



# **The Reconstruction Initiative: Australia–Japan Foundation’s response to Japan’s 2011 earthquake and tsunami**



Australian Government

豪日交流基金

Australia-Japan FOUNDATION





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# Minister's foreword

The Australia–Japan relationship is strong and long standing. It is a relationship built on common values and interests.

Trade and investment have been a pillar of the Australia–Japan relationship for five decades. Our bilateral relationship now encompasses cooperation on regional and global issues, a defence and security partnership, and extensive education, tourism and cultural exchanges.

During then-Prime Minister Tony Abbott's visit to Japan in April 2014, he and Prime Minister Shinzō Abe affirmed their intention to elevate our strategic partnership to a 'new special relationship'. Our relationship has never been stronger.

When the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami struck on 11 March 2011, the Australian Government was quick to respond, donating \$10 million to the Australian Red Cross Japan and Pacific Disaster Appeal. We dispatched a 76-member Urban Search and Rescue team to search for survivors in Minami Sanriku and deployed a Royal Australian Air Force C-17 to transport more than 500 tonnes of relief stores, food, water and personnel around Japan.

Many Australian businesses, individuals and volunteer groups offered support to assist Japan in its long process of recovery. Across Australia, local communities rallied to find ways to help the Japanese people.

More than four years since the earthquake and tsunami, many livelihoods are still badly affected. Australia is not forgetting the human face of destruction, not least of which is the impact on children and the elderly.

In this spirit, the Australian Government, including through the Australia–Japan Foundation, is continuing to make a real contribution to the people and businesses in the Tohoku region. We have always known that the recovery would require commitment and ongoing support.

This Reconstruction Initiative book celebrates some of the many projects that are supporting the long-term human needs of the people of Japan. The various initiatives display innovative public–private partnerships and cooperation with partner organisations, designed to make a real difference.

The Australian Government's support for the Reconstruction Initiative reflects our long-term commitment to the people in the Tohoku region and the importance we attach to this bilateral relationship.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Julie Bishop'.

**The Hon Julie Bishop MP**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs



# Chair's foreword

The members of the Board of the Australia–Japan Foundation (AJF) were deeply shocked and saddened by the catastrophic damage caused by the earthquake and tsunami that struck North-East Japan on 11 March 2011. I recall these terrible disasters vividly, having been serving as Ambassador to Japan at that time.

At the first AJF Board meeting held following the disaster in June 2011, members unanimously agreed that supporting Australian Government reconstruction efforts would be a major, strategic priority for the AJF. Board members agreed to a new funding priority area, known as the Reconstruction Initiative, for the ensuing years, knowing full well that the reconstruction of north-eastern Tohoku would require long-term dedication and grant funding.

Supporting the recovery has been rewarding, inspiring and effective in bringing Australia and Japan even closer together.

I wish to acknowledge the significant contributions that the members of the Board of the AJF have made since 2011, and are continuing to make, in keeping our support alive, so that the communities of the Tohoku region are not forgotten, especially the children and the elderly. This includes all Board members who were part of the original decision to establish the Reconstruction Initiative. I wish to thank specifically my predecessor as Chair, Peter Corish AM, together with former Board members Melanie Brock, Professor Kate Darian-Smith, Greg Earl, Tim Lester and Peter Yates AM; and the former Manager of the AJF Secretariat in Canberra, Sheree Minehan, and in Tokyo, Michiyo Horita, who all made significant personal contributions to the successful implementation of the Reconstruction Initiative.

The Board will continue to support reconstruction as a priority of the AJF, by providing grants for projects that help in small, but tangible and deeply personal ways, such as by bringing music and cultural performances to children and their families to lift their spirits, supporting school exchanges and rebuilding the Australia House artists' centre in Niigata Prefecture, which borders the Tohoku region.

Since 2011, the AJF has contributed nearly \$900 000 in grant funds to helping the people of Tohoku. Our work continues. In 2015–16, the Board recommended projects amounting to \$106 540 for further reconstruction-related projects in the Tohoku region.

This book celebrates many of the diverse range of projects undertaken by Australian individuals and organisations to support the ongoing recovery process, and the special relationship between the peoples of Australia and Japan.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Murray McLean'.

**Murray McLean AO**

Chair, Australia–Japan Foundation

# Map of Japan

Japan is an island nation in the Pacific Ocean with high-rise-filled cities, imperial palaces, mountainous national parks and thousands of shrines and temples.

The Tohoku region consists of the north-eastern portion of Honshu, the largest island of Japan.

It has six prefectures: Akita, Aomori, Fukushima, Iwate, Miyagi and Yamagata.

Tohoku, like most of Japan, is hilly or mountainous, with the Ōu Mountains running north-south.



This map is presented for information only. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade accepts no responsibility for errors or omission of any geographic feature. Nomenclature and territorial boundaries may not necessarily reflect Australian Government policy. The map provides DFAT travel advice as at 30 October 2015. For the latest travel advice on Japan, please refer to: [smartraveller.gov.au](http://smartraveller.gov.au). Credit: DFAT



# Australia–Japan relations

The Australia–Japan partnership is extremely close and our most mature in Asia. It is crucial to the strategic and economic interests of both countries.

In the nearly 40 years since Australia and Japan signed the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in 1976, relations have continued to develop around enduring peace and friendship between the two countries and their peoples. The treaty states that the relationship will continue to develop based on trust and mutual confidence.

Although radically different in many ways, Australia and Japan have much in common.

Both countries have similar values and interests, including democracy, freedom, the rule of law and human rights. Both enjoy a strong economic relationship including the two-way trade relationship that has its modern roots in the 1957 Agreement on Commerce.

During the then-Prime Minister Abbott’s visit to Japan in April 2014, he and Prime Minister Shinzō Abe affirmed their intention to further strengthen the friendship between the two countries and elevate the strategic partnership to a ‘new special relationship’ based on common values and interests. Prime Minister Abe’s visit to Australia in July 2014 highlighted the continued importance of the bilateral economic partnership to both countries.

The strength and breadth of the bilateral links between Australia and Japan are reflected in many areas, including trade, science, education, culture and the arts, and people-to-people ties. In fact, in almost every field, the interests of the two countries overlap.

Many of the bilateral links involve 103 sister city relationships and six sister state relationships and many study abroad programs, taking Australian students to Japan and bringing Japanese students to Australia. The foreign language most studied in Australia is Japanese.

Geographically, both countries cover many climatic zones and citizens must deal with frequent natural disasters. Australia, for example, deals with bushfires caused by hot dry summers. Japan deals with natural disasters such as earthquakes, volcanoes and tsunamis.

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Both countries have similar values and interests, including democracy, freedom, the rule of law and human rights.

A year that truly demonstrated the strength of the friendship between Australia and Japan was 2011 when both countries dealt with such disasters. In January of that year, the north-eastern state of Queensland experienced a devastating flood disaster. The Japanese Government responded early, providing the Australian Government with a great deal of support. Japanese businesses and ordinary Japanese citizens also rushed to donate money to Australian charities. A couple of months later, when the earthquake and tsunami struck Japan on 11 March, it was Australia’s turn to be quick to respond, at government, business, community, school and individual levels.

The future is bright for the relationship between the two countries. Two recent moves support this, including the Japan–Australia Economic Partnership Agreement, which entered into force on 15 January 2015 and significantly improves access for Australian businesses into the Japanese market, and the New Colombo Plan, launched in 2014—offering Australian undergraduates new opportunities and grants for study and internships in the Indo-Pacific region, including Japan.

Australia is Japan’s friend and partner, and will always remain so.

# Australia–Japan Foundation

The AJF was established under the *Australia–Japan Foundation Act 1976* on the recommendation of the Crawford Commission under the chairmanship of Sir John Crawford AC CBE.

In 2006, following the Government’s response to the Review of Corporate Governance of Statutory Authorities and Office Holders conducted by John Uhrig, the AJF’s statutory status was revoked and it was re-established as a bilateral foundation within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The ‘Order Constituting the Australia–Japan Foundation’ was signed by the Governor-General on 30 November 2006.

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Each year, the AJF provides funds in the form of grants to suitably qualified individuals and non-government organisations in Australia and Japan.

The function of the AJF is to strengthen the Australia–Japan relationship in ways that support Australia’s foreign and trade policy interests through strategies designed to:

- develop sustainable partnerships in, and increase understanding of, areas of shared interest between individuals and organisations in both countries
- promote people-to-people engagement in business and commerce, arts and culture, education, science, technology and innovation, health and medicine, sport, local government, and community services
- increase understanding of the importance of Japan to Australia as an economic and strategic partner
- increase recognition in Japan of Australian excellence and expertise.

Each year, the AJF provides funds in the form of grants, under the International Relations Grants Program administered by DFAT, to suitably qualified individuals and non-government organisations in Australia and Japan. The grants support projects across the AJF’s priority funding areas that build sustainable networks and increase mutual understanding and goodwill between the two countries.

These are the AJF’s current priority areas for grant funding:

- 1) **Reconstruction**—to assist communities of the north-eastern Tohoku region to recover from the devastation of the earthquake and tsunami of 11 March 2011.
- 2) **Economics and trade**—to support the Australian Government’s economic diplomacy agenda to increase trade and business opportunities between Australia and Japan.
- 3) **Security, regional and international relations**—to explore issues relating to peace and stability in the region and globally.
- 4) **Education and science**—to support the New Colombo Plan in Japan and education collaboration and exchange between leading tertiary education and science institutions in Australia and Japan in areas of mutual interest.
- 5) **Society and culture (including community grants)**—to support professional, community and institutional linkages between Australia and Japan which highlight Australian excellence and expertise in Japan and enhance mutual understanding, friendship and respect.
- 6) **Communication, information and advocacy**—to support the development and distribution of comprehensive, relevant and up-to-date information which projects an accurate and positive image of Australia in Japan, celebrates the enduring nature of the bilateral relationship and increases public understanding of the importance of the Australia–Japan relationship in both countries.

More information about the AJF can be found at: <http://bit.ly/1lph60l>

# Australia–Japan Foundation Board

The AJF Order in Council specifies that the Board shall consist of a Chairman, an Ex Officio departmental member and no fewer than four and no more than nine board members. The Chairman is appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs for a five-year term. Members other than the Chairman and the Ex Officio member are appointed by the Foreign Minister for a period of three years.

