AUSTRALIAN KENDO RENMEI LTD

2026 NATIONAL COUNCIL DELEGATES & MEMBERS REPORT

A Year of Growth, Change and Opportunity

Chairperson's Opening Statement



Dear National Council Delegates, State and Territory Representatives, and Members of Australian Kendo,

2026 has been a year of significant change for Australian Kendo.

It has been a year in which we have grown, challenged ourselves, introduced new ideas, stepped onto new international stages and, importantly, begun to build the foundations for the future of our organisation.

2026 BY THE NUMBERS

Almost 1,800 members. One national community.

Australian Kendo is no longer a small collection of individual clubs and associations.

We are a national community spanning every State and Territory, encompassing Kendo, Iaido and Jodo, and increasingly providing opportunities for juniors, university students, coaches, Shimpan, competitors and future leaders.

Our latest verified membership snapshot provides a picture of the community we are building.

1,869

TOTAL MEMBERS

1,583
Adults

286
Juniors

THREE MARTIAL ARTS

1,607
Kendo members

354
Iaido members

117
Jodo members

A NATIONAL COMMUNITY

Our members are represented across all eight States and Territories.

35.6% — NSW
29.1% — Victoria
8.7% — Queensland
10.3% — Western Australia
6.3% — South Australia
5.6% — ACT
2.2% — Tasmania
1.1 % — Northern Territory

OUR MEMBERS

73.0% Male
26.3% Female
0.6% Other

But numbers alone don't tell the whole story.Behind every number is a person.A person who walks through a dojo door for the first time.

A junior who discovers competition.A university student who finds a Kendo community in a new city.A coach who gives up their weekend.

A Shimpan who volunteers their time.A parent who drives hundreds of kilometres so their child can compete.

A member who quietly turns up to training week after week.

These are the people who make Australian Kendo what it is.

And as our organisation grows, our responsibility grows with it.The challenge for the AKR is not simply to increase the number of members.It is to ensure that every member can see a pathway within Australian Kendo.

A pathway to learn.A pathway to compete.A pathway to coach.A pathway to contribute.A pathway to lead.

GROWTH IS NOT JUST ABOUT NUMBERS.GROWTH IS ABOUT OPPORTUNITY.WE HAVE GROWN. NOW WE NEED TO CONNECT.

Growth is about creating opportunities for our members.

It is about developing our juniors, supporting our coaches, strengthening our officials, creating better competitions, developing our national teams, supporting our States and Territories, and ensuring that every member—whether they are a beginner attending their first training session or an experienced member representing Australia internationally—feels that they are part of Australian Kendo.

It is also about transparency.

As an organisation, we need to be able to communicate not only what we are doing, but **why we are doing it, where we are going, and how our members can be involved.**

I want to acknowledge at the outset that this is an area where we still have work to do.

While the AKR has continued to develop its communication at the national level, it is apparent that information is not always reaching members consistently through the State and Territory structures. A national organisation can produce information, policies, opportunities and programs, but if that information does not reach the dojo, the individual member and the families who support them, then we have not truly communicated.

This is something we need to improve.

The AKR Board does not see communication as simply the responsibility of the national office or Board. It is a shared responsibility across the national, State, Territory and club structures.Our members are the organisation.

The National Council is the connection between the AKR and the States and Territories, and therefore one of our most important mechanisms for ensuring that information travels in both directions.

We need information to flow **down** to our members, but equally importantly, we need ideas, concerns, suggestions and experience to flow **up** from our members to the AKR.That two-way communication will be an important part of the next stage of our development.

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1. A NEW CHAPTER — AUSTRALIAN KENDO RENMEI LTD

12 June 2026 — A significant milestone

On 12 June 2026, Australian Kendo Renmei took another major step forward when the organisation became registered with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission as a **Company Limited by Guarantee**.

This is more than simply changing the name on a document.

It represents a significant change in the way the national organisation is structured and governed.

A Company Limited by Guarantee is a structure commonly used by Australian not-for-profit, sporting and community organisations. ASIC describes this structure as particularly suited to organisations whose purpose is not to distribute profits to members, with any surplus being directed back towards the organisation's purposes.

