



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Presented By Kate Corkery, OJU President

OCEANIA JUDO UNION

REPORTING PERIOD: NOVEMBER 2023 – OCTOBER 2025

STRENGTHENING JUDO ACROSS OCEANIA

Introduction

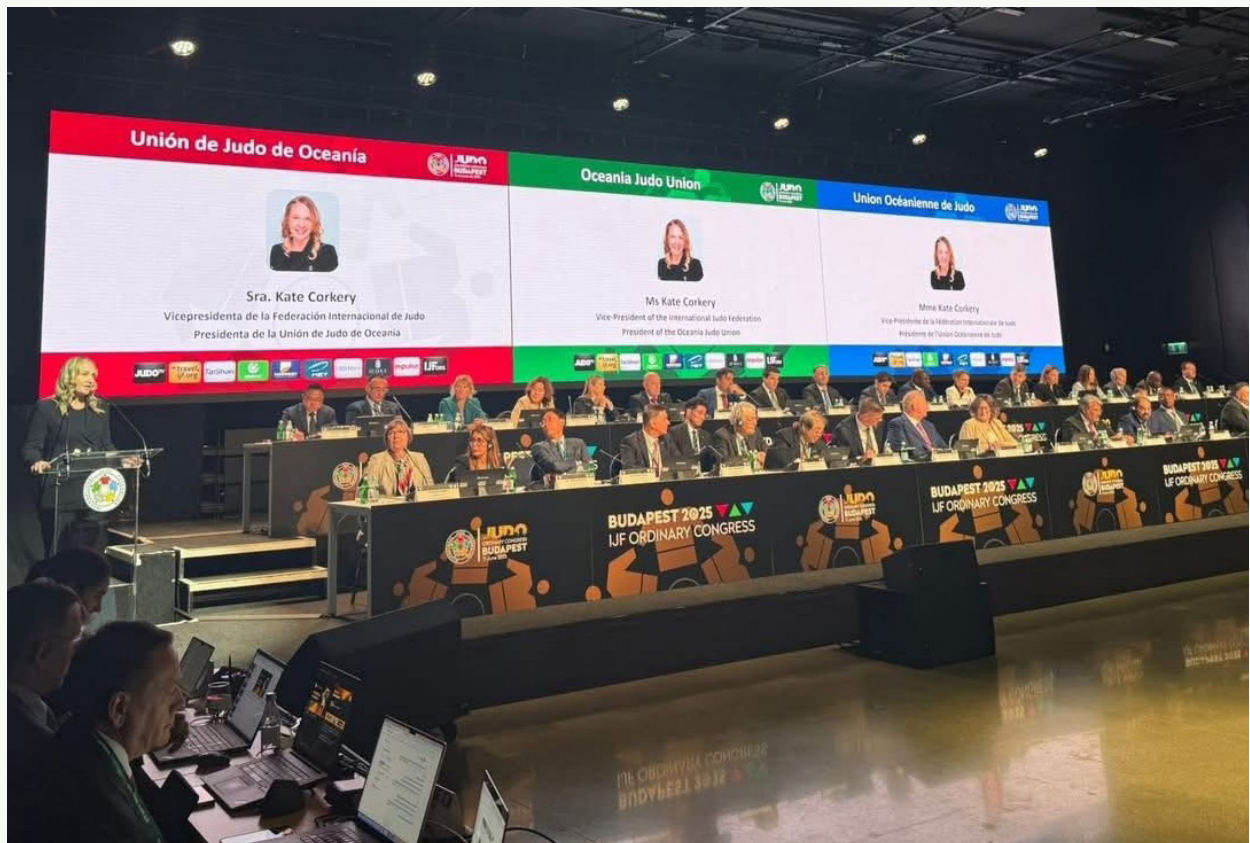
Since my election as President in November 2023, the Oceania Judo Union (OJU) has experienced a period of renewal, achievement, and stability. In under two years, we have reclaimed our flagship Oceania Championships, strengthened governance, and launched initiatives that are having a transformative effect across our region.

