

The Hon Robert James Heffron

The honorary degree of Doctor of Letters was conferred upon the Honourable Robert James Heffron by the Chancellor Sir Charles Bickerton Blackburn KCMG OBE at the ceremony of conferring of honorary degrees held on 29 August 1952 as part of the University of Sydney's Centenary celebrations.

The Honourable Robert James Heffron was Deputy Premier of New South Wales and Minister for Education.



The Chairman of the Professorial Board Professor A D Trendall (on left) presenting the Honourable Robert James Heffron to the Chancellor Sir Charles Bickerton Blackburn for the award of an Hon DLitt, (*Sydney Morning Herald photos, copies held by the University of Sydney Archives*).

Citation

Presented by the Chairman of the Professorial Board, Professor A D Trendall:

Mr Chancellor, the ideal commonwealths of the ancient Greeks rightly placed the greatest importance on a sound educational system as the proper basis for the training of a good citizen, and the Latin poet Juvenal's "maxima debetur puero reverentia" shows that the Romans, too, fully appreciated the vital place that youth holds in the community. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that the Ministry of Education is a key position in any government, and we are very fortunate at this time in New South Wales to have in that high office a man who devotes his time and energy so unsparingly to the cause of education at all stages.

Robert James Heffron's whole political career has shown him to be a man of deep sincerity of purpose and with the courage of his convictions, "One who never turned his back, but marched breastforward."

It is, in consequence, not surprising that under his ministerial aegis we see the results of his educational zeal and enthusiasm in the rapid growth of the Child Welfare Department, which he has raised to a level equal to the best overseas, in the expansion of library and other cultural facilities, in the planning and creation of new schools, colleges and institutes of higher learning, and last, but not least, in the unflinching sympathy he has always shown with our own University and in his ready understanding of its more pressing problems.

Mr Chancellor, I present to you Robert James Heffron, Deputy Premier of New South Wales and Minister for Education.

From "The University of Sydney Centenary Celebrations August 26 - August 31, 1952" compiled by the Office of Information and Public Relations. Allan Gamble, Information and Public Relations Officer.