

— CHIEF MINISTER'S — STUDY TOUR

Shared History  Shared Future



Okinawa, Japan
2027

DefenceNT
defence.nt.gov.au

 **NORTHERN
TERRITORY**
GOVERNMENT

Message from the Chief Minister



The Northern Territory has always played a unique role in Australia's defence story, from the Second World War through to today's strategic partnerships that place us at the centre of Indo-Pacific regional security. That story is not just about history, but about who we are as Territorians: resilient, forward-looking, and deeply connected to our region and those who live throughout it.

The Study Tour gives our young Territorians the opportunity to step onto the world stage. Under the theme Shared History, Shared Future, students will visit Okinawa to reflect on the lessons of history but also gain new perspectives on the friendships and partnerships that shape our future.

Japan is one of Australia and the Northern Territory's most important partners. From historic ties through to contemporary connections in energy, resources, defence and trade, our relationship with Japan is enduring and vital. There could not be a better destination for our young leaders to visit.

This initiative is about inspiring the next generation of Territorians to carry forward our values of service, respect, and cooperation, while strengthening our place in the Indo-Pacific community.

Following the success of the 2026 Study Tour, I am proud to launch this second program for 2027. I look forward to the stories, experiences, and insights our students will bring home to share with their families, schools and communities.

The Hon. Lia Finocchiaro MLA,
Chief Minister of the Northern Territory,
Minister for Defence NT.

Overview

What is the Chief Minister's Study Tour?

The Northern Territory has a proud tradition of respecting those who served, and recognising our place in the Indo-Pacific region.

The Chief Minister's Study Tour continues that tradition, while connecting our history to the present and reflecting contemporary priorities and our enduring partnership with Japan.

This program is designed to give young future Territory Leaders a deeper understanding of how Australia's shared history with Japan continues to shape peace, partnerships, and alliances in the Indo-Pacific today.

Students will take part in a guided experience at sites of historical significance and contemporary relevance, participate in cultural and educational experiences and reflect on themes of conflict, sacrifice, cooperation, and peace.

The study tour will also:

- show students potential career pathways in defence, diplomacy, education, and government
- help students understand the Northern Territory's important role in our region and in Australia-Japan relations
- give students the chance to represent the Northern Territory overseas and on their return as emerging leaders.

The study tour will return to Okinawa, Japan in June 2027.

Study Tour students receive a gift from Japanese students on a visit to their school.



Who is the tour for?

Northern Territory students in Year 9 will be selected to participate through a Territory-wide competition. They will travel in 2027, during Year 10.

The selection process will consider each applicant's response to the guiding question:

The Australia-Japan relationship is critical to the Northern Territory's future.

As a young Territorian and future leader, what initiative, idea or partnership would you champion to strengthen ties with Japan and help build a peaceful, prosperous, and secure Indo-Pacific?

Why would it matter?

What will students do on the tour

The study tour will focus on exploring the history of Australia and Japan and its ongoing impact on peace and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific, with a strong emphasis on the close partnership between Japan and the Northern Territory.

During the tour students will:

- visit key historical sites, including Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum, the Himeyuri Peace Museum, and the Former Japanese Navy Underground Headquarters, where they will reflect on the impact of conflict and the importance of peace in the region
- visit the Okinawa Peace Memorial Park and other sites of historical significance
- explore contemporary regional partnerships and learn about the importance of cooperation, diplomacy and alliances in supporting peace and security in the Indo-Pacific
- participate in cultural and educational experiences, including opportunities to engage with Japanese students and experience Okinawan culture and traditions

Each day will conclude with a daily reflection. At the end of the study tour students will deliver a presentation or reflection piece to the Chief Minister and share their learnings with their schools and communities on their return.

Students may be asked to help promote the following year's study tour.

Students hear about the history and importance of the former Japanese Navy underground headquarters.



How to enter

Eligibility

To be eligible students must:

- be enrolled in Year 9 at a Northern Territory school in 2026
- have, or be willing and able to obtain at their own cost, a valid passport for travel in June 2027
- have parent/guardian permission to apply and participate if selected. Parent/guardian contact details will be required for verification and communication.

