

Chancellor

I wish to nominate Dr Pam Ryan for conferral of an Honorary Doctorate of the University.

As a psychologist, political scientist, organisational consultant and academic, Dr Ryan has helped numerous private and public organisations successfully handle a diverse range of strategic, psychological, organisational, cultural and political issues.

Dr Ryan earned her Ph.D. at the University of Texas. She has taught graduate and undergraduate classes in the psychology of decision making, qualitative research methods, entrepreneurship, organisational behaviour and politics. Dr Ryan is a research fellow at the University of South Australia attached to the Hawke Research Institute for Sustainable Societies and a Research Associate of The Edward A. Clark Center for Australian & New Zealand Studies at the University of Texas. Dr Ryan's most recent research projects include an Australian National Longitudinal Study focussed on psychological responses to the effects of terrorism on well-being.

Dr Ryan is a co-founder and co-author of "Board Women", an international program to assist women to serve most effectively on Boards of Directors, both private and public. She has enjoyed various Board appointments, including a term on The Premier of South Australia's Council for Women.

Dr Ryan is also Chair of the "Silverton Foundation", a private family foundation based in Austin, Texas. Founded by Dr Ryan and her husband, the Silverton Foundation is dedicated to empowering disadvantaged people through educational, health and social services. The Foundation was

established in 2000 and operates internationally, with programs funded in Australia, Ethiopia, Vietnam, East Timor and the USA. In 2005 the Silverton Foundation was awarded the Philanthropic Organization of the Year for Central Texas.

Dr Ryan has shared her time between Australia and Texas for almost twenty years. In 1998, she shifted her focus to the public policy/political arena, to establish “Issues Deliberation Australia / Issues Deliberation America (IDA)”, and has been its Managing Director since its inception.

As Managing Director of IDA, Dr Ryan has headed the team of psychologists, sociologists, researchers and over 100 volunteers to ensure the success of numerous political and public policy projects:

- national Deliberative Polls on whether Australia should become a Republic, reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians and, most recently, relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Australians
- the Economic Growth Summit and Constitutional Convention on parliamentary reform for the South Australian government, and on whether or not to adopt a Bill of Rights for the ACT Government
- and a cross-country comparative study of voter behaviour in Australia and the USA.

There have been IDA research and event collaborations with both the Hawke Research Institute and the Hawke Centre at UniSA including support for IDA’s deliberative polls, and both entities have benefited from these associations.

Dr Ryan’s most recent deliberative poll in March 2007 brought together 340 Australians from all over the country and all walks of life with 40 Muslims who had participated in earlier focus groups.

After the event, an opinion poll found a dramatic drop in concern about Muslims in Australia following the detailed discussions about terrorism and other issues. Before the event, 35% told Newspoll that Muslims were a threat to the Australian way of life, and this fell to 21% after the event. Those who believed Muslims coming to Australia had a bad impact on national security nearly halved from 44% to 23%. The 49% who said the incompatibility of Muslim and non-Muslim values was a big contributor to terrorism fell to 22%, and just under a third who originally thought that Muslims who come to live here made Australia worse but this shrunk to just 7%.

Dr Ryan's organisation, "Issues Deliberation Australia" provided the Howard Government with a report on the full findings of the comparative survey. Labor's spokesman on multicultural affairs, Laurie Ferguson, praised the "highly democratic" nature of the event and said it would inform policy-makers in years to come. An Australian Premiere documentary screening of 'BEYOND BELIEFS: Muslim and Non-Muslim Australians Deliberate' was jointly presented with the Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre and supported by the Equal Opportunity Commission. 800 people attended at the Town Hall in September 2007.

In March 2005, Dr Ryan founded "Psychologists Without Borders" (PWOB) as a direct outcome of the first International Assembly on Managing the Psychology of Fear and Terror. This unprecedented event brought 90 of the world's experts on fear and terror to Austin, Texas to collaboratively build strategies for global, national, local and individual application.

In May 2005, Dr Ryan joined a team of psychologists from Israel, Australia and Texas for a PWOB pilot project in Sri Lanka doing tsunami relief work. PWOB is involved in planning similar mental health work for survivors of Hurricane Katrina in the US Gulf coast.

Out of Dr Ryan's International Assembly initiative, there has also been an exploration of what actually happens to survivors of terror in the aftermath, and the issue of how well prepared our communities are to deal with the longer term psychosocial effects of terrorist attacks. This also featured the screening of the film *BEYOND FEAR: Finding Hope in the Horror* based on the works of the invited experts. The film explores the psychological impact of fear and terror through the eyes of those who have suffered and those whose job it is to help them manage their trauma. This was co-presented with UniSA's Hawke Centre in November 2006 to an Adelaide audience of 650 at the Town Hall.

In summary, Dr Ryan's Australian and international contribution has been significant and her commitment to equity, research, and social justice are qualities which our own institution values highly. Therefore Chancellor, I present Pamela Ryan for the honorary degree of Doctor of the University in recognition of her achievements.