



## **HIERARCHY AND THE MEMBERS PROTECTION POLICY**

Aiki Kai Australia's recent involvement in a court case has alerted us to the fact that the fundamental nature and character of our organisation, its structure, and the role of our Member Protection Policy (MPP) might be subject to misunderstanding in some quarters. What follows is a background to help explain how our history and purpose relate to the MPP .

## **HISTORY**

Sugano Sensei arrived here in 1965 with authority from the Founder, O Sensei, to bring Aikido to Australia - meaning the traditions and understanding of the nature of its budo qualities, as adapted by O Sensei. Hierarchical aspects of this included absolute respect for the Art and for one's teachers and seniors so that, during the 13 years of his residence in Australia, Sugano Sensei set up dojos and appointed teachers all around Australia with the responsibility of passing this on to junior trainees, and this responsibility also passed to those rising to become instructors and to hold official positions.

## **AIKI KAI AUSTRALIA**

All of this was built into Aiki Kai Australia (AKA) on its founding as an association of members in 1975, with the express purpose of helping Sugano Sensei to protect, propagate, and teach Aikido. (AKA was at that time Hombu's Sole Recognised Representative National Organisation for Australia).

## **TECHNICAL AND TEACHING COMMITTEE**

Within the association, as required by the International Regulations of Hombu in Japan, Sugano Sensei appointed a Technical and Teaching Committee (TTC) comprising himself and some of his most senior students. The role of this TTC was not only to teach what Sugano Sensei was passing on but also to oversee all technical and ethical issues within AKA.

## **AREA REPRESENTATIVES AND STATE ORGANISATIONS**

Then, when Sugano Sensei moved to Europe in 1978, he formalised the appointment of national state and territory Area Representatives, with the responsibility to oversee and impart both the external form of Aikido and essential qualities of its inner art in their state or territory, including such traditional hierarchical values as the importance of respect for seniors and care for juniors.

He further encouraged those Area Representatives to each set up a state or territory organisation within their Area whose core purpose would be to support them in

carrying out their duties on behalf of AKA, just as the national organisation supported him in his.

### **INCORPORATION**

Next, in 1985, Aiki Kai Australia incorporated, further officialising the same model – in-order-to facilitate Sugano Sensei, TTC, National, state and territory Representatives and members to continue the work of Aikido with the added protection of incorporation and insurance. The role of the TTC continued to be paramount, requiring it to ensure that instructors were passing on the totality of Aikido through maintaining its technical and ethical culture.

### **NATIONAL COACHING ACCREDITATION SCHEME & MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY**

Over a further period spanning about 20 years, Aiki Kai Australia then became recognised by the Federal Government as the accrediting body for Aikido teachers under the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS). An element of this was the introduction of a Member Protection Policy (MPP), which the organisation adopted on the understanding that its complaint purpose was to allow individual members to make complaints and to address child protection and where a member felt they were being personally discriminated against, based on gender, race, or religion. Unfortunately, when the Federal Government changed its criteria for the recognition of sporting organisations to require competition, Aiki Kai Australia ceased having NCAS recognition. The MPP was kept in place. The MPP was never adopted to supplant the traditional, historical jurisdiction of the TTC with its authority to regulate and discipline instructors. That role goes to the very heart of AKA's purpose and jurisdiction regarding Aikido itself through teaching, qualification of instructors and grading of students. This means, for example, that the AKA Grading Panel is in no way connected to the MPP.

### **A BETTER UNDERSTANDING**

The TTC and Board are now evaluating how this core understanding of Aikido and the role of the TTC can be better articulated so that both instructors and students will understand the importance of its role now and into the future, including, for example, assurance that, if a problem relating to an instructor or student contains elements that should first be considered under MPP guidelines, it can be done before the TTC then moves to a formal decision on any Aikido element of such complaint.

### **FURTHER COMMUNICATION**

All instructors and prospective instructors are strongly encouraged to access the Instructor Course held twice annually at our National Schools, at which the above topics are covered. Given that not all instructors can attend these schools, it is envisaged that some key modules of the course, including the above topics, will be made available online to instructors to minimise any misunderstanding of who we are and what is expected of instructors.