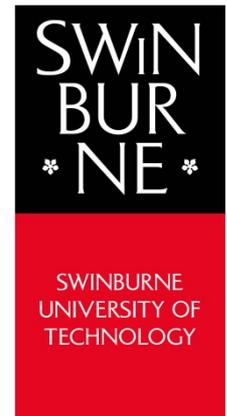


SPEECH
PROFESSOR LINDA KRISTJANSON AO, VICE-CHANCELLOR

Event: Installation Ceremony for Professor John Pollaers
Date: Thursday, 23 May 2019
Location: Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre



Acknowledgement of country

I would like to respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we gather, and pay respects to all Aboriginal Community Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the history of this region.

Welcome

Thank you for joining us to warmly welcome Professor John Pollaers to Swinburne as our fifth Chancellor. I'm delighted to support John as he formally steps into his role. I am pleased to be working with him, guiding Swinburne through these exciting times, making the most of the opportunities before us.

Swinburne is proud of its international standing

Swinburne's story goes all the way back to 1908, when it was founded by the engineer, businessman, philanthropist and politician, George Swinburne and his wife Ethel, as the Eastern Suburbs Technical College in Hawthorn.

As a university, we are young – only 27 years old. And in that short time we have become a world-class leader in education, research, innovation and entrepreneurship.

The Times Higher Education University World Rankings place Swinburne in the top three per cent of universities worldwide. The QS World University Rankings also counts Swinburne among the top 400 universities worldwide, and in the 'Top 50 Under 50' years of age.

Recently, we celebrated an exceptional outcome in the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) assessment. We earned a rating well above world standard in four broad fields – Physical Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Engineering, and Psychology & Cognitive Sciences - and recorded significant gains across a range of disciplines.

Of course, rankings are only one part of our story, of which we are extremely proud. Such independent rankings affirm our commitment to excellence and social and economic impact.

Swinburne has become a magnet for industry collaboration and investment

Our graduates are highly employable and sought after by industry, both here and abroad. We take pride in their outstanding technical and academic abilities, their social and emotional intelligence, their strong capacity to work in teams, their willingness to innovate, their communication skills and, importantly, their good old-fashioned common sense.

Today, there are more than 190,000 Swinburne graduates in over 140 countries around the world. This network continues to play an integral role in our success.

Swinburne's reputation for tackling contemporary concerns by bringing together the best minds in business and the best minds in research has set us up as a magnet for industry collaboration and investment. Take for example: the Data for Social Good Cloud Innovation Centre – a joint venture that we recently launched with Amazon Web Services, which is the first of its kind in Australia. Or, the global Blockchain Centre of Excellence that we launched earlier this year and which we co-lead with Capgemini.

To offer our students meaningful professional placements, we partner with more than 350 organisations across Melbourne and Australia. That includes Medibank, Richmond Football Club and Siemens – to mention just a few.

Swinburne is working to grow its global presence

We are also partnered with more than 200 other educational institutions around the world including in Israel, India, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Germany, Vietnam and the United States.

Swinburne was the first Australian university to link up with the CSIRO in Silicon Valley with an aim of furthering Australia-US research, innovation and communication.

In Israel, we have strong and ongoing relationships with Tel Aviv University, the Weizmann Institute of Science, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Israel Institute of Technology, Technion – as well as many others.

We have established research partnerships with two of India's most dynamic academic institutions: the Institute of Technology, Hyderabad, and the Institute of Technology, Madras. And, just last month, we announced a new partnership with the technology-focussed FPT University in Vietnam.

Swinburne is committed to its people and to helping shape our society

Our people are at the heart of our success. In these fast-paced, changing times, where virtual, physical and biological worlds collide, it is the energy and determination of our people that define our distinction.

As a university, we strive to contribute to, and shape, our society. We want to make a difference to this country's future. Our dedication to social cohesion, excellence, innovation and industry engagement is deeply embedded, and we are committed to providing an accessible, inclusive and diverse environment for work and study. For example, this year we joined the Raising Expectations program, building on the existing supports and services for students who have lived in out-of-home care.

In March, we launched our AccessAbility Careers Hub to help students living with a disability to obtain paid internships and work.

We also want Swinburne to be a place where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their heritage, cultures and spirituality are valued, respected and celebrated. We were the first university in Australia, and one of only a handful of institutions in the country, to attain a distinguished “Elevate” status for our Reconciliation Action Plan.

The people we employ and the people we welcome, like Professor John Pollaers, define Swinburne. Our people, with their ability to establish relationships, to dream, to strategise, to create, to regret nothing, and to make and learn from mistakes, have driven our achievements.

Swinburne is dynamic, passionate, bold, clever, determined, creative, innovative, curious and reputable -- all traits which immediately turn my mind to our new Chancellor, Professor John Pollaers.

Professor John Pollaers is an inspired choice to lead Swinburne

John has a distinguished international career in the consumer products and advanced manufacturing industries. He brings significant experience from across the public and private sectors to our university.

He has held many senior roles including: President of Asia Pacific and Managing Director of Australasia for Diageo plc, and he was appointed to chief executive positions at both Pacific Brands and Foster's Group Limited.

John is also a successful entrepreneur. He is founder and executive chairman of Leef Independent Living Solutions.

John is chairman of the Australian Advanced Manufacturing Council and Chairman of the Australian Industry and Skills Committee. He is a thought leader on how to develop our workforce for the future and the imperatives of global business in this century. He was a member of the Prime Minister's Industry 4.0 Taskforce and, in 2017, was appointed chair of Aged Care Workforce Strategy. Last year, John was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for his services to manufacturing, education and business.

I know John to be a person of great intellect, energy, leadership and resolve.

John, it is a great honour to personally and on behalf of Swinburne welcome and congratulate you on your installation as Chancellor.

Governor, I now call upon you to formally install Professor John Pollaers as the fifth Chancellor of Swinburne University of Technology.