



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST FELLOWSHIP AWARDS
Friday 16 April 2021

Mr David Trebeck, National Chair, The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust

Associate Professor Jane Munro, Chair, and **Board Members**, Victorian Regional Committee of the Trust

Churchill Trust volunteers, donors, sponsors, supporters and Fellows Association office holders

Distinguished guests

New Fellows

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we are gathering and pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to any Elders here with us.

It is a pleasure to welcome you all to Government House for the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust 2020 Fellowship Awards.

It is a special pleasure because I have been involved with this organisation for almost 30 years. Mind you, that both pleases and terrifies me at the same time!

It pleases me because I have had the opportunity to know the Trust and the contribution of its dedicated staff, generous donors, thoughtful selectors and brilliant alumni.

From almost every angle in fact – as a Fellow, as a member and later Chair of a Selection panel, as a member and later Chair of the Victorian Regional Committee and as a member of the national Board. And for some six years now, as Governor, hosting this event.

At the same time, it does terrify me because, when I first met the people of this Trust, there were some who had been involved for something like 30 years and, taking nothing away from how

impressive they were in their commitment and their wisdom, I admit that they seemed quite 'old' to me. Now I realise that's me! (And, in retrospect, they don't seem old at all!!)

That little niggle aside, I do have a deep appreciation of the impact of a Churchill Fellowship. And, never more so than now, at a time when the world has delivered us a global challenge on a massive scale.

We have learned much from this pandemic, including that the world is a small place. And that, despite borders, we have a commonality of interests.

We have seen that collaboration between nations, however political winds might be blowing at the time, is imperative for the greater good.

We have seen – through the swift development of COVID vaccines – what can be achieved when nations and experts put their heads together to solve a problem otherwise deemed insoluble or impossible.

Those very understandings have always been at the heart of these Fellowships. Facilitating travel for clever Australians to advance their expertise to the betterment of our nation, is the guiding principle underpinning the work of the Trust.

Such was the vision of those who devised Fellowships in commemoration of the leadership across decades of Sir Winston Churchill. And such has been the inspiration of those who raised and donated money for the original fund and those who have perpetuated such generosity since. Indeed, the focus of all those who support the Trust.

As Victoria, like elsewhere in the world, embarks on the recovery from this pandemic, it is heartening to see an illustrious group of new Fellows who will contribute to the strong rebuild of our economy and our community. Your backgrounds and areas of interest are diverse. We need every single one of you.

I thank the Trust, its staff, its donors and the army of volunteers who enable your opportunities and successes.

I do want to mention John Miles, a former Fellow, who is retiring after a long association with the Trust. Fittingly, he received the Trust's inaugural Recognition Award in 2019. We wish him and Ruth well (except when Essendon plays Geelong!).

Finally, let me acknowledge the resilience and patience of each one of our Fellows. You have flourished in a selection process held in unusual circumstances. And you are now no doubt awaiting your trips with anticipation. Kudos too to everyone connected with the selection process which must have had its challenges across difficult times.

That leaves me only to say that each Fellow should feel very proud. Our warmest congratulations to you and we hope that you and your guests enjoy this celebration today.