

## Professor Tom Calma AO Citation

Thursday 11 May 2023, Hawke Centre Event

<b>Officiator:</b>	Hon John Hill, Deputy Chancellor
<b>Award being conferred:</b>	Doctor of the University (DUniv)
<b>Citation delivered by:</b>	Professor Marnie Hughes-Warrington AO Deputy Vice Chancellor: Research & Enterprise

---

Professor Tom Calma AO is an Elder of the Kungarakan people and member of the Iwaidja people, and has been involved in Indigenous affairs at a local, community, state, national and international level for 40 years.

Born in Darwin, Tom moved to Adelaide to study an Associate Diploma of Social Work at the South Australian Institute of Technology, one of UniSA's antecedent institutions, and upon graduating in 1978, led the creation of the Aboriginal Task Force program at the Darwin Community College. Beginning with that role, Tom has worked tirelessly for the improvement and advancement of Indigenous peoples' health, justice, education, and employment.

Tom has served in positions within Australia relating to Indigenous and mainstream employment, community development and education, and as Senior Adviser to the Minister of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. Internationally, he has worked as a senior Australian diplomat in India and Vietnam representing Australia's interests in education and training from 1995 to 2002.

Tom was Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission from 2004 to 2010, and also served as Race Discrimination Commissioner from 2004 until 2009.

In 2005, Tom authored the Social Justice Report, which called for the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to be closed within a generation and laid the groundwork for the Close the Gap campaign. He chaired the Close the Gap Steering Committee for Indigenous Health Equality since its inception in March 2006 and retired as Co-Chair in 2011. The Close the Gap campaign has effectively brought national attention to achieving health equality for Indigenous people by 2030, and National Close the Gap Day is celebrated on 24 or 25 March each year.

In 2010, Tom was appointed National Coordinator for Tackling Indigenous Smoking to lead the fight against tobacco use in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. He was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2012, named ACT Australian of the Year in 2013 for his work as a human rights and social justice advocate, and named the Senior Australian of The Year for 2023.

Tom is currently the Chancellor of the University of Canberra and a Professor at the University of Sydney, and remains an active researcher, with interests including pharmacological application for scabies control, genomics, Indigenous cancers and tobacco control, as well as health, mental health, and suicide prevention. He is a member of the Australian Genomics Independent Advisory Board, the Australian Medical Research Advisory Board and co-Chair of Reconciliation Australia. Tom is a joint awardee of the inaugural UniSA Alumni Awards and is patron of the UniSA Deadly Alumni Association.

In 2019, Tom was appointed as co-chair of the Senior Advisory Group of the design process for a permanent Indigenous advisory body to parliament, building on many decades as a fierce advocate for progress and change in Australia and beyond.

On behalf of the University of South Australia, I confer on you, Thomas Edwin Calma, the honorary award of Doctor of the University.