

Citation for Sir Rod Eddington AO

Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop, in whose name this medal is awarded, spent much of his post war life serving our nation by rebuilding Australia's links with Asia, particularly promoting reconciliation and partnerships with the Japanese.

Sir Rod Eddington AO embodies and brings to life Weary's vision, having contributed a significant proportion of his life to deepening Australia's involvement with Asia.

He has done this not only through occupying leadership positions in some of the region's most prestigious companies, but also via his role as the key figure in the Australia-Japan business relationship through his chairmanship of the Australia-Japan Business Co-operation Committee.

A passionate, patient and pragmatic advocate for stronger ties with Asia, Sir Rod has used his combination of on-the-ground experience in Japan, Hong Kong and Korea, and his broad network of relationships in the region, to generate countless opportunities for Australia and its people.

This Rhodes Scholar from Perth has been a mentor to many academics, political figures and executives who are a vital part of Australia's key bilateral relationships, particularly with Japan. He has accompanied scores of political and corporate leaders on official visits to either Australia or Japan, and has sought to create future custodians of the relationship by creating the Future Leaders program within the Australia-Japan Business Co-operation Committee.

His contribution was recognised in 2015 by the Japanese government, which awarded him the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun, one of Japan's highest civil honours.

Sir Rod has set the template for success in the region for Australians, and the tools he has used to prosper in Asia were those he developed in Australia – an inquisitive mind and strong ambitions, but always with a humble demeanour. And just like Weary Dunlop, a passion for helping others.

Growing up in resource rich Western Australia, Sir Rod got an early insight into how vital Asia would be in Australia's destiny as Asian faces began popping up in the neighbourhood and at university.

His engineering classes were increasingly filled with students from Malaysia, Tokyo and Singapore and Sir Rod soaked up their accounts of life beyond Australia's borders and began to form the view that Asia would be the key growth opportunity on the horizon for Australia.

Before long Japan would commence its pivotal role in bankrolling the expansion of Western Australia's iron ore and natural gas industries. After finishing his university

education at Oxford, Sir Rod took a job with the Swire Group, which soon seconded him to their subsidiary, the airline Cathay Pacific.

His rise through the ranks of the airline took him to South Korea, Japan and then to the company's headquarters in Hong Kong, where he lived for 11 years, the last five as the managing director.

After 5 years in the UK running British Airways, Sir Rod has been back in Australia for some years where he chairs investment bank JP Morgan while retaining close ties to Asia through his chairmanship of Lion, the Australian subsidiary of Japanese brewer Kirin, and his directorship with the Hong Kong-based China Light and Power Holdings.

Sir Rod is a key part of Australia's business representation at APEC as a member of the forum's Business Advisory Council.

As a firm believer that Australia's destiny lies within the region he has worked tirelessly to ensure that the country's economic, corporate, cultural and political compass shifts towards Asia. He has seen some of his ambitions for engagement fulfilled in recent years with the completion of free-trade agreements with South Korea, Japan and China. In fact Sir Rod was instrumental in ensuring that services were a big part of the trade agreement with Japan.

For many years Sir Rod generously provided his wisdom and encouragement to members of the Asialink Leaders Program. He modestly spoke about his own experiences in the region and patiently answered all their questions. While he has helped pave the path to Asia for many talented Australians, we know that Sir Rod's own efforts to deepen our engagement with the region will continue for many years to come.

And as such there can be no more deserving recipient of the 2017 Sir Edward Weary Dunlop Asialink medal.