The reclamation of the Oceania Continental Championships stands as our greatest success, symbolising resilience, unity, and the restoration of Oceania’s competitive voice on the international stage. Alongside this, we have:

- ✓ Advanced youth development at the Perth Cadet and Junior Championships;
- ✓ Supported Kiribati’s historic milestone with the awarding of its first black belt;
- ✓ Celebrated Peter Hermann’s recognition as 10th Dan;

- ✓ Expanded gender equity initiatives and opportunities for women;
- ✓ Partnered with the Australian Defence Forces (ADF) in the Solomon Islands to embed judo within the community;
- ✓ Progressed development of a bold Strategic Plan for through until 2028; and
- ✓ Launched the new OJU website, modernising communication and accessibility.

None of this could have been achieved without the remarkable leadership, hard work and support of our Executive Committee, whose guidance and commitment have been unwavering. I also extend my deepest gratitude to our Commission Directors and Commissioners, who continue to dedicate their expertise and energy. We could not do this without them.



Governance and Leadership Stability

Stability and good governance have been at the center of our work since the new Executive Committee was formed in November 2023. We recognised early that to achieve growth, we needed to restore credibility and embed modern governance practices.

Key achievements in this area include:

- ✓ Rewriting and modernising outdated policies, ensuring consistency with international best practice;
- ✓ Resolving the historical financial audit issues, restoring external confidence and enabling a clean slate for the future;

- ✓ Establishing transparent and consistent leadership processes;
- ✓ Introducing new digital communication platforms, including the OJU website, to improve visibility, accessibility, and engagement with members.

These governance reforms provide the foundation upon which our competitive and developmental successes have been built.

Reclaiming Our Continental Championships

The reclamation of the Oceania Continental Championships has been the defining achievement of this period. After several years of uncertainty, the OJU has successfully restored our flagship event to its rightful place at the heart of the regional calendar. This achievement not only reaffirms Oceania's ability to host competitions of the highest standard but also ensures that our athletes, coaches, referees, and officials have access to the premier platform for development and recognition within the region. By reclaiming these Championships, we have strengthened pathways to international competition, created new opportunities for our Member National Federations and reinforced the unity and pride of the

Oceania Judo community. The return of this event symbolises resilience, determination, and the collective commitment of our region to safeguard the future of our sport.



Identification of Olympic Athletes for Paris 2024

Working closely with our Member National Federations, the OJU identified and supported athletes with Olympic qualification potential, ensuring they received targeted guidance, exposure at key international events, and access to strategic partnerships. Preparing athletes for competition at the highest level remains a core responsibility of the OJU, and these efforts are central to strengthening Oceania's presence on the world stage.



Athletes at Paris Olympics & Paralympics 2024

Oceania's judo athlete delegation at Paris 2024 reflected the region's diversity, determination, and growing competitive presence. Australia was represented by a formidable trio: Katharina Haecker, ranked fifth in the world, who battled fiercely before bowing out in the early rounds; Aoife Coughlan, who reached the Round of 16 with a commanding opening win; and Josh Katz, who showed resilience in making his second Olympic appearance. From the Pacific islands, Nera Tiebwa of Kiribati made history as the youngest judoka at the Games and the nation's first-ever judo Olympian, while Hugo Cumbo of Vanuatu competed with grit and showcased the progress of his country's high-performance program, proudly representing a new generation of island athletes. Gerard Takayawa of Fiji carried forward his family's proud judo legacy, bringing experience, strength, and determination to the +100 kg division. New Zealand's Moira de Villiers and Sydnee Andrews added depth and class to the Oceania contingent, with Andrews making her Olympic debut in the +78 kg category and de Villiers bringing veteran leadership to the team. William Tai Tin of Samoa proudly represented the Pacific in the men's -73 kg category, reinforcing the presence of island nations at the Games. Rounding out the regional team, Maria Escano of Guam made history as the territory's first female Olympic judoka. Together, these athletes embodied the spirit of Oceania judo—courageous, ambitious, and ever-rising on the world stage.

