

THE 55TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the AUSTRALIA JAPAN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA Inc

- Monday 6th May 2019 -

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

On 1 May 2019 the Reiwa era commenced in Japan. This marks the day on which Emperor Akihito's elder son, Naruhito, ascended the throne as the 126th Emperor of Japan. The kanji characters for Reiwa are 令和 ... broadly translated to denote "Beautiful Harmony".

This augers well for the Japan-Australia relationship. Both countries are partnering in renewed efforts to maintain "harmony" through regional alliance, trade liberalisation (through both JAEPA and TPP11) and investment, and through education, tourism and cultural exchange.

It takes effort and commitment from so many people on many levels to maintain the dialogue and foster this "harmony". The AJSV is honoured to play its part in this effort through staging special events and grass roots programs that engage Australian and Japanese individuals and organisations.

The AJSV is also going through its own transition and renewal. To help sustain and further develop our Society, we have embarked on a campaign to recruit new volunteers to help run AJSV programs, and to attract new corporate members and sponsors to better fund the expansion of AJSV activities. For a volunteer organisation like AJSV, this is of course quite a challenge!

Such renewal is important to ensure continuity of the AJSV cause. It helps to revitalise our efforts, and introduces new people from the AJSV community of volunteers to interact with our membership and other stakeholders. We have a dedicated group of engaging and talented people. Each has their own story to tell about why they love the connection between 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.

We have just completed a successful year actively engaged in fostering the strong relationship between Australia and Japan, and staging events that celebrate the benefits that come from this relationship. Of course "celebration" is key to what we do at AJSV!

The members of AJSV understand that 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. In this context I would 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 co-operation.

On behalf of the members of AJSV, 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.

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 motivates the commitment of our members throughout Victoria.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS of the PAST YEAR

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. Here are some of the highlights of the past year...

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 2018 the event attracted 220 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, the Hon. Bruce Atkinson MLC, as well as Keisuke Honda, the Japan international footballer who had recently joined Melbourne Victory. The evening was made extra special by the inspirational address given by Mr Mat Bowtell, who spoke of his career at Toyota and how, after leaving Toyota, he had applied his engineering skills to develop innovative robotic prosthetic limbs and devices. Everyone at the dinner was captivated by his heart-felt and compelling story of challenge, perseverance, and generosity.

It was a great occasion for corporate and individual members of AJSV, JCCI and JSM to mingle and celebrate. I would like to congratulate Robyn Heraud and everyone at AJSV involved in staging the event. It was planned and delivered as a professional, high calibre, and grand occasion.

I would also like to thank our major Sponsors – Japan Airlines, Bega Cheese Company, Deloitte Australia, Ernst & Young, KPMG Australia, Mitsubishi Australia, Mitsui & Co. (Australia), and Toyota Motor Corporation Australia. 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 AJSV Business Briefings, through the leadership of Celeste Koravos, have been particularly successful this year. Topics have ranged from “Society 5.0 and social implications for the Digital Age”, to career planning events for university students interested in the Australia-Japan connection. A special event was staged in collaboration with the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program, providing fresh insights for the JET alumni to consider career opportunities after returning from their assignments in Japan. The role of women in Australia-Japan business was celebrated by an event on International Women’s Day in Melbourne. This has become an annual fixture in the AJSV calendar of Business Briefings, which provides a forum for wide-ranging discussion of developments and some of the key challenges that remain. Renewed collaboration with Asialink, and partnerships with AJSV corporate members, brought some new ideas and real focus to the Business Briefings this year. I would like to extend special thanks to Celeste Koravos for her untiring commitment to AJSV, and her outstanding contribution in a range of AJSV initiatives.

There was a great turn-out for **Konshinkai** networking functions throughout the year. They provide a forum to bring together Australian and Japanese business executives, government officials, and people involved with education and cultural organisations. Participants mingle and exchange information on experiences and future opportunities presented by the Australia-Japan relationship. Konshinkai helps a lot of people reconnect with past friends and make new contacts, and helps AJSV pave the way for future initiatives. Many thanks to Deborah Vega for her strong commitment and drive ensuring successful events throughout the year.

