

Emeritus Professor of the University

Professor Friso De Boer

Professor Friso De Boer has an impressive tenure at CDU of 22 years and is a renowned senior academic for the university and a leader in the disciplines of engineering and information technology.

Throughout his career he has held the position of Professor of Engineering (2009 – 2025), Associate Professor (2003 -2008), Head of School, and Discipline Chair across Engineering and Information Technology. Over the course of his 38 year-long career in academia, his work has encompassed appointments at the University of Wollongong, University of the Netherlands Antilles, and Netherlands' largest public university, the Delft University of Technology.

As a Discipline Chair of Engineering at CDU, he pioneered the online delivery of engineering education, including the development of fully accredited online laboratories. Which led to CDU's Engineering Program to be the first fully online Engineering Accredited Program in the country and one of only two in Australia to receive EUR-ACE accreditation. This accreditation reinforced CDU's positioning as a national leader in digital delivery.

Professor De Boer's leadership has been instrumental in establishing programs attractive to international students. Under his guidance, CDU has had the number of International Fee Paying (IFP) students studying engineering increase from about 8% of the total cohort in 2003 to about half in 2024.

Through his research, Professor De Boer attracted significant external funding, securing \$3.5 million for CDU research between 2003 and 2009. He also supervised 17 HDR students and has been extensively published in the specialist fields of bio signalling processing and machine learning.

Further to his contributions to CDU Professor De Boer served as an Executive Member of the Australian Council of Engineering Deans (2013–2024), chaired multiple Engineers Australia accreditation panels, and was appointed to the Northern Territory Ministerial ICT Advisory Council (2014–2018). He is a Fellow of Engineers Australia, Senior Member of The Australian Computer Society, and Member of the Australasian Association for Engineering Education.

Professor De Boer's time at CDU has had transformative impact in Engineering and IT. Over the years he has fostered a culture of innovation, quality and strategic growth.

His continual service to CDU life, professional bodies, and engineering community engagement reflect his commitment to advancing education and engineering practice in Australia and internationally.

In recognition of his distinguished academic leadership and contributions to CDU, the engineering and information technology professions and the broader community, Charles Darwin University Council awards Professor Friso De Boer the Honorary title of Emeritus Professor of the University

Doctor of Letters

Honoris Causa

His Excellency, The President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste,

Dr José Ramos-Horta

Dr José Ramos-Horta is one of the world's most respected advocates for peace, reconciliation, and the power of knowledge to shape just and inclusive societies. His life's work reflects an extraordinary commitment to intellectual leadership grounded in lived experience, cultural understanding, and moral courage.

For more than four decades, Dr Ramos-Horta has advanced the cause of Timor-Leste through scholarship, diplomacy, and sustained global engagement. During the long struggle for independence, he acted not only as a political representative, but as a translator of history, culture, and human rights—bringing international attention to the voices and experiences of the Timorese people. His work exemplifies knowledge as a form of leadership: carefully articulated, ethically grounded, and mobilised to inform global conscience and action.

Following independence, Dr Ramos-Horta played a central role in shaping Timor-Leste's approach to reconciliation and nation-building. He was a strong advocate for truth-telling processes that acknowledged past harms while prioritising healing, social cohesion, and shared futures. His support for reconciliation mechanisms demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of post-conflict societies—recognising that sustainable peace requires not only political settlements, but deep engagement with history, memory, culture, and community knowledge systems.

Across his leadership roles as President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and international statesman, Dr Ramos-Horta has consistently championed education, intellectual exchange, and dialogue across difference. He has emphasised the role of universities, scholars, and future leaders in strengthening democratic institutions, advancing regional cooperation, and addressing complex global challenges. His leadership is marked by humility, reflection, and an enduring belief in learning as a lifelong and collective endeavour.

Dr Ramos-Horta's contribution is particularly significant in the Indo-Pacific region. His work has strengthened relationships between nations, advanced regional stability, and modelled a form of leadership that bridges local knowledge and global responsibility. His legacy speaks powerfully to Charles Darwin University's mission as a regional university committed to Indigenous knowledges, reconciliation, social justice, and engagement across Northern Australia and our neighbouring nations.

In recognition of his contribution to reconciliation, peacebuilding, and his exemplary service to Timor-Leste, Charles Darwin University Council awards Dr José Ramos-Horta the degree of Doctor of Letters, Honoris Causa