Distinguished Professor Susan Marjorie Scott FAA, FEurASc

Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present to you an outstanding candidate for admission to the Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University (honoris causa): **Distinguished Professor Susan Marjorie Scott**.

Professor Scott is Distinguished Professor of Theoretical Physics at the Australian National University. Her significant contribution over three decades includes groundbreaking discoveries in general relativity and cosmology. She has played a leading role in the development of the field of gravitational wave science in Australia, helping to unlock one of the universe's most complex mysteries.

Gravitational waves are ripples in space and time caused by massive cosmic events, including the collision of black holes. In 2015, Susan was part of the international team that was the first to detect gravitational waves from black holes colliding 1.3 billion years ago.

Professor Scott credits watching the moon landing on television in 1969 as the event that triggered her lifelong interest in gravity. She retains a vivid childhood memory of spending hours glued to the TV, enthralled with the images of astronauts taking giant leaps off the surface of the moon. Her career aspirations were further shaped after receiving an all-girl school scholarship, with students encouraged to believe that with hard work and determination, they could do whatever they set their minds to.

Professor Scott completed a Bachelor of Science degree at Monash University, majoring in Mathematics and Physics, and attaining First Class Honours in Pure Mathematics.

Following completion of her PhD in Mathematical Physics at the University of Adelaide, Susan was awarded a Rhodes Fellowship to the University of Oxford, where she worked with Nobel Prize winner Professor Sir Roger Penrose and his research group for four years. She returned to Australia and held a 5-year Australian Research Council Fellowship at the ANU before taking up a tenured lectureship in the Department of Physics.

Professor Scott has been recognised internationally for her work through many prizes, including the 2016 Special Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics; the 2016 Gruber Prize for Cosmology, as part of the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory team; the University of New South Wales 2020 Dirac Medal for Theoretical Physics, the 2022 Walter Boas Medal from the Australian Institute of Physics and the 2022 Walter Burfitt Prize awarded by the Royal Society of New South Wales.

In 2020, she was one of four scientists, and the first female physicist to be awarded the Prime Minister's Prize for Science – Australia's top prize for science – for her role in the ground-breaking detection of gravitational waves first proposed by Albert Einstein.

In 2022, Professor Scott was the first Australian to be elected a Fellow of the International Society on General Relativity and Gravitation, was appointed Editor-in-Chief of the Institute of Physics journal *Classical and Quantum Gravity*, and in 2023, she was awarded the Thomas Ranken Lyle Medal by the Australian Academy of Science for outstanding achievements in mathematics and physics.

Distinguished Professor Scott is a Fellow of the European Academy of Sciences, the Australian Academy of Science, the International Society on General Relativity and Gravitation, and the American Physical Society. She is a Chief Investigator with the ARC Centre of Excellence for Gravitational Wave Discovery (OzGrav), and has advanced public understanding of the fabric of space-time, making the latest black hole and gravitational wave discoveries accessible and understandable to the Australian public.

Susan Scott is a role model for young girls in STEM and women in science careers. On becoming the first female physicist to win Australia's top prize for science she said, “It’s a very important milestone. It’s incredibly important that young women can see we can have successful women role models in this field. I would like to be such an example.”

Her enduring commitment to the importance of STEM is evidenced through her position on the Board of Management that launched ‘Einstein-First’, a new science curriculum which is introducing Einsteinian and modern physics for year 3 to year 10 school students, and works to improve STEM involvement in the classroom, throughout Australia.

Distinguished Professor Susan Scott was the first Australian, and Australian woman, to be awarded the prestigious European Academy of Sciences’ Blaise Pascal Medal, recognising her research in gravity being undertaken in Australia, by an Australian, on the global stage.

Chancellor, I am pleased to present to you **Distinguished Professor Susan Scott**, Bachelor of Science (Honours), Doctor of Philosophy, Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science, and Fellow of the European Academy of Sciences … for admission to the Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University (honoris causa).