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September 2008

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The AMAI

As part of the transformation from The Aikido Institute to Compass Inc, we have tried to define the various services we provide while maintaining the commonality of purpose that connects them all. At heart this organisation is still very much motivated and guided by the philosophy and practice of traditional martial arts. The ethics and values, competencies and behaviours of this 'Way' can influence and underpin all Compass does in it's organisational life. Core values and competencies are a key driver for all individuals and organisations. The very nature of life is fluidity, change and dynamic complexity – the adventure of new territory in every moment. Core values and competencies act as a compass to help us navigate those changing situations and circumstances.

Often these values and competencies remain implicit and unspoken. To purposefully follow a vision requires that we make these concepts explicit and we singly and jointly commit ourselves to maintaining and sharing the values we believe in. These values and competencies are not some convenient tool we use in certain part of our lives. Rather they can act as a code we abide by at all times, a standard we aspire to in all aspects of our life and as the roots from which we grow true and straight.

While Compass Inc is the umbrella organisation, the area within that organisation responsible for providing all the ongoing daily classes, regular seminars and various events in traditional martial arts also has a new identity. The AMAI has been established to extend the base of the Aikido Institute to a national level that is also more inclusive of other arts. The reality is for quite a few years we have provided far more than Aikido classes. Thanks to the wonderful support and teaching of Nishioka Sensei over the past decade, we provide regular classes in the arts grouped under the Shinto Muso Ryu banner. These arts include Jojutsu / Jodo, Kenjutsu, Iaijutsu, Tanjojutsu, Juttejutsu and Kusarigamajutsu. Nishioka Senseis' influence has also vastly modified the approach we have taken to Aikido, building on the base provided by Yoshinkan Aikido to now be strongly integrated with Koryu and in particular, sword principles and practice.

The AMAI has two purposes. One is the ongoing provision of activities as above. The second is more complex. In travelling to teach in various areas, I've often been hosted by small groups, many of whom have no existing or meaningful affiliation. This has often meant that the people teaching and assuming responsibility within that group have access to few real resources, human or otherwise. This lack of real support places considerable emphasis on those people and can leave them feeling burdened and having to 'invent the wheel' at every turn. The alternative that has flourished in Australia in the past involved those same small groups being bled dry by larger organisations





with grading fees, mat fees etc and still receiving little 'professional support and training.

The AMAI aims to support associations, clubs and individuals in developing a strong Budo culture in their local communities. There are various types of membership available from individual to executive allowing for different levels of involvement from various clubs, groups and Dojos. It also allows membership by groups teaching arts other than Aikido and offers a range of benefits including teaching and resource support, financial assistance and guidance, website and promotional links, bulk purchasing of insurance, advertising, printing, training uniforms and equipment etc. As a non-profit body the AMAI is able to take a genuinely altruistic motive into it's relationships with these groups and help them help their communities by fostering access to professionally provided martial arts and ways. Perhaps the key benefit is access to the learning we have accumulated and the systems and network we have developed as an organisation over 17 years as a full time martial arts provider.

David

