

## **Dr Graeme Killer AO**

### **Citation for conferral of Doctor of Medicine (honoris causa) Ceremony 4, Wednesday 29 April 2015, 11:00am**

Chancellor, I present to you Graeme Killer.

Graeme Killer has played a unique role in veterans' health in Australia over the last three decades. After a distinguished career as a medical officer in the Australian Defence Force, during which he was for a time the Commanding Officer of the Aviation Medicine Institute, he then became the Principal Medical Officer for the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

The duration of his service in the Department of Veterans' Affairs has meant that he has a unique role in terms of his institutional memory and advocacy for veterans. He has ensured a degree of technocratic knowledge and sophistication that is not often seen in the formulation of government policy. He has crafted and guided the health care system from having highly prejudicial attitudes towards psychological suffering of veterans to one that is now highly attuned and prepared to face and manage the morbidity of war.

Dr Killer established a committee in 1992 that led to a transformation of the quality of health care for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder by establishing inpatient programs around the country.

He also played an instrumental role in advocating for the National Centre for War Related PTSD which is now the Australian Centre for Post-Traumatic Mental Health.

In this role he has acted as the mentor for a number of psychiatrists and other medical health practitioners who have worked in this general area, providing invaluable advice. Dr Killer encouraged Professor Sandy McFarlane strongly to join the ADF Reserves which led to him becoming a Group Captain and having a substantial and influential role in reforming mental health in the ADF.

Dr Killer has also overseen a series of ground breaking research studies into the health of veterans. These have included the study of the Gulf War veterans, the atomic blast veterans, submariners, and the F-111 Deseal and Reseal studies.

He played a central role in advocating for the establishment of the Centre for Military and Veterans Health. In more recent times, he has ensured the smooth conduct of the Transition and Wellbeing Study, the \$3.2 million research program examining the health and functioning of individuals who have left Defence since 2010.

His breadth of knowledge and wisdom has meant that many of the battles and struggles that often impede the development of health systems in the light of emerging knowledge have been circumvented. He is an example of a public health physician working within a bureaucracy who has not been stymied or lost clarity of thinking because of his political role. Dr Killer is a rare practitioner and an exemplar.

The University of Adelaide has gained significantly from the initiatives that Dr Killer has put in place. Our conduct of the Middle East Area of Operation studies and the ADF Mental Health and Wellbeing Study are just two examples.

Dr Killer also played a key role in the Mates Program, an innovative method of connecting general practitioners and veterans in the review of their medication through a centralised data base system.

In summary, Dr Killer has demonstrated how the care of veterans depends upon good research, active clinical monitoring, and the proper policy frameworks to ensure these initiatives can progress. He has the utmost respect of clinicians, administrators and veterans alike. He has a career that should be an exemplar to anybody seeking public service.

Dr Killer has accompanied many aging veterans on tours of remembrance. In their older years, he has played an important role as a practitioner at these very meaningful and difficult times for the veterans. This is an example of how he has not simply been an administrator but a clinician who has truly understood the predicament and welfare of those who have served the nation and as a consequence, has been motivated to improve and maintain the health care systems that recognise and acknowledge their service.

I am very pleased and proud to present to you Chancellor, Dr Graeme Killer, Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery, Diploma of Aviation Medicine, Master of Science (Occupational Medicine),

Fellow of the Australian Faculty of Public Health Medicine, Fellow of the Australian Faculty of Occupational Environmental Medicine, Associate of the Royal Australian College of Medical Administrators, Officer of the Order of Australia, for admission to the honorary degree of Doctor of Medicine (honoris causa).