



AUSTRALIAN KENDO RENMEI

Kendo - Iaido - Jodo

PRESIDENTS REPORT TO NATIONAL COUNCIL DELEGATES and MEMBERS FOR 2011 ACTIVITIES.

Dear Delegates and Members,

VALE - SENSEI SUMITAKA NAGAE

It was with great sadness to learn Sensei Sumitaka Nagae, Kendo Kyoshi 7 Dan, passed away on 14 November 2011 in Tokyo.

Nagae sensei was the Patron and a Life Member of the AKR. He had also received many awards for his work in developing relations between Australia and Japan. Nagae sensei was presented with the Japan Foreign Ministers Commendation Award in August 2002; the Japanese Imperial 5th Order of Merit of The Rising Sun in April 2003 and in December 2007 he received a commendation from the AJKF in recognition his significant contribution to Australian kendo.

Nagae sensei was a highly respected kendoka both in Australia and in Japan. Since the 1970's Nagae sensei was also a kendo inspiration to many Australians and a much respected and loved leader to the kendo community in Victoria and in particular, in Melbourne.

Nagae sensei's contribution to the AKR was significant and he will be missed very much.

MEMBERSHIP

The Australian Kendo Renmei concluded 2011 with a healthy membership, albeit a very slight reduction on the previous year. At the end of 2011, we had a membership total of 1066 members, with 818 registered for Kendo, 276 registered for Iaido and 142 registered for Jodo. We had 178 juniors in our midst and the gender proportions were close to 80% men and 20% women.

COMPETITION and SEMINARS

20th AUSTRALIAN IAIDO CHAMPIONSHIPS and 11th AUSTRALIAN JODO CHAMPIONSHIPS

As usual, the first AKR event for the year was the combined Australian Iaido and Jodo Championships, Seminar and Grading Exam. The event ran from Monday 24 January to conclude with Dan grading exams on Sunday 30 January 2011. The venue was the excellent, State Netball and Hockey Centre in Parkville, Melbourne.

The seminar was supervised by a Japanese delegation headed by the AKR Technical Advisor for Iaido – Sensei

Katsuo ODA, Iaido Hanshi 8 Dan and our Technical Advisor for Jodo – Sensei Kuniaki NAGAYAMA, Iaido Kyoshi 7 Dan and Jodo Kyoshi 7 Dan, with sensei Tetsuo OHARA, Hisao TSUCHIYA and Natsume YAZAWA also providing valuable instruction. Attendance was, as would be expected, very strong, with ninety-two members attending. The Championship results are recorded on the AKR website and show that all states were fairly represented across the placings.

OCEANIA WOMEN'S KENDO SEMINAR

A new event appeared on our calendar, The Oceania Women's Kendo Seminar & Taikai 2011.

This event was conducted on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 February 2011 in Sydney. The Seminar was targeted at our women members and organised by them as well. Two women kendo sensei, Satoko KANZAKI, Kendo 7 Dan and Tokiko ABE, Kendo 6 Dan, instructed the attendees. Their advice was very well received, according to the many favourable reports.

Forty Australians and six New Zealanders participated in this event. Their age from eleven to sixty-six years old, with 52% of participants being Dan graded and 48% were Kyu grade holders.

The event organisation was led by Kate Sylvester (Vic), Shoko Bunder (NSW) and Vivian Yung (NSW), with numerous other members generously assisting. The event was in part funded by attendance fees, plus significant financial support from both the AKR Executive Committee and New South Wales Kendo Association.

36TH AUSTRALIAN KENDO CHAMPIONSHIPS

Saturday 23 to Wednesday 27 April 2011 saw the 36th Australian Kendo Championships held at the Tallebudgera Active Recreation Centre on the Gold Coast in Queensland, a venue that has hosted many AKR kendo, Iaido and Jodo events.

The AKR Kendo Board and the All Japan Kendo Federation jointly funded the attendance of Mr. Shinichiro NOGUCHI, Kendo Kyoshi 8 Dan and Mr. Shoji KOKUBO, Kendo Kyoshi 8 Dan, to attend as Seminar Instructors, Advisors for the Championships and as Chief Examiners for the Kendo Grading Exam. The AKR is very grateful to the AJKF for the

continuing and generous support provided to oversee and guide our kendo development.

