

## Mr Ron Radford AM Citation

Chancellor, the University of South Australia awards the Honorary Doctorate Degree to a recipient in recognition of distinction by the person in public service or service to the University, or in recognition of distinguished contribution by the person in a field of academic endeavour.

Ron Radford AM, referred to by some as “the elder statesman of Australian art”, is Director of the National Gallery of Australia. Before taking up this position in early 2005 he was Director of the Art Gallery of South Australia for thirteen years.

Victorian-born, Mr Radford was educated at Scotch College, Melbourne University and RMIT. He began his career not as a curator but as an education officer at the National Gallery of Victoria, and a very good one at that. Even in his first role, he was mounting exhibitions which were quite original contributions to Australian art history.

Rumour has it that he lied about his age, adding just a few years, to win his next role in 1973 as Director of the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery. It was a position previously held by the renowned Founding Director of the National Gallery of Australia, James Mollison - perhaps he was destined to follow in Mollison’s footsteps even then.

The Director of Art Monthly, Deborah Clark, has said about him, "Ron is one of that amazing generation who went to regional galleries and...made them into something important, something really vibrant. He's incredibly energetic and knowledgeable."

In 1981 Mr Radford became curator of European and Australian paintings and sculpture at the Art Gallery of South Australia - a role now filled by three curators.

In his time as Director, from 1991-2004, Mr Radford built an extraordinary collection of Australian art, particularly from the colonial period, developed a strong holding in Asian art and expanded the Renaissance collection. His capacity to engage donors to work with him for many years to purchase key artworks has greatly contributed to the depth and quality of the collection.

Mr Radford is known in Adelaide as a convivial , larger than life bon vivant with a wicked sense of humour and an easy ability to dissolve potential conflict with light-heartedness.

In his 30 years to date of working in the art museum profession in Victoria, South Australia and Australian Capital Territory, he has been responsible for the acquisition of approximately 15,000 works of art and has personally curated almost sixty exhibitions. He is also the author of numerous catalogues and books and was appointed Australian Commissioner for the 1999 Venice Biennale.

Mr Radford is a Doctor of Letters and an Affiliate Professor of the University of Adelaide and in 2003, became a Member of the Order of Australia.

He has served on many national and state boards and committees, including five years as a member of the Australia Council and Chair of its Visual Arts/Craft Board (from 1997–2002). He was a foundation member of the National Portrait Gallery Board from 1997 to 2005 and its Deputy Chair from 2001 to 2005.

In addition to his Director role at the NGA, Mr Radford is currently a trustee of the Gordon Darling Foundation, a member of the Board of Art Exhibitions Australia, a director of the Bundanon Trust and a member of the Australia International Cultural Council.

Chancellor, I present Ron Radford for the honorary degree of Doctor of the University in recognition of his significant contributions to the art community in South Australia and Nationally.