Mr Antony John Green

Antony began covering elections for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) in 1991. He is now a fixture on ABC news and has been the face and voice of more than sixty election broadcasts for the ABC. Antony has an ongoing commitment to the study of elections and has developed software to analyse election results as they occur.

Honorary Doctor of Letters
Conferring ceremony: 7 November 2014 (Arts and Social Sciences).

Citation

Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present Antony John Green to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*) for his exceptional contributions to politics and election coverage.

Born in 1960 in England, Antony's parents brought him to Australia in 1964 for a better life. He attended James Ruse Agricultural High School, and did two undergraduate degrees at this university, a Bachelor of Science and a Bachelor of Economics. The Science degree emphasised mathematics and computing. In the Economics degree he did honours in Government and Public Administration, where he profited especially from the tutelage of Dr Ernie Chaples (1939-2012) on public opinion polling and electoral behaviour.

He worked initially as a data analyst in the computing industry and for a polling company before joining the ABC in 1989. Antony began covering elections for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) in 1991 with a New South Wales poll, followed by the federal election of 1993. He is now a fixture on ABC news and has been the face and voice of more than sixty (60) election broadcasts for the ABC. He has covered every Australian state and territory election since, as well as some city council, New Zealand, Canadian and United Kingdom polls. He is recognised from coast-to-coast as the ABC's Mr Election.

In the hothouse atmosphere of election night with pressure from all sides, he offers a tangible enthusiasm, a measured calm, and an absolute premium on the factual, leavened by some impish good humour. Among the partisan supporters, limelight-seekers trying to predict results (too) early, one-eyed advocates, Green is a bastion of responsibility. Getting it right is far more important on his watch, than getting the headline, although over the years he has learned how to do both - be accurate and be first.

The key to his authoritative election night performance is his preparation. In a realm where once gut-feelings, anecdotes from some random polling booths, and vague memories of elections past were the norm, Green has injected science.

He has written and developed his own software to analyse results as they occur. This system is now the official election calculator of the ABC, which boasts of its accuracy, speed, and precision on its web site. By comparing the results from every polling booth in the country with the same booths at the previous election, he is able to pronounce far more accurately and penetratingly on the implications of the early stages of the count. Watching the way American pundits were reduced to speculation about where votes were from and what the swings might be during the televised count of the 2012 US Presidential election was a reminder of just how much more sophisticated and accurate the ABC's election coverage has become on Antony's watch.

Green's commitment to the study of elections has an intellectual depth beyond that of any other media commentator on elections, past or present. His appetite for elections is remarkable, as is the energy he puts into analysing and evaluating results the better to understand the results. His ABC blog is replete with detailed examinations of Australian elections, territory, state, and federal, including by-elections. It runs to hundreds of pages, enough for several monographs. This wealth of material is often used by students to learn about elections. In addition, he has 50,000 followers on Twitter who learn about elections from him.

In addition, he is a regular contributor to publications such as *The Sydney Morning Herald.* He also participates in academic conferences on elections, such as the Annual Conference of the Australian Political Studies Association. In these discussions, his knowledge, rigor, and precision make him the equal of any scholarly psephologists from a university. He has written over 30 commissioned research reports for the NSW Parliament on aspects of election results and electoral boundaries. The historical depth of his knowledge is displayed in the book he co-authored with David Clune, *The Electoral Atlas of New South Wales, 1856-2006* (Government of NSW 2006). He has contributed chapters on elections to academic works, such as the definitive study of the NSW Labor Government from 1995 to 2011, *From Carr to Keneally.*

He also acts as a broker between the scholarly analysis of voting, elections, party systems, balloting techniques, and other technical details and the wider and more general public and public authorities. This role has included the 2014 debates about how to reform Senate voting. He has also been invited on numerous occasions to give evidence to state and federal standing committees on electoral matters on technical aspects of elections and voting. Few media commentators command enough respect to be treated as experts like this.

Antony has constructed a unique role for himself in Australian public life. He has made an outstanding contribution to the public understanding of voting and elections. He has produced journalism and commentary of great quality and integrity, but also has been an important contributor to contemporary Australian scholarship. He remains a voice of reason in a public debate that is not always reasonable. He has combined unparalleled technical expertise with light touch communication. As a public educator, he has set an example of concentration and deliberation in difficult circumstances while broadcasting live on television to millions. This is public education at its best.

Chancellor, I present Antony John Green for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*), and I invite you to confer the degree upon him.