

[The Honorable Hieu Van Le AC](#)

## **The Honorable Hieu Van Le AC Citation**

**Tuesday 26 September 2023 at 3.30pm**

**Officiator:** Ms Pauline Carr, Chancellor  
**Award being conferred:** Doctor of the University (DUniv)  
**Citation delivered by:** Professor Marnie Hughes-Warrington AO

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**Chancellor, The University of South Australia awards the Honorary Award of Doctor of the University to a person of eminence who has made a distinguished contribution to public service, or a field of academic endeavour or artistic pursuit. It is my pleasure to present the Honorable Hieu Van Le AC for the honorary award of Doctor of the University in recognition of his distinguished service to the community.**

Hieu Van Le was born in Central Vietnam and studied Economics at Da Lat University. Hieu and his wife, Lan, arrived in Darwin in 1977 as refugees, following a long, harrowing boat journey from Vietnam.

They settled in Adelaide, initially at the Pennington Migrant Hostel, and Hieu quickly became active in helping South Australia's growing number of Vietnamese migrants settle into their new life.

Hieu returned to study at the University of Adelaide, where he earned a Bachelor of Economics and Accounting (BEc), and later a Master of Business Administration (MBA).

He is accredited as a member of the Certified Practicing Accountants (CPA) and worked at the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) from 1991 until 2009, rising to the position of Senior Manager – Financial Services Regulation, responsible for regulating South Australia's financial services industry and investment markets.

In 1996, Hieu was awarded the Australia Day Medal for outstanding service to ASIC.

In parallel to his professional pursuits, Hieu continued to be a prominent, dedicated advocate for cultural diversity, serving on community groups relating to the settlement of new migrants and refugees, cultural and linguistic diversity, business, the arts, and education.

In 1995 he was appointed a member of the SA Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission – SAMEAC - and in 2001 was awarded the Centenary of Federation Medal for service to the advancement of multiculturalism. In 2004, Hieu became SAMEAC's Deputy Chair and then, in 2007, was appointed Chair – the first person of Asian background to lead this organisation in South Australia.

The combination of Hieu's distinguished professional achievements and deep dedication to community wellbeing led to his appointment as Lieutenant Governor of South Australia in August 2007.

After seven widely respected years in the role, on 1 September 2014, Hieu was sworn in as the 35<sup>th</sup> Governor of South Australia, a position he held until 31 August 2021.

Hieu was an extremely popular Governor, respected for his close, compassionate engagement with the community and hard work. At the time he stepped down, Hieu told the ABC that, during his time as Governor, he and his family were motivated by the generosity they had been shown as refugees, saying: "We're trying very, very hard every single day to contribute to the community, to make sure that we've never forgotten the mission that we have — to pay back this society who have been so generous, so compassionate to embrace us into this peaceful and free country."

During his time as Governor, Hieu served as patron of over 230 organisations, and it is understood he is the first Vietnamese-born person who has ever been appointed to a Vice-Regal position in the world.

In 2010, Hieu was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for outstanding service to community, social inclusion and international engagements, and in June 2016, was appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) for outstanding service to the community and to the State of South Australia.

In December 2021, the Italian Government awarded Hieu the title Cavaliere (Knight) of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic (OMRI). He has also been awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Adelaide University and Flinders University.

Currently, Hieu is the Chairperson of the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) and the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust Board.

He is also patron, life member, honorary member, director, trustee or ambassador for 25 other organisations, continuing his lifelong dedication to community service.

**Chancellor, I am pleased to present Hieu Van Le AC for the honorary award of Doctor of the University.**