Board members are drawn from different states and territories and collectively have a range of professional expertise in, and experience of, Japan. Members are selected on the basis of their standing in the Australian community, their ability to contribute to the bilateral relationship in their area of expertise and their demonstrated interest in Japan.

Members of the AJF Board as at 1 October 2015 are:

## **Chair**

Murray McLean AO, Executive Chairman, Dunmore McLean Pty Ltd, and formerly a senior officer of DFAT, most recently serving as Ambassador to Japan (2004–11)

## **Board Members**

Dr Chiaki Ajioka, Art Historian (modern Japanese art) and Japanese art consultant

Peter Cleary, Vice President, LNG Markets and Eastern Australia Commercial, Santos

Hon Richard Court AC, Chairman, RISC; Consultant to Australian Capital Equity Pty Ltd; Trustee of the Channel 7 Telethon Trust; Chairman, The Anglican Perth Diocesan Trustees; and Chairman, Australian Olympic Team Appeal—Western Australia

Dr Bronwyn Evans, Chief Executive Officer, Standards Australia

Associate Professor Doug Hall AM, writer and critic and Honorary Fellow at the School of Culture and Communications, Faculty of Arts, University of Melbourne

Debra Hazelton, General Manager, Global Career Management Division, Mizuho Financial Group Inc., Tokyo, Japan

Professor Veronica Taylor, Dean of the College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University (ANU)

Gary Quinlan, Deputy Secretary, DFAT (Ex Officio member)

More information about the Board of the AJF can be found at: <http://bit.ly/1Ui037f>



Members of the Board of the Australia-Japan Foundation at its meeting in Canberra on 1 July 2015. From left to right: Mr Gary Quinlan, Deputy Secretary, DFAT and Ex Officio, Dr Chiaki Ajioka, Mr Murray McLean AO, Professor Veronica Taylor, Mr Peter Cleary, Mr Doug Hall AM and Dr Bronwyn Evans. Absent—the Hon Mr Richard Court AC. *Credit: DFAT*

# Introduction

## Japan's earthquake and tsunami disaster

Friday 11 March 2011 started out as a typical day in Japan, but life changed forever at 2.46 pm (Japan Standard Time) when a 9.0-magnitude earthquake showed its mighty force off the Pacific coast of Tohoku. The Great East Japan Earthquake, also known as the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake and the 3.11 Earthquake, was the most powerful ever to have hit Japan and the fourth most powerful earthquake in the world since modern record-keeping began in 1900.

The epicentre was approximately 130 kilometres east-southeast of Tohoku's Oshika Peninsula. The hypocentre had a depth of 24 kilometres.

But that was not all that happened to Japan that fateful day. The earthquake triggered a powerful tsunami. In less than an hour, the first of many waves hit the country's coastline, reaching up to 40.5 metres in Miyako in Tohoku's Iwate Prefecture. In the Sendai area, waves travelled up to 10 kilometres inland and flooded approximately 561 square kilometres. The waves destroyed several protective tsunami seawalls. The massive surge destroyed three-story buildings where people had gathered for safety.

Then the third of this triple disaster occurred when the tsunami caused a catastrophic nuclear accident. The Level 7 meltdowns at three reactors in the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant required immediate and surrounding areas to be evacuated, affecting hundreds of thousands of residents.

The official statistics<sup>1</sup> issued by Japan's National Police Agency on the triple disaster are staggering. The Agency reported that 127 290 buildings had collapsed, with another 272 788 buildings half collapsed and 747 989 partially damaged. Around 4.4 million households in north-eastern Japan were left without electricity and 1.5 million without water.

The Japanese National Police Agency also reported<sup>2</sup> that 15 891 people had died, 6152 were injured and 2584 were missing across 20 prefectures. A total of 228 863 people had been forced to move away from their home and live in temporary housing or be permanently relocated.

Not only were many lives lost, families torn apart and housing and buildings destroyed, but livelihoods were lost and industries damaged.

The Japanese Government estimated the economic cost was approximately US\$300 billion, making this the costliest natural disaster in world history.



One of the team members of an Australian-led DFAT consular relief team that worked on the ground at evacuation centres in the earthquake and tsunami devastated regions of Miyagi Prefecture. Credit: DFAT

Of the tragedy, the then-Japanese Prime Minister, Naoto Kan said, 'In the 65 years after the end of World War II, this is the toughest and the most difficult crisis for Japan.'

## Australia's response

Australia's response to Japan's earthquake and tsunami disaster was swift, with the government, on behalf of all Australians, expressing its deep condolences and support for the people of Japan.

The Australia Government donated around \$10 million to the Australian Red Cross Japan and Pacific Disaster Appeal. A 76-member Urban Search and Rescue team from New South Wales, assisted by officers from the Australian Embassy in Tokyo and additional officers sent from DFAT, was despatched to the town of Minami Sanriku in Miyagi Prefecture to search for survivors.

A Royal Australian Air Force C-17 jet transported more than 500 tonnes of relief stores, food, water and personnel around Japan. Two other aircraft transported specialised pumping equipment to help bring the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant under control.

Australians were immediately inspired by the Japanese people's stoicism and resilience. Witnessing the 2011 disasters led many Australians to help their Japanese friends in many ways. Many even travelled to Tohoku to volunteer in local communities.

Then-Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, visited Minami Sanriku in April 2011—the first foreign head of government to visit Tohoku after the disaster—and toured some of the hardest hit communities. During the Prime Minister's visit, the Government donated a large food package to Minami

1 10 February 2014.

2 10 March 2015.



Sanriku and a charity dinner hosted by the Australian Embassy in Tokyo raised approximately \$198 000 for Tohoku.

The Australian public and Australian businesses—so deeply moved by the earthquake and tsunami—also gave generously to Save the Children Australia and World Vision Australia, with both organisations quickly establishing bases in Tohoku after the disasters, providing assistance by distributing food, clean water, warm clothing and blankets and helping to clean evacuation centres.

A 'Team Australia' perspective has consistently driven Australia's support for the reconstruction of Tohoku. The Australian Government, businesses, non-government organisations and citizens have united as one, helping to contribute to the recovery of Tohoku so it could become a successful, thriving region once more.

While much progress has been made, recovery and reconstruction will still take a long time, indeed decades. Many residents remain in temporary housing and are expected to do so for several years. There is increasing need to deal with the mental health aspects of recovery in disaster-hit areas.

It is a tribute to the strong people-to-people links between the two countries that Australia continues to provide support to Tohoku. Australians remain deeply moved by the dignity and determination demonstrated by the Japanese people as they continue to rebuild their lives.



Above and below: Scenes from Fukushima—after the triple disaster of 11 March 2011. Credit: Ms Melanie Brock, AJF Board Member February 2010 to February 2015





# The Reconstruction Initiative

At the first meeting of the AJF Board following the earthquake and tsunami in June 2011, members decided to establish a new funding priority area within the AJF's grants program to help the people of the Tohoku region recover and rebuild.



AJF Board members meeting in Canberra on 24 June 2011. From left to right: Dr Heather Smith, former Deputy Secretary, DFAT and AJF Ex Officio, Mr Peter Yates AM, Ms Melanie Brock, Mr Greg Earl, Mr Murray McLean AO, Mr Tim Lester and Professor Kate Darian-Smith. *Credit DFAT*

This priority area of funding support was named the 'Reconstruction Initiative'. The Board reserved one-fifth of its budget for 2011–12 to projects that would provide tangible support to help devastated communities recover. The Board sought projects that would help build a new sense of community, reduce feelings of isolation, help people develop new personal and creative skills, and create a shared sense of hope and optimism. Members particularly wanted to support projects that would help the young, families and the elderly.

Efforts began soon after the tsunami and included support requested by the Australian Embassy in Tokyo to fund Australian performers to participate in the first of what would become several 'recovery markets' for Minami Sanriku. These markets gave local people the opportunity to sell food, crafts and other goods, to boost morale and the local economy. Australians—including staff from the Australian Embassy in Tokyo and members of the expatriate community—set up a sausage sizzle in Minami Sanriku and sold Australian lamingtons and Australian wine and juice. All proceeds were donated to the town. This important initiative showed the people that Australia cared about them and the rebuilding efforts.

Since that early start, the AJF has funded a large and diverse range of projects for the Tohoku region under the Reconstruction Initiative, including building a substantial, interactive playground for children and families; providing a mobile library which makes regular visits to a number of communities in Fukushima; and funding school visit programs and exchanges to Canberra, Brisbane, the Gold Coast and Melbourne. Arts-led projects have been supported also, including rebuilding the iconic Australia House for artist residencies in neighbouring Niigata Prefecture and projects focusing on music, theatre and children's performances.

Grants under the Reconstruction Initiative have also helped rebuild urban environments, industries and livelihoods, such as in the development of alternative rice growing activities and aquaculture and oyster farming projects. Grants have supported important research in many areas, including mental health, best practice for building resilient communities through landscape architecture, anticipating climate disasters in urban environments, and bioremediation of contaminated radioactive waste.

The road to reconstruction is a long one, which is why the AJF continues to support projects. From 1 June 2015, a number of new members joined the AJF Board to replace those who had retired. At their first meeting on 1 July 2015, these new members recommended funding six Reconstruction Initiative projects totalling \$106 540 or nearly 17 per cent of AJF's allocation of funding for 2015–16.

This book summarises some of the projects completed to date and how these have had contributed in tangible ways to community efforts towards recovery.



Australian musician, Ol' Man River, performing at the Minami Sanriku Recovery Market on 30 October 2011, just six months after the tsunami/earthquakes. *Credit: DFAT*

# Total Reconstruction Initiative funding

## Summary of total funding 2010–16

The AJF's support for reconstruction efforts for the Tohoku region started at the end of 2010–11 when the Board supported a grant for the initial rebuilding of the Australia House in Niigata Prefecture which was also affected by an aftershock of the earthquake. In June 2011, at its first meeting following the March 2011 disaster, the AJF Board reserved approximately 20 per cent of its 2011–12 budget to meet the immediate needs of communities in the Tohoku region. Three projects received immediate funding under the Board's Reconstruction Initiative. These were a direct response to community

needs identified by the Board through consultation with authorities in Tohoku.

