

Ms Mary Lane

The honorary degree of Doctor of Letters in Social Work was conferred upon Mary Lane by the Chancellor Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO at the Faculty of Education and Social Work graduation ceremony at 9.30am on 13 April 2012.

Mrs Lane, BA MSW DipSocStuds *Sydney*, who was a member of the social work staff of the University of Sydney from 1982 to 2002 and is currently an Honorary Senior Lecturer in Social Work, has made an outstanding contribution to community work practice in Australia.

Mrs Lane gave the occasional address at the ceremony.



The Chancellor and Mrs Lane, *photo, copyright Memento Photography.*

Citation

Chancellor, I present Mary Lane for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters in Social Work (honoris causa).

Mary commenced a career-long professional association and commitment to Western Sydney in Mount Druitt in 1974 with the then New South Wales Health Commission, focusing on innovative, participatory processes to improve the health and life circumstances of disadvantaged communities. She was appointed to membership of the Family Law Council of Australia the year following the introduction of the 1975 Family Law Act, legislation that revolutionised the legal treatment of women and children post-family separation, particularly of those who were escaping violence in the home. Such involvement epitomised two lifelong passions – the rights of women and children and anti-violence.

In 1975 she co-founded and chaired the nongovernment organisation Future Lobby, which was to influence national policy directions in child care provision and flexible employment. In the early eighties, she co-led Future Lobby's community development project in the new housing estate of St Clair.

Mary Lane has had a distinguished career as an academic member of staff at this University, her alma mater, from 1983 to 2002. Over that time she contributed consistently to the learning, teaching and inspiration of generations of social work graduates. As a researcher, writer and teacher she has had a significant and lasting impact on community work in Australia. Her contribution to the advancement of community work theory cemented the University of Sydney's reputation as a leader in the field locally, nationally and internationally. Through her publications Mary has been at the forefront of theoretical debates and a legendary practitioner in community work practice. She will shortly release a book on community work in Australia over the past 40 years, much of which she has lived through her teaching, research and practice.

Mary has been particularly influential through her scholarship which links community work practice with crime prevention and anti-violence. This writing was the forerunner of a better understanding of the connections between community life and crime, providing practical strategies for deploying community strategies to prevent violence and crime. This is now viewed as mainstream crime prevention in Australia. Her commitment to peace and non-violence is reflected in her founding and life membership of the University of Sydney's Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies.

Mary Lane's outstanding contribution to community work practice, policy and research has been underpinned by her confidence in the ability of ordinary people to participate and be involved in building community, regardless of their social location. She has a passionate and life-long dedication to the work of social justice.

Chancellor, I present Mary Lane for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters in Social Work (honoris causa) and I invite you to confer the degree upon her.