At the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, Oceania was proudly represented by Taylor Gosens of Australia, who competed as our sole judoka in the +70kg J2 Women's division. Making her Paralympic debut, Taylor carried the hopes of the region and demonstrated remarkable courage and determination on the tatami. Her participation was not only a personal milestone but also a landmark moment for Oceania, highlighting the importance of inclusivity and the growing pathways for athletes with a disability to compete at the highest level. Taylor's journey has already inspired many within the judo community, and her presence in Paris underlined Oceania's commitment to ensuring that judo is truly a sport for all.

The retirement of Katharina Haecker marked the end of a remarkable era, but her legacy inspires the new generation of judoka rising through our ranks.



Referee Development, Promotion & Growth

The Executive Committee has worked closely with OJU Referee Commission Director Lubo Petr—an accredited Olympic referee of the highest caliber—and collaborated extensively with our Referee Commissioners and Member National Federations to boost both the quantity and standard of referees across Oceania. We have supported referees attending both regional and international events to broaden their experience and enhance officiating capability. In recognition of the region’s expanding reach, Craig Bartlett

from New Zealand was selected by the IJF to officiate at the 2024 Paralympic Games in Paris, underscoring Oceania’s growing influence in elite refereeing circles. Carlo Knoester also did us proud as a referee supervisor at Paris 2024. Furthermore, we are proud to have partnered with the IJF to deliver an International Referee Seminar & Assessment during the 2025 Gold Coast Oceania Open, offering a critical platform to elevate skills and professional development for referees throughout the region.

Delegation to the 2023 Pacific Games – Solomon Islands

Our delegation united athletes and officials from across Oceania, showcasing both the diversity and strength of our judo community. The 2023 Pacific Games provided a vital platform for athletes to gain international experience while reinforcing Oceania’s presence at one of the Pacific’s premier multi-sport events. The Games not only elevated the profile of judo in the region but also offered a valuable test of our athletes’ ability to compete under pressure. Under the exemplary leadership of event director Mr Jo Naulu, all objectives were successfully achieved, marking a significant milestone in Oceania’s long-term sports development strategy.



ADF Judo Activities – Solomon Islands

A groundbreaking partnership with the Australian Defence Forces (ADF) extended the reach of judo into communities across the Solomon Islands. From 25–30 November 2024, the OJU supported a series of ADF-led programs that combined inclusive judo sessions with coaching workshops, kata instruction, referee education, and sport administration training. Delivered at the Solomon Islands

National Sports Institute (SINIS), the initiative engaged athletes of all levels and provided coaches and officials with new skills and confidence. Beyond the mats, the program fostered community connection and laid the groundwork for the sustainable growth of judo in the Solomon Islands for years to come. Thanks to Paul Nelson and Kevin Shaw for their leadership of this important development initiative.

Strengthening International Relations

The OJU has significantly strengthened its international relationships over the past year, building deeper connections with the IJF Executive and our fellow Continental Unions which has created increased opportunities for our athletes, coaches, and officials worldwide. Our partnership with the PanAmerican Judo Confederation has reinforced ties with one of the sport's leading unions, opening pathways for shared technical expertise, joint training camps, and knowledge exchange. Collaboration with the European

Judo Union has centered on the growth of innovative programs such as Adaptive and No Limits Judo, while renewed engagement with the Kodokan has further embedded Oceania within the traditions and heritage of our sport. In addition, I was honored to be invited by Mr Daniel Lascau to represent the OJU at a refereeing seminar in Malta, reflecting the trust and recognition we are building internationally. These partnerships collectively strengthen Oceania's competitive capacity and broaden our reach on the global stage.



