

Trish White citation

Thursday 12 September 2019, 11.00am

Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present to you The Honourable **Patricia Lynne White** for admission to the Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University (honoris causa).

In today's world we hear much about technological disruption and how important STEM will be to all of our futures. I'm sure that in this room today there will be many who will agree.

As graduates in engineering, maths, computer science and architecture – you will be focussed on building the future for all of us.

One hundred years ago this year – in 1919, just after World War One – Australia faced the need to build a nation.

A group of pioneering engineers got together to see how they could best ensure the high-quality engineering profession that would be required.

That was the start of Engineering Australia, which is this year celebrating its centenary as the peak professional body for engineers in Australia.

They have set the standards for education and practice in a profession responsible for transforming this nation and the world.

Today we are privileged to have with us the National President and Chair of Engineers Australia, the Honourable Trish White. As the head of Engineers Australia, Ms White represents 100,000 of our finest professionals.

In awarding this honorary degree we are recognising Ms White's leadership, her depth of understanding, and breadth of experience in the engineering profession; her advocacy for the profession; and the tremendous support and guidance she has given to our University's Faculty of Engineering, Computer and Mathematical Sciences over many years.

Ms White is, of course, best known to many of us as a Member of Parliament and a Cabinet Minister in the South Australian Government.

During a political career spanning more 15 years, she served the people of South Australia with great distinction. She represented South Australia as a Shadow Minister in Opposition and then State Government Minister, holding the portfolios of Education and Children's Services, Transport, Science and Information Economy, and Urban Development and Planning.

Deciding not to recontest her seat in the 2010 election, she resumed life outside politics, and as we see today, has continued to distinguish herself in the field that is her first passion: engineering.

Ms White was educated at the University of Queensland with Bachelors degrees in Engineering and Arts.

She began her career in 1985 as a telecommunications engineer and project manager for the Queensland Department of Communications, moving to applied research with the Defence Science and Technology Organisation, now known as DSTG, in 1988.

Throughout her various roles, she has shown herself to be a creative and innovative thinker. A large number of organisations have benefited from her skills and leadership.

Notably, Ms White was a member of the Prime Minister's Industry 4.0 Taskforce, exploring the changing nature of work and how Australia should best take advantage of the 4th Industrial Revolution.

At the University of Adelaide, her knowledge of industry and government have been invaluable. She has rendered an exceptional level of service to our University for more than 11 years on the Faculty Advisory Board for Engineering, Computer and Mathematical Sciences, and has been Chair of that Board since 2013.

She has brought an important industry perspective to inform our curriculum and program development, and has provided strong guidance to the Faculty on connecting more deeply with industry, helping foster valuable relationships.

Ms White is also a former Chair of the Advisory Board for the University's Centre for Energy Technology.

Perhaps most importantly, at a time when universities, industry, government and the community are all still coming to terms with how to encourage young women into STEM careers, Trish White has – for more than 30 years – been an outstanding role model for women in engineering.

As National President and Chair of Engineers Australia, she is an advocate for change, and is committed to achieving gender balance and inclusion in the profession's workforce.

Chancellor, I am very pleased and proud to present to you the Honourable Trish White, Bachelor of Engineering, Bachelor of Arts, FIEAust, CPEng, EngExec, APEC Engineer IntPE (Aus), and FAICD... for admission to the Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University (honoris causa).