From 2012–13, in announcing its grants program, the Board invited Australian individuals and organisations to submit proposals for projects under the Reconstruction Initiative.

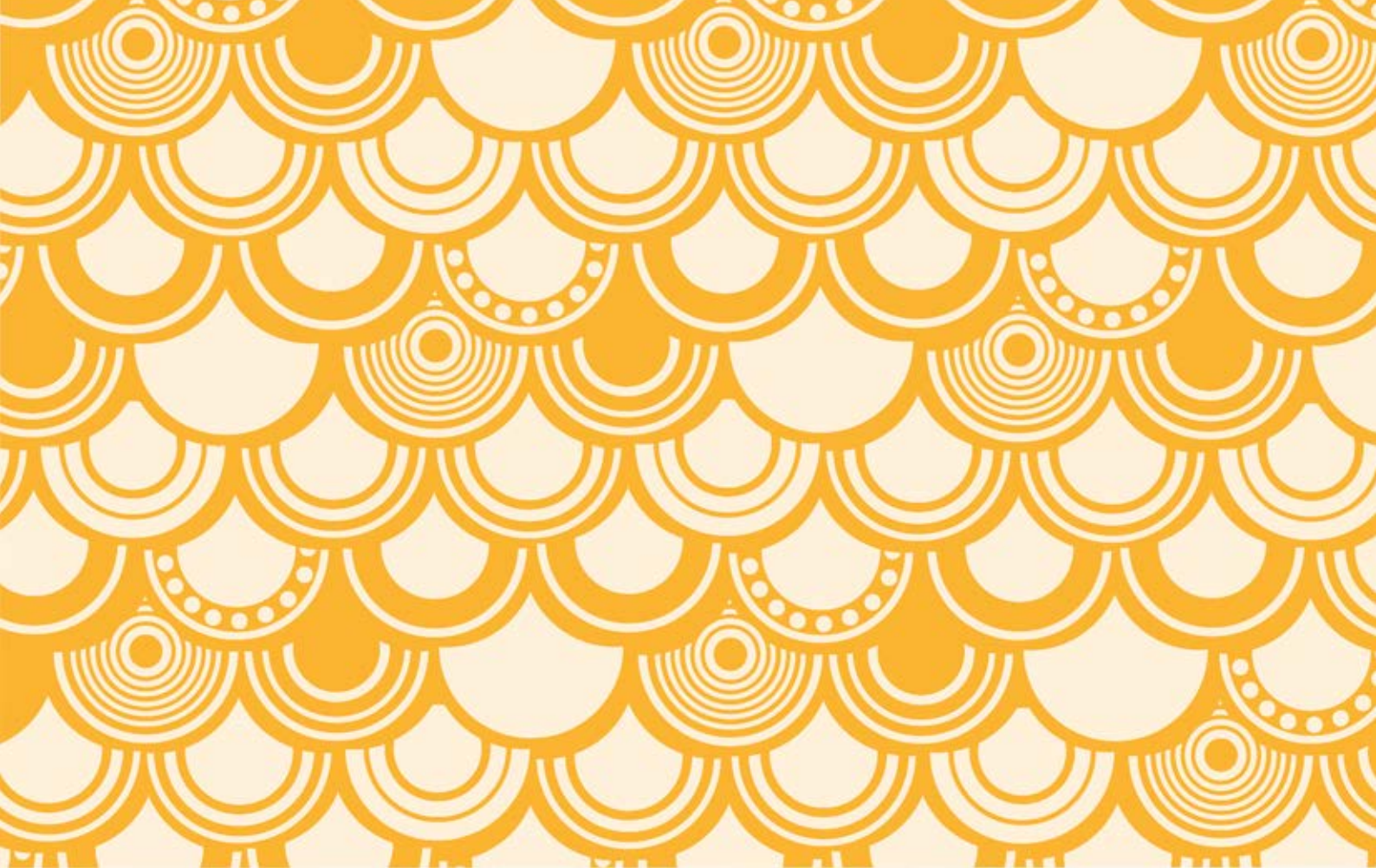
Over the years 2010 to 2016, the AJF Board has approved more than \$1 million to projects under the Reconstruction Initiative for the Tohoku region (Table 1).

**Table 1: AJF grant funding since 2010 by financial years**

Project name	Funding commitment (\$) Amounts exclusive of GST	Story reference page
<b>Support in 2010–11</b>		
Echigo-Tsumari Satoyama Collaborative Organisation—New Australia House for Echigo-Tsumari (Tranche 1)	35,000	
Minami Sanriku Recovery Market	7,000	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>42,000</b>	
<b>Reconstruction Initiative 2011–12</b>		
Iitatemura Board of Education—Mobile library	53,500	16
Echigo-Tsumari Satoyama Collaborative Collective—New Australia House for Echigo-Tsumari (Tranche 2)	50,000	17
Iitatemura Board of Education—Playground at Temporary Kindergarten in Iino	117,805	18
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>221,305</b>	
<b>Reconstruction Initiative 2012–13</b>		
<i>Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai</i> (NHK) Enterprises—Australian Jazz Journey 2012	25,000	
Minami Sanriku Board of Education—Minami Sanriku Student Exchange and Study Tour Program to Australia	37,862	20
Polyglot Theatre—We Built This Town	30,000	21
Department of Psychiatry, University of Melbourne—Mental Health Leadership Development and Research Exchange Program	30,000	22
Scouts Australia—Supporting Scouts of Greater Tohoku Through International Scouting	28,271	23
Echigo-Tsumari Satoyama Collaborative Organisation—New Australia House for Echigo-Tsumari (Tranche 3)	26,000	
Minami Sanriku Office—Tohoku Reconstruction Initiative: Visit to Australia by Japanese Mayors (two separate grants)	19,649	24

Project name	Funding commitment (\$) Amounts exclusive of GST	Story reference page
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (Dr Peter Smooker)— Bioremediation of Contaminated Radioactive Waste	19,920	25
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, School of Architecture and Design (Dr Gretchen Wilkins)—Rebuilding Sendai: Post-tsunami Urbanism in Japan	10,900	26
Townsville Sister City Recovery Study Mission—Iwaki Student Recovery Study Mission	10,000	27
ACT Australia–Japan Society—Tsunami Youth Victims Program	10,000	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>247,602</b>	
<b>Reconstruction Initiative 2013–14</b>		
Minami Sanriku Board of Education—Minami Sanriku Student Exchange and Study Tour Program to Australia	50,000	
Questacon—2014 Science Circus Tour	50,000	30
Insite Arts International—Saltbush Tour of Sendai	37,662	31
Taikoz—Oni Kenbai	20,000	32
CSIRO (Dr Farid Kendoul)—Autonomous Radiation Mapping	15,000	
Swinburne University (Dr Rob Roggema)—Reborn Resilience—Anticipating Climate Disasters in Urban Environments	15,000	33
ACT Australia–Japan Society—Tsunami Youth Victims Program	15,000	
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (Dr Marieluise Jonas)— Shibitachi Hyakunenkaï—where to from now? Building resilient communities through landscape architecture	12,275	34
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>214,937</b>	
<b>Reconstruction Initiative 2014–15</b>		
Support Our Kids—2015 Homestay Program	45,000	36
Polyglot Theatre—Kodomo Tachi Ga Shikiru (Kids are the Boss)	30,000	
NHK—Australian Jazz Journey 2014—Cookin' on 3 Burners	30,000	37
University of Queensland (Dr Andrew Wilson)—Oshika Peninsula Recovery, Innovative Approaches to Aquaculture	15,000	38
ACT Australia–Japan Society—Tohoku Youth Program	15,000	39
Ms Yumi-Umumare—DasShoku Shake! Japan Tour	10,000	
University of Sydney (Dr Oscar Pizarro)—Marine Habitats Off Tohoku	15,000	
Takemi Shirado—Ganbaroo! Fukushima Farm Project	10,217	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>170,217</b>	
<b>Reconstruction Initiative 2015–16</b>		
Isabella a Capella/Tipitania Music—The Hana Wa Saku Tour	25,000	
Support Our Kids—2016 Homestay Program	20,000	
Scouts Australia—Support of Japanese Disadvantaged Youth	18,000	
NHK Enterprises Inc.—Australian Musicians Performances in Iwate	15,000	
ACT Australia–Japan Society—Tohoku Youth Program	15,000	
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (Dr Marieluise Jonas)— Kesenuma—Living with the Sea	13,540	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>106,540</b>	
<b>TOTAL FOR FINANCIAL YEARS 1 JULY 2010 TO 30 JUNE 2016</b>	<b>\$1,002,601</b>	





## Summary of funding

When the AJF Board met in June 2011, members agreed to reserve funds from the 2011–12 AJF grants program to support vital and immediate community needs as identified through consultations overseen by Melanie Brock, the Tokyo-based AJF Board member, with individuals and organisations in the Tohoku region.

These three major projects were identified for AJF support for 2011–12.

projects in

2011  
2012

2013  
2014  
2015



Iitate-mura Mayor Mr Jin Sato, AJF Chair Mr Murray McLean AO and a local official next to the AJF-funded mobile library. Credit: DFAT

## Bringing books to the people

When the citizens of Iitate-mura Village were forced to leave their homes for temporary housing in and around Iino City, they naturally felt isolated, lonely and stressed. The Japanese Government was forced to order their evacuation to protect them from radiation levels following damage to three nuclear reactors in Fukushima Prefecture caused by Japan's 2011 tsunami. The thought of leaving familiar surrounds for at least five years—until their beloved village became safe again—caused tremendous psychological stress for many.

Following discussions led by the AJF, members of the Iitate-mura Board of Education brainstormed how to use the 40 000 books left behind in the Iitate-mura Library to provide much-needed entertainment and light relief for those relocated. They identified the need for a mobile library to bring communities together.

The mobile library was launched on 31 January 2013, in the presence of Bruce Miller, Australia's Ambassador to Japan, and AJF Board Member Melanie Brock.

