

## Professor Denise Bradley AO Citation

Chancellor

It is a singular honour to have been asked to propose Professor Denise Bradley for the award of both the honorary degree of Doctor of the University, and Emeritus Professor. While the University has celebrated the contribution to education, and public life more generally, of many distinguished members of the University and the wider community through the award of an honorary doctorate, and while we acknowledge the contribution of the most productive members of the professoriate by conferring on them the title of Emeritus Professor on their retirement, no one has previously been proposed for both of these awards. And that is fitting, since no one associated with the University has been both so prominent in public life and done more to shape the University of South Australia than Professor Bradley.

Professor Bradley began her professional career as a teacher in secondary schools and colleges, juggling work and family commitments as she raised four sons. She then brought together her personal and professional experience through her appointment as Women's Adviser to the South Australian Education Department from 1977 to 1980, before moving back to higher education as a lecturer in education at the Adelaide College of Arts and Education.

Two years later, and following the amalgamation of the various colleges of advanced education to form the South Australian College of Advanced Education – one of the two antecedent institutions of the University of South Australia - she was elected the Dean of the Faculty of Education of the SACAE, a position which she held until her appointment to the position of Director: Academic of the SACAE in 1986. Thus Prof Bradley has held leadership positions in institutions which led to the University of South Australia for more than twenty years.

Professor Bradley became the Principal of the SACAE in 1990 and when the University of South Australia was formed by the amalgamation of the SACAE and the South Australian Institute of Technology in 1991, she became the Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University, holding that position until 1997 when she was appointed Vice Chancellor following Professor David Robinson taking up the position of Vice Chancellor of Monash University.

While heavily engaged in the task of leading and developing first the SACAE and then the University of South Australia, Prof Bradley also played an important national role as member of the Tertiary Education Commission and the Higher Education Council, the latter as Deputy Chair from 1991-1994. She continued her policy interest in equity as a member of the Schools Commission National Working Party on the Education of Girls, Convenor of the national Women's Employment Education and Training Advisory Group, and Chair of the Equity Working Party of the Higher Education Council.

She also began contributing to the developing policy on quality in schooling and higher education, as a member of the Joint Schools Council/Higher Education Council working party on Teacher Quality, the Australian Vice Chancellor's Committee Standing Committee on Education, which she chaired in 1999, and the Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. During this time she acted as a reviewer for many universities including Deakin, the University of Technology Sydney and Monash. Her leadership in this emerging field was recognised by the State and Federal Ministers of Education when she was appointed one of three foundation directors of the Australian Universities' Quality Agency in 2000.

Equity and quality have been two of the major areas of higher education policy development in Australia in the last twenty years. It would be generally agreed that the four others have been the huge growth in participation in universities; the development of links between technical and further education and universities; broadening the research base across Australia's universities; and the internationalisation of higher education. Professor Bradley has made important contributions nationally in all these areas, as a director of Open Universities Australia and the Australian Credit Transfer Authority; a member in 1989 of the joint Higher Education Council/Australian Research Council working party on research infrastructure; and as a Director and since 2005 Chair of IDP Education Australia, an executive member of the International Association of University Presidents and a director of the Australian-American Fulbright Commission Board. Her international work has included contributions to OECD reviews, UNESCO conferences and numerous ministerial delegations.

While it is not possible in this citation to survey Professor Bradley's many appointments and contributions, it is striking how often she has been involved at the beginning of what becomes a defining policy issue or major development in the higher education sector, as my brief summary shows. Her eye for the emerging issue, ability to identify the questions that need to be addressed and capacity to make persuasive contributions to their resolution has led to her being elected to the Board of the AVCC by her fellow Vice Chancellors, a position she has held since 2003, to her Chairing the Australian Technology Network of Universities since 2005, her membership since 1995 of the Board of Directors of the Business/Higher Education Round Table and to Minister Nelson appointing her to the Higher Education Review Reference Group in 2002.

For these many achievements in higher education Professor Bradley has, among many other honours, been awarded an honorary doctorate by Pukyong University – UniSA's longest standing international partner university – and RMIT will follow later this year; been made a fellow of the Australian College of Educators – and will assume the Presidency of the College from 2008; has been made a fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors; was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in 1995 and awarded the Centenary Medal in 2003; and closer to home was South Australian of the Year in 2005.

As a scholar, Professor Bradley has published in many of the areas in which she has worked from girls and schooling, through distance education to higher education management. Particularly in recent years she has been in much demand as a speaker on higher education management and leadership both in Australia and internationally.

The major expression of her scholarship, however, has been the creation of the University of South Australia. There is no aspect of the University that has not been the attention of her sharp intelligence. Many managers in the University will have had the unnerving experience of discussing their area with her to discover that she seems to know more about it than they do, and has clear ideas about how it should be developed, ideas which have typically been based on recently reading more widely about the area than those who are specialists in it. Her capacity to absorb information and quickly reach a conclusion which can be successfully carried through is unequalled in my experience. That and her enormous energy – and total commitment to the job – have been the foundation of her successful leadership of the University. It is no exaggeration to say that Professor Bradley's leadership saved the University from a very serious financial situation early in her term as Vice Chancellor, just as her leadership has more recently turned around IDP, an organisation which is at the core of Australia's great success as a provider of international education.

While the future will take its own course, the University is now surely on a successful path. There have been moments earlier in our short history where this was far from assured, and getting the University back on a path to success has required leadership and commitment that would have tested any chief executive. On every occasion, Professor Bradley has risen to the challenges as they presented themselves – indeed, as she sought them out.

There is no part of the University which she has not profoundly influenced, and accordingly, Chancellor, I present Denise Bradley for the title of Professor Emeritus, and for the degree of Doctor of the University.