

CHANCELLOR

It gives me great pleasure to present Mr John Uhrig the award of Doctor of the University. Few Australians have played a more significant role in the business life of Australia. He is currently Chairman of the Board of two of Australia's top ten companies, Westpac Banking Corporation and CRA Limited. He is also the Chairman of the Boards of three major South Australian-based companies, Santos Limited, Amdel Limited and Codan Pty Ltd whose activities in oil and gas exploration, mineral analysis and electronics are of vital importance to the South Australian economy and mirror research strengths of the University.

John Uhrig has also contributed substantially to state and commonwealth government enquiries. In South Australia he has been Chairman of the Industrial Development Advisory Council, and a member of the Committee of Enquiry into Rehabilitation and Compensation of Persons injured at work and the Remuneration Tribunal. At the Commonwealth level he has been Chairman of the Australian Manufacturing Council, the Council of Advice to the Bureau of Industry Economics and the Review of the Industry Assistance Commission. He has also served on the Committee of Enquiry into Australia's Relations with the Third World, as a member of the former corporate watchdog, the National Companies and Securities Commission and was the Business Council of Australia's representative on the Commonwealth Working Party to recommend legislation on affirmative action for women. His outstanding contribution to Australia was recognised by the honour of an award as an Officer in the Order of Australia in 1980.

John Uhrig was born in Newcastle, New South Wales and attended Newcastle Technical Boys High School and the University of New South Wales. His career has flourished since settling in South Australia. He has been associated with major South Australian companies, having served on the Board of B. Seppelt & Sons and, most notably, as Managing Director of Simpson Holdings, the well-known white goods manufacturer, from 1975-85. He became a Director of CRA in 1983 and Chairman of the Board in 1987. He was appointed a Director of Westpac in 1989 and became its Chairman at the height (or depth) of its troubles in 1992. At the time, he was described in an article in the Business Australian as 'sensible, sound and down to earth'. Like Codan, the South Australian electronics company whose Board he chairs, which is a world leader in its field and is one of South Australia's success stories, John Uhrig is a quiet achiever.

A close business associate of his, recently commented that John Uhrig is an outstanding Director who has the rare ability to 'create an environment in which people can develop to their full potential'. Significantly, he has shown great leadership in companies involved in the mining and minerals industries such as CRA and Amdel, fields in which the University is at the forefront of Australian research such as the Ian Wark Research Institute, which under the dynamic leadership of Professor John Ralston, has been established with significant industry backing. John Uhrig's contribution to state and commonwealth government committees on rehabilitation and workers' compensation, relations with the Third World and affirmative action for women also sit well with the University's major commitment to equity issues in its mission.

In short, John Uhrig represents the very best example of leadership in Australian industry and the community. He is an outstanding South Australian and a worthy recipient of the University's highest award. Deputy Chancellor, I have the honour to present John Uhrig AO for the degree of Doctor of the University.