

## Mr Ronald John Yates AM

The degree of Doctor of Engineering (honoris causa) was conferred upon Ronald John Yates at the Engineering ceremony held on 30 May 2000.

### Citation

Chancellor

I have the honour to present Ronald John Yates AM for the conferring of the degree Doctor of Engineering honoris causa.

Ronald Yates was one of our early aeronautical engineering students. He graduated in 1944, and served three years as a flight test engineer in the RAAF.

He then joined the flight operations department of Qantas. His career spanned forty years, of which seven were spent in the United States of America. During this time, he played a pivotal role in the evaluation and selection of post-war aircraft, particularly the new era jet transports. He was project manager of the acquisition and introduction into service of the Lockheed Electras, and the Boeing 707, 767 and 747 aircraft.

Mr Yates rose through the ranks and became Chief Operating Officer, responsible for the day-to-day control of the airline. By the time he retired in 1986, he was the Chief Executive Officer of Qantas, and continued as Technical Consultant until September 1993. Mr Yates is the only engineer in the eighty year history of Qantas to have reached the position of Chief Executive Officer.

In June 1993, Mr Yates was appointed a Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia for services to aviation.

He was the catalyst in the Government's establishment of the Federal Airports Corporation, and was its founding Deputy Chairman. It contributed more than \$7 billion to the Government's revenue and built a superb infrastructure.

On behalf of the then Department of Civil Aviation, he made an intensive study of the airworthiness certification of imported aircraft, and recommended significant policy changes which were adopted by the Government and which streamlined procedures.

Mr Yates was appointed to the Board of the Civil Aviation Authority in June 1990, and became Chairman of its Superannuation subsidiary and its Capital Projects committee. The most notable project, costing \$300 million, was the decision, in February 1994, to consolidate the management and provision of air traffic services throughout Australia into two centres - Brisbane and Melbourne.

Since July 1991, he has been an Executive Councillor of the International Federation of Airworthiness, a non-governmental organisation, representing one hundred and twenty five airlines, civil aviation authorities and manufacturers. It is dedicated to improving airline safety worldwide.

He has been an Executive Councillor of the Australian Division of the Royal Aeronautical Society since 1975 and its President from 1977-79 and 1982-84. In December 1998, he was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the Royal Aeronautical Society in the UK for outstanding contributions to the airline industry. This is the highest honour the Society can confer.

Mr Yates was Deputy Chairman, then Chairman, of the Preston Group (Victoria) 1991-1997, promoting the development and sale of Australian software to airlines and airport authorities throughout the world. He has been Chairman of Tower Technology since July 1993, a company engaged in designing and developing optical scanning systems.

Mr Yates participated in the early development of the Warren Centre for Advanced Engineering in the Faculty of Engineering and provided ongoing Qantas support. He has maintained a close liaison with the University of Sydney since his undergraduate days when he was a rugby union blue in two successive years. He has also assisted the Department of Aeronautical Engineering in many ways, the most recent being the

acquisition of a Boeing 707 flight simulator.

After 55 years, since graduation as an aeronautical engineer, he is still very active in aviation as well as in the community and, for the last six years, has been Deputy President of the Lane Cove Community Aid Service.

Inventiveness in the management of major aeronautical engineering projects, and service to the industry as a whole are the hallmarks of his distinguished career.

Chancellor, I present Ronald John Yates, AM for admission to the degree of Doctor of Engineering honoris causa, and I invite you to confer the degree upon him.