App unlocks Cowra’s history
Design students begin phase two of the Cowra Voices project

Six design students from Tokai University’s Sapporo campus will visit Cowra between February 23 and February 25 to begin work on Cowra Voices, a project linking people, stories and places via a geo-location capable, heritage trail app, narrating Cowra’s story of civic peace and reconciliation.

Cowra Voices will harness the power of storytelling to document, share, and explore new narrative bilateral connections by creating a multimedia storytelling app, featuring sound rich audio stories of people buried in Cowra’s famous Japanese War Cemetery, as well as local people involved in the post war reconciliation work.

The visit is a continuation of the project after phase one saw the Japanese embassy fund the creation of a database of those buried in the Japanese Cemetery. This mobile app will have geo-location capabilities that visitors can use to navigate Cowra’s Peace Precinct, making the app a valuable resource in encouraging engagement with Cowra’s unique history.

The university students will home stay with Cowra locals and visit famous sites including the cemeteries, Japanese Gardens, the Peace Bell, and POW Camp Site.

They will have the opportunity to meet representatives of Cowra Shire Council and learn about Cowra’s history.

They will contribute to the technical and aesthetic design of the app, which is expected to be launched at the 75th anniversary of the Cowra Breakout in August, 2019.

Cowra, home of the famous ‘Cowra Breakout’ is known for building bonds of friendship with Japan, and is arguably the only place to have peace tourism in Australia.

Cowra Voices is partly funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade through the Australia-Japan Foundation (AIF) Grant.

The project is a partnership between Cowra Shire Council, Cowra Tourism Corporation, Arts OutWest, and Nikkei Australia, a group promoting research, study, arts, and information exchange about the Nikkei diaspora in Australia.