

# Essay Contest Awards Ceremony

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This year at the awards ceremony, 1st prize-winners in Junior A and B divisions and the NSW outstanding winner in the Senior Division shared the experiences they gained writing their essays in brief speeches.

**Ms Sarah Webster** of Cecil Hills High School received a Senior division outstanding prize in 2011, following her highly-commended prize in Junior B division in 2010. Below is the body of her speech on the night.

*This is the second year that I have independently entered the contest and I find that each year I am challenged by a question that really makes me think about the importance of maintaining strong international relations, the dynamics of our government and the ever-increasing interconnectedness of the world. Personally, this contest has been an incredibly valuable experience as I have been given the opportunity to learn about the history of both Japan and Australia, how this has affected their current relationship, and to appreciate how complex and multifaceted that relationship is.*

*When composing my response to the 2011 senior question, I was particularly interested in how our economic, political and cultural ties have emerged and how these have resulted in increasing cultural awareness. Something I believe this competition highlights is that whilst geographically we are separated, we share that desire to co-operate and share information to enrich one another.*

*That opportunity to extend my own understanding of the world in which I live, beyond the school syllabus, is invaluable.*

*Thank you, and needless to say I look forward to the next competition!*

SENIOR TOPIC 2011: Japan and Australia share a very close relationship. Give examples of how our two nations have helped and supported each other throughout history up until the present, and how such mutual assistance has shaped and strengthened the Australia-Japan relationship.

Sarah's essay entitled *After the Rain* began with the quote:

“雨降って地固まる

“Adversity builds character.”

And she concluded:

“Japan and Australia have come to develop a blossoming post-war friendship; one of great diversity and complexity. Whilst this relationship has overcome adversity, it has arguably been all the more strengthened by these challenges. Such obstacles, when overcome and combined with joint efforts to reconcile differences and move forwards, have added texture to the tapestry that is the Japan-Australia relationship.”

# Young Australian Businesspeople in Japan on JENESYS FBC.AU

**JENESYS FBC.AU** is one of several programs under the Japanese government scheme **Japan East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths Program**, referred to as the 'JENESYS' program<sup>1</sup>. It is now in its fifth year. Its goal has been to foster links between young people in East Asia and thereby stronger solidarity among East Asian Summit member states (ASEAN plus Australia, China, India, New Zealand and the ROK).

**FBC.AU** stands for the 'Invitation Program for Future Business Counterparts from Australia' and as such the participants who went on the FBC.AU trip to Japan from 15 to 22 February 2012 were young professionals starting or in the earlier stages of their careers.

## Pre-orientation and Farewell

The Japanese Consulate in Sydney held a pre-orientation briefing and drinks reception for NSW and NT participants at the consul-general's official residence on 14 February. In attendance were many members of the Japanese business community based in Sydney, and the consulate was very grateful for the support of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Sydney.

Consul-General Kohara told participants in his speech that it was his sincere hope that the JENESYS program would contribute to their stronger futures and a much stronger relationship between Australia and Japan.

## The Program

While in Japan, participants had lectures on economics and business focussing on Australia-Japan ties, visited Japanese companies including Nippon Steel and TOYO Knife Co., took part in cultural experiences and went to Minami Sanriku, a town severely impacted by the earthquake and tsunami disaster.

**We approached several participants by email to share their thoughts about the program after their return.**

**In brief:** All respondents gave very positive reports and feel that they have benefited from taking part in JENESYS. When asked what the program could have done better, the organisation of the trip was praised but the desire for more free time and the possibility of including a home stay to gain a better understanding of people's daily life were mentioned. The visit to Minami Sanriku and the chance to hear from local people had a very strong impact on them all.

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1. JENESYS is pronounced as for 'Genesis'.