The new structure also provides a clearer corporate framework for governance, accountability, financial management and the responsibilities of directors and members.

However, with change comes responsibility.

We are now learning how to operate within this new structure and, like any organisation undertaking a significant transition, there will be a period of adjustment.

Our task is not simply to change the legal structure and continue doing everything as we have always done.

Our task is to take this opportunity to ask:

What should Australian Kendo look like in five, ten and twenty years?

The new structure gives us an opportunity to build systems that are sustainable, transparent and capable of supporting the continued growth of Kendo, Iaido and Jodo throughout Australia.

It also brings with it additional governance and reporting responsibilities. ASIC notes that companies limited by guarantee must maintain appropriate corporate records and comply with financial reporting, directors' responsibilities and member-related requirements applicable to their particular reporting tier.

This means that 2026 should be viewed as the beginning of a transition rather than the completion of one.

The work ahead

Over the coming period, the AKR will continue to:

- establish and refine the new governance framework;
- align our policies and procedures with the new corporate structure;
- clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Board, Committees and National Council;
- improve documentation and record keeping;
- strengthen financial and risk management processes;
- improve communication with States, Territories, clubs and members;
- develop clearer pathways for members to contribute to national programs; and
- ensure that our governance supports, rather than restricts, the development of our martial arts.

This is an important point.

Governance should be the foundation that allows our organisation to grow—not a barrier that prevents it from doing so.

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2. AUSTRALIAN KENDO STEPS ONTO A NEW INTERNATIONAL STAGE

The Asian Oceania Kendo Federation and the First AOKC

2026 also saw the establishment of a new international chapter for Kendo in our region with the formation of the **Asian Oceania Kendo Federation (AOKF)** and the inaugural **Asia-Oceania Kendo Championships**.

The first championships were held at Tokyo Budokan on 30–31 May 2026.

For Australia, this was much more than another international competition.

It was an opportunity for Australian Kendo to demonstrate that we are not simply participants within the region—we are contributors to its future.

Australia achieved significant outcomes both on and off the court.

Among those achievements were:

- Australia securing representation on the AOKF Board;
- Australian Shimpan being selected to officiate at the inaugural championships;
- strong performances by Australian competitors across the individual and team competitions;
- Australian women finishing third in the Women's Team Championship;
- Samantha Zhong taking second place in the Women's Individual 3-Dan and Below Championship;
- Su Hee Cho receiving Fighting Spirit recognition;
- Joshua Wildey taking second place in the Men's Individual 3-Dan and Below Championship; and
- Australian participation contributing to the establishment of new relationships throughout the Asia-Oceania region.

These achievements should be recognised not simply as medals or appointments.

They demonstrate the growing depth of Australian Kendo.

The appointment of an Australian representative to the AOKF Board also provides Australia with an opportunity to contribute directly to the development of Kendo throughout the region.

With opportunity, however, comes responsibility.

Australia must continue to develop people capable of contributing internationally—not only as athletes, but as coaches, Shimpan, administrators, technical leaders and future governance leaders.

The AOKF experience therefore provides us with another important question:

How do we develop the next generation of Australian leaders who can represent Australian Kendo internationally?

That is a conversation we should continue.

3. THE 48TH AUSTRALIAN KENDO CHAMPIONSHIPS — GOLD COAST

Queensland showed what Australian Kendo can deliver

From 3–7 April 2026, the Queensland Kendo Renmei hosted the **48th Australian Kendo Championships, Seminar and Dan Grading Examination** on the Gold Coast.

It was a significant national event bringing together competitors, officials and supporters from across Australia and overseas.

The event demonstrated the capability of an Australian State organisation to deliver a major national event to a very high professional standard.

The competition itself also reflected the continued development of Australian Kendo.

The 2026 championships saw, among other developments, the introduction of the **Women's Veterans Championship** and the return of the **Women's Mixed Dan Teams Championship**.

These developments are important because national championships should not simply repeat what has happened previously.

They should evolve with the membership.

