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## news & events

### Women weigh in at sumo championships

A sold-out crowd witnessed the biggest day of sumo wrestling in Australia in nearly 20 years at the Australian Sumo Championships on the Gold Coast on 18 July.

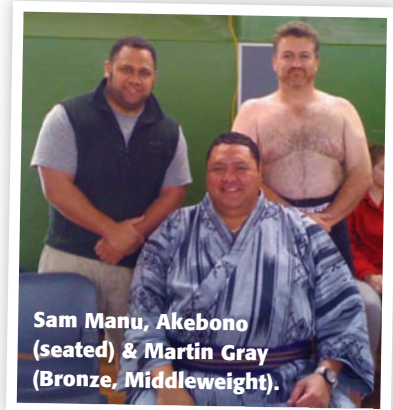
With over 40 competitors and 82 bouts, the event broke several records, including for the first time a greater number of women *sumotori* than men. It also drew extra media attention and competition due to the attendance of the 64th Yokozuna and first non-Japanese Grand Champion Akebono Taro as a judge, and the entrance of Australia's Strongest Man, Derek 'Thunder' Boyer, in the heavyweight division.

The competition, which was

officially opened by the Consular General of Japan, Makoto Hinei, was a qualifier for the Australian team to the World Combat Games and the World Sumo Championships later this year.

In the women's divisions, seniors Clare Szanto and Clare Lutton were again dominant, and standout Renne Robinson used her favoured *shitate-nage* (underarm throw) to take both the Junior title and third place in the Senior Women's Openweight event.

The men's divisions saw several surprises, including Australian Junior Champion Daywu Hahn contesting the Senior Lightweight title,



**Sam Manu, Akebono (seated) & Martin Gray (Bronze, Middleweight).**

losing to Luke Bulger. In the Middleweight category, judoka Chris Swalwell defeated New Zealander Ben Thorpe and in the Heavyweight division, the strength and power of Derek Boyer was too much for former champion Drew Weeks. In the open contest, Heavyweight newcomer Peter Townsend defeated the veteran middleweight John Trail.

### Aussie takes karate test in Okinawa

The head instructor of Canberra's Kodokan Matsubayashi-ryu (Shorin-ryu) Karate Dojo, Reece Cummings, recently visited Okinawa to train and grade under Takayoshi Nagamine Soke, the 10th Dan head of Matsubayashi-Ryu, at his headquarters in Naha City.

Sensei Cummings, who has been training in the style for over 10 years and runs a dojo in Canberra, ACT, undertook rigorous one-on-one training with Master Nagamine, averaging two daily sessions of two-to-three hours each, and lived for the most part in the dojo's guest room. It was Cummings' second trip to Okinawa — the small island 550km south of mainland Japan, known as the 'birthplace of karate' — since he first met Nagamine Soke in Australia in 2005.

After 10 days of refining technique and kata, Nagamine Soke told Cummings that he would test for 3rd Dan (*Sandan*). The test would consist of performing a variety of kata in front of all the Okinawan Matsubayashi-ryu dojo heads in Okinawa, including 9th Dan Hanshis Yoshitaka Taira Hanshi and Toshimitu Arakaki, as well as some of the island's most senior Goju-ryu karateka.

"This trip was made to develop not only technical proficiency in karate, but to develop a deeper philosophical and cultural understanding behind Shorin-ryu karate-do as a way of life. It was an amazing experience to be able to travel to Okinawa and train with genuine karate masters," said Cummings.

He also paid tribute to John Carlyle, his Australian sensei and chief instructor of the Matsubayashi-ryu Karate Association of Australia: "It is because of the support of my teacher and his dedication to preserving and developing true Matsubayashi-ryu karate-do in Australia that this experience was even possible," said Cummings.



**Cummings with Nagamine Soke**