The mobile library, equipped with snow tyres to enable all-weather usage, was named 'Koala-go' (meaning 'Koala-vehicle') and decorated with a Koala drawing, an illustration of the Australian flag and the AJF logo to show the community the connection with Australia.

Koala-go travels around the communities of Iino City to provide those living in temporary housing with library and information services. Partial funding for the mobile library was also provided by school students from Queensland's Ironside State School who had undertaken extensive fund-raising activities. The school maintains a strong connection to Japan through a long-term student exchange program.

A bonus was that the books provided citizens with learning opportunities, re-created a sense of community and became a welcome distraction from the difficulties faced by those evacuated. Educational material—'Experience Australia' kits produced by the AJF—were distributed by the mobile library to deepen understanding of Australia by the people of Fukushima.

The mobile library continues to be a great success and a continuing asset to Iitate-mura. The vehicle travels to 22 places on a schedule of 10 to 12 days a month, delivering books with the support of volunteers and retired school bus drivers. More than 1500 residents use the library and they borrowed 2386 books in 2014–15.

In late 2014, the Japan Library Association paid tribute at a public ceremony to the AJF and Ironside State School for acquiring the mobile library. A Certificate of Appreciation was passed to Ironside State School on behalf of the AJF by the former Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the then-Senator at the time, Brett Mason.



# Building a new Australia House—from the ground up

Created in 2009 inside a 100-year-old farmhouse in Niigata, Australia House was a place where Australian artists engaged with Japanese communities and produced and exhibited work. When a powerful aftershock hit in the rural snow country of Niigata Prefecture, three hours north of Tokyo, on 12 March 2011, Australia House collapsed and was destroyed.

The decision was made by the Echigo-Tsumari Satoyama Collaborative Collective in Niigata, Tokamachi, and the Australian Embassy in Tokyo to build a new Australia House, even more innovative and dynamic than the original. This would be a permanent base to showcase Australian artworks in Japan and facilitate Australia–Japan exchanges.

A Reconstruction Committee was formed and an international design competition held based on the concept of ‘reasonable, robust and small’ hazard-resistant construction. The committee was overseen by Tadao Ando, a world-renowned architect, Professor Tom Henegan, an architect and professor at Tokyo University of the Arts, and Fram Kitagawa, General Director of the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale, one of the largest and most prestigious international arts festivals in the world.

Sydney-based Australia architect Andrew Burns was unanimously selected as the winning entrant from 154 proposals. Burns collaborated closely with Japanese partners to build the new Australia House—a synthesis between the distinct Japanese and

Australian architectural traditions and a design that respected environmental sustainability and incorporated natural disaster-prevention construction techniques. Australia House was officially opened on 27 July 2012 with Australian and Japanese dignitaries in attendance, including Ambassador Bruce Miller and AJF Chair Murray McLean AO.

Leading Australian artists Brook Andrew and Andrew Rewald were the first artists-in-residence. Andrew created and installed a permanent artwork. Rewald conducted workshops with local residents and presented an art event.

In collaboration with the Australian Embassy Tokyo, the project was delivered as part of the Triennale. More than 450 000 people visited the Triennale in 2012, representing a 25 per cent increase in visitors from 2009. Of these, 15 350 visited Australia House.

Beginning in 2010–11 and over two further consecutive financial years, the AJF contributed nearly \$100 000 in grant funding to rebuilding and fitting-out the new Australia House.

Today, Australia House is once more a thriving centre and it reflects a merging of Japanese and Australian culture. The centre includes galleries, a workshop and a residential space for Australian artists. It also showcases collaborative projects between Japanese and Australians.



Official opening of the New Australia House in 2012. Credit: DFAT



Opening of the playground at Iitate in 2012. Credit: DFAT

## Let the children play

The residents of Iitatemura Village, just 40 kilometres from the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant, had to be evacuated after the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake to protect them from the effects of radiation. They moved to safe, temporary housing in Iino Town, further away in the prefecture, knowing they may have to live there for up to five years while their home village was cleared and rebuilt.

The Iitatemura Board of Education had built a new temporary kindergarten in Iino but had no funds to build a much-needed playground for kindergarten and primary school children—important for their emotional wellbeing. So where would the children play?

With substantial grant funding from the AJF, a fun, interactive recreation area with play equipment was developed in the bare 500-square metre area in the school grounds, providing the children with important psychological relief. All work was completed for the start of the new academic term in April 2012.

A presentation ceremony for the temporary playground was attended by Ambassador Bruce Miller and AJF Board member Melanie Brock. Moving speeches were made by Iitatemura officials, acknowledging the deep friendship between Australia and Japan. Children delighted guests by singing songs and presenting the Ambassador with a special drawing of children in the playground which is now displayed at the Australian Embassy.

The playground will be dismantled and taken to Iitatemura Village once it is safe to return there. It will become a permanent legacy and be used by children for many years to come.

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Children delighted guests by singing songs and presenting the Ambassador with a special drawing of children in the playground which is now displayed at the Australian Embassy.





# Summary of funding

The AJF major grants round for 2012–13 was advertised in January 2012 and provided the first opportunity to invite applications from Australian and Japanese individuals and organisations for projects responding to the devastation suffered by people of the Tohoku region.

Under the Reconstruction Initiative, the AJF Board approved 12 grants totalling \$247 602—the biggest year to date in terms of applications received, grants approved and funding allocated.

These major projects were identified for AJF support for 2012–13.

projects in

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015



First exchange of children from Minami Sanriku to Helensvale State High School Queensland—saying goodbye. *Credit: DFAT*

## The ripple effect of study tours

The special ties between Minami Sanriku and Australia have grown steadily since Australia first sent a 76-member Urban Search and Rescue team into the area in the immediate aftermath of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. The relationship was further boosted by a visit of the then-Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, and continuing support of the Australian Government through the work of the Australian Embassy in Tokyo, members of the Australian expatriate community in Japan and the AJF grant program.

As part of its Reconstruction Initiative, the AJF launched the Minami Sanriku Student Exchange and Study Tour Program to Australia. Twenty-four junior high school students from Minami Sanriku, aged 12 to 14 years, participated in a school and homestay visit to Helensvale High School in Queensland in March 2012. Exchange visits by young people from the Tohoku region have become an annual centrepiece of the AJF's Reconstruction Initiative.

This visit provided valuable respite to the students who were suffering so much from the catastrophe.

Beyond immediate respite, why are study tours so enriching?

They make a positive difference, especially by raising mutual awareness in Japan and Australia of each other's country. While studying and touring, students broaden their perspectives, picking up a wealth of knowledge on many aspects of Australian society, culture and innovative education techniques, which they take home with them.

They also form rewarding relationships that last for years.

With this exchange, the students, from three Minami Sanriku junior high schools, competed for coveted places by writing an essay in Japanese on what they would like to do in Australia if they could visit.

Since 2012, young people from Minami Sanriku have participated in three other student exchange visits to Australia. Minami Sanriku was selected because it was one of the worst affected townships in the Tohoku region and because of the special bond with Australia.

In April 2013, the exchange took place in Victoria with students spending four days at Fairhills State High School (with home stays) and three days seeing farm life in Ballarat and Kyneton. Students also expanded their horizons through learning excursions, including to Phillip Island, about 140 kilometres south-southeast of Melbourne.

In March 2014, a group of 20 young students visited Queensland to participate in a 10-day educational visit conducted at Cleveland High School and enjoyed homestay accommodation arrangements. They also participated in cultural and recreational activities in the region.

The most recent exchange took place in August 2015 when the Japanese organisation 'Support Our Kids' organised a similar homestay program at Craigslea State High School in Queensland.





The Polyglot team with parents and children of Minami Sanriku. Credit: John Bailey

## The joy of a humble cardboard box

It is hard to imagine joy in the wake of a disaster that will take decades to overcome. But joy was what children and families felt when Polyglot Theatre arrived in Minami Sanriku.

With AJF grant funding, the Melbourne-based contemporary theatre company designed a community project to help heal by unleashing the extraordinary resilience and imaginations of children, to the delight of all whose lives were touched by this special project.

Polyglot Theatre specialises in participatory arts experiences for children and families using simple materials to make extraordinary creations—in this case, humble cardboard boxes.

'We Built This Town' was a large-scale, theatrical installation and workshop. Children were given thousands of cardboard boxes to build imaginary towns in an ongoing playground of construction. Polyglot artists were trained in working with those who had experienced trauma to ensure a positive, healing result.

This fun and inclusive project became one of the most joyful ever imagined, and language was no barrier. Children squealed with delight and laughed as they created their idealised cardboard world. We Built This Town was also ground breaking for parents, who became just as involved as the young ones.

Children began their adventure by designing their own small house from a cardboard box. They created roofs, doors, windows, furnishings and everything else an imaginary occupant would need to be happy at home.

The project—complex to design, plan and set up—was made possible with additional support from officers of the Australian Embassy, staff from Australian companies,

such as Lend Lease and ANZ Bank, and Minami Sanriku community officials and members. Close, productive relationships were established which carry through to this day.

The 40 or so highly imaginative and beautiful houses were prominently displayed in a separate art installation and the public invited to visit. They were perched on islands dotting the floor with fishing boats, birds and jetties connecting the islands.

As Yuji Komatsu, of the Minami Sanriku Board of Education, said:

*Thanks to this great opportunity, their hearts could heal after the earthquake and tsunami disaster ... I hope this event will become mental nourishment for the next generation who will become leaders in relations between our two countries and a bridge that links Australia and Japan.*

Contributing to the community rebuilding efforts in Tohoku remains a major objective of the AJF's Reconstruction Initiative. Since 2011, the AJF has given three grants to Polyglot Theatre to implement its innovative, interactive work including, most recently, in August 2014 when Polyglot Theatre return to Minami Sanriku in May 2015 with its new Drawbridge work.

'With this project we're bringing children's play back into focus, reconnecting displaced residents in the community with children to explore family relationships and how they play out for kids and older people,' says Sue Giles, Polyglot Theatre's Artistic Director. 'It's enriching for Polyglot, with our artistic practice, to share in rebuilding community spirit through an active, creative experience.'





## Long-term healing through education and science

Mental health is a massive issue for communities affected by a sudden and unanticipated natural disaster. This was certainly the case when the earthquake and tsunami struck the Tohoku region in 2011.

