

Hugh Possingham citation

Thursday 2 May 2019, 2.00pm

Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present to you Hugh Philip Possingham.

The Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science (*honoris causa*) is being awarded to Professor Hugh Possingham in acknowledgement of his internationally recognised pioneering research into endangered species, conservation biology and ecological planning.

Professor Possingham completed a Bachelor of Science with Honours in Applied Mathematics at the University of Adelaide in 1984. He was awarded the Rhodes Scholarship to study at Oxford University, and completed his Doctor of Philosophy in ecology and mathematics at Oxford in 1987.

Professor Possingham returned to Australia on a Queen Elizabeth II Fellowship, undertaking research at the Australian National University into the application of population viability analysis to conservation.

He rejoined the University of Adelaide as a staff member, and was promoted to Professor in 1995.

In 2000, Professor Possingham took up a Chair in the departments of Mathematics and Biological Sciences at the University of Queensland. In 2001, he became director of The Ecology Centre, where he has remained as both an Australian Research Council Professorial Fellow and as an ARC Federation Fellow.

He currently holds a number of positions including: Chief Scientist of The Nature Conservancy; Director of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Environmental Decisions; Director of the Centre of Biodiversity and Conservation Science; and Director of a National Environmental Science Program Hub.

The Possingham lab works on formulating and solving biodiversity problems and settling conservation priorities through advances in spatial ecology, and decision support tools for fire, weed and pest management. The lab collaborates with many governments and non-government organisations around the world.

Professor Possingham is co-developer of Marxan, the most widely used conservation planning software in the world. This software currently has more than 7000 users in more than 180 countries around the world. It was used to underpin the rezoning of the Great Barrier Reef, and to create Australia's marine park system – the biggest of its kind in the world.

Professor Possingham is an Emeritus Professor of the University of Adelaide.

He is widely regarded internationally for his work. His awards include multiple Eureka Prizes for Environmental Research, the inaugural Fenner Medal for Plant and Animal Science, and the Australian Mathematics Society Medal.

Professor Possingham was elected to the Australian Academy of Science in 2005. In 2013 he was the first Australian to be elected an Ecological Society of America Fellow, and in 2016 he was elected Foreign Associate of the National Academy of Sciences in the United States.

Chancellor, I am very pleased and proud to present to you Professor Hugh Philip Possingham, Bachelor of Science with Honours in Applied Mathematics, Doctor of Philosophy, for admission to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science (honoris causa).