The success of the Gold Coast championships was the result of the work of many people who often remain invisible to the competitors themselves:

- tournament organisers;
- volunteers;
- Shimpan;
- State and national officials;
- medical and welfare personnel;
- administrators;
- coaches;
- venue staff;
- sponsors and supporters; and
- the families and members who make national events possible.

To Queensland Kendo Renmei, we extend our sincere appreciation.

The Gold Coast event demonstrated that Australian Kendo has the people, experience and capability to deliver national events to a professional standard.

4. THE FIRST JUNIOR AUSTRALIAN KENDO CHAMPIONSHIPS

Building the future — one young Kendoka at a time

Perhaps one of the most important developments of 2026 was the introduction of the **1st Junior Australian Kendo Championships**.

This was not simply another tournament.

It was an investment in the future of Australian Kendo.

The inaugural event provided young Kendoka with an opportunity to compete nationally, meet other young practitioners, develop friendships and experience what it means to be part of something larger than their individual club.

Junior clubs and competitors came together from across Australia, including Melbourne, Canberra, Wollongong and New South Wales.

The official event information describes the championship as a milestone designed to provide a fun, safe and inclusive environment in which young Kendoka could compete, challenge themselves, learn from others and build friendships.

The event also produced a range of age-category competitions from U10 through U20, demonstrating the breadth of junior participation.

But perhaps the most important measure of success was not the medals.

It was whether the young competitors wanted to come back.

Child safeguarding — the work people don't see

Claire Baker, our National Child Safeguarding Officer, has provided a valuable reflection on the event.

One of the strongest messages from Claire's reflection is that good safeguarding should often be almost invisible.

Families should remember the competition.

Young people should remember their friends, their matches, their successes, their disappointments and the excitement of being part of a national event.

They should not have to think about the systems working quietly in the background to keep them safe.

The inaugural JAKC required months of preparation involving:

- risk assessments;
- junior-specific competition planning;
- safeguarding measures;
- policy development and review;
- accreditation checks;
- volunteer briefings;
- medical planning;
- Shimpan preparation; and
- coordination between the many people responsible for creating the event environment.

Claire described the event as an example of what can happen when people contribute their expertise behind the scenes.

That contribution deserves recognition.

The success of an event is often measured by medals and results.

For junior Kendo, we should also measure success by a much simpler question:

“Do I get to have more matches?”

If a young Kendoka leaves a national championship wanting to come back and compete again, we have created something valuable.

The inaugural Junior Australian Kendo Championships therefore represents more than a new competition on the calendar.

It represents the beginning of a pathway.

A pathway from junior Kendo, to senior Kendo, to national representation, coaching, Shimpan, administration and leadership.

It is the beginning of building the next generation.

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5. DEVELOPING THE PEOPLE WHO DEVELOP OUR PEOPLE

National Coaching Development Workshop — Melbourne

Another important step forward in 2026 was the **National Coaching Development Workshop**, hosted in Melbourne by the Victorian Kendo Renmei.

We welcomed **Dr Blake Bennett and Dr Glenn Fyall**, who brought significant experience in sports coaching, coach development, learning and safeguarding.

Their work has included research into coach development, learner-centred approaches, active learning, reflection and the use of new approaches to develop coaches and sporting organisations.

The Melbourne workshop therefore asked some very important questions.

Are we developing coaches—or simply teaching people how to coach?

And perhaps more importantly:

How do we develop the leaders who will develop the coaches of the future?

Representatives and leaders from across the States and Territories came together for discussions that challenged some traditional approaches to coaching and learning.

The purpose was not to discard the traditions that make Kendo what it is.

It was to ask how we can combine those traditions with modern learning methods so that Australian Kendo remains relevant to the people entering our sport today.

Our members learn differently.

Our juniors learn differently.

Our young adults learn differently.

Our coaches come from different backgrounds and have different experiences.

The question for the AKR is therefore not:

“How have we always taught Kendo?”

It is:

“How can we preserve what is important while finding better ways to help people learn?”

This will be an ongoing journey.

The attendance and engagement of leaders from across Australia demonstrated that there is a strong appetite for this work.

The workshop is only the beginning.