Although focus in the immediate aftermath must be on emergency and recovery disaster response, psychological and mental health needs quickly become urgent. As happened in the Tohoku region when a vast swathe of communities were severely impacted, family structures were fundamentally changed forever, adding to the complexity of the lives of those affected. These communities need to cope in the short term and heal over the long term. Response to stress and resilience are key factors. Support for psychological recovery is critical.

Although radically different in many ways, Australia and Japan share the burden of a growing epidemic of mental health problems caused by frequent natural disasters, as well as climate change and socio-economic development. The AJF provided a grant to a unique collaboration between the National Center of Neurology and Psychiatry in Tokyo and the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Melbourne. These leading institutions joined forces to advance mental health resilience in communities affected by disasters.

A mental health leadership workshop and symposium was held in Japan, from 26 to 28 June 2013, to build best-practice in this area of specialisation. Short study placements in Melbourne strengthened research collaboration between Japan and Australia in relevant mental health areas. Leaders from both countries shared expertise and specialty knowledge in mental health recovery strategies for communities, especially for post-disaster recovery. The foundation was laid for collaborative mental health education and research projects by Japanese and Australian experts.

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The foundation was laid for collaborative mental health education and research projects by Japanese and Australian experts.

Japan is a leading country in research and technological advances in neuroscience with the potential to create novel medical interventions and treatments for mental illness. Australia is emerging as a world leader in developing successful models of care for mentally ill people, particularly in community treatment, depression, disasters and youth mental health.

The knowledge transfer between the two countries raised community awareness and understanding of mental health problems, such as depression. It supported the need to fight the stigma faced by those suffering mental health problems. It established ways to increase resilience to position communities to cope with the pressures of their changing physical and socioeconomic environments.

The National Center of Neurology and Psychiatry and Department of Psychiatry each contributed to the other's knowledge base and the way was paved for these two leading institutes to continue to work together.



At the 23rd Australian Scout Jamboree, Maryborough, January 2013. Back row, left to right: Suzanne McGrath, Scout Leader, Hume Region, NSW; Scott Thomas and Linda Taylor (Home Hospitality); Reg Williams RFD, Chief Commissioner, Scouts Australia; Mr Junzo Fujita, former Consul-General, Japanese Consulate, Queensland; Mr Neville Tomkins OAM, International Commissioner, Scouts Australia; and Tomohide Sato, Leader, Scout Association of Japan. Front row, left to right: Scouts from Japan: Naoya Takahashi, Yamato Kato, Takeyama Kaiji, and Keitaro Koga. *Credit: Paul Rollason, Scouts Australia*

## The power of international scouting

Helping the young people of the Greater Tohoku Region on the road to recovery by building their resilience and providing enjoyable experiences they would otherwise not have was the focus of a special project by voluntary organisation Scouts Australia.

With an AJF grant under the Reconstruction Initiative, Scouts Australia worked on a community-to-community initiative connecting many hundreds—potentially thousands—of young people from Greater Tohoku with Australia.

In partnership with the Scout Association of Japan, Scouts Australia hosted a small number of Japanese Scouts, aged 13 to 14 years, and their leader, to the January 2013 Australian Jamboree in Maryborough, Queensland. Participating in a Jamboree can be the highlight of a young person's scouting life. This was certainly the case for the Japanese Scouts.

It all started when members of Scouts Australia saw images of the devastation of Japan's earthquake and tsunami.

'We were shocked,' said Neville Tomkins, International Commissioner, Scouts Australia. 'Whilst Scouts Australia was the first of member nations to send its

condolences to our Japanese counterparts, we felt an overwhelming need to do much, much more, to be true to our world commitment.'

The grant, combined with significant support from other organisations, saw four female Japanese Venturer Scouts (aged 16 to 17 years) participate in the Scouts International Student Exchange Program. Each had been affected, directly or indirectly, by the 2011 disaster in their home country, exposing them to stress and despair.

While living with Australian host families for four to five weeks, the Japanese youth participated in scouting activities and attended Australian schools. It was a positive life changing experience for each one.

World Scouting aims to create a better world and to assist the disadvantaged. Scouting is the largest youth development organisation in Australia. It is also the largest youth development organisation in Japan with some 150 000 members. Worldwide, Scouting has around 40 million members across 161 member nations.

Tomkins says the project has enabled Scouts Australia 'to build stronger communities and forge enduring life-time friendships between our two nations.'



## The power of lessons learned

At the invitation of the AJF, Minami Sanriku Mayor Jin Sato and Iitate Village Council Chair Chohei Sato visited Australia in October 2012. They did so to build professional links, reconnect with emergency services personnel who had been dispatched to Japan immediately following the earthquake and tsunami, share experiences and further their understanding and knowledge of natural disasters and response policies.

Having the opportunity to learn from Australia's expertise with its own natural disasters was a key priority for the Japanese officials. So too was applying the valuable lessons learned on improving Japan's long-term psychological and emotional aspects of recovery and approaches to disaster preparedness.

The officials first travelled to flood-affected Grantham, Queensland, about 100-kilometres west of Brisbane, an area described by media as a 'war scene' of 'utter devastation'—an area that looked as if it had 'been hit by a tsunami'.

Next, the Minami Sanriku officials travelled to Sydney for the 50<sup>th</sup> Australia–Japan Joint Business Conference. To a standing ovation, Mayor Jin Sato and Iitate Village Council Chair Chohei Sato joined the then-Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, on stage and spoke to the 400 delegates about their painful experience and the slow process of reconstruction in Minami-Sanriku and Iwate.

Another emotional meeting occurred the next day when the officials met and thanked NSW Fire and Rescue Chief Superintendent Rob McNeil, who led the Urban Search and Rescue team that operated in Minami Sanriku in the immediate aftermath of the disaster.

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Having the opportunity to learn from Australia's expertise with its own natural disasters was a key priority for the Japanese officials.



# What happens to the land?

The catastrophic explosions at three of the four nuclear reactors at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant brought about by the Tohoku earthquake and tsunamis, caused extensive radioactive contamination over a wide area.

Land instantly became unusable and too dangerous to live on. It would remain so until a solution could be found, but the degree of the problem was enormous. The disaster at Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant released around 35.8 petabecquerels of Caesium-137 into the atmosphere, 42 per cent of the volume released in the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant disaster that struck Ukraine in 1986.

After visiting the contaminated area, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology's (RMIT) Candice Raeburn resolved to use her scientific research and experience to help.

She returned to RMIT's School of Applied Sciences in Victoria and, with her supervisor Professor Peter Smooker, started a research project to help with the cleaning up of the contaminated land and make it safe once more for affected communities.

With grant funding support from the AJF, the research team explored a natural, science-driven solution called bio-remediation. Bio-remediation uses biological organisms to solve environmental problems. It is a cost-effective, sustainable approach to cleaning up contaminated soil and groundwater, including through the use of agents like bacteria, microbes and fungi.

Cleaning up the radioactive waste, particularly caesium, is difficult, but the scientists found a potential way to overcome this contamination when they discovered a bacterial strain, *Deinococcus radiodurans*, which is highly resistant to radiation damage.

Researchers at RMIT and the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency are now collaborating to assess the ability of *Deinococcus radiodurans*, and associated strains, to take up caesium and withstand ionizing radiation. Testing will then take place with Japanese associates at Miyagi University.

Publication of the important scientific outcomes has also been made possible as part of AJF grant funding.



Contemplating the terrible destruction wrought to the Sendai foreshore by the tsunami of 11 March 2011. Credit: Professor Peter Smooker



Symposium moderator and presenter, Professor Yasuaki Onoda, Professor of Architecture and Planning, Tohoku University, with symposium participants touring Ishinomaki. *Credit: Dr Gretchen Wilkins*

## Rebuilding Sendai—post-tsunami urbanism

Following the earthquake and tsunami of March 2011, the School of Architecture at Tohoku University was displaced from its teaching facility, mid-semester. The building was later demolished. Undeterred, faculty members quickly mobilised recovery efforts, holding community design workshops, developing temporary housing proposals and establishing emergency tele-communication networks. But more was needed to plan for the long-term rebuilding of the city.

An international design symposium was held in December 2012, with AJF funding, focusing on post-tsunami urbanism in Japan. It was conducted in Sendai by Dr Gretchen Wilkins, with Dr Paul Minifie, Architecture and Design Faculty, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

'Rebuilding Sendai: Post-tsunami Urbanism in Japan' saw Japanese architects, academics, critics and government officials gather with counterparts from Australia, as well as architects and academics from Europe and the United States. Cross-cultural sharing of expertise and experience was a key focus. At the symposium, experts debated how to rebuild Sendai as compromised buildings in the capital continued to be razed and a new urban fabric slowly began to emerge.

International case studies on pre and post-crisis urbanism were presented. Participants also debated issues, explored architectural and urban design practice and asked significant questions. What was the best way to deal with the pace and competing pressures—expediency on the one hand and time to reflect on the other?

What was the best way to deal with the seemingly unresolvable debate about urban safety? Were high-damage areas unfit to redevelop? Should environmentally volatile areas be re-urbanised?

'Interestingly, participants learned that these types of questions were also debated in the aftermath of other natural disasters such as the 2009 Victorian bushfires and 2012 Queensland floods in Australia, as well as the 2005 Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans,' said Dr Wilkins. 'As with the debates in the aftermath of disasters in Australia and the United States, discussions in Sendai threw up controversy about where to locate future settlements and how to assess potential risks, even when residents had their hearts on rebuilding in the same location.'

The project strengthened collaboration among Australian and Japanese experts.

'Australians brought real-life experience from their own local disasters. The Japanese did too,' said Dr Wilkins. 'And both learned that while the characteristics of each crisis are different, there is always overlapping territory in how to manage and plan for future change in cities affected by disaster. The questions for architecture and urbanism are collective ones.'

The project also highlighted how valuable it is to exchange knowledge and debate issues surrounding urbanisation on environmental systems. 'This is central to Australia, Japan and many other countries,' says Dr Wilkins. 'Indeed, much of the resulting research and findings from the project will inform other discussions about future urban development.'



