

Citation for Alec Brennan AM
Doctor of Business (*honoris causa*)

Monday, 31 May 2021 – 4.30pm

Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present Alec Brennan AM to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Business (*honoris causa*) in recognition of his outstanding contribution to business, the not-for-profit sector and to community initiatives.

Alec began his career as a research scientist, having graduated from the University of NSW with a Bachelor of Science (Food Technology) in 1969. He later completed a Master of Business Administration and Harvard Business School's Senior Financial Management Program.

He moved into management and has had a business career spanning more than 30 years as a public company director in the resources, manufacturing and materials sectors. Alec was inaugural Chair of Emeco Group when it listed on the ASX and served for three years on the ASIC External Advisory Committee.

Much of his business career was spent with the CSR Group, then a major Australian diversified conglomerate with interests in resources and manufacturing. He was Chief Executive of a succession of successful affiliated companies including New Zealand Sugar, Gove Aluminium, Bradford Insulation and Ready-mixed Concrete. He worked as Finance Director, Strategy Director and subsequently four years as CEO of the CSR Group.

Whilst working in senior management roles, Alec also commenced his governance career by contributing to health and the environment as a board member for organisations focused on ground-breaking medical research and environmental policy and practice. He dedicated his time and knowledge for over 10 years as Board Director of the Garvan Research Foundation, which supports the medical research programs of the Garvan Institute of Medical Research.

He is a generous supporter of the University of Sydney's Institute of Bone and Joint Research, which is devoted to advancing understanding of disorders and diseases of the musculoskeletal system. His initial donation to the Institute funded a postdoctoral Fellowship that not only increased resources for research into bone and joint disease but also provided an incredible opportunity to an early career researcher and he is currently sponsoring a further major research project.

Alec is also a strong supporter of academic research at Macquarie University into Motor Neurone disease and chairs a group that provides funding and support to improve quality of life and limit suffering for those affected by this tragic disease.

Demonstrating his passion for the environment, Alec offered his expertise gained from 40 years of business experience to the Board of the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), as an independent member in early 2012. He also served on and subsequently chaired the EPA's Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

He continues to champion the protection and preservation of the environment through his role as a member of the Board of Directors at the Sydney Institute of Marine Science (SIMS). SIMS is a world-leading marine science institute operated in partnership with all key Universities in the Sydney basin. It undertakes collaborative marine research and innovation, as well as offering research training and teaching in the marine sciences. For five years Alec chaired the SIMS Foundation raising money for marine research and was responsible for developing a new model for fundraising for SIMS that dramatically improved the Institute's philanthropic income.

Alec's philanthropy is most evident through his role as Founder and Chair of the Brennan Family Foundation, which supports the arts, education and environment through charitable contributions to non-profit organisations and community initiatives. Through the Foundation, he established the Elizabeth Brennan Scholarships for the Master of Teaching in Early Childhood Education at the University of Sydney, which assists students as they work to gain the necessary theoretical and practical skills required to provide excellence in leadership in early childhood education.

In the 2013 Queen's Birthday Honours, Alec was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to business and commerce to tertiary education administration and to the community.

Alec is strongly committed to excellence in academia, He has been a valuable supporter of the University of Sydney through direct support of research and educational initiatives and through his positions as a Fellow of Senate from 2006 to 2017, Pro-Chancellor from 2011 to 2015 and Deputy Chancellor from 2013 to 2015.

Alec has applied his professional expertise and success to promote positive change in the community, particularly in the fields of education, medicine and the environment.

Chancellor, I present Alec Brennan AM for admission to the degree of Doctor of Business (*honoris causa*) and invite you to confer the degree upon him.