



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

INTERNATIONAL SPECIALISED SKILLS INSTITUTE FELLOWSHIP AWARDS

Thursday 28th November 2019

The Honourable Sir James Gobbo AC, CVO, QC, former Governor of Victoria, Co-Founder of the ISS Institute, and **Lady Gobbo**

Lady Primrose Potter AC, Patron in Chief and Co-Founder, ISS Institute

Professor Amalia Di Iorio, Chair, and **Board Members**, ISS Institute

Ms Wendy Draayers, Chief Executive Officer, ISS Institute

Distinguished guests

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 with us today.

Against the backdrop of these Specialised Skills awards, I note that it was within this, the world's oldest continuous culture, that this country's first trades and specialised skills resided.

I am delighted to welcome you all to Government House for the 29th Annual ISS Institute Fellowship Awards Ceremony.

Given that the ISS Institute was originally known as the Palladio Foundation - due to its early links with Italy and the Veneto region - how fitting that I am able to host these Awards in this beautiful house, often described as a *Palladian Palace*, due to its Italian architectural design.

Aren't we all grateful that the earlier Elizabethan-style and French Baronial style buildings, proposed for our Government House, were considered too expensive, and were never realised!

It is not just that architectural connection, however, that makes us so pleased to participate this year in these Awards.

As I travel Victoria with my husband Tony, we are left in no doubt at all as to the need for skills training to ensure a *Smarter Australia* and, in turn, our future prosperity.

Victoria, and Australia, are not alone in this regard.

In this role, I am called upon to represent our State overseas. Across the last four years, I have noticed increasingly that, in the course of those official visits, the discussions about education are focusing on skills training. And it is not confined to any one region. It is the same from Latin America to Southeast Asia, through China and in India.

Of course, we have always needed specialised skills and trades.

The ISS Institute has been a leader in responding to that need.

Almost three decades ago, you recognised the shortage of skills in 'endangered' specialised crafts and trades.

Today, you make a significant contribution to lifting our vocational skills, whether in traditional areas, in the latest technology or in the latest skills to assist in disadvantaged sectors.

I applaud you for recognising the role of Fellowships to 'turbo-charge' careers, and promote improved skills within a particular field.

I know first-hand the value of such an opportunity.

Some years ago, I was the beneficiary of a Churchill Fellowship in my area of the law. I know that it gave me so much beyond just the obvious opportunity to travel to hone my knowledge and skills.

I made contacts and connections with other experts in my field, that endured well beyond my Fellowship. I gained confidence in my field. And I have no doubt at all that the kudos of the Fellowship gave me a bigger voice in the area when I returned.

You, the ISS Institute Fellows, will find the same. What an exciting time lies ahead for each one of you. And, in turn, for us, when you return.

We know that '*A high tide lifts all the boats*'. That is, we know that your enhanced skills and your experience will reverberate through your trades and vocations. Your skills will help to lift the skills of others.

That is not just speculation.

I see that an evaluation of this Fellowship Program, conducted by the Centre for Social Research at our wonderful Swinburne University, has shown that Fellows apply the knowledge gained across their whole careers. Many start their own businesses or projects. They create new networks, and contribute more broadly to their sectors.

Our Fellows today are a testament to the diversity of specialist areas covered in this Program.

From art crime detection to irrigation pumps. From conservation of numismatic collections to TAFE training in textiles. Or from addressing gaps in Victorian hospitality training to heritage roof plumbing skills (a topic dear to my heart right now - for obvious reasons!). And the most interesting and practical skills and vocational areas in between, as you are about to hear.

Congratulations to each of our 23 Fellows. You have done yourselves, your families, your friends and your colleagues proud, and your chosen fields of work proud, as well.

I thank the ISS Institute, Founders, Sir James Gobbo AC, CVO, QC, Lady Primrose Potter AC and Mrs Elsie Valmorbidia and Patrons, Mr James MacKenzie and Mr Tony Schiavello AO.

Thank you to the generous support of past and present donors and philanthropists, sponsors, board members, and alumni.

You all contribute, in accordance with the State Motto of Victoria, to our '*Peace and Prosperity*'.