**Citation – Adjunct Professor Richard Fisher AM**

Honorary Fellowship - Thursday, 2 June 2022, 12.00noon

Deputy Chancellor, it is my pleasure to present Adjunct Professor Richard Fisher AM to you, to be awarded the title of Honorary Fellow of the University of Sydney in recognition of his outstanding record of service to the University.

Richard was General Counsel of the University for almost 15 years, retiring at the end of 2021, as well as an Adjunct Professor in the Sydney Law School, delivering lectures and supervising students.

Richard has had a distinguished career as a legal practitioner, with expertise in commercial law, focussing on insolvency and corporate reorganisation. Before taking up the General Council role he was a Partner, and Chairman of Partners, at Blake Dawson (now Ashurst), one of Australia’s leading law firms. He has held directorships at Sydney Water and InvoCare, been a consultant for the Asian Development Bank, a commissioner at the Australian Law Reform Commission, and a member of the Library Council of New South Wales.

In 2007 Richard was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for his service to the legal profession, to law reform in relation to insolvency and the protection of creditor rights, and to the community.

But today we want to focus on his contribution to the University for over a decade and a half, because it truly has been immense.

Twenty years ago, the University’s legal team was largely a single solicitor whose job was to decide which legal firm was the most appropriate for any one case: an expensive and cumbersome approach to the wide range of legal issues facing the University.

Over the past 15 years, Richard has built a comprehensive legal services team, the Office of General Counsel, which is regarded by many as one of the public sector’s best in-house general counsel teams in the State. He has a keen eye for emerging legal talent and a great capacity for mentoring. Over the years he has managed to recruit excellent early and mid-career lawyers, often those with significant family responsibilities seeking a more manageable workload.

Thanks to Richard, the University now has significant in-house legal capabilities in areas such as labour law and industrial relations, trusts, construction and property law, intellectual property, policy documentation and commercial law. While we still parcel out significant cases to major legal firms, far more of the legal work is managed in-house.

The Office of General Counsel works closely with senior executives across all operational areas of the University. Richard and his team engaged effectively with portfolios and professional service units across the University with the result that they are regarded as a trusted and highly reliable source of advice. Richard has been a sounding board for Vice-Chancellors and Deputy Vice-Chancellors, offering sage counsel and advice, and is highly regarded and trusted by senior executives across the University.

The Office of General Counsel has provided outstanding support for the Provost portfolio, not only around difficult industrial relations and staff misconduct cases, but in supporting key initiatives such as the establishment of the University’s centre in China. Richard has played a vital role in supporting the work of the University’s Director of Higher Education Policy and Projects, and contributing to government inquiries, working parties, and submissions to Ministers. His informed legal counsel has been a bedrock of the University’s engagement with successive State and Federal Governments.

Beyond his legal expertise, Richard has had more general responsibilities in the University, including the establishment of the Trusts Office, which supports the University’s effective administration of its endowment fund; the restructuring of the University’s Internal Audit function; the establishment of the University’s Risk Management function; and Chairing the Working Group which developed the University’s Charter of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom.

Richard has genuinely transformed the way that the University conducts legal services work and has established a wonderful platform for his successor to build upon.

Deputy Chancellor, it is a great pleasure to present to you Adjunct Professor Richard Fisher AM, to be admitted as an Honorary Fellow of the University of Sydney.