

**Citation for the Honourable Dr Brendan John Nelson AO BMBS FRACP (HON) FAMA
FRSN**

Tuesday 23 April, 2019 at 3:00pm

Officiator: Mr Jim Hazel, Pro Chancellor

Award being conferred: Doctor of the University (DUniv)

**Citation delivered by: Professor Marie Wilson, Pro Vice Chancellor
(Business and Law).**

Pro 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 the Honourable Dr Brendan Nelson AO for the honorary degree of Doctor of the University, in recognition of his distinguished service to the community.

Dr Nelson has been Director of the Australian War Memorial since December 2012. Prior to this, he was the Australian Ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg, the European Union and NATO, serving from 2010 to 2012. He drove a major transformation in Australia's relationships with the European Union and NATO.

Born at Coburg, Victoria, Dr Nelson graduated from Flinders University in 1983 with a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery. He worked as a medical practitioner in Hobart from 1985 to 1995. In 1993 he was elected unopposed as National President of the Australian Medical Association, the youngest person ever to hold this position. He had previously served as its Vice President and Tasmanian Branch President. A relentless advocate for his profession, as AMA president he campaigned on a wide range of social policy issues, including Aboriginal health and immunisation. He led the campaign to ban tobacco advertising and sponsorship of sport. In 1995 Dr Nelson completed his term as AMA president having overseen a major growth in AMA membership.

Dr Nelson was elected to the Federal Parliament in March 1996, representing the Sydney electorate of Bradfield for the Liberal Party of Australia. In 2001 he was promoted from parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Defence to Cabinet into the senior portfolio of Minister for Education, Science and Training. Here he drove major reforms to universities and a focus on school standards and reporting. In

2006 he was appointed Minister for Defence when troops were deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, East Timor and the Solomon Islands. He oversaw major new investments, including the purchase of four C-17 heavy lift Globemasters, 24 FA-18F super hornets, three air warfare destroyers, two Landing Helicopter Docks, two additional battalions for the Australian army and a multibillion dollar recruitment and retention package.

In November 2007 Dr Nelson was elected leader of the Liberal Party of Australia, serving as Leader of the Opposition until September 2008. He led his party to support of the national Apology to Aboriginal Australians. The following year he retired from politics before taking up his ambassadorial appointment.

In 1995 Dr Nelson was awarded the AMA's highest honour, the Gold Medal for "Distinguished Service to Medicine and Humanity". In recognition of his commitment to public health, he was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. In 2011 he received an Honorary Doctorate from Flinders University and in 2017, an Honorary Doctorate from the Australian National University. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of NSW, Rotary Paul Harris Fellow and a Sydney University John Lowenthal Medallist.

Dr Nelson was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in January 2016 for his services to the community, the parliament of Australia, diplomacy and cultural leadership.

In 2018 the Returned and Services League conferred Honorary Life Membership upon Dr Nelson for his services to and support of veterans. He was also awarded honorary citizenship of the Belgian city of Ypres in recognition of his support for the city, its commemorations and Last Post Association.

He is a Distinguished Visiting Fellow at ANU; Member of the Australian Genome Project Advisory Board; Patron of Lifeline ACT; Patron of Trish MS Research; Patron of the Weary Dunlop Foundation; Patron of the NSW RSL and Services Clubs; Ambassador for Legacy Australia and for the Defence Force Reserves Council.

Pro Chancellor, on behalf of the University of South Australia, I am pleased to present the Honourable Dr Brendan John Nelson AO for the honorary degree of Doctor of the University, in recognition of his distinguished service to the community.