The AJSV Student Exchange Scholarship Program drew many applicants in 2018. The program led by Ms Hiroko Yasunori provides financial support through scholarships to young Australian students who would otherwise not have the opportunity to participate in exchange programs with Japanese schools. In 2018 the Scholarships were awarded to students from Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar School and Christian College Geelong. Our thanks again to Mitsubishi Australia and Ernst & Young for their continuing sponsorship of this program.

In a joint initiative with the State Government of Victoria, AJSV launched a new program in 2017. This 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 commenced in 2018, eligible students of the International University of Health and Welfare (IUHW) in Japan are given the opportunity to visit Melbourne and an educational institution of their choice to further their studies. The inaugural scholarship in 2018 was awarded to a student of IUHW who spent four months in Melbourne studying at the Hawthorn English Language Centre.

Our sincere thanks to the State Government of Victoria for their support of this program.

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 – Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Pacific Islands, Asia, China, and the Americas – to promote peace and understanding across cultures. Last year marked the 30th anniversary of the APCC, and nine delegates, including six Junior Ambassadors from six Primary Schools across Victoria attended the Convention in Fukuoka. The full Report of the 2018 program is available to members at the AGM and through the AJSV website.

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.

As part of the APCC program, a group of 18 students from Fukuoka visited Melbourne for reciprocal home-stays in 2018. 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 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 2018, including many special offers made available to members through the AJSV website, the E-Newsletter, and social media. Cinema Nova provided members wonderful preview screenings of the latest releases from Japan, and the growing popularity of Japanese Anime and related pop phenomena has continued. There was a wide range of performances and art exhibitions from Japan staged in Melbourne, and the AJSV International Women's Day function featured works by prominent female authors.

AJSV also participated in events hosted by other Japan organisations in Melbourne. Again the Japan Summer Festival and the Box Hill Japan Festival really brought a little bit of Japan to Melbourne; and the Sakura Picnic staged in collaboration with the Manningham Council and Parks Victoria was a particular success. There was something for everyone. 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 “street food” true to the atmosphere and tastes on offer in Japan. For AJSV, it was a wonderful opportunity 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)

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 am very grateful for the dedicated support of the Committee of Management and Volunteer Groups, and the AJSV Administration team. Thank you all for your efforts and contribution this year.

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. The Treasurers Report on the 2018 Financial Accounts will be tabled at the AGM later today.

This year we have undertaken a major review of the AJSV Constitution (“The Rules of AJSV”) to ensure it is up-to-date with the most current legal requirements, rights, and obligations of an association such as ours. Our sincere thanks to Corrs Westgarth Chambers for their invaluable advice and assistance through this process. A Special Resolution to adopt the changes will be submitted to the AGM today.

Sadly, we bid farewell to a number of COM members this year...Murray Sayers, Simon Peake and Lynden Cullen. Our thanks for their dedicated support and contribution to the AJSV, and we wish them all well in their future endeavours.

Congratulations to Celeste Koravos on her appointment as AJSV Vice President, and to Deborah Vega on her appointment as Secretary to the COM this year. Both have provided years of outstanding service to AJSV, and we look forward to their continued support in their new capacities on the COM. I would also like to welcome the new Committee members – Owen Boushel, David Buchanan, Jessica Stevens, Mitsuru Takada, and Kirrily Zoon – and to officially welcome Robyn Heraud in her new role as AJSV Manager, working with Hikaru Davies to help run the AJSV Office.

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 2019

At the Annual General Meeting of the Australia Japan Society of Victoria Ltd (AJSV) held on Monday 6 May 2019, 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 Celeste Koravos
Secretary	Ms Deborah Vega
Treasurer	Mr Jack Stanesby

Committee Members:

Mr Owen Boushel

Mr David Buchanan

Mr D'Arcy Butler

Ms Jessica Stevens

Mr Mitsuru Takada

Ms Hiroko Yasunori

Ms Kirrily Zoon

Office Management:

Ms Robyn Heraud

Ms Hikaru Davies