6. UNIVERSITY KENDO — UNITING AUSTRALIA THROUGH COMPETITION

UniSport Nationals 2026 — Perth

University Kendo continues to be one of the great connection points within Australian Kendo.

The 2026 UniSport Nationals were held in Perth from 26 September, with Kendo contested in both men's and women's competitions. UniSport reported that more than 5,400 students from universities around Australia would participate across 30 sports during the Perth Nationals.

For Kendo, however, the significance goes beyond the results.

University clubs provide a unique environment.

Students move between cities.

They graduate.

They begin careers.

They travel overseas.

They move into new communities.

And many continue Kendo wherever life takes them.

This makes university Kendo an important pathway into the broader Australian Kendo community.

The 2026 competition once again brought university clubs together in the spirit of competition and camaraderie.

The breadth of participation demonstrated in this year's draws was particularly encouraging.

It also demonstrated the value of the continued work undertaken by the Kendo Committee and those who volunteer their time to develop the university competition.

To the Kendo Committee, university club leaders, coaches, managers, Shimpan and volunteers, thank you.

The UniSport Nationals have become much more than a yearly competition.

They have become an annual meeting point for university Kendo across Australia.

Iaido and Jodo Annual Outcomes Report

Building National Capability, International Connections and Future Opportunities

The Australian Kendo Renmei (AKR) Iaido and Jodo Committees have continued to develop their respective disciplines during the reporting period, with a focus on providing opportunities for members to train under senior international instructors, participate in national seminars and championships, undertake grading, and strengthen Australia's relationships with the wider international Iaido and Jodo community.

The year has also seen the committees begin to look beyond the traditional national calendar and consider opportunities for Australia to play a greater role in hosting international events within the Asian Oceania region.

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7. Iaido – National Championships, Seminar and Grading

A key activity during the year was the organisation of the Australian Kendo Renmei Iaido Championships, Seminar and Grading.

The Iaido Committee sought the participation and support of senior Japanese instructors to ensure Australian practitioners had access to high-level instruction and experienced grading and shimpan personnel.

The proposed teaching delegation included:

- **Morishima Kazuki Sensei – Iaido Hanshi 8 Dan**
- **Takizawa Tomomi Sensei – Iaido Kyoshi 7 Dan**

The invitation sought their assistance in conducting the seminar, undertaking shimpan duties and participating in the grading panel.

The grading program was scheduled for **4 September 2026**, with examinations from **1st Dan through to 5th Dan**.

Outcome

The participation of senior overseas instructors provides an important pathway for the continued development of Iaido in Australia. Their involvement gives Australian practitioners the opportunity to:

- Train directly under senior Japanese Sensei.
- Receive instruction aligned with international standards.
- Experience high-level shiai and shimpan practices.
- Undertake grading with appropriately experienced panels.
- Strengthen relationships between Australian and Japanese Iaido organisations.
- Develop the technical knowledge and confidence of Australian instructors and senior practitioners.

The AKR recognises that access to senior international instructors is an important component of maintaining and developing the standard of Iaido within Australia.

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8. Development of International Iaido and Jodo Opportunities

During the reporting period, consideration was also given to Australia's potential to host an **Asian Oceania Iaido and Jodo Championship**.

This represents an important potential development for both disciplines and would provide Australia with an opportunity to contribute more significantly to the development of Iaido and Jodo throughout the Asian Oceania region.

The proposal considered the requirements surrounding international competition and the role of the All Japan Kendo Federation (AJKF).

Based on the information available at the time, it was understood that formal AJKF approval was not necessarily required for Australia to host an international competition where no AJKF-authorised grading was being conducted as part of the event.

Nevertheless, the importance of maintaining transparency and a positive relationship with the AJKF was recognised.

Accordingly, the intention was to provide the AJKF with a courtesy notification of Australia's proposed plans, allowing any concerns or matters requiring consideration to be raised at an early stage.

Outcome

This approach reflects the AKR's commitment to:

- Good governance.
- Transparency in international relationships.
- Respect for the AJKF and international Iaido and Jodo structures.
- Careful consideration of approval and grading requirements.
- Developing Australia's role within the Asian Oceania region.

