

Professor James Gehling

Citation for conferral of Doctor of Science (honoris causa) Ceremony 3, Tuesday 29 April 2014, 2:00pm

Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present to you Professor James Gehling .

Professor Jim Gehling received his B.Sc. Honours and M.Sc. degrees from the University of Adelaide, followed by a Ph.D at the University of California, Los Angeles. Professor Gehling began his teaching career at the Wattle Park Teacher's College and continued on to the University of South Australia, the W.E. White Postdoctoral Research Fellowship at Queen's University in Canada in 1998-2000, and then the South Australian Museum since 2001, where he is currently a Senior Research Scientist. Professor Gehling's role in the South Australian Museum is to inquire into and explain evolution of early animal life on Earth. His main field of research and interpretation is the palaeobiology and environmental setting of the oldest known animal fossils, the Ediacara biota and the Early Cambrian fossils of South Australia. His roles include management of National Heritage Listed Ediacara Fossil Site at Nilpena - a field laboratory for the study of the Ediacara biota and its palaeoenvironmental settings and interpretation and protection of geological sites in the Flinders Ranges and Kangaroo Island.

He won the Victorian Premier's Book Prize for Science in 2009 for co-authoring "The Rise of Animals. Evolution and Diversification of the kingdom Animalia", published by Johns Hopkins Press, Washington and he has a long list of international media appearances, mostly focused on the Ediacara biota, culminating in his appearance in 2009 with Sir David Attenborough, who was hosting his documentary on First Life, featuring Ediacara fossils from the Brachina Gorge Geological Trail and at National Heritage listed Ediacara fossil site at Nilpena.

In 2005, Professor Gehling was the driving force behind a very rare event – the naming of a new Geological time zone -The Ediacaran Period. This was the first period-level interval of geological time to be created in the Standard Global Chronostratigraphic Scale for well over 100 years. It covers an interval of about 88 million years from about 630 million years ago to the beginning of the Cambrian Period about 542 million years ago. This was officially unveiled by the South Australian Premier, Mike Rann, on 16 April 2005.

I am very pleased and proud to present to you Chancellor, for admission to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science (honoris causa) — Professor James Gehling.