

The Honourable Robert Hill AC

Citation for conferral of Doctor of Laws (honoris causa) Ceremony 5, Wednesday 29 April 2015, 2:00pm

Chancellor, I present to you the Honourable Robert Hill.

The Hon. Robert Murray Hill, AC was until recently Chancellor of the University of Adelaide, an office he held from 26 July 2010 until 26 July 2014.

Robert Hill attended Scotch College before taking degrees at the University of Adelaide in Arts and in Law. He went on to complete a Masters in Law at the London School of Economics, before returning to practice in South Australia as a barrister and solicitor, where one of his roles was to assist in drafting the first Bill introduced into the South Australian Parliament to legalise homosexuality between consenting male adults.

In 1980 Robert Hill was elected to the Parliament of Australia, as a Senator for South Australia. He chaired the first Senate Scrutiny of Bills committee, which he himself had promoted, to ensure scrutiny of legislation for compliance with rights and liberties.

During the course of twenty- five years in Parliament, he held the offices of Minister of Environment, (and Environment and Heritage), Minister of Defence, and Leader of the Liberal Party in the Senate, including ten years as Leader of the Government in the Senate.

As Federal Minister for the Environment, Robert Hill introduced and administered the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, the first national law to give decision-making responsibility to the federal Environment Minister. He also reformed Australia's heritage laws creating the Australian Heritage Council, and legislating a framework for the protection and financial support of a larger range of heritage sites. Additionally he worked towards reform of the Aboriginal Places Act to provide protection of Indigenous places.

Between 1996-2002 Robert Hill led the Australian delegation to the International Whaling Commission. He commenced the early work on whether there might be a judicial option to contain Japan's claimed scientific whaling program.

In 1997, Robert Hill led Australia's delegation which negotiated the Kyoto Protocol to the International Framework Convention on Climate Change. Also that year he introduced, through the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, a proposal to develop an Implementing Agreement under the Law of the Sea Convention to provide for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use on the high seas.

In 2006, Robert Hill resigned as Minister of Defence, and as Leader of the Government in the Senate. Shortly afterwards, he was appointed as Australia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, a position he held until May 2009. He played a significant part in the negotiations leading to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Persons. He also contributed to the evolution of the principles of Responsibility to Protect and international humanitarian law in relation to the protection of civilians in conflict situations.

On return to Australia in 2009, he was appointed Adjunct Professor in Sustainability at the US Studies Centre, University of Sydney. In July 2009, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd appointed him to Chair the Australian Carbon Trust. He holds a number of other key board positions related to climate change and conservation. Recently he has been a member of the Global Ocean Commission, comprising eminent world thought-leaders. The Commission promotes discussion and change amongst stakeholders, governments and the UN General Assembly, about international regulation of the sea in relation to biodiversity in the oceans. Robert Hill is also a member of the Board of Karrkad-Kandji Ltd, supporting Indigenous Protected Areas in West and Central Arnhem Land.

In June 2012, Robert Hill was awarded a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC).

Robert Hill is a distinguished alumni of the University and the Adelaide Law School. Throughout his professional life Robert Hill has made important contributions to innovative lawmaking and governance, at both national and international levels, and in relation to issues of utmost importance to our current and future society and civilisation.

I am very pleased and proud to present to you Chancellor, the Honourable Robert Hill, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Laws, Master of Laws, Companion of the Order of Australia, for admission to the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws (honoris causa).