



2019 Newington Medal - International

MR RIC WELLS (ON 1973)

Ric Wells has been one of Australia's most outstanding diplomats of recent decades, holding key ambassadorial posts, heading major trade missions and serving at the highest levels of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Ric attended Newington College from 1968 to 1973. He had a stellar academic career, in which he was Dux of First Form (Year 7) and Fourth Form (Year 10) and runner-up to Dux in Fifth and Sixth Forms (Years 11 and 12), the latter with leading passes in English, Latin, Ancient History, Modern History and French. He was a keen debater, leading the Firsts team and winning the Richard Thompson Prize for best debater in 1973. He was also a keen stage performer, with major roles in College productions of Stoppard's *The Real Inspector Hound* and Sheridan's *The Rivals*.

Having joined the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) following university studies, Ric served in the embassies in Cairo and Jakarta and as Deputy Head of the Australian Mission to the World Trade Organisation in Geneva. In Australia between postings he served at the Assistant Secretary level in management and policy roles, focusing on trade policy, in DFAT and in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. The latter roles reflected his expertise in, and commitment to, a holistic and integrated approach to conducting Australia's diplomatic, security and economic relationships.

From 2003 to 2005 Ric headed DFAT's South Pacific, Africa and Middle East Division as First Assistant Secretary. He then concurrently headed the China Free Trade Agreement Task Force, laying the groundwork for the free trade agreement signed in 2015, and the equivalent FTA Task Forces for Japan and Korea. In 2009 he was appointed Deputy Secretary of the Department, serving concurrently as Australia's Ambassador to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group. His final diplomatic posting was as Ambassador to France from 2012 to 2014.

Ric's lifetime of service to his country, much of it serving overseas in senior diplomatic and trade mission roles, and his crucial contributions to the building of Australia's economic relationships with our major trading partners, make it an honour to award Ric Wells the Newington Medal (International) for 2019.

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STANMORE

200 Stanmore Road, Stanmore NSW 2048
Tel: 02 9568 9333 Fax: 02 9568 9521
Email: contact@newington.nsw.edu.au



newington.nsw.edu.au

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K-6
STANMORE

115 Cambridge Street, Stanmore NSW 2048
Tel: 02 9568 9444 Fax: 02 9560 4921
Email: wylvem@newington.nsw.edu.au

K-6
LINDFIELD

26 Northcote Road Lindfield NSW 2070
Tel: 02 9416 4280 Fax: 02 9416 4167
Email: lindfield@newington.nsw.edu.au

ELC

129 Cambridge Street, Stanmore NSW 2048
Tel: 02 9568 9555
Email: elc@newington.nsw.edu.au