

ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL JEFFERY AC CVO MC
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
ON THE OCCASION OF
RECEPTION FOR WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST FELLOWS
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA
28 JULY 2008

May I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today; their traditional wisdom, enduring history and culture.

Good afternoon everyone, and welcome to Government House.

As Patron of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, it is a great pleasure to meet the 2008 Fellows and present you with your Awards today.

This annual presentation of Churchill Fellowships is a welcome reminder of the extraordinary wealth of talent and initiative in Australia, and the desire shared amongst the Fellows to work for the betterment of our community.

The 2008 Fellows from the ACT are worthy additions to the already illustrious list of 3000 Fellows created since the inception of the awards in 1965.

We have here today experts in the fields of social policy, education, autism, music and the arts, ceramics and glass, media and communication, journalism and science education and awareness - a dazzlingly diverse array of subjects but all of importance in building a stronger and more resilient community. I am particularly thrilled with the fact that my own media advisor, Stephen Jiggins, is in this group.

Brian, Peter, Nicole, Jane, Stephen, Karen, Shelley and Itzell - in the best of the traditions of the Churchill Fellowship, you are each about to embark on a wonderfully rewarding experience.

Recognising your considerable existing expertise and ability in many areas, you will nevertheless return personally enriched and able to make an even greater contribution in the subject areas you have chosen to explore.

This is the guiding principle of the Churchill Trust, to travel and bring back new insights and understanding which will enhance the lives of your fellow citizens.

It is in keeping with a great Churchill aphorism: We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

Churchill himself gave unparalleled leadership at a very dark time of our history.

With the defeat of France, Nazi forces were poised to inflict a defeat on Britain which would have had enormous ramifications for the free world.

It is most appropriate that Sir Winston Churchill's determination to resist that fate is commemorated in Fellowships designed to strengthen all that is good about the way of life he did so much to protect.

Our new Fellows walk in the footsteps of Australians who have made enormous contributions:

. Professor John Yeo, a 1966 Fellow from New South Wales, went on to become one of our leading spinal cord injury specialists;

. 1967 Tasmanian fellow Rex Hobcroft became founding Chairman of the Australian International Conservatorium of Music and one of our most distinguished music educators;

. the Crime Stoppers program was implemented as a direct result of Victorian police officer Geoff Wilkinson's 1985 fellowship; and

. Queensland 1992 Fellow Dimity Dornan established "Hear and Say Centres" integrating deaf children into the hearing and speaking community throughout her State.

Indeed, it is hard to think of an aspect of Australian life that has not been enhanced by Churchill Fellows.

The success of the Program would not have been possible without the commitment of the Trust's Board of Directors and the committees who give their time voluntarily to assist with selecting the successful applicants.

I commend you all for the magnificent work you do.

May I also say what a pleasure it has been to be Patron of the Trust for the past five years, and to have the privilege of meeting the ACT Fellows and many others over that time.

As our term in office draws to a close, Marlena and I wish the Trust continuing success in making such a wonderful contribution to the well-being of our nation.

To our new Fellows, well done, good luck and a safe return to Australia.