2023 Perth Oceania Open

The 2023 Perth Oceania Open was again testament to the high quality event delivery capacity Australia and the Oceania region has available. Seniors saw 300 competitors from 64 countries, Juniors 88 from 11 countries and Cadets 69 from

8 countries. My thanks to Simon Read for the time, dedication and commitment he has shown to hosting such a high quality of event in Western Australia across the past 5 years.

2024 Tahiti Open

The 2024 Tahiti Open, the competition served as a powerful showcase of our region's ability to deliver high-level, internationally recognised judo events. Held from 1-2 June 2024 at the Arue Complex in Pirae, this second edition of the Oceania Open de Tahiti drew 53 judoka from 10 nations, spanning four continents—demonstrating both global reach and regional interest in our sport

Competing under the World Cup-Continental Open banner on the IJF World Tour, the event attracted strong participation from athletes representing Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, as well as local French Polynesia—who notably ranked second overall in the

national standings behind France. The event underscored Tahiti's organisational capability, the appetite for competition in our region, and the importance of sustained Oceania engagement. I thank Mr Stephane Gustin and the FPJ for their exceptional hosting of this event.



2026–2028 Strategic Plan

The Executive Committee is currently developing a new Strategic Plan, which provides a clear framework for future growth. Adopted in principle during this reporting period, the plan prioritises athlete development, governance reform, gender equity, and regional cooperation. These pillars ensure that the OJU's efforts are purposeful, measurable, and accountable, aligning with both regional

needs and international expectations.

We look forward to working closely with our Commission Directors and Commissioners to refine the details, finalise the content, and formally release the Strategic Plan. Their expertise and commitment will be central to shaping initiatives that deliver meaningful outcomes for athletes, coaches, officials, and member federations across Oceania.



Honouring Kata and Veterans

Honouring tradition and experience remains central to the identity of the Oceania Judo Union. At the 2024 World Kata Championships in Las Vegas, our region was prominently represented, showcasing the growing technical strength and dedication of Oceania judoka. Notably, Sam Manu and Phouphayly Palilavong of New Zealand delivered a standout performance in the Goshinjutsu division, earning an impressive 436 points, a testament to their discipline and commitment International Judo Federation. Australian siblings Bernhard and Bianca Tandean also rose to the occasion in the U23 Ju-no-kata category—rebounding strongly after a challenging start to place 6th in the world, narrowly missing the podium in a highly competitive field International Judo Federation.

The OJU Kata Commission, under the leadership of Bill Vincent, successfully hosted the 2025 OJU Kodokan Kata Seminar in Christchurch, New Zealand. This event brought together kata practitioners, coaches, and referees from across the region to deepen their technical knowledge, strengthen links with the Kodokan, and reinforce Oceania’s commitment to preserving and advancing kata as an integral part of judo.

Beyond competitive accomplishments, Veterans remain vital pillars of our community—both as mentors and role models. At the 2023 World Veterans Judo Championships, Oceania’s veteran judoka again made their presence felt, with Peter Middleton and Luc Tournier leading the way for Team Australia. Their performances were not just personally rewarding but deeply symbolic, embodying resilience and passion. As Tournier reflected, “Veterans are a logical and natural extension of seniors... We are role models for many young judoka,” asserting the integral role they play in

mentoring and cultural continuity within judo International Judo Federation. Fiji’s Jo Naulu, newly on the IJF Veterans Commission, emphasised the importance of broader recognition: “They are real heroes... Without them, we would be nothing,” highlighting the need to amplify the visibility of veteran contributions throughout our region International Judo Federation.

Together, our kata exponents and veterans illustrate the unity of tradition and innovation that defines Oceania judo. Their dedication enriches our sport, legacy, and future alike—guiding younger generations while elevating our regional presence on the world stage.