- Providing future opportunities for Australian practitioners to participate in significant international events.

The proposal remains an important strategic opportunity for the future development of Iaido and Jodo in Australia.

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9. Jodo – National Seminar and Championship

The Jodo Board also continued to provide national development opportunities through the **Australian Jodo Seminar and Championship**, held in **Hobart from 12–14 April 2025**.

The seminar was led by:

- **Shiiya Sensei**
- **Fujisaki Sensei**
- **Tsuriga Sensei**

with **Butsui Sensei** also in attendance.

The event provided Australian Jodo practitioners with the opportunity to participate in a national championship and receive instruction from experienced senior instructors.

Outcome

The Hobart event contributed to the continued development of Jodo in Australia by providing:

- A national competition opportunity.
- Access to senior international instruction.
- Development opportunities for Australian practitioners.
- A forum for members from different states to train together.
- Continued exposure to international standards and practices.
- Strengthening of relationships between Australian Jodo and senior Japanese instructors.

The successful continuation of national seminars and championships remains an important foundation for the growth of Jodo within Australia.

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10. Strengthening the Future of Iaido and Jodo

The activities undertaken during the reporting period demonstrate that Iaido and Jodo within the AKR are continuing to develop through a combination of **national programs, international engagement, education, competition and grading opportunities**.

The Committees' work extends beyond the delivery of individual championships and seminars. It is increasingly focused on building sustainable pathways for practitioners and instructors and creating opportunities for Australia to contribute to the wider international community.

The proposed Asian Oceania Championship is particularly significant in this regard. While still requiring further development and consultation, such an event could provide a platform for Australia to demonstrate its growing capability and provide Australian practitioners with greater exposure to international competition.

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11. Looking Forward

The AKR will continue to support the Iaido and Jodo Committees in developing opportunities that benefit practitioners throughout Australia.

Key areas for continued development include:

National Development

- Continued national seminars and championships.
- Accessible grading opportunities.
- Development of Australian instructors and senior practitioners.
- Improved communication and engagement between states.

International Engagement

- Continued invitations to senior overseas Sensei.
- Strengthening relationships with Japanese organisations and instructors.
- Greater participation in Asian Oceania activities.
- Exploring opportunities for Australia to host significant international events.

Governance and Standards

- Ensuring grading and competition activities are conducted appropriately.
- Maintaining transparent communication with relevant international bodies.
- Ensuring AKR activities remain consistent with appropriate international standards and good governance.

Conclusion

The past year has provided a strong foundation for the continued development of Iaido and Jodo within the Australian Kendo Renmei.

Through national championships, seminars and grading opportunities, Australian practitioners have continued to benefit from the knowledge and experience of senior instructors from Japan. At the same time, the Committees have begun looking toward the future, exploring how Australia can play a greater role in the development of Iaido and Jodo throughout the Asian Oceania region.

These activities are not simply individual events. They form part of a longer-term pathway to **develop people, strengthen standards, build international relationships and create opportunities for the next generation of Australian Iaido and Jodo practitioners**.

The AKR thanks the Iaido and Jodo Committees, their volunteers, instructors, officials and members for their continued commitment and contribution to the development of these disciplines in Australia.

The work continues, with the objective of building strong national programs today while creating greater opportunities for Australian Iaido and Jodo tomorrow.

2026 WAS A YEAR OF CHANGE. 2027 WILL BE A YEAR OF BUILDING.

And the years that follow will be determined by what we choose to build together.

On behalf of the AKR Board, thank you for your trust, your patience, your contribution and your commitment to Australian Kendo.

Thank you to our States and Territories.

Thank you to our clubs.

Thank you to our committees.

Thank you to our coaches and Shimpan.

Thank you to our volunteers and families.

And most importantly—

Thank you to every member who continues to step onto the floor.

The future of Australian Kendo is not something that happens to us.

It is something we create. The foundation has been laid. The opportunity is in front of us. The next chapter is ours to write.

Together.

Andrew van Hamond
Chairperson
Australian Kendo Renmei