# Forging long-lasting relationships: the value of student exchanges

Townsville and Iwaki have been sister cities for 20 years and have a remarkably strong relationship through a variety of exchanges, especially youth exchanges.

Student exchanges are a valuable way to cross promote cultures, build understanding and forge long-lasting relationships. That was what happened when 10 students and two adults from Iwaki City in Fukushima Prefecture visited Townsville, Queensland, on a relief study mission in July and August 2012. Iwaki City suffered terribly in Japan's earthquake and tsunami. Some families lost ancestral homes forever and others their livelihoods. Many residents, concerned for their future, talked about dislocation and their sadness.

Many students had their school destroyed by the tsunami and had to be relocated. Students from three schools in Iwaki and those from Fukushima Prefecture evacuated out of a quarantine zone put in place because of radiation from the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant took refuge in classes at Meisei University Campus in Tokyo.

With AJF grant support, participating students found respite from their ongoing troubles at home. They experienced school life at The Cathedral School in Townsville, studying English as a second language and enjoying new subjects. They were paired with special buddies who were studying Japanese.

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Culturally, the students benefited from homestays with Australian families and participated in social, sports and sightseeing activities.

Both Australian and Japanese students were encouraged to talk about their respective cultures, with many discovering that differences do not matter that much. Several Japanese students found relief by sharing their personal stories and talking about what their communities had been through. It was a cathartic process.

The respite, even though short lived, helped the students see a world outside the daily problems they faced in Fukushima. It helped build a spirit of optimism and an understanding of the value of international relations. Many established contacts and friendships that will continue for years to come.



The [Townsville] Kizuna Youth Project for Iwaki students after the Great East Japan Earthquake. Students from Iwaki with the Whantanah-Jaban Aboriginal Traditional Dance Group at the Cathedral School, August 2012. Credit: Ms Susan Roberts



An interactive performance with students during Steven Rossitto's visit to Kiri Kiri Middle Elementary School in Iwate Prefecture. *Credit: DFAT*

## Memorable, moving music

Music can have a tremendous healing effect and provide hope in the wake of a natural disaster. Once essential food and temporary shelter are secure, communities focus on reconnecting and rebuilding on an emotional level. They focus on the 'human face' of disaster.

Australian singing sensation, Steven Rossitto, discovered this first-hand when he performed in Japan with his band as part of the Australian Jazz Journey 2012 cultural performance project. This journey took Steven to visit the people of Tohoku as part of a good-will tour of the areas devastated by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

With AJF grant funding, Steven and his band performed at the Australian Embassy and at a sold-out concert at the prestigious Cotton Club in Tokyo, as part of the famous and well-respected Tokyo Jazz Festival. Even more special were his performances at two schools in Iwate, a prefecture significantly affected by the disaster.

'Perhaps the most memorable and moving experience was our visit to the Kiri Kiri Middle Elementary School, situated on the coast in an area directly affected by the disaster,' said Steven. 'We were told that many of the students had lost loved ones in the disaster and many were still living with the consequences of losing their homes ... What struck us most was that after all the devastation the students had been through, and were still going through, they all greeted us with such happiness and appreciation.'

Steven's visit was even more poignant because it took place on the 18-month anniversary of the disaster.

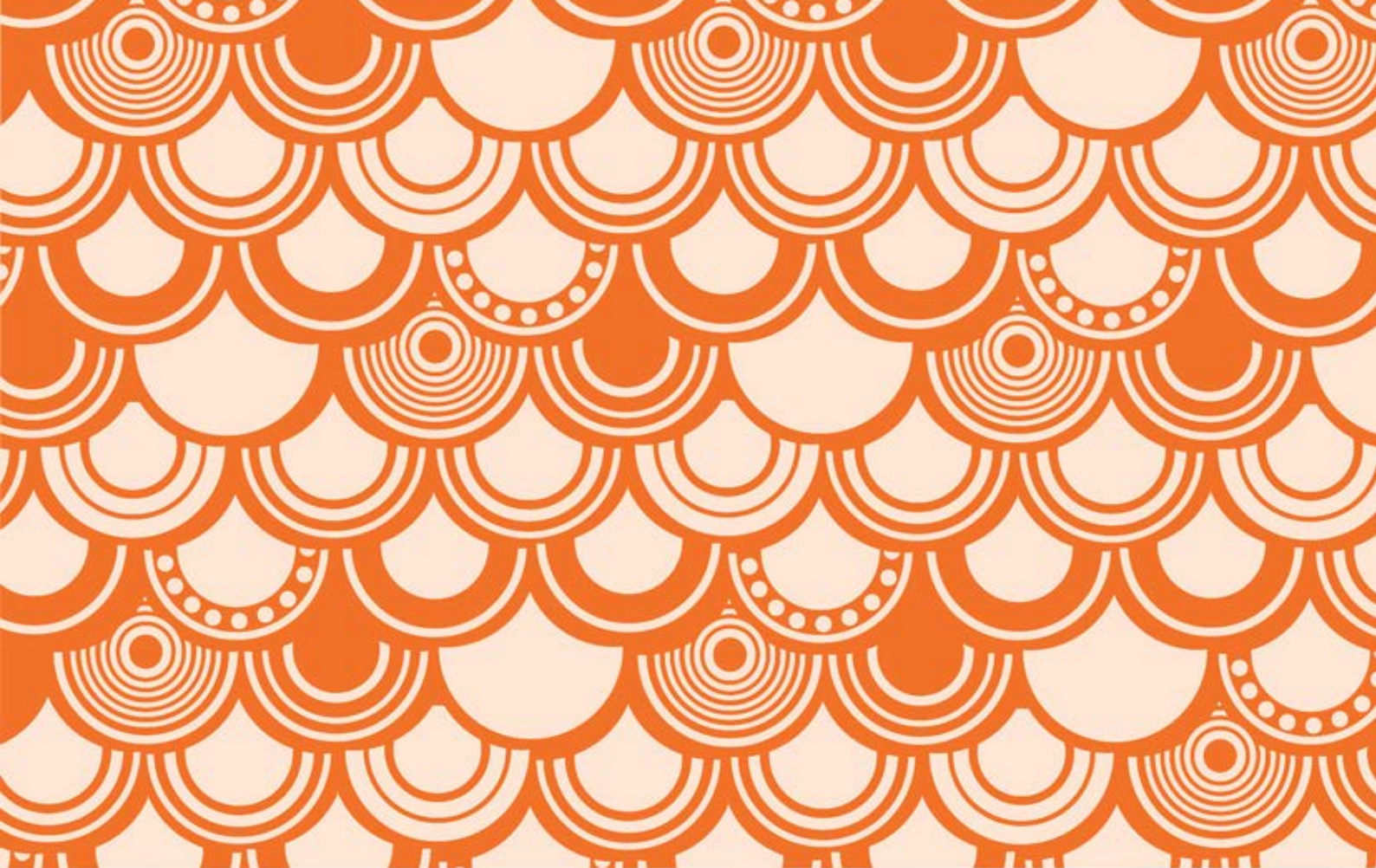
'After we had finished the performance we waited in a room as our equipment was being re-loaded on to the bus ... We then heard singing coming from the room next to us,' said Steven. 'We peeked in and saw a group of boys singing a beautiful Japanese song. To our knowledge this was not a planned performance but I think it's safe to say it deeply moved us all.'

The students at Kiri Kiri had found joy and solace through song. Music had once again been a reassuring way for the students to reflect on what they had been facing during the disaster, enabling them to express what they had been through in ways that sometimes words cannot do.

'It occurred to me that no matter where in the world you are or what your circumstances are, something as universal as music is always there,' says Steven. 'I now have a heart to help raise funds for the survivors of the Great East Japan Earthquake and hope to be in Japan again in the not too distant future.'

Arts-led projects like Jazz Journey have been a powerful tool in the recovery process. This is why NHK Enterprises, with the support of the AJF and the Australian Embassy in Tokyo has, every year since 2011, organised visits to Tohoku by prominent Australian jazz musicians to play at community festivals and in local schools. The goal is to use memorable music to help build a new sense of community, reduce feelings of isolation, help people develop new personal and creative skills, and create a shared sense of hope and optimism.





## Summary of funding

In 2013–14, the AJF provided grants for eight projects under the Reconstruction Initiative, totalling nearly \$215 000.

This included two student exchange visits to Australia and a large-scale visit to Tokyo and Sendai region by Questacon's Science Circus to visit children and schools affected by the tsunami. Questacon's visit also marked its 25th anniversary as Australia's premier science and technology public information institution. Questacon was established with the major help of a significant gift to Australia by the Japanese government and business community.

These are some of the projects supported by the AJF under the Reconstruction Initiative for 2013–14.

projects in

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015





## A special bond through science

Australia and Japan have a special connection through science centres. And that has included the two countries celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Questacon, Australia's multiple award-winning National Science and Technology Centre.

So what is the connection?

It all started years ago with a generous \$10 million grant from the Japanese Government and business community. The special grant paid for half of the initial construction cost for Questacon's national and international operations in Canberra. The headquarters officially opened on 23 November 1988 as a joint Australia–Japan Bicentennial Project.

Fast forward to 2014, and Questacon took off to Japan for a five-week Science Circus Tour. With an AJF grant, and in partnership with Japan's National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation (Miraikan), Questacon held free and engaging touring science shows and a travelling exhibition for the public over five weeks in April and May 2014. More than 30 hands-on science exhibits were displayed, with something for all ages and interests.

The tour travelled to Tokyo and four other regions in Japan, including areas in Tohoku such as Minami Sanriku hit by the 2011 disaster. It was one of the two largest Reconstruction Initiative projects funded by the AJF in 2013–14.

More formally, the tour introduced Questacon's Science Circus outreach model of science communication to Japan. The tour also involved high-profile government, corporate and educational organisations in workshops between Questacon, Miraikan and three regional science centres in Tohoku. The workshops helped build the capacity of Japan's science centres, with Questacon also learning along the way.

At the end of the exciting tour, the travelling exhibition was gifted to participating venues and communities in legacy of Questacon's lasting gratitude and relationship with the Government of Japan, Keidanren (Japan Business Federation) and people of Tohoku.

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The tour was all the more special for its expression of friendship and gratitude for Japan's role in Questacon's beginnings.



