



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

THE JACK BROCKHOFF FOUNDATION 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Thursday 27th February 2020

Mr Robert Symons, Chairman of the Jack Brockhoff Foundation, and **Mrs Janne Symons**

Ms Anita Hopkins, Executive Officer of the Jack Brockhoff Foundation, and **Dr Roger Knight**

Members of the Brockhoff family

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 afternoon.

I welcome you all to Government House to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Jack Brockhoff Foundation.

Amongst the many interesting aspects of this role, I come across many annual reports. They provide me with a useful factual snapshot about a huge range of wonderful Victorian organisations with which we are privileged to interact.

But the 2019 Jack Brockhoff Foundation Annual Report stood out when it recently crossed my desk. In addition to providing useful facts and figures as to its menu of activities, from the very start, it gave me a special window into the ethos of this organisation.

On the page immediately inside its front cover, in a short paragraph, under an historic photograph of the front of the Brockhoff and Co's West Melbourne premises (or 'Victoria Steam Biscuit Factory', as it was then called), the Board of the Foundation thanked the organisations who had received grant funding, *'for the positive impact they have achieved within the communities they support.'*

The Board then recognises the individuals whose research grants and travelling scholarships – funded by the Foundation – *'have enabled them to achieve career excellence within the institutions they serve.'*

And so, the funder has thanked those they have funded, even though one strongly suspects that the ledger of gratitude might weigh more markedly in the opposite direction!

Well I am pleased for the opportunity today to thank all of those who have served the Foundation across the last 40 years – many eminent Victorians, including Brockhoff family members amongst them.

The time and expertise that they have all so generously volunteered have held the Foundation in good stead, enabling the Founder's vision to be faithfully realised.

Sir Jack Brockhoff's original gift of \$4.8 million is now heading towards a corpus of \$60 million. And the many organisations and individuals you have helped have been the beneficiaries – in total – of grants of more than \$95 million.

Of course, the impact of your prudent management and thoughtful grant funding cannot be measured just in those terms.

The Foundation's focus on small grants to grassroots community organisations that might otherwise be overlooked, or through cleverly targeted collaborative funding, have ensured a positive and enduring impact on the health and wellbeing of the Victorian community well beyond the measurable sums of the grants that have been given.

The Brockhoff Foundation's influence can be seen in improved supports for children and youth, older Victorians, people with disabilities and medical research.

I recognise so many of the community organisations that are presently benefitting from the Foundation's grants. We are patrons of some, and are close to or have visited others.

We see how the Foundation has risen to the challenge to optimise its relevance to the ever-changing community that it seeks to support.

The early career medical research grants are a case in point.

The program recognises the special needs of talented young scientists to conduct world-class research in health and wellbeing. It is exciting to see the opportunities that you are providing to them, (and in turn to us), in areas as diverse as the treatment of chemo-resistant cancers (in this instance with the Marian and E.H. Flack Trust), ways to modify the risk of Alzheimer's disease or ways in which to reduce risky alcohol consumption.

The key to the enduring success of the Foundation may be found in the fact that many of those associated with it have served for very substantial periods.

May I single out one gentleman who has been with the Foundation for its full 40 years.

It is of course your Chairman, Robert Symons. I was fortunate enough, as a Board member and the Chair of the Victorian Committee of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust to see his dedication up close. The measured approach of the lawyer. The decency of a good man.

In that recent Annual Report, Robert refers to '*40 Years of Giving*'. I know he was not in any way referring to himself, but let me take the liberty to turn that phrase back on him, and to thank him most specifically for all that he has given across those 40 years.

As we look back over the four decades, the generosity of the Brockhoff family is not dimmed by time, and we thank, congratulate and celebrate everyone who has contributed to the Foundation and its great achievements in the community.

You have all truly contributed, – in the words of Victoria’s State motto – to our ‘*Peace and Prosperity*’.