

NEWS RELEASE

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Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**
Child Protection and Family Support

New approaches to education support to break the cycle of disadvantage for vulnerable children

New approaches to education support have the power to drive social change and break inter-generational cycles of poverty and disadvantage. Education professional, Olivia Samec's passion for trauma informed, early intervention strategies are the motivation behind her drive to find better ways to improve educational and life outcomes for some of Australia's most vulnerable children.

As the recipient of a prestigious Churchill Fellowship sponsored by the Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support division, (the Department) in Western Australia, Olivia now has the opportunity to reach the world stage to investigate and learn from examples of world best practice educational models that are effectively engaging traumatised children.

"I am so grateful to be given the opportunity to see the world's leading education programs in action and to hopefully discover alternative and contemporary ways to engage children. I am so excited about the possibilities that lie ahead and the new ideas that I will be able to share when I return to Australia will be invaluable".

Olivia has already achieved positive change locally with the creation of The Discovery Book Club – a concept designed to address the poor education outcomes experienced by children in the out of home care system. The Discovery Book Club successfully injected new and exciting ideas, attracting strong interest and partners who now collaborate and coordinate their collective resources across Western Australia.

"My team have been at the forefront in developing a trauma informed, early intervention model for education and well-being for children in care with the Discovery Book Club and it's the only model of its kind in Australia.

"We have also partnered with the State Library, the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation, the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation, Notre Dame University and Wise Kids Books to deliver this program and we are seeing increased engagement in this multi-layered approach," Olivia said.

The Department has partnered with the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust for several years to award Churchill Fellowships to Western Australians, specifically to investigate issues relating to the protection and care of children and young people or support for at risk individuals and families.

"The long-term partnership and sponsorship of a Churchill Fellowship by the Department reflects the benefits of collaboration and sharing to achieve results – attributes inherent in a Churchill Fellowship," said Adam Davey, CEO of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust.

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust was established in 1965 to honour the memory of Sir Winston Churchill, and fulfil his wish to offer people from all walks of life, the opportunity to travel overseas to gain new knowledge and insights and bring that back to Australia to positively impact our communities and society at large.

"This award is for anyone who feels they have exhausted alternatives within Australia and would like to see what other countries are doing successfully in a similar space to inspire new ideas, innovation, and excellence," said Mr Davey.

The Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support division's Acting Assistant Director General Glenn Mace said the Department is committed to learning and best practice in the services it delivers.

"Identifying new and innovative approaches to working with children and young people who have experienced trauma is an important aspect of this work," Mr Mace said.

"We are pleased to be sponsoring Ms Olivia Samec's prestigious Churchill Fellowship, which will provide valuable insights and approaches for literacy education to better support some of Western Australia's most vulnerable children."

No academic qualifications are required in order to apply for a Churchill Fellowship and the subject of the proposed project is limitless provided a benefit to Australia is evident and a willingness to share the knowledge gained with Australia is displayed.

For the full list of 2017 Churchill Fellows visit <https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/fellows/>

See where a Churchill Fellowship can take you...apply from 1 February 2018.

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