

CHANCELLOR,

I have the honour to present to you Professor Grahame Webb, who Council has determined should be awarded the degree of Doctor of Science *Honoris Causa*.

Professor Grahame Webb is widely regarded as one of the world's leading authorities on crocodylian research and management, and on the concept of conserving wildlife through programs of sustainable use.

Grahame Webb born in Sydney and raised in central New South Wales – notably a very long way from crocodiles. His interest in reptiles didn't manifest itself until he attended university and started studying zoology. He completed his undergraduate degree, Honours degree and Doctor of Philosophy at the University of New England, where he was awarded the University medal in 1970. He moved to Darwin in 1973 to undertake research into Saltwater Crocodiles in northern Australia. During this time he worked closely with the Indigenous communities of Arnhem Land, becoming familiar and learning from methods of traditional management.

In the post war period up until 1971 when it was banned, hunting resulted in the near extinction of crocodiles in the Top End – the population at that time was estimated to be at around 4,000. Very little study had been done on crocodiles up until that time, enabling Grahame to undertake ground breaking research into their biology and ecology. In addition to this, as crocodile numbers began to rise, Grahame recognised the growing need for crocodile management – the numbers have today risen to levels of about 75,000 – 80,000 crocodiles, which co-exist almost on par with humans in the Top End.

Professor Webb has also been heavily involved with the development of education programs designed to ensure that people can co-exist with these numbers of crocodiles. In addition to this, he has warned against culling the crocodile population, particularly the larger males, which are responsible for keeping the population at a sustainable level. Instead he postulates conservation through sustainable use. This is guided by several principles, including that conservation of wildlife and natural habitats on private lands will be enhanced if land owners can derive economic benefit from using wildlife sustainably, and that these uses should not be detrimental to the conservation of the species or their supporting ecosystems. Under such a system, for example, wild eggs can be harvested and farmed, and the landowners could be suitably recompensed. The skins and meat can then be used to supply the market, further ensuring that wild crocodiles remain a valuable asset to the Northern Territory that should be maintained, despite their predatory nature.

In 1978 Grahame Webb established Wildlife Management International, which was initially focussed on conservation and management of crocodiles, but which has now expanded to

include both local environmental management and international issues. WMI serves the needs of numerous national and regional governments and wildlife and conservation agencies, as well as industries, universities and individuals. In Australia, co-operative research links have been established with Murdoch University, the University of New South Wales, the University of Adelaide and Charles Darwin University.

In 1994, WMI developed Crocodylus Park as a crocodile research and education centre in Darwin, and which now serves as a base for the company's operation. Grahame and his wife Giovanna, who is also a crocodile scientist, manage the centre as a research facility, a tourist attraction and as a crocodile farm. Crocodylus Park represents an important commitment by WMI to public education, wildlife conservation and sustainability.

Professor Webb has published hundreds of academic papers and numerous books, including one work of fiction. He has a distinguished academic record and has held appointments with the University of Sydney, the Australian Museum – Sydney, the University of New South Wales and Charles Darwin University. In addition he was the Foundation President of Essington School, a Foundation member of the Northern Territory Research and Development Advisory Council, the Foundation Chairman of the Northern Territory Research and Innovation Board and has held many positions with the International Union for Conservation of Nature Species Survival Commission. He has been the Chairman of the Board for the NT Environment Protection Agency and has a long history of international involvement through conferences and symposia as an invited expert and keynote speaker.

In 2001 Professor Webb was awarded the prestigious Clunies Ross National Science and Technology Award, for his contribution to a new vision for wildlife conservation based on sustainable use. In 2003 he was awarded an Australian Centenary Medal, for his contribution to crocodile research and to the establishment of The Essington School in Darwin.

CHANCELLOR

In recognition of his world leading research into crocodiles and outstanding contribution to wildlife conservation, Grahame Webb has been awarded by the Council of Charles Darwin University, the degree of Doctor of Science, *Honoris Causa* -Professor Grahame Webb