

THE 54TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the AUSTRALIA JAPAN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA Inc

- Monday 16th April 2018 -

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The AJSV has completed another year actively engaged in the challenges and celebration of the strong relationship between Australia and Japan.

I use the word “challenges” because it is not simply a matter of leaving the Australia-Japan relationship somehow on automatic, and hoping that all will remain well. It takes work and commitment from so many people on many levels to maintain the dialogue and further the relationship. Of course “celebration” is key to what we do at AJSV! The relationship between Australia and Japan is something special. It is important for the Victorian community to experience the benefits of this alliance, and to be given opportunities to join in the celebration.

For its part, the AJSV is run by a community of tireless volunteers drawn from our membership: a dedicated group of engaging and talented people. Each has their own story to tell about why they love Japan and Australia, and why they enjoy their involvement in AJSV. Both individually and as a group their enthusiasm for the AJSV cause is contagious, and they personify the value of the qualities promoted by AJSV. In this context I would also like to acknowledge the strong association the AJSV enjoys with the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Melbourne (JCCI), and the Japanese Society of Melbourne (JSM). The three organisations have flourished in partnership over such a long time, and the AJSV is indeed fortunate to share this spirit of mutual assistance and co-operation.

On behalf of the AJSV members, our sincere thanks to the Consul General of Japan in Melbourne, Mr Kazuyoshi Matsunaga, and the Governor of Victoria, The Honourable Ms Linda Dessau, for their continuing patronage of our Society, and active collaboration with AJSV.

The co-operation between Australia and Japan on significant regional policy matters over the past year has left no doubt about the mutual commitment to the alliance and the values we share. The Prime Ministers of both countries have reinforced the importance of the relationship on many occasions. Trade and investment activity remains strong, with promising signs of renewed growth in key sectors. At the same time, educational exchange programs are expanding, as is the popularity in Australia of Japanese modern culture. The buzz about the forthcoming Rugby World Cup in 2019, and the Tokyo Summer Olympics in 2020 is building, and the boom in Australian tourism to Japan continues. After many years, the resumption of direct flights from Melbourne to Tokyo has been welcomed by business people and tourists alike!

These developments cover a wide spectrum from diplomatic ties, economic growth, education, as well as enthusiasm for social and cultural exchange – and speak to the purpose of AJSV and our programs and activities. We aim to help Japanese and Australian people understand and appreciate each other's cultures across a wide range of activities. The importance of the Australia-Japan relationship, and the benefits and sheer enjoyment that come from this relationship, are what drives the activities of AJSV and the commitment of our members throughout Victoria.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS of the PAST YEAR

While you may all have been following, and indeed participating in AJSV activities over the course of the past year, I would like to reflect on how the AJSV is evolving in step with the maturing relationship between Australia and Japan. For example, the focus of Business Briefing sessions is increasingly about Australian and Japanese enterprises learning from each other and collaborating, as well as more conventional discussion about business opportunities, trade, and risk. The focus of educational programs is more about exchange between the cultures, as well as learning language. Social events and programs celebrate the benefits of interaction between both cultures, and the depth of understanding that comes through such exchange.

The Annual Spring Gala Dinner was once again a resounding success, and remains a prestigious highlight of the Australia-Japan calendar of events in Victoria. In 2017 the event attracted some 250 guests, including key senior figures involved in the Australia-Japan relationship. Special guests included the Ambassador of Japan to Australia, His Excellency Mr Sumio Kusaka. The Consul General of Japan in Melbourne Mr Kazuyoshi Matsunaga, who had recently arrived in Melbourne for his posting, provided the key address, and in his unique style shared some interesting insights into the nature of Japan's relationship with Australia. It was a great occasion for corporate and individual members of AJSV, JCCI and JSM to mingle and celebrate.

I would like to congratulate AJSV Vice President Robyn Heraud and everyone at AJSV involved in staging the event. They should be suitably proud of the results of their efforts and contribution. It was planned and delivered as a professional, high calibre, and grand occasion.

