



COUNCIL FOR ADVANCEMENT
AND SUPPORT OF EDUCATION

The CASE Asia-Pacific Leadership Award recognises CASE member institution heads, presidents, vice-chancellors, chancellors, system heads, or other campus chief executive officers for outstanding efforts in promoting and supporting education and institutional advancement. Overall, nominees must demonstrate the ability to actively support advancement, create a vision and inspire others, establish a positive image for their institution while leading it to higher levels of success, increase their institution's stature in the community, and encourage innovation among employees.

Citation for 2024 CASE Asia-Pacific Leadership Award Recipient

Professor John Dewar AO Vice-Chancellor (2012-2023), La Trobe University

Professor Dewar is widely respected in Australia's higher education system. A senior leader in Australian universities for over 20 years, Professor Dewar was appointed Vice-Chancellor of La Trobe University in January 2012. He was the Chair of Universities Australia from 2021 to 2023 and a member of the Universities Australia Board from 2016 to 2023. His service to the higher education sector was recognised in 2020 when he was named an Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished service to education through leadership roles in the universities sector, and to professional organisations. Professor Dewar concluded his tenure at La Trobe in December 2023, leaving a long lasting legacy behind him. He now holds the position of Emeritus Professor at La Trobe.

An internationally known family law specialist and researcher, Professor Dewar has actively advocated for Advancement at La Trobe, establishing the University's inaugural fundraising campaign, *Make the Difference*. La Trobe was the first non-Go8 university in Victoria to launch a major fundraising campaign. A A\$50 million initial campaign target set in 2017 was met two years ahead of schedule in 2018. This led to a new A\$100 million target, also achieved ahead of schedule in 2022. Under Professor Dewar's leadership, close to A\$135 million has now been raised towards a target of A\$200 million by 2027. This is a remarkable achievement.

Professor Dewar has cultivated a philanthropic culture across the University that did not exist prior to his arrival. La Trobe researchers now understand the power of philanthropy to support their work, and the University community has seen the positive impact of giving in supporting students from all walks of life to succeed at a university.

Professor Dewar has been energetic in championing the work of his Advancement team. Through his advocacy for Advancement with both internal and external stakeholders, Professor Dewar has created an environment in which the La Trobe Alumni and Advancement Office team has thrived, more than doubling in size during his tenure. He has taken responsibility for a portfolio of Principal Gift prospects and has actively stewarded Principal Gift donors, allocating a significant portion of his time to these activities. This has included a personal role in the stewardship of La Trobe's largest ever philanthropic gift — A\$42M for autism research from the late Mrs. Olga Tennison. Professor Dewar further established the Campaign Cabinet, an advisory committee of high-net-worth individuals and alumni volunteers who advocate for the Campaign and open their networks to La Trobe's Advancement team.

Professor Dewar has led the development of three University Strategic Plans, all of which chart a vision of the unique character, ethos, and values of La Trobe as a university that combines accessibility and inclusion with world-class excellence across the six campuses. Understanding that strategy cannot succeed without culture, Professor Dewar also embedded four cultural qualities in the way of working at La Trobe—Innovative, Connected, Accountable, and Care. These have been important in supporting a culture of giving at La Trobe.

Starting in 2013, Professor Dewar sponsored an innovative initiative to inspire the La Trobe staff community to take part in philanthropic giving to the University: *Golden Lanyard Staff Giving Program*. This exceptionally successful program has raised A\$995,000 since it began, with 1,024 staff contributing to a fund that has provided scholarships to 84 students in need across all campuses, and bursaries to 223 equity students across La Trobe's five campuses.

Professor Dewar has been a staunch advocate for regional higher education opportunities, guiding the development of the La Trobe Strategy for Regional Victoria in 2020. Under the Strategy, each regional campus is supported by a Regional Advisory Board comprised of community and industry leaders, providing an important source of advice to the University on local priorities. This is a key example of Professor Dewar's inclusive and collaborative leadership toward increasing opportunities for rural and regional Victoria.

During his tenure, La Trobe has achieved its highest ever ranking on the three most prominent global rankings (the Academic Ranking of World Universities, Times Higher Education, and QS World University Rankings). The University has also increased its research income by 150% and improved performance on measures of teaching quality and the student experience, with La Trobe graduates ranked third nationally, and first in Victoria, by the 2022 Employer Satisfaction Survey.

Professor Dewar has overseen more than a decade of significant achievement at La Trobe. His achievements include the creation of major partnerships that are enduring, reciprocal and multi-

faceted, traversing joint research, work-integrated learning, education, and co-creation of initiatives. Through these endeavours, Professor Dewar has raised the community profile and standing of La Trobe University across Victoria and nationwide. He has led the University and broader community to innovate on prominent issues facing the world. Chief among these is the commitment to environmental sustainability, including Australia's largest urban solar farm, which is being built on 3.5 hectares at La Trobe's Melbourne Campus and forms part of the University's goal to achieve Net Zero by 2029. Professor Dewar has firmly embedded a cultural quality of innovation into the fabric of La Trobe—a licence for La Trobe staff to think about their work and roles differently, and to take calculated risks to achieve better outcomes.

In recognition of Professor Dewar's outstanding achievements in building a strong culture of Advancement at La Trobe University and his inspiring leadership, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education proudly presents Professor John Dewar with the CASE Asia-Pacific Leadership Award.