

Professor Vicki Rubian Sara AO

The honorary degree of Doctor of Science was conferred upon Vicki Sara by the Chancellor, Ms Belinda Hutchinson AM at a Faculty of Science graduation at 11.30am on 7 April 2016.

Citation

Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present Emeritus Professor Vicki Rubian Sara, AO to for admission to the degree of Doctor of Science (honoris causa) in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the fields of science and research and to higher education.

Professor Sara's path of knowledge and learning began firstly at Sydney Girls' High School and then a Bachelor of Arts degree and a PhD at the University of Sydney.

In 1976 she left Sydney for Stockholm where she worked for 17 years at the Karolinska Institute, one of Europe's largest medical universities and Sweden's largest centre for medical training and research. It was here that she isolated the growth hormone responsible for foetal brain development which is now used as a therapeutic for growth and metabolic disorders. In 1994, Professor Sara was awarded the Karolinska Institute Rolf Luft Medal for excellence in endocrine research.

After a distinguished and successful career in Sweden, Professor Sara returned to Australia in 1993 taking up a role as Head of the School of Life Science at Queensland University of Technology. In 1994 the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia awarded Professor Sara the Sir John Eccles Award for distinguished and productive medical research.

Professor Sara furthered her endocrinology research at QUT, establishing and becoming Director of the Cooperative Research Centre for Diagnostic Technologies, then promoted to Dean of Science in 1996.

In 1997 Professor Sara moved to Canberra to become the Chair and then Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Research Council, Professor Sara was the driving force behind far reaching reforms of the council, in the doubling of its funding and establishing its credibility to deliver policy and programs that advance Australian research and innovation globally.

From the late 90's, Professor Sara took on a number of national and international appointments, including Vice-Chair of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Global Science Forum in 1999 and member of the Advisory Board of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation R&D Leaders' Forum in 2002.

During the early part of this decade Professor Sara provided further outstanding contributions to the fields of science and research as a member of the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council; the CSIRO Board; and the Advisory Board of the Rio Tinto Foundation for a Sustainable Minerals Industry. She was Director of the Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics from 2004 to 2009 and Chair of the Board of the Australian Stem Cell Centre from 2005 to 2008. Renewing her ties to Scandinavia, she was appointed Consul General for Sweden in Sydney from 2006 to 2007.

Professor Sara has played a unique role in Australian science policy with her unflinching advocacy for the importance of science. She is one of only a few who have such a profound understanding and active support of science and research, and the importance it has for the Australian community and industry.

From 2004 to 2016, Professor Sara was Chancellor of the University of Technology Sydney where she led the organisation with a clear and bold vision.

Professor Sara has received numerous awards throughout her career in recognition of her contribution to science and research.

She was awarded the Centenary Medal for notable achievement in science, made a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science, a fellow of the Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, she has Honorary Doctorates from the University of Technology Sydney, University of Southern Queensland, Victoria University and Queensland University of Technology.

In 2010, Professor Sara was awarded an Officer in the General Division for distinguished service to science through contributions to research and policy development, and to higher education.

Chancellor, I present Emeritus Professor Vicki Sara AO for admission to the degree of Doctor of Science (*honoris causa*) and invite you to confer the degree upon her.