

KIZUNA Project

Japanese students visit Sydney

In the last issue we read accounts by young Australians who went to Japan on the Japanese Government's KIZUNA program at the end of 2012. In March, two groups of Japanese students came to Sydney, the first 28 high school students and the second 60 university students.

visited local universities gaining an idea of campus life and later taking part in workshops and activities with students at a weekend camp.

Both groups presented reports at sessions held on the final day of their visits. It was clear the students really enjoyed their time in Australia, learning

convert their experiences into a 'mega experience' by disseminating information as widely as possible and by using social media to keep in touch.

It seems that the KIZUNA experience will continue even after the groups return to Japan.



Deputy Consul-General of Japan in Sydney, Mr Toshiaki Kobayashi [seated left], with participants from the university student KIZUNA project, supporters and former Australian KIZUNA and JENESYS participants at the final presentation session.

The high school students visited Corpus Christi Catholic High School near Wollongong, visiting the school and taking part in activities and homestays. They visited Bathurst where they saw a working farm to gain an idea of agriculture in Australia. They also visited Kelso High School. The students took part in a life-saving experience at Manly Life Saving Club, which left them tired but happy.

The university program saw the students break into groups to visit several Australian companies and organisations to get an insight into businesses with links to Japan. They also visited Newcastle to learn about the importance of coal to Japan's energy supply and learnt about new technologies being developed at the National Solar Energy Centre. They

much and appreciating the opportunity to share their stories of what has happened since the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Exchange with Australians their own age was clearly the highlight for them. A recent Australian KIZUNA participant, Mr Lee Grainger, commented that during the weekend workshops, the university students engaged in meaningful exchange because people weren't thinking 'Now is exchange time', rather they were focussed on the tasks and worked together to achieve them, helping each other with language gaps.

Both groups said that they plan to report their experiences in Australia to people back in Japan. The university students explained they were keen to ensure that KIZUNA didn't remain as simply a personal experience and wanted to

JICE (Japan International Cooperation Center) organises many Japanese Government programs including the KIZUNA program and together with the Sydney Consulate organised the students' visits on KIZUNA.

However, both programs would not have been the success they were without the help and input of many supporters and organisations.

The organisers would like to thank:

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

Corpus Christi Catholic High School and community, Barcoos Farm Stay, and Kelso High School (Bathurst)

UNIVERSITY PROGRAM

The University of New South Wales, the University of Technology Sydney, the University of Sydney and the University of Wollongong, Port Waratah Coal Services, CSIRO, Reserve Bank of Australia, TAL Insurance, Crowe Horwath and Lion Nathan.

BOTH PROGRAMS

Manly Life Saving Club, The Japan Foundation Sydney, and past KIZUNA and JENESYS participants who enthusiastically took part in various activities.

One organisation that was involved with both the high school and university students was Manly Life Saving Club.

Manly Life Saving Club was honoured to be able to assist with the KIZUNA Project.

Not only was it great fun to meet the students involved, share the history of the Club and teach surf skills, it was a privilege to share our vastly different cultures!

I believe that we also benefited greatly from the experience,

meeting and making friends with our Japanese friends reinforces the strong bond we have with Japan and serves as a great example of the idea that people are people, the same but different, but most importantly deserving of respect and friendship.

Mr Marc Manion

General Manager, Manly Life Saving Club