

CHANCELLOR,

Chancellor, I have the honour to present to you Tom Calma, who Council has determined should be awarded the degree of Doctor of Letters *Honoris Causa*.

Mr Tom Calma is an Aboriginal elder from the Kungarakan tribal group and a member of the Iwaidja tribal group whose traditional lands are south-west of Darwin and on the Coburg Peninsula in Northern Territory.

As a young man, Mr Calma completed an Associate Diploma of Social Work at the South Australian Institute of Technology and began working for the Australian Government in various roles.

In 1980 he joined the then Darwin Community College, one of the predecessor institutions of this University we enjoy today, as a lecturer in the Aboriginal Task Force program. By 1981 he was coordinator of the program and then Head of the academic department. At the time Tom was the first Indigenous Australian appointed to a tenured position at a post-secondary education institution in the Northern Territory and one of the first nationally.

In 1986 he rejoined the Australian Government as the Director of the Aboriginal Employment and Training Branch in the Department of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs based here in Darwin.

Following a transfer to Canberra, he became the Executive Officer to the Secretary of the Department of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs. In this role he chaired and undertook a national review of Aboriginal Education Units in the department.

Over the ensuing years he has held a range of positions with the Australian Government, roles that often had a national and international scope.

By 2003 he had become the Senior Adviser – Indigenous Affairs to the then Federal Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and Minister assisting the Prime Minister on Reconciliation. Later he moved into the role of Manager of the Community Development and Education Branch of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services with a range of policy and program delivery responsibilities.

In 2004 Mr Calma was appointed by the Australian Human Rights Commission to the role of National Race Discrimination Commissioner and also Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner. He held these positions until 2009.

During his appointment as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Mr Calma took on a significant national leadership role, which included

- implementing the “Close the Gap Campaign” to achieve health equality for Indigenous Australians;

- promoting economic development through recognition of Indigenous people's traditional land tenure systems;
- highlighting climate change and its effects on Indigenous peoples; community-based solutions to addressing family violence and child abuse in Indigenous communities; ensuring effective representation of Indigenous peoples in government policy making processes and service delivery;
- formal government endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; delivering the 2009 Mabo Oration; and
- continued advocacy for members of the Stolen Generations and delivering the formal response in Parliament House on their behalf to the Prime Minister's National Apology.

He was recently engaged as the first National Coordinator for Tackling Indigenous Smoking. As part of this role he will lead and mentor the *tackling smoking workforce program* being established under the Australian Government's \$100 million COAG Tackling Smoking initiative to reduce the incidence of tobacco smoking in Indigenous communities.

Mr Calma also gives his time to important issues in the wider community. He has been

- A White Ribbon Day Ambassador since 2005.

And is National Patron of

- The Wakakirri National Story Festival:
- The Poche Centres for Indigenous Health Network
- The Rural Health Education Foundation.

For almost four decades Mr Calma has been deeply involved in Indigenous affairs at the local, community, state, national and international levels. Throughout this time he has strived to achieve better outcomes in education, employment and training programs for Indigenous people from both a national policy and program perspective.

Tom Calma, you are recognised for your tremendous, life-long commitment to the advancement of Indigenous and multicultural issues within Australia. It is with great pleasure that this evening we also recognise your achievements with this honorary degree.

CHANCELLOR

In recognition of his outstanding commitment and contribution to the advancement of Indigenous and multicultural Australia, primarily in the areas of education, employment and training programs