



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST AWARDS

Friday 22nd November 2019

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

Associate Professor Jane Munro, Chair, Victorian Regional Committee, The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

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 this morning.

Tony and I welcome you all to Government House. It is a pleasure to do that for every event, but it is a particular pleasure for us to welcome you, the 2019 Churchill Fellows. First, because you do our State proud, and I shall return to that. But also because of our strong personal connection to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust.

I have lost count of how many times I have sat in this very room for this very ceremony. I have changed seats across these occasions.

On my first visit, I sat where you, the new Fellows, are sitting. I felt honoured. I felt proud. I felt excited at the prospect of the work that the Fellowship would enable me to undertake – of the financial assistance it would give me, but also the doors it would open for me overseas, and the credibility it would add to my findings upon my return.

I also felt incredibly nervous. Not about the ceremony, and I hasten to tell you to relax and enjoy your time here with us. My nerves related to the prospect of undertaking what would be an immense trip. Being away from my young family. Travelling alone for a full 8 weeks. The volume of work. How to prepare for it whilst working full time and looking after the family. How to prepare the report upon returning.

Of course, it was all fine, but any trepidation that anyone may be feeling is, in my book, entirely normal!

Anyway, sometime after returning, I moved to that side of the room, as a member of a selection panel, then as a member of the Victorian Regional Committee and later as its Chair.

No nerves then. Just the joy of watching our handiwork as selectors, as we heard the names called out for the awards. To enjoy watching the Fellows looking far more relaxed than when we had last seen them at interview.

My last move around this room was a particularly unexpected but happy one. It was when I stepped into this role in 2015. What a pleasure it has been to be able to continue the tradition of hosting these awards at Government House.

Across the last four years or so, we have become more familiar with the many different fellowships and awards available to clever Victorians.

The Churchill Fellowships are unique amongst them.

First, their genesis. Winston Churchill was pleased at the prospect of a memorial that would see travelling Fellowships, bearing his name, to give opportunity to enable ordinary people from participating countries to travel overseas to meet people and to learn.

Secondly, the fact that academic credentials, age or discipline are not the basis of qualification. These Fellowships are open to outstanding people who can achieve great things for our community. What a terrific test.

And thirdly, I think they have a kudos about them for bearing Churchill's name.

I am not saying that everyone will endorse every political decision that Sir Winston made across his long period of leadership, nor that they will uncritically support every aspect of his many years in public life. But it would be hard not to fully adopt his ethos of service, summed up in one of his many exquisitely incisive writings, that: *'We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give'*.

That ethos underpins these Fellowships.

As the recipient of a Churchill Fellowship, you are the recipient of a precious opportunity. An opportunity to make a difference. To serve your community in a meaningful way.

And today, an occasion that enables us to reflect on service, I want to thank the very many people in this room who, through their service, ensure that these Fellowships, the Fellows and, importantly, the fruits of their Fellowships, continue to flourish.

Thank you to the generous donors and sponsors. Thank you to the Trust staff and the Board of Directors. And thank you to a large number of volunteers who give their time and expertise through the selection process, through support of the Fellows and Alumni.

In thanking people, I cannot let today go without acknowledging a particularly special man, Robert Beggs AM, who passed away just a few months ago.

Robert personified service to the community. I experienced his contributions first-hand through the Trust. I was fortunate to succeed him as the Chair of the Victorian Regional Committee. He had served as a great role-model through his gracious spirit, fair mind and sound judgment.

He committed many years of service, and was amongst the great people of this organisation.

As was Dr David Burke AM who, sadly passed away last week.

And today we welcome 22 more good people into the fold. We are pleased to congratulate each one of you, and we hope that you and your families, friends and colleagues enjoy this time with us.

It is now my pleasure to invite the Chair of the Victorian Regional Committee, Dr Jane Munro, an outstanding Fellow and an outstanding contributor to the Trust, to say a few words.