
Update #11 - F20/21 membership fees waived, for renewing members.



Corona Virus Update #11

Aiki Kai Australia takes the unprecedented step to waive membership fees for the 20/21 financial year.

**Introduction from Tony Smibert Shihan
President of Aiki Kai Australia**

This has been a tough year, but made better by the efforts of so many to keep Aikido alive and well in form and spirit. These include the many instructors and students who have continued personal training at home, those who have participated in Zoom and outdoor classes and all of those who have maintained the hard work of Aiki Kai Australia around the country (and of course in some states and territories dojo training is now allowed).

I've been involved in the day-to-day life of the association for well over 50 years now and it always amazes me what the efforts of even a moderate number of people, when supported by the goodwill and enthusiasm of an entire organisation, can achieve. So much so that we often find it difficult to explain to outsiders just how our small organisation has achieved so much.

This year, as you are about to hear from Dziedzic Shihan, the Board and TTC have taken the extraordinary step of extending all annual memberships by 12 months *without payment* for this financial year, while covering all of the normal, ongoing and unavoidable costs that the organisation will still incur over the 12 months out of the reserve held by the Association.

While our costs will be curtailed, we will likely have a financial shortfall this financial year, given that we have unavoidable ongoing running costs and membership income will be lower. We are

confident that the cash reserve held by Aiki Kai Australia can sustainably cover this shortfall.

I commend them for this decision and am happy that the Sugano Foundation has also decided to waive its student fees and assist the Association as necessary. Meanwhile, some members have also suggested Aiki Kai Australia accept contributions towards ongoing running costs during this time. It's a great suggestion and we will be very happy to accept it from anyone who wants to help in this way.

Right now, daily life is a serious financial challenge for many and so it seems to me that charging no membership fee for 12 months is entirely in accord with the spirit of our heritage and I look forward to seeing everyone when we can again resume 'normal service' in all states and territories.

Warmest regards to all,

Tony Smibert

Dear John,

As Smibert Shihan said in these opening remarks we have taken an unprecedented action in unprecedented times. We are extending the membership, for all annual, *renewing* members by a further 9 months. This means we will have provided most people with a total of 12 months free membership, if you take into account the 3 months already applied.

For most current annual members this means you are fully financial up to 1 July 2021. We will extend Introductory memberships to 1 July 2021 as well. New people who join us from 1 September will be asked to pay the full applicable membership fee.

For those wonderful people who have already jumped in and paid their full membership up to 1 October 2021 we will extend that date to 1 July 2022, or offer them a refund and leave their renewal date at 1 July 2021.

You should be aware, we exhaustively looked at many, many options over these past few weeks but as the training is so scattered across the country and there is still such a high level of uncertainty for the coming months, combined with the appalling financial situation both at a personal and business level, we felt this was the best option for the membership as a whole. We hope you agree with us.

As mentioned earlier we do have ongoing fixed costs every year, regardless if classes are held or not. These are the running of the national database and website, a hefty insurance bill, bank/transaction fees, accounting fees, basic legal costs and the running costs of office bearers. We have pared down all non-essential costs and tightened the belt wherever we can, and we can cover these costs for one year out of our financial reserves, which should get us through this crisis and still be in a reasonable financial state, but with a strong membership base, to build the organisation in better times!

For those of you who don't know, the positions in the association operate on a voluntary basis, this goes for every instructor and the wonderful state and national administrative people who make the association function. This association is held together and runs on the goodwill of all participants. It's extraordinary, you are all extraordinary.

With very best wishes,

Andrew Dzedzic

National Area Representative

PS: Some members have already indicated they would like to help out with a contribution to our financial reserves. We are very happy to accept this, but it is not obligatory, nor will it affect your membership status.

*If you want to make a contribution go to our national website and look for 'Contribution' in the blue menu panel or follow this link:
<https://aikido.org.au/Contribute>*