The 2025 Pacific Mini Games – Embedding Judo in the Regional Sporting Fabric

Judo's presence at the 25th Pacific Mini Games, held from 29 June to 9 July 2025 in Koror, Palau, was nothing short of transformative. Hosted at the Meyuns Elementary School Gym, the competition unfolded over 7–8 July, drawing 91 judoka from eight nations, including Australia, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, Vanuatu, Palau, and Tokelau.

Spanning 17 medal events (eight per gender plus a mixed team event), the tournament offered athletes vital competitive exposure. French Polynesia led the medal tally with other strong performances from Vanuatu, Australia, Kiribati and Guam—a reflection of

regional strength and dedication.

The range of participation—spanning established judo nations and smaller federations—highlighted the breadth of engagement across Oceania.

The excellence of planning and delivery behind the event cannot be overstated. Under the stewardship of Jennifer Anson, an Olympian and respected figure in Palauan judo, the Games showcased exceptional coordination and execution. Her guidance ensured smooth logistics, strong referee standards, and seamless implementation—bringing the spirit and integrity of judo alive in Palau.

Stimulus Grants: Empowering Grassroots Growth

The Stimulus Grants program has been a cornerstone of our capacity-building efforts, delivering vital support to Member National Federations across Oceania. Thanks to this funding, federations have been able to:

Upgrade and access training facilities — with modern mats and equipment installed in nations such as Samoa and Vanuatu, enabling safer and more effective practice environments.

Run targeted training camps — including regional coaching and athlete camps that bring together judoka and mentors from smaller island nations, fostering performance improvement and regional camaraderie.

Modernise technology and operations — federations have invested in essential tools like video analysis software and digital communication platforms, enhancing coaching quality, referee development, and organisational efficiency.

These investments have levelled the developmental playing field, ensuring that federations with fewer resources can still deliver high-quality training, nurture new talent, and retain competitive momentum. The Stimulus Grants are doing much more than just funding activities—they are helping to build a fairer, stronger, and more unified judo community across Oceania.

Kiribati Development Visit (April–May 2025)

The development visit to Kiribati marked a turning point for judo in the nation.

Paul Nelson led extensive training, school outreach, kata sessions, and referee seminars. The awarding of Kiribati's

first black belt to Mr Eddie Karoua was a historic moment. Meetings with government leaders further embedded judo's presence in the country, establishing a roadmap for future development.

Peter Hermann achieving 10th Dan

The awarding of 10th Dan to Peter Hermann stands as a milestone of global significance and a moment of immense pride for Oceania. This rare and prestigious honour recognises not only his lifetime of dedication to judo but also his profound impact as a teacher, mentor, and leader. Peter's contribution has shaped generations of judoka, strengthened the foundations of our sport across Oceania, and earned him enduring respect within the international judo community. His recognition at this level affirms both the legacy he has built and the inspiration he

continues to provide to the judo family worldwide.



Gender Equity Commission Activities

Equity and inclusion remain cornerstones of our work, and the Gender Equity Commission has continued to drive meaningful initiatives across the region. In March 2025, we delivered a dedicated social media campaign celebrating the incredible women of Oceania judo, amplifying their stories, achievements, and leadership to inspire the next generation. Building on this, we awarded

five scholarships for women to undertake the IJF Academy program, providing new pathways for education, accreditation, and leadership development. These initiatives, alongside ongoing workshops and targeted support, are helping to strengthen female participation at every level of our sport and ensure that Oceania continues to progress toward a truly balanced and inclusive judo community.



Conclusion

Since November 2023, the Oceania Judo Union has made remarkable progress across governance, competition, development, equity, and international collaboration. The reclamation of the Oceania Championships has been the defining achievement of this period, supported by reforms that have restored confidence and credibility.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to the Executive Committee for their incredible

leadership and support. I also thank the Commission Directors and Commissioners, whose expertise and dedication make our work possible. Together, we have built momentum, stability, and unity across Oceania.

With the adoption of the Strategic Plan, the launch of our new website, and continued development initiatives, Oceania judo is stronger, more resilient, and ready to embrace the opportunities of the future.