I would also like to thank our major sponsors – Japan Air Lines, Bega Cheese Company, Ernst & Young, Mitsubishi (Australia) Ltd, Mitsui & Co (Australia) Ltd, Toyota Motor Corporation, and Peninsula Hot Springs. Their generous support and collaboration with the AJSV team make events such as the Gala Dinner possible, and add considerable weight to our efforts to promote active engagement in the Australia-Japan relationship.

The Annual Golf Day attracted many executives and budding champions to the splendid surrounds of the Yarra Yarra Golf Club. It was a marvellous day for golf enthusiasts among the AJSV and JCCI membership, ranging from eager beginners to semi-professionals, to mingle and enjoy the company and the great facilities of YYGC. Our thanks again to YYGC for their generous support of this annual event, and to Mizuno for their sponsorship and impressive prizes for the winners.

Following the success of the AJSV roundtable format for the “Women in Australia-Japan Business” event last year, planned AJSV **Business Briefings** for this year will follow a similar approach on themes including innovation and technology, property and construction, and the challenges of collaboration.

There was a great turn-out for *Konshinkai* networking sessions throughout the year. They provide a relaxed atmosphere for Japanese and Australians to discuss topics of mutual interest, improve understanding of current events, business prospects, and enjoy the fun, food and drink. There were many highlights in addition to the regular Izakaya and sake appreciation evenings. The inaugural “**Alumni Night**” held with the JET Program Alumni Association (JETAA) attracted over 80 people. It was soon followed by a joint AJSV/JETAA *konshinkai* event. Both created a forum to bring together past and present participants from AJSV and the JET program to exchange information on experiences and future opportunities presented by the Australia-Japan relationship. It helped a lot of people reconnect with past friends and make new contacts, and paves the way for future forums. The *Bounenkai* to celebrate the end of 2017 at Tetsujin was a particular success. Special thanks to Deborah Vega for her strong commitment and indefatigable drive ensuring successful events throughout the year.

The AJSV Student Exchange Scholarship Program drew many applicants in 2017. The program led by Ms Hiroko Yasunori provides financial support through scholarships to young Australian students who would otherwise not be able to participate in exchange programs with Japanese schools. In 2017 the Scholarships were awarded to students from Melba Secondary College and Emmanuel College. Our thanks again to Ernst & Young and Mitsubishi for their continuing sponsorship of this program.

In a joint initiative with the State Government of Victoria, AJSV launched a new Scholarship this year. It is a Memorial Scholarship in honour of Yosuke Kanno, a young man who had been visiting Melbourne to further his studies and was among the victims of the tragic Bourke Street incident in January 2017. Under the terms of the Scholarship program, which commences in 2018, eligible students in Japan will be given the opportunity to visit Melbourne and an educational institution of their choice to further their studies. Our sincere thanks to the State Government of Victoria for their support of this program.

AJSV co-hosted functions for the visit of a group of senior high school students from Kyushu to Melbourne and Warrnambool in Western Victoria. The main aim was for the group to meet with university students (and others) involved in Japanese studies in Melbourne, to help them consider prospects for them to study in Melbourne in the future, and to experience regional Victoria.

The long-standing association between AJSV and the Asia-Pacific Children's Convention (APCC) goes from strength to strength. The Convention is held in Fukuoka each year, with children from across the Pacific region – Australia, New Zealand, Pacific Islands, Asia, China, and the Americas – to promote peace and understanding across cultures. Last year marked the 29th anniversary of the APCC, and six Junior Ambassadors from six Primary Schools across Victoria attended the Convention in Fukuoka.

The Convention starts with an orientation camp bringing together 240 participants from around the region, followed by home-stays with Japanese families, school visits, and excursions to take in the many sights of Fukuoka. The Cultural Event, where children perform an item celebrating their individual culture, was live-streamed to parents and friends around the globe. We are looking forward to something special for the 30 year anniversary milestone in 2018!

As part of the APCC program, a group of 18 students from Fukuoka visited Melbourne for reciprocal home-stays this year. Host families provided visitors a taste of life in Australia, with particular focus on opportunities for education.

