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## **SENSEI'S BLOGS:**

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**A new name on an old path –**

**Aikido Institute to Compass Inc**



Many people may already be aware of the name change (and separation between the AMAI (Martial arts) and Compass Education & Training services) our organisation has undergone as of the first of July. For nearly 17 years we have been The Aikido Institute and I share a quiet pride in the reputation we have developed over those years. At the same time I am humbled by the contributions of so many people over those same years. People have given so much of themselves – some perhaps for a short time and others for many years. Volunteering in working bees or teaching children & adults – helping with computers and advising on all manner of subjects – building offices, renovating kitchens, serving on committees – sweeping mats, mowing lawns, watering gardens ... so many ways ... so much love and care and effort.

As we draw to a close the era of the Aikido Institute, I want to formally thank all those hundreds of people for their assistance and support in so many big and small ways. Thank you. Without your generosity of spirit we could have done very little indeed.

There have been so many milestones and achievements it's impossible to recall them all, however some are –

Joining the International Yoshinkan Aikido Federation / offering childrens classes (over three thousand children through the Palmwoods Dojo alone) / 19 adults achieving Yudansha (black belt) status / Matthew Lee as our first person coming through the junior classes and going on to achieve Shodan as an adult / commencing our unique Alternative Education programmes in schools (over 7,000 students through those programmes) / buying the house next to the Dojo / attracting international teachers of the highest calibre to our "Dojo in the bush" / renovating the Dojo, landscaping the grounds and building the office under the house / travelling to teach in so many other Dojos trying to share what we had learned / the Armidale branch under Martin sensei and now Jonathan sensei, the Cooroy branch under Stuart sensei / providing seminars and presentations to Corporations / providing training to elite athletes through the Academies of Sport / The many demonstrations of Aikido and Jodo / the Camps and Seminars with other Dojos / the Backyard Blitz / the Uchi Deshi programme / meeting and commencing Shinto Muso Ryu under Nishioka Sensei / planning and then finally opening Aiki Abilities to





young people with intellectual disabilities (now 32 clients and 16 staff in two centres.)

On over 9,000 occasions a teacher has walked onto the mat, composed themselves in seiza, clapped their hands, bowed ... and taught a Budo class to adults or children in our Palmwoods Dojo alone.

“We can never step into the same river twice” as the saying goes. The Aikido Institute has grown and changed a great deal ... yet throughout we have also remained true to our purpose – to bring the martial way to our community in ways that can most benefit people. To provide a standard and a way in changing times. In Japanese there is a concept called **Neru**. This has several meanings but essentially it combines the ideas of forging steel from iron and imparting lustre to and/or weaving fibre. This is the way in martial ways. To temper ourselves through constant practice in such a way as to balance hardness and softness. To weave together the elements of our true selves, polishing and refining. To learn how to live each day. Making this Budo philosophy and practice accessible has been at the heart of The Aikido Institute over the past 17 years.

Our organisation will continue down that path under new names – The Compass Institute Inc. and the AMAI. The new names reflects the diversity in our core operations without losing the thread. The directional compass is the symbol of exploration, the tool of visionaries & adventurers. With it we can navigate through new territories. The divider compass is the tool of mapmakers – of those who will act as guides that others may follow. With these two compasses we can explore and map the world as we go. With them, the Aikido Institute can embark on its new adventure under its new identity.

Compass incorporates the AMAI (Traditional Martial Arts), Compass Education and Training Services, Compass Community Enterprises and Compass Corporate Partnerships. Future Blogs will focus on each of these elements separately to give you a better idea of just how diverse our operations have become.

**David**