Dancers of the Saltbush. Left to right: Deon Hastie, Lou Bennett and Anna Balducci with a northern Queensland butterfly.  
Credit: 'Daylight Breaks'—Tim Standing

## From Saltbush to Sendai

It was a long trip for the members of Saltbush to reach Sendai City, but worth every travel mile. It gave the Australian dance theatre production a rewarding opportunity to present an important story of hope and joy for children and families struggling with the harsh reality of the devastation of Japan's 2011 disaster. In telling the story through the magic of the Dream Time, Saltbush created a lasting experience and sense of wellbeing for many.

Saltbush specialises in presenting immersive and interactive journeys through the culture and language of Aboriginal Australia. Its Japan tour, supported by AJF grant funding, included a theatre production and workshops for young people 4 to 12 years of age. The tour was just as inspiring for adults.

Eight shows with workshops were held in local schools and theatres in Sendai, the capital of Miyagi Prefecture, which, with a population of about a million, is the largest city in the Tohoku region. Close to 1000 participated. Audiences were highly responsive and children—delighted, curious and motivated—keen to engage in performances, workshops and question-and-answer sessions.

'To me making and presenting dance or theatre for young people is simply about creating joyful memories and personal experiences which can also be shared with others,' said Jason Cross, Director of Saltbush, who has been presenting the company's work around the world since 1997. 'Following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, it was clear that in our small way we could offer Saltbush as a gift and invite young people to momentarily

adventure from the everyday and replace it with a sense of magic and joy.'

Jason says working internationally, in the way that he does, has had a direct impact on his empathy for other cultures. His relationships with friends and peers in Japan extend as far back as 2002, having both presented Australian theatre work in Japan and toured Japanese theatre work in Australia.

'I always learn about a culture through individual people and shared moments with these people,' says Jason. 'Having close personal friends in Japan connects me to the country—its success and trials. In travelling and working in the region of Tohoku we were overwhelmed by the uplifting spirit of the people. I hope the children who experienced Saltbush take away a small memory of magic, which stays with them as they grow up.'

The international tour, managed by Insite Arts, had many other spinoff benefits, including creating broader and positive understanding of Australian Indigenous culture and the ability to present an innovative Australian performing arts product, with its associated technical expertise, in Japan. The production paved the way for strong relationships to be built between artists and audiences.

Saltbush also established relationships with representatives of Japanese arts centres, actors, dancers and producers, including those involved with major festivals. Long-lasting relations built with Art Revival Connection Tohoku, Boxes Sendai and representatives from the Miyagino Arts Center will continue to lead to reciprocal outcomes for Japan and Australia.



Australia's Taikoz with the Iwasaki Onikenbai Hozonkai dancers and musicians from Iwate Prefecture, on stage at City Recital Hall Angel Place (Sydney) on 28 November 2013. *Credit: Karen Steains Photography*

## An intangible cultural treasure

When 13 members of an 'intangible cultural treasure' performed Oni Kenbai with Taikoz, the sold-out crowds at Sydney's City Recital Hall were mesmerised. The treasure was Iwasaki Oni Kenbai Preservation Society (IOKPS), one of Tohoku's main cultural assets. The society was bestowed the honorary title by the Japanese Government, recognising the importance of maintaining the country's cultural assets.

The two companies joined forces in November 2013, with the trip to Australia involving free public demonstrations, high-school demonstrations, a weekend of intensive workshops, master classes and the ticketed performance at City Recital Hall.

Oni Kenbai is a spectacular Buddhist prayer dance, which pays homage to ancestral spirits at the midsummer Lantern Festival.

Taikoz says that with its colourful masks and powerful movements, Oni Kenbai is a 'deeply spiritual expression of the centuries-old rites and beliefs of the humble but strong-willed farmers of the region.' Iwasaki Oni Kenbai Hozonkai are the keepers and practitioners of this ancient form of dance and music and are known throughout Japan for their deep roots and high level of skill.

Established in 1997, Australia's Taikoz is equally highly skilled, having composed more than 30 original works for the Japanese wadaiko drum, including several in combination with distinguished composers and involving instruments such as koto, marimba, saxophone and the

didgeridoo. Some members of the group have been going to Japan each year since 2010 to study Oni Kenbai, a centuries-old art form.

The relationship between Sydney Oni Kenbai Club and IOKPS was strengthened through the visit and the Oni Kenbai Club has been invited to travel to Iwate for a reciprocal study and performance experience. The AJF-funded project introduced this wonderful Japanese art form to the Australian public. It also supported IOKPS to remain viable in the aftermath of the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami and strengthened the already powerful ties between Iwasaki Oni Kenbai and Taikoz.

This special project increased understanding in Japan of shared interests with Australia and recognition in Japan of Australian excellence and expertise in a popular Japanese art form.

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Oni Kenbai is a deeply spiritual expression of the centuries-old rites and beliefs of the humble but strong-willed farmers of the region.





## Reborn Resilience

Science and education play an increasingly important role in anticipating, responding to and adapting to unexpected events like the tsunami that hit Kesennuma City, Miyagi Prefecture, with mighty force in 2011.

Reconstruction of the area became an immediate priority, with ongoing disaster preparedness an important focal point, especially since Kesennuma also faces other climate-change issues including hotter and more humid summers, increasing run-off of rainwater through its downhill running rivers, and greater risk of flooding from the ocean.

With grant funding from the AJF, the 'Reborn Resilience' project turned its attention to helping the city develop a climate resilient structure plan. Several Australian climate change experts from Swinburne University travelled on a seven-day exchange to Keio University's environment and planning department and the City of Kesennuma.

The experts lent their knowledge and ideas to the design of an innovative, resilient urban environment. They gave a series of lectures and high-level presentations—rich in content—to academic, government and public audiences. They also participated in a site visit of Kesennuma, gave two workshops and presented final findings to local leaders and the Kesennuma community.

Work is now underway to publish an academic book documenting the research undertaken as part of the 'Resilience Reborn' project.

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The experts lent their knowledge and ideas to the design of an innovative, resilient urban environment.

# Sizing up a seawall in Shibitachi

When experts from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) visited Shibitachi in December 2011, they were shocked at the extent of devastation caused by the 2011 tsunami. A small coastal village close to Kesennuma where the remaining citizens from Shibitachi had all been displaced and were living in temporary accommodation until their village could be rebuilt.

To protect the community, the Japanese Government proposed that a giant seawall be built—10 metres tall and 200 metres long.

But was a seawall the answer?

Dr Marieluise Jonas, a landscape architect from RMIT, works with Tokyo University's Ota Lab. On a trip to Japan she met with community leaders from fishing villages, including Shibitachi, to talk about the seawall. In the case of Shibitachi, villagers looked at a physical model of the seawall, to get a realistic idea of its scale. 'The response was fantastic,' says Dr Jonas. 'The community was incredibly engaged.'

While the community wanted the comfort of protection from future tsunamis, the idea of a seawall came with its own set of questions and potential challenges. What impact would it have on local culture? How would it affect the beauty of the natural landscape? And with Shibitachi being a fishing village, what effect would the seawall have on the local economy?

Villagers and experts alike wondered if the seawall would really work. After all, the 17-metre breakwater in Kamaishi—the world's largest—was destroyed by the 2011 tsunami. Could a seawall only 10 metres tall be effective?

With grant funding from the AJF, a symposium of experts in landscape architecture and urban design was held on 12 October 2013 in the city of Kesennuma to explore these and other issues. The focus for Shibitachi Hyakunenkai was 'Where to from now? Building resilient communities through landscape architecture.'

Experts first participated in a half-day site visit to Shibitachi, where they were met by local community leaders and shown around the bay and harbour areas. The visit also gave them a flavour of local culture and building traditions.

The site visit was followed by the high-profile symposium, held in Kesennuma's community hall to include a wider audience. The symposium—attended by members of the local community and reconstruction experts from Tokyo, Rikuzentakada and Shibitachi—led to lively debate and renewed discussion on reconstruction strategies.

The symposium brought new perspectives to discussions and enabled experts to present their visions for a sustainable reconstruction of the village infrastructure from a landscape architectural perspective. It inspired the local community to get involved in exploring alternatives that might better fit their local culture and natural environment. And it led to extensive national and international media attention.

As a result of the 2013 expert workshop, the village committee succeeded in requesting a revision of the prefecture plan of the 10 metre-high seawall for Shibitachi. To date, the seawall has not been built.

A further outcome was a discussion on the Tohoku recovery progress and the seawall issue at the 2013 Canberra Centenary Conference, sponsored by Australia ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites). The project also established new contacts and led to a follow-up workshop in Tokyo in January 2014.

'The project is a small but important piece in a large puzzle of rebuilding Tohoku,' said Dr Jonas, 'but it drew attention to small villages and their heritage and helped empower the locals.'

The project team is now working on several publications, covering emerging research and continuing with the collaborative work that has been underway between RMIT and Tokyo University since 2011.

Dr Jonas is now working with Shintaro Suzuki and Dr Toshihiko Abe of Waseda University to request a full environmental assessment process to assess the potential impact of the seawall on Shibitachi Bay. In 2015–16, Dr Jonas was provided with a second AJF grant to continue this important work in conjunction with the community of Kesennuma.



Shintaro Suzuki points out the seawall site.  
Credit: Dr Marieluise Jonas



Professor Ota presents the planned seawall.  
Credit: Dr Marieluise Jonas



# Summary of funding

In 2014–15, the AJF provided grants for eight diverse and important projects under the Reconstruction Initiative, amounting to \$170 217. The student exchange visit program for young people from Minami Sanriku was broadened to enable students from other parts of the Tohoku region to participate.

These are some of the projects supported by the AJF under the Reconstruction Initiative in 2014–15.

projects in

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015





Students from the Tohoku region selected to visit Queensland in August 2015, with Ambassador Bruce Miller, Australia's Ambassador to Japan.  
Credit: DFAT

## Support our kids

It would be easy for children suffering deep hurt from Japan's 2011 earthquake and tsunami to lose hope in their future. The young are especially vulnerable in the face of a natural disaster. It is hard for them to understand what has gone on and imagine that their lives will ever be normal.