The APCC program cultivates long-lasting impressions among Australian and Japanese from an early age, and inspires genuine interest in seeking further understanding and engagement. This is reflected in growing participation in the Peace Ambassador and Bridge Club Australia activities, led by the 'alumni' of past APCC programs, some of whom are now well into their 20's and 30's. Once again our thanks go to Ms Heather Derbyshire for her outstanding leadership and commitment to the APCC program, and to Hiroko Yasunori who tirelessly continues to cultivate the widening range of AJSV educational programs

Cultural and Entertainment Events were a regular feature of 2017, including many special offers made available to members through the AJSV website, our E-Newsletter, and social media. Cinema Nova in particular has provided members some wonderful preview screenings of the latest releases from Japan, and the growing popularity – indeed mini boom – of Japanese Anime and related pop phenomena has continued.

AJSV also participated in events hosted by other Japan organisations in Melbourne. The Japan Summer Festival and the Box Hill Japan Festival really brought a little bit of Japan to Melbourne; and this year the Sakura Picnic staged in collaboration with the Manninham Council and Parks Victoria was a particular success – with a wonderful display of cherry blossoms to welcome Spring at the Cherry Grove in Banksia Park. There was something for everyone at each event. Impressive crowds – young and old, across a range of cultures and backgrounds – enjoyed outstanding displays of Japanese performing arts and culture, and rows of stalls cooking up an array of Japanese “street food” true to the atmosphere and tastes on offer in Japan. For AJSV, it was a wonderful opportunity to participate in the festivities, and to engage with a range of people with mutual interest in strengthening the bonds and understanding between Australia and Japan.

The AJSV Committee of Management (COM)

The membership of the AJSV Committee of Management is attached to this report. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the AJSV Co-Chairmen, Mr Murray McLean AO and Mr Yoshi Sagawa for their enduring commitment to the AJSV cause, and the learned and helpful guidance they have kindly extended to me during the year. I have been particularly impressed this past year by the dedication of the Committee of Management and Volunteer Groups, and the AJSV Administration team. Thank you all for your efforts and contribution. Today I am especially pleased to formally welcome back Murray Sayers and D’Arcy Butler to the Committee of Management. We are indeed fortunate to have their continued interest and support.

As a volunteer not-for-profit organisation, the AJSV manages its programs and events within a very tight budget. The AJSV Treasurer’s Report for the year attests to a well-managed operation, and careful attention to striking the right balance between what we can offer our members and the limits of our funding and resources. Our thanks to Ernst & Young – and particularly Jack Stanesby as AJSV Treasurer – for their continued support and helping us keep a steady hand on our financial responsibilities.

Sadly, we bid farewell to Kaori Chiba, who will be leaving her post as AJSV Office Manager to pursue a full-time legal career. Our thanks go to Kaori for her dedicated support and contribution to the AJSV, and we wish her well in her future endeavours. I am very pleased to report that Hikaru Davies will take over the role of Office Manager, and on behalf of the COM we all look forward to working with Hikaru as she takes over the “nerve centre” of AJSV operations.

In closing, let me briefly look to the year ahead...

The evolution of AJSV will continue to bring some challenges as well as rewards!

To continue to inspire interest in the Australia-Japan relationship we must continue offering ideas and programs that meet the changing requirements of our membership. Like any volunteer organisation, we must also attract and retain membership and sponsors to help fund our programs and to continue to evolve. To the members of the Committee of Management and the AJSV community of Volunteers, our Society is fortunate to have the generous commitment of your time and talent, and I am confident that through your leadership and active engagement the AJSV will continue to thrive.

My sincere thanks to you all.

Ross Ciaravolo
President



AJSV Committee of Management 2018

At the Annual General Meeting of the Australia Japan Society of Victoria Ltd (AJSV) held on Monday 16 April 2018, the following Office Bearers and Members were appointed to the AJSV Committee of Management:

Joint Chairmen:

Mr Murray McLean

Mr Yoshito Sagawa

Office Bearers:

President Mr Ross Ciaravolo

Vice President Ms Robyn Heraud

Secretary Mr Simon Peake

Treasurer Mr Jack Stanesby

Committee Members:

Mr D'Arcy Butler

Ms Celeste Koravos

Ms Lynden Mullen

Mr Murray Sayers

Ms Deborah Vega

Ms Hiroko Yasunori

Office Manager:

Ms Hikaru Davies