



Participants in kagamibiraki, the traditional breaking open of a sake barrel, included the Mayor of Parramatta, Cr Pierre Esber [right]. After the official opening of the festival, they took part in a tea ceremony.



Matsuri-Japan Festival in Parramatta

The first-ever Matsuri-Japan Festival in Parramatta was held on 9 June organised by the Japan Club of Sydney (JCS).

JCS wanted to introduce Japanese culture to people living in the geographic heart of Sydney, namely Parramatta. Using experience gained as the organiser of the Matsuri-Japan Festival in Willoughby and as a major organising participant in Sydney's largest Japanese event, the Matsuri-Japan Festival held at Darling Harbour, JCS put on a great event in Parramatta's Centenary Square.

Despite some on-and-off drizzle that morning, the weather held and many people came to the festival and enjoyed Japanese tea ceremony, Ikebana and origami, among other activities. The Consulate-General of Japan in Sydney held a calligraphy workshop.

It was wonderful to see many young people and families stop by the stage and booths to experience a little of Japanese culture.

-- JCS marks 35 years --

Established in 1983, the Japan Club of Sydney (JCS) is a non-profit organisation run by volunteers. It aims to foster friendship between Japanese families, promote Japanese culture and foster friendship and mutual understanding within the wider community. www.japanclubofsydney.org



SCHOOL VISIT PROGRAM

The consulate's school visit team had a very busy term 2 this year, visiting many schools to give calligraphy workshops to students studying Japanese.

The calligraphy workshop is an initiative of the Consul-General of Japan in Sydney, Mr Keizo Takewaka, who would like to show his appreciation to schools offering Japanese language by providing an opportunity for their students to experience Japanese calligraphy first hand.

May saw the team visit Belmore South Public School, St Columba's Catholic College (Springwood) and Pendle Hill High School.

In June the team travelled far and wide. At Rutherford Technology High School west of Newcastle, students from Dungog High School travelled down to Rutherford to take part with the Rutherford students. Staying in the area, the next day the team visited Belmont High School and Hunter Sports High School. The next week the team gave workshops at several schools in Ballina and Lismore—St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School, Blue Hills College and Emmanuel Anglican College. The third week in June the school visit team was back in Sydney, visiting Tara Anglican School for Girls and Cammeraygal High School. The final week of June the team was in Darwin to give workshops at The Essington School, Mackillop Catholic College, Darwin High School and Darwin Middle School.

The first week of July—the final week of NSW term 2—saw the team at Gosford High School.

The team was impressed by the can-do attitude of so many of the students who took part and made the most of the opportunity to write Japanese characters the traditional way with brush and ink ... although one student was disappointed not to be able to make the ink from scratch by grinding the block of compressed ink against the ink well. Sorry to say, we don't have enough time to do that and use the modern approach of prepared ink out of the bottle!

We can't possibly include photos for all the places we visited, so we have selected several from the team's trip to Darwin (the NT falls under the jurisdiction of this consulate). Permissions allowing, we post students' efforts regularly to our Facebook page www.facebook.com/CGJSYD.



Schools in New South Wales* are invited to apply for our 2018 program (Terms 3 and 4).

However, please note that from Term 3 2018 onwards, the school visit program will only be conducted on a limited basis.

*Schools in regional areas are welcome to apply for visits, however, we may not be able to meet all requests.

Sydney Consular Women's Club luncheon

On 29 May, a luncheon for the Sydney Consular Women's club was held at the official residence of the Consul-General of Japan in Sydney. It is customary to try to incorporate something of the host country's culture at such events. Consul-General Keizo Takewaka and his wife Miyuki decided that the luncheon was a perfect opportunity to introduce the kimono, the traditional costume of Japan.

Mrs Tae Gessner introduced different features of the kimono and the role of the kimono within Japanese society. It was a unique opportunity to compare different types of kimono and to see how a kimono is put on. Many Japanese today seldom wear the full kimono; some have never worn one at all. This is in contrast to the lightweight cotton summer kimono known as the *yukata*, which is commonly worn at festivals and as pyjamas at traditional Japanese inns known as *ryokan*.

The weather smiled on the event, and an outdoor tea ceremony was conducted by Mrs Gessner after the kimono explanation and demonstration.



Mrs Tae Gessner, Director of the International Kimono Club Sydney, explaining about the *furisode* kimono, a type of kimono known for its beautiful long sleeves which swing gently as you walk.

The International Kimono Club Sydney meets monthly to learn about and enjoy wearing the kimono.