The Championships were well attended, with 104 members competing, with 37 being Dan holders and 67 Kyu grade holders. At the following Seminar, Noguchi and Kokubo sensei provided excellent instruction to more than 40 trainees over two days.

I wish to thank John Isaacs, Kevin Humphrey and their team of willing volunteers for their strong contribution to make it a great event.

NITTAIDAI

In February, our old friends from the Nippon Sports Science University (Nittaidai) again visited Sydney and Melbourne for their Traditional Martial Arts and Cultural Exchange Program.

Australian kendo members were also challenged in keiko by our highly skilled visitors and then with friends and family, we also enjoyed watching comprehensive and fascinating demonstrations of various martial and cultural arts, in both cities.

SHOGO

The award of the shogo level of Renshi is an important development in the career of any kendo, iaido or jodo player. The attainment of Renshi in Australia requires a number of AKR and AJKF criteria to be met, including being 6th Dan for at least a year and other stringent requirements. The final step is for an examination paper to be then assessed as successful by an examination panel of the AJKF.

AKR was proud to announce that following the exam in Kyoto, Japan on 6 May, that Brian Brestovac (WA), Yuji SANO (NSW) and Takashi ITAKURA (NSW) were all successful and had been awarded Kendo Renshi.

Congratulations to Brestovac sensei, Sano sensei and Itakura sensei on their awards.

In November, the first AJKF Exam which was accessible to foreigners for the next higher shogo level of Kyoshi was conducted. Candidate pre-requisites for the Kyoshi exam include being 7th Dan, already a Renshi holder and other stringent requirements. Once those are met, then a comprehensive exam follows.

I was very happy to be advised that Yoichi Yano sensei was successful in his Kyoshi exam. As this was the first Kyoshi awarded to a locally developed kendoka and is a significant milestone in the skill development of Australian kendo.

Congratulations to Yano sensei.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL and INSURANCE

Membership renewal time is in June each year, when memberships and insurance premiums are due to be paid by the 30th. The AKR co-ordinated player accident, instructor and public liability insurance scheme continued for the second year. Since we introduced the national insurance scheme, the savings to members have been significant, with the premium for 2011/12 alone producing a saving to members of \$11,000, compared to 2009.

SUMMER SCHOOL

In most years, at the end of July, the AJKF host a Summer Seminar for Foreign Kendo Leaders. The trainees have to travel to Gedatsu-kai Centre in Kitamoto City, Saitama Prefecture, a short trip north of Tokyo. Once there, the AJKF provide trainees with a local travel subsidy, all accommodation and food, plus an excellent modern kendo dojo for 10 long days of very intense kendo learning. The AKR Kendo Board also provides a subsidy to assist our selected members to attend. The 2011 Summer School was attended by Tony Beston (WA) and Sharyn Wragg (ACT). Tony and Sharyn were selected by the AJKF from a list of 4 candidates submitted by the AKR.

2011 FIK ASIAN ZONE SHINPAN SEMINAR

The 2011 FIK Asian Zone Shinpan Seminar, was held in Seoul, Korea from 21 to 23 October 2011.

The AKR and the Kendo Board wishes to encourage senior Australian kendoka to attend such seminars, with a view to improving the standard of kendo shinpan in Australia. To achieve that aim, an amount of \$5,000 was provided from the AKR Kendo Board to assist toward the trainees cost of travel and accommodation to attend the seminar.

Three AKR trainees attended the 2011 seminar, all from NSW, sensei Ho Young Choi, sensei Yuji Sano and Andrew van Hamond.

On a related subject, the AKR continues to lobby the International Kendo Federation to conduct a seminar in Australia.