Instructions

To enter, eligible students must submit their response to the guiding question:

The Australia-Japan relationship is critical to the Northern Territory's future.

As a young Territorian and future leader, what initiative, idea or partnership would you champion to strengthen ties with Japan and help build a peaceful, prosperous, and secure Indo-Pacific?

Why would it matter?

Students are encouraged to consider the question from a variety of perspectives, use a variety of sources, and be creative in their approach and communication.

Entries must be submitted directly through the online application portal at defence.nt.gov.au

There is no requirement for school sign-off, although students are encouraged to seek support from their teachers and school when preparing their entries.

Submission requirements

Students should select one of the following modes:

Essay

- 600-900 words (excluding titles, subtitles and bibliography)
- include a bibliography.

Recorded PowerPoint presentation

- 3-5 minutes recorded oral or video presentation with PowerPoint (or equivalent)
- a presentation of 6-12 slides.
- include a bibliography.

Website

- 600-900 words of text or equivalent oral or video material
- must be accessible via a link that leads to a home page
- include a bibliography
- include any passwords that may be required.

Be clear and to the point. As a guide, judges will spend a maximum of 10 minutes reading, listening or viewing each entry prior to shortlisting.



**Entries close 7pm
19 October 2026**

Selection process

Entries will be assessed based on:

- quality of perspectives and interpretation
- relevance to the guiding question
- creativity and originality of the response
- clarity and effectiveness of communication.

A judging panel will shortlist finalists based on student submissions.

Shortlisted students will then be interviewed by a panel which may include DefenceNT, the Department of Education and Training and other relevant stakeholders.

In addition to student entries, the panel will consider the following criteria:

- interest in learning about the history of the relationship between Australia and Japan
- commitment to learning from others and through new experiences
- interest in exploring Defence, diplomacy, or leadership pathways
- willingness to share learnings with their school and wider community
- being open to trying new things and experiencing Japanese culture.

Throughout the selection process, additional consideration will be given to Aboriginal and regional and remote students across the Northern Territory.

Students experiencing a perfect day out learning about Japanese history and culture.



Schedule

Milestone	Timing
Official program launch	7 September 2026
Competition submission period	7 September - 19 October 2026
Judging of entries	20 October - 11 December 2026
Announcement of winners	February 2027
Travel preparation (documents, consents, chaperones, visas)	February - May 2027
Study tour	June 2027
Post tour engagement and review	July – August 2027



Kimono or Yukata rental is a popular experience in many parts of Japan.



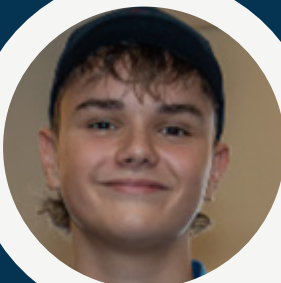
Tallula Van Der Mark, Essington School

"It was an incredible educational experience. Stepping outside the classroom allowed me to engage with history and culture on a deeply personal level, completely shifting how I view global issues and my own field of study."

A piece of advice I would give to future participants is to totally give this opportunity a go."

Ramneet Gill, Darwin High School

"Make the most of the trip, and every opportunity you get. Don't be afraid to try new things and stay organised (some days can be very busy) and get enough rest. Take every chance to learn from the people you meet and ask questions whenever you can. This trip will be one of the most rewarding experiences of your school years, so make the most of it, you will cherish these memories forever."



Jack McDonald, McKillop Catholic College

"You have been given an amazing opportunity. Do not sit inside your comfort zone and waste it, experience new things, try new flavours understand somebody else's view; that's what you're here to do."

Ruby Prime, Katherine High School

"Something that really stood out to me was seeing the victims of the war displayed in the museums, Each person had a photo, a short description, and their dreams and goals. It reminded me that every person has hopes and dreams just like we do – they were so much more than just a number on a page."

If you're thinking about applying for an opportunity like this, do it! It's normal to feel scared and anxious, but don't let that stop you. It could be the best decision you ever made."

