

**Citation for Janet Holmes à Court AC, AO BSc, DipEd
Tuesday 28 March 2017 at 3:00pm**

Officiator: Mr Jim McDowell

Award recipient: Ms Janet Holmes à Court AC, AO BSc, DipEd

Award being conferred: Honorary Doctor of the University (DUniv)

Citation delivered by: Professor Simon Beecham
Pro Vice Chancellor Information Technology, Engineering and the
Environment

Chancellor, the University of South Australia awards the Honorary Degree 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 Ms Janet Holmes à Court AC, AO for the honorary degree of Doctor of the University, in recognition of her distinguished service to the community.

Janet Holmes à Court is one of the most respected and influential people in Australia thanks to her achievements in business and her philanthropy. The National Trust has named her one of its “100 Australian Living Treasures”.

The breadth of her contribution was highlighted when she was promoted to a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) in 2007 for “service to business, particularly as a leader in the construction, wine and cattle industries, to the advancement of Western Australia's musical and theatre culture, to the visual arts, and to the community”. She had previously been made an Officer in the Order of Australia (AO) in 1995.

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Janet Holmes à Court studied science at the University of Western Australia (where she was the only woman majoring in organic chemistry) and worked as a science teacher before marrying and turning her skills to business with her husband's companies, which she took over following his death.

Her interest in education continued, however, and she cares passionately about the cultivation and nurturing of excellence in all fields of endeavour.

While perhaps best known as a patron of the arts, her interests and commitments are diverse. Among many roles she has served on the Board of the Reserve Bank, as a founding supporter of the Australian Wildlife Conservancy, as Pro-Chancellor at Murdoch University and a Senate member at both Murdoch and the University of WA, and as an advocate for Australian architecture in her current role as Venice Architecture Biennale Commissioner.

She currently chairs the Australian Children's Television Foundation and the West Australian Symphony Orchestra and sits on the board of six other organisations: the Australian Major Performing Arts Group; the Australian National Academy of Music; the Australian Urban Design Research Centre; the Chamber of Arts and Culture WA; the Australian Institute of Architects Foundation; and the New York Philharmonic International Advisory Board.

The Holmes à Court family has had a long interest in art and the Holmes à Court Collection includes more than 4000 works, many of which are lent to galleries around Australia for public display. The Holmes à Court Gallery at Vasse Felix Winery is a major attraction in Margaret River.

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Janet Holmes à Court's philanthropic support of the arts, medical research and charitable organisations has been long-standing and significant. She was named United Way Philanthropist of the Year in 2008, received the Woodrow Wilson Corporate Citizenship Award in 2009, and in 2011 was Inducted into the International Women's Day WA Women's Hall of Fame and elected an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

Janet Holmes à Court has made a significant impact on Australian society both directly through her support of cultural, charitable and educational causes, including medical research, and indirectly through her vision and leadership. An active participant in progressive social issues, she has been a strong promoter of public ethics in corporate life and her own philanthropy has inspired others to do the same.

Chancellor, on behalf of the University of South Australia, I am pleased to present Janet Holmes à Court AC, AO for the honorary degree of Doctor of the University, in recognition of her distinguished service to the community.