EXAMS IN JAPAN

During the course of 2011, twenty-one AKR members were examined for kendo, iaido and jodo 4, 6 and 7 Dan in Japan. The AKR Iaido and Jodo Boards provided a subsidy of \$400-500 to some members, to assist with their costs to attend iaido and jodo exams.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for AKR to be able to assemble panels for examination above 4 Dan. The AJKF also have a strong view that, particularly for 6 Dan and above, such grades should be only examined for in Japan. So even with their support, AKR may not be able to examine for 6 Dan as frequently as we would like.

FINANCES

Unfortunately, the Executive Committee was challenged in finding a Treasurer for the 2011 year. Our federation, along with many such organisations relies on the generosity of members who volunteer their time and energy to assist us all. But with no available person, the time available for AKR work was challenged by the extra workload. Late in the year, we decided to employ a bookkeeper to assist with the catch-up and to update our accounting system.

The AKR has separate accounts for each of – the Executive Committee, Kendo Board, Iaido Board, Jodo Board and from 2011, also the Iaido/Jodo Championships. Board's funds are intended to be used to support the further development of our members skills and to achieve that aim, each Board presents a budget for approval.

The financial activities of the AKR have produced regular surpluses, or profits, for the last ten years. These surpluses have been added to our existing savings. During our October 2010 conference, National Council decided that some of the accumulated savings of the AKR Executive Committee account would be distributed to the Kendo, Iaido and Jodo Board accounts, to provide more funds for their activities and to facilitate greater autonomy for the Boards.

After the audit of our 2010 finances was complete, we identified \$28,371 to re-distribute proportionally to each Board. This was completed during 2011.

Kendo with 67% of members received \$19,056; Iaido with 22% received \$6,101 and Jodo with 11% received \$3,214. These amounts were added to the existing savings of each Board.

Overall, the AKR generally operated within our means during 2011. Once again we have produced a surplus. The surplus funds will be distributed to facilitate activities to benefit the further development of the kendo, Iaido and jodo skills of our members.

The AKR Finance Report for 2011 is separate to this report and copies are available to members from state associations.

IT and SOCIAL MEDIA

The AKR now has virtually all of our archives and records stored on a web server. These records are generally available to any member. For obvious reasons, security and passwords restrict the access to some of them, but your State Secretary will be able to either provide the information that you may seek or advice on how you can access the archive.

The AKR has a website, which continues to develop. Contributions of content are always welcome, so don't hold back. We also have a presence on Facebook, where

updates and information are also provided. AKR has used Twitter for nearly three years for a similar purpose to Facebook and also for more immediate news.

AKR NATIONAL COUNCIL

The governing body of the AKR is National Council, the members of which include the four Executive Officers, plus a Delegate from each state and each of the Kendo, Iaido and Jodo Boards.

While Delegates are in contact frequently on various issues, we also meet formally twice a year.

Our 2011 Annual General Meeting was held on 11 April by teleconference and we met in Melbourne, in person for our annual conference on 15 and 16 October.

I would like to thank all Delegates and members of the AKR National Council for their input, suggestions, hard work and efforts to improve the activities of kendo, Iaido and jodo in Australia during this and previous years.

Integral to the activities of the AKR is the Kendo, Iaido and Jodo Boards. I would like to thank the respective Chairpersons; Khay-Lin Teoh (Vic), Ramon Lawrence (WA) and Russel Lawrence (WA) for their efforts, support and advice.

A special thank-you is to Ramon Lawrence. Ramon advised that he will retire in January 2012 as our long term Iaido Board Chairperson. I thank Ramon for his efforts over many years to improve the skills of our in particular our Iaido members and our jodo members.

I would also like to again thank the various Championship and Seminar Organising Committees, for their effective good work to achieve an excellent series of events.

ELECTIONS

During 2012, all four major AKR committees are due for election. By the time that you read this, the election result for the AKR Iaido and Jodo Boards will be known.

In April 2012 the positions of both the AKR Kendo Board and the Executive Committee will be vacated, with an election for both of those committees to be held separately.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

I would like to thank the members of the AKR Executive Committee, Vice-President Mr. Dean Hawthorn (NSW) and Secretary, Ms. Vivian Yung (NSW) for their hard work, support and counsel, not only for 2011, but also during the past three years of our term.



Richard Ward
President