

Dr Leanna Christine Read

Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present to you Dr Leanna Christine Read for admission to the Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University (*honoris causa*), in recognition of her significant service and leadership across scientific, business and government sectors, and particularly in the biotechnology sector, both in South Australia and nationally.

She was among the first to recognise the enormous potential of technology in the biological sciences. Her leadership and service in this area contributed to the growth of the biotechnology industry in South Australia and has been recognised nationally.

Leanna credits good science and maths teachers during high school for putting her on the path to a career in science. Graduating from the University of Adelaide in 1977 with a Bachelor of Agricultural Science with Honours, she then completed a PhD in Biochemistry at Flinders University.

Her early research career involved investigating the role of growth factors in milk, first at the Adelaide-based CSIRO Division of Human Nutrition, then the University of Adelaide and the University of California, Davis. During her time in California, Leanna saw first-hand the impact of research-industry collaboration on the growth of the biotechnology industry. This experience would prove invaluable to her future leadership of the biotechnology industry in Australia.

In 1989 Leanna Read was appointed the inaugural Director of the Child Health Research Institute, South Australia's first independent medical research institute. From the 1990s on, she has led several successful research and commercial ventures focused on the translation of research to application with real-world impact. Outcomes from the Cooperative Research Centre for Tissue Growth and Repair have had a lasting impact through the application of biotechnology innovations to manufacturing processes and commercial applications in wound treatment. Leanna also founded a successful and profitable biotechnology company, TGR Biosciences, as one of the Cooperative Research Centre's commercial ventures. At the Cooperative Research Centre for Cell Therapy Manufacturing, Leanna focused on research translation of cancer immunology and smart surfaces for implanted medical devices.

As Chair of biotechnology companies Carina Biotech and TekCyte, Dr Read has continued to build her legacy in commercialisation of biomedical therapies, treatments and devices, and curative immune therapies for cancer.

From 2014 to 2018, Leanna Read was South Australia's fourth Chief Scientist and the first woman to hold the position. In this role, she provided independent advice on science, research, technology, and innovation to the South Australian Government, and raised the research and innovation profile of the State.

Leanna continues to champion the development and uptake of new technologies through her roles with venture capital investment companies, particularly supporting early-stage life sciences businesses. Her experience and expertise in fast tracking and scaling up research findings into practice also benefits the State's agricultural sector. She chairs the Agtech Advisory Group, established in 2019 by the South Australian Government to promote uptake of Agtech into the farming sector and grow the SA Agtech industry.

Her most recent appointment is Chair of Health Translation SA, a collaborative network which brings together nine academic, research and health care agencies within South Australia to foster health applications of research in the state.

Leanna Read has held positions on numerous government advisory boards related to innovation, including the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council; the Federal Government Industry Research and Development Board; the South Australian Economic Development Board; Commercialisation Australia and the SA Science Council. In the university sector, Leanna has held a tenured academic position at the University of Adelaide and completed a seven-year term on the University of South Australia Council. She is a member of the Australian Government Biomedical Translation Fund; the Trust Board of the Playford Memorial Trust; and a Board Member of RSPCA South Australia.

Dr Read is also a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, having acted as Board Director between 2013 and 2015.

She has been the recipient of a number of prestigious local and national awards, including the inaugural Biotechnology Industry Service Award by the Australian Biotechnology Association; a Centenary Medal for services to the Industry R&D Board; the 2006 South Australian Premier's Award for Science, Technology and Innovation Management Excellence; and the 2006 South Australian of the Year. Dr Read was the 2011 Central Region winner of the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year (Technology). Just last year, she received a Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Adelaide.

Today we extend that recognition, in awarding the highest honour the University can bestow.

Chancellor, I am pleased to present to you Dr Leanna Christine Read, Bachelor of Agricultural Science (Honours), Doctor of Philosophy, Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, for admission to the Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University (*honoris causa*).

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