoyed the activities immensely and gained an insight to the demands of mastering Japanese arts and crafts. Apart from these activities there were visits to craft centres, temples, gardens, and a primary school. The primary school students were excited to meet us and took pride in showing off the highlights of Kanazawa city and their English skills. It was a relaxed fun time especially seeing their glee in beating us at their traditional games.

All too quickly my time in Kanazawa came to an end and as I got on the plane to leave for home there was a bit of a hole, as if I was leaving something behind. My mind holds a lingering memory of sitting in an onsen, looking out over misty mountains, and the mellowing of senses by a bottle of warm sake. There is this unspoken urge to go back, do it again, but hopefully next time with better language skills, and less shy.

OSUMO

Kisenosato became the first Japanese riskishi to win a basho and get promoted to Yokozuna, and he has gone on to add the Haru Basho (Spring tournament) and in the process defeat a fellow-Japanese, Ozeki Terunofuji, in a play-off. Terunofuji has had bad luck with injuries in recent times but appears to be in good shape at present. The Mongolians Kakuruyu and Haramafuji both finished on 10-5 after the former defeated the latter, thus leaving the coast clear for Kisenosato and Terunofuji. Kisenosato was heavily bandaged after a fall on the Friday when he suffered shoulder and chest muscle damage in his bout with Harumafuji but he says he will be ready for the next round.

KEIBA

The Classics season is now underway and as a curtain-raiser we had the Osaka Hai which has been raised to Group 1 status run at Hanshin over 2000m on 2nd April. This race is generally seen as a prelude to the Tenno She (Spring) and in addition to the prize money the winner won an entry into the Irish Champion Stakes which is run in September at The Curragh. And the winner was the ever-so-handsome Kitanan Black, the winner of the 2016 Japan Cup. No word so far on his travel plans.

The Oka Sho was run at Hanshin under the Sakura with the win going to Reine Minoru at long odds as one of the two daughters of the legendary Frankel, Soul Stirring was a hot favourite. She could only get third prize this time - her first defeat to date, but there had been rain and the course was on the soft side which may not have suited.

And another upset occurred in the Satsuki Sho with the favourite a filly Fan Dii Na trying to become the first filly to win this since 1948. She didn't make it with the win going to Al Ain (yes, by Deep Impact) from Persian Knight, giving trainer Yasutoshi Ikee the quinella.



The parade leaves for the Oka Sho beneath the Sakura.
Photo courtesy Satoshi Hiramatsu of Sponichi Japan.



"Sydney with the Murrays"

L to R Moe Arakawa,(chaperone) Chiyo Yahata, Reina Takahashi, Pamela Murray, Ron Murray, Yuto Abe, Shingo Kameya.

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