

Mr Phillip Andrew Adams AO

The honorary degree of Doctor of Letters was conferred upon Phillip Adams by the Chancellor the Hon Justice Kim Santow at the Faculty of Arts graduation ceremony at 4.00pm on 6 May 2005.

Citation

Chancellor, I have the honour to present Phillip Andrew Adams, AO for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa).

Phillip Adams is arguably Australia's number one public intellectual. He has made pivotal contributions to Australia's identity across film, broadcasting and print media.

Phillip Adams' creative vision paved the way to a vibrant national film industry. Helping to create the Australia Council, Phillip established Australia's National Film School. He established the South Australian Film Corporation, which became the model for subsequent film commissions in other states. As Chair of the Australian Film Commission, Phillip signed Australia's first co-production agreements with France and the United Kingdom and persuaded then Treasurer Paul Keating to establish the Australian Film Finance Corporation. Phillip is recognised in his own right for his films and has, amongst many AFI awards, won two 'Best Films'.

Phillip devised the immensely successful Life, Be In It campaign which effected a paradigm shift in Australian society. His campaign for the United Nations' International Year of the Disabled Person won the Golden Lion at the Cannes Festival in 1982.

As a public commentator and broadcaster, Phillip Adams is one of the major facilitators of debate in this country. In this role, he continues to influence the thinking, the welfare and culture of our society. Prime Minister Gough Whitlam summed up Phillip's contribution in these words: 'It is a fortunate coincidence that Australia's leading comic writer is also her most perceptive social critic. No-one serves more faithfully the cause of rationality in human affairs.'

Phillip Adams was appointed Foundation Chair for the Commission of the Future, served as Chairman of the National Australia Day Council, and recently co-founded the human rights organisation A Just Australia. Phillip has also chaired the Australian Film Institute and Film Australia. His innumerable board memberships include Greenpeace and Care Australia. He was the Australian Humanist of the Year in 1987.

The International Astronomical Union named 'a minor planet' orbiting the sun between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter, 'Phillipadams'.

While he has his critics, Phillip's influence permeates every facet of our society. It has done so over a public life stretching almost 50 years.

Chancellor, I have great pleasure in presenting to you, for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa) writer, broadcaster, filmmaker and National Treasure, Phillip Andrew Adams.