

Pop-culture study tour in Japan – a report

JENESYS 2.0 (said 'Genesis') is the Japanese Government's flagship youth exchange program. Several exchange programs are carried out under the JENESYS 2.0 umbrella. Between 30 September and 9 October 2013, ten young Australians joined some 322 more young people on a tour to learn about Japan's pop-culture. The pop-culture study tour was formally known as *The Short-term Invitation Programme from ASEAN Countries, Australia, New Zealand, India and Timor-Leste — Visit to Learn Japan's Pop Culture*.

Two university students from NSW took part. One was **Ms Michelle Krikowa** and here is her report.

My name is Michelle Krikowa. I am a third year student currently studying "Entertainment Business Management" at JMC Academy. I've centred most of my studies on Japanese Popular Culture also working alongside SMASH (Sydney Manga and Anime Show) in their Cosplay section since early 2012.

I applied to go on the trip, because despite most of my study being focused on Japanese Pop Culture, I had never been to Japan myself and thought to further my research the JENESYS program would only benefit me. I wanted to confirm the knowledge I had already gained in my studies and use the trip to further increase my knowledge of Japanese popular culture. I also wanted to attend the trip because I want to work in the Japanese entertainment industry, whether that's bringing Japanese entertainment to Australia or working in Japan in the future.

Overall, the trip was a wonderful experience. Not only did I learn a substantial amount about the entertainment industry, but also meeting people from around the world has helped me further my studies on a global scale, not just in Australia. I found out a lot about the entertainment industry, in both traditional and contemporary practices. This has given me a new view on how the entertainment industry is approached in Japan and will assist me greatly in further studies. I also found out a lot about the general culture of youth

through the trip's school exchange components.

I found the visit to Tokyo Visual Arts one of the highlights of the trip, so much so that I'm considering applying to the college in the future to increase my knowledge on the entertainment industry in contemporary music performance.

what I have learned from that lecture to further promote "Japanese Popular Culture" within Australia.

I really enjoyed the trip to Fukuoka. It was an entirely new region of Japan I hadn't looked into before and it really assisted my knowledge of Japanese popular culture. Learning about the *Kawaii ward** on the first day in Fukuoka was very interesting. I also gained a lot of knowledge from this part of the trip including the NOH theatre, learning more about traditional entertainment and how it still remains to co-exist with contemporary culture. I also enjoyed interacting with my host family; I loved the short time I spent with them and will keep in contact with them in the future.

I do intend to visit Japan in the very near future. I am already applying to learn the Japanese language in 2014 as well as to participate in a student exchange program in December next year. I am also planning to take part in a reunion in Japan with fellow JENESYS 2.0 members in the future within the next few years. I found the friends I made to be one of the best aspects of the trip. I not only learnt how my own knowledge influenced my experience of the trip, but also how others view the Japanese culture. This exchange with other participants gave me many new insights.

I will definitely be returning. I cannot wait to go back to Japan.

Kawaii-ku (cute ward) is Fukuoka's seventh ward or district established in August 2012. It is a virtual ward created to promote the city's cute assets. Its population is 42,002 [01/10/2013]. <http://kawaii-ku.jp>



Participants studying the entertainment industry were introduced to NOH in Fukuoka.



Michelle [front left] with other participants during the homestay

I also found the lecture we had on the first day on "Cool Japan" incredibly insightful. It was the most enjoyable lecture that I experienced on the trip, and I took away so much information about "Cool Japan" and hope to use