

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 Catherine Branson AC SC for the honorary degree of Doctor of the University in recognition of her distinguished service to the community.

Catherine Branson was born in Terowie, South Australia and grew up on a farming property near Hallett. She attended the Presbyterian Girls' College, now known as Seymour College, before studying at the University of Adelaide.

Graduating with a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Arts, Catherine initially worked in private legal practice. In 1977 she accepted a role in the South Australian Department of Legal Services before moving to the Crown Solicitor's Office in 1978.

Catherine was the first female head of a South Australian government department, as Chief Executive Officer of the Attorney-General's Department, and simultaneously the first female Crown Solicitor in Australia. Later, she practised as a barrister at the private bar, being appointed Queen's Counsel in 1992. She went on to be one of the first women to be appointed to the Federal Court of Australia, where she served for more than 14 years.

Following her retirement from the Federal Court, Catherine served as President of the Australian Human Rights Commission.

In 2018 Catherine was awarded a Companion of the Order of Australia for her service to the judiciary as a Judge of the Federal Court of Australia, to the law as an advocate for human rights and civil liberties, to judicial administration and professional development, and to governance roles in tertiary education.

Prior to her appointment in 2020 as the seventeenth Chancellor of the University of Adelaide, she served on the University's Council as the Chair of the Audit, Compliance and Risk Committee and as Deputy Chancellor.

Catherine has been, and continues to be, a leader of social change and a champion of the people of South Australia

Chancellor, I am pleased to present Catherine Branson AC SC for the honorary award of Doctor of the University.