In their own small way, homestay programs plant a seed of hope and help young people cope through dedicated, personalised support.

This was certainly the case with the 10 students, aged 13 to 18 years, who travelled from Tohoku to Queensland in August 2015 to take part in the Support Our Kids Homestay program, with support from the AJF.

The students were selected through a competitive process and had to complete set tasks before they travelled, including preparing a presentation in English on their disaster experience.

During their two-week homestay, the Japanese students attended local schools, interacted with local families and participated in cultural activities. They were encouraged to think and act on choices to be made about their future. On their return, they shared their experiences with other students.

Support Our Kids has supported Tohoku-disaster affected students for more than four years, having organised homestays with 227 students to Canada, France, Ireland, New Zealand, San Marino, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and United States.

Organisers work closely with embassies to deliver the programs. The program works a treat in raising awareness of the support provided by each country and establishing and nurturing long-standing relationships. Participants stay in touch with their host families and members of the communities they visited, creating a strong network between Australia and Japan.

Support Our Kids hopes to continue to run the homestay program until 2020. A second grant was approved by the AJF in the 2015–16 grants round to enable another exchange in 2016.

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The young are especially vulnerable in the face of a natural disaster. It is hard for them to understand what has gone on and imagine that their lives will ever be normal.

# The endearing power of music

The power of music to help with recovery after a major disaster cannot be underestimated. That was what the members of Cookin' on 3 Burners learned during their visit to Tohoku in September 2014 where they saw, first hand, how the community was still struggling to rebuild some three years after it was hit with the 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

Arts-led creative recovery projects, like the Australian Jazz Journey, provide positive and creative experiences for individuals and communities.

This AJF-funded project lent support to the people of the Tohoku beyond rebuilding infrastructure. It helped rebuild the spirits of the people, in particular the children and elderly who are, in many ways, the most vulnerable.

During its tour, Cookin' on 3 Burners went to Iwate Prefecture and performed their wonderful and uplifting music at the Iwate Jazz Festival and in local schools.

As Australia's foremost Hammond Organ trio, Cookin' on 3 Burners joins the dots between funk, soul, boogaloo and jazz. Since forming in 2000, Jake Mason (Hammond organ), Dan West (guitar) and Ivan Khatchoyan (drums) have forged a well-earned reputation on the international music scene with a series of acclaimed releases.

Their bluesy and soulful sound appealed to the students and teachers of Iwate, with children dancing and clapping their way through songs. The trio broke through barriers by teaching children how to engage in music with artists instead of just listening passively.

While in Japan, Cookin' on 3 Burners also delighted an audience of nearly 1000 at the Tokyo Jazz Festival, further raising awareness of Australia's culture excellence in contemporary music. Tokyo Jazz is Japan's largest and most prestigious jazz festival and a stage for international and well-regarded performers.

There was no stopping Cookin' on 3 Burners. They also performed for more than 1000 people at the Jozenji Jazz Street Festival in Sendai, a major city devastated by the 2011 disaster.

Through high-quality performance and workshops, the project was successful in many ways. It proved once more how important music and arts can be in disaster recovery. It showcased emerging and creative Australian jazz talent in Japan. It raised awareness in Japan of Australian excellence and expertise in the music industry and established strong, long-term ties between musicians, producers, critics and audiences, strengthening people-to-people links between the two countries.



Members of the trio Cookin on 3 Burners performing with students at Akasaki and Takonoura Elementary School in Ofunato, Iwate, in September 2014. Left to right: Dan West (guitar), Ivan Khatchoyan (drums) and Jake Mason (Hammond organ). Credit: DFAT





Members of the Momonoura community discuss Tasmanian oyster farming techniques. *Credit: Ben Sheehan*

## Recovery through innovative oyster practices

Villagers living in Oshika Peninsula had grown oysters for decades. But the coastal fishing industry was decimated by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. Oyster aquaculture appeared to be lost forever and, along with it, the livelihoods of many local fishermen. With 98 per cent of the industry's infrastructure lost, including oyster rafts, work facilities and oyster culture beds, was there any chance of revitalising the Japanese industry?

A project by the University of Queensland, led by Dr Andrew Wilson, helped bring hope to the area's oyster farmers. The challenges were great given that the industry was in trouble even before the earthquake and tsunami. The motivation to help was strong given that Australia–Japan oyster linkages go back 70 years. Indeed, the Pacific Oyster, a popular variety produced in Australia, originally came from Japan. And because of the ties between the two countries, Australia has become a world leader in the oyster industry.

While there remained a great deal to be done to re-establish businesses, including markets through which the farmers could sell their fresh catch, the members of the Momonoura community recognised the need to be innovative in re-establishing their livelihoods and the economic viability of their community.

The project, assisted with AJF grant funding, looked at innovative approaches to aquaculture, agriculture and forestry. It also looked at ways tourism could support rural communities to become sustainable.

Oshika Peninsula projects south-east into the Pacific Ocean from the coast of Miyagi Prefecture in north-east Honshu, the main island of Japan. It was the closest part of Honshu to the epicentre of the Tohoku earthquake.

After the disaster, each community had to decide where to relocate their village. They then resolved to do whatever was needed to re-establish oyster farming and other businesses destroyed by the tsunami. Despite significant emotional and financial costs, the fishermen understood the need to be innovative with aquaculture and other industries such as agriculture and forestry.

Dr Wilson worked directly with Momonoura and collaborated with Professor Momoyo Kaijima from the School of Art and Design, University of Tsukuba, who led the rehabilitation process.

Through the project's 'seed' phase, strong relationships were quickly built between Tourism, Forestry, Agriculture and Aquaculture in Tasmania, seven researchers from the School of Art and Design at the University of Tsukuba and community leaders from Momonoura.

Work began with a week-long field trip and workshop in Tasmania, which itself has a vibrant and lucrative oyster industry. The delegation wanted to learn as much as they could about oyster farming techniques used in Australia but not available in Japan.

During the trip, held in July 2015, representatives from Momonoura visited Tasmanian oyster, berry and food farms, as well as timber centres. The workshop, held in the Museum of Old and New Art in Hobart, saw case studies presented across tourism, aquaculture, agriculture, and forestry industries. A special presentation was given on a project looking to use oysters to remove heavy metal pollution from river estuaries.

A bilingual website will be launched in December 2015 as a permanent record of fieldwork, workshop and research outcomes.





The Hon Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, meeting with students from Ishinomaki who visited Canberra as part of an AJF-funded student exchange organised by the ACT Australia-Japan Society in April 2015. Left to right: Natsuiki Kanno, Kana Nagayama, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, Toi Watanabe and Akihisa Yamada. *Credit: DFAT*

## Respite for Tohoku youth

The ACT Australia-Japan Society has supported close people-to-people ties between Australia and Japan over many years.

The Society raised funds to support recovery efforts in Japan, but members wanted to do more. As a result, the Society focused on ways to help the more than 1200 young people who had lost one or both parents during the disaster by organising respite visits for them to Canberra involving educational, cultural and recreational programs. To achieve this, the Society partnered with renowned Japanese organisation Ashinaga Ikuikai.

The AJF has supported this project from the outset. Since 2011, the Society has organised and supported a school and homestay program for 22 young people who attended school classes at Radford College in Canberra and stayed with Radford families.

The program included social, cultural and recreational activities, including visits to Australian Parliament House, Australian War Memorial, Japanese Embassy, Questacon, National Zoo and Aquarium, and the Nara Peace Park in Lennox Gardens.

In April 2015, the AJF Secretariat and Japan Section of DFAT organised a special visit for the young people to Parliament House to see Australian democracy in action during Question Time. Visitors met the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, in her office and discussed their future aspirations as well as their views of Canberra and Australia.

A reception was held for the students at DFAT during which they met with Japanese speaking officers of the department, some of whom were posted to the Australian Embassy in Tokyo at the time of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami.



The Hon Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, meeting with young students from Ishinomaki who visited Canberra as part of an AJF-funded student exchange organised by the ACT Australia-Japan Society in April 2015. Left to right: the Hon Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs with Akihisa Yamada, Toi Watanabe, Natsuiki Kanno and Kana Nagayama. *Credit: DFAT*

# The future

Australia will continue to support the people of Tohoku. They will not be forgotten.

The AJF's commitment is as strong as ever. Through its annual grant program, the AJF will continue to provide funding support for projects that will deliver tangible benefits, understanding that the recovery of Tohoku is inevitably a lengthy process.

The Reconstruction Initiative continues. In 2015–16, the Board, including five new members succeeding those who had been part of the AJF's decision to establish the Reconstruction Initiative, reaffirmed its commitment to the initiative and recommended six grants totalling \$106 540. These projects focus on young people and on improving the region's recovery, prosperity and the wellbeing of its people.

At its meeting on 1 July 2015, the AJF Board approved grants to these individuals and organisations for 2015–16 under the Reconstruction Initiative:

- Isabella a Capella, a Lismore-based choir, for the 'Hana Wa Saku tour' to the Minami Sanriku region to perform at various venues, including kindergartens, schools and nursing homes
- Scout Association of Australia, to enable Japanese scouts from Tohoku to attend the Australian Scout Jamboree in Sydney in 2015–16
- Support Our Kids 2016 Homestay, to conduct a second homestay program in Australia by young people from Tohoku, including students from Minami Sanriku

- NHK Enterprises—Australian Jazz Journey 2016, for a tour by members from the Australian Art Orchestra to conduct workshops and performances at schools in Iwate
- ACT Australia–Japan Society, to organise exchange visits to Canberra in 2015–16 as part of its Tohoku Youth Exchange program
- Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (Dr Marieluise Jonas), to work again with the community of Kesennuma.

The Board of the AJF extends its best wishes to Australian and Japanese grant recipients who, through these 2015–16 activities, will further support the recovery process and strengthen the Australia–Japan relationship.

The Board also expresses its appreciation to individuals and organisations in Australia and Japan who have undertaken recovery-related projects under the Reconstruction Initiative since 2011. We thank them for their commitment, drive and dedication to supporting the people of Japan.



Children's Exchange 2014 to Queensland—farewell reception at the Australian Embassy in Tokyo hosted by HE Mr Bruce Miller, Australia's Ambassador to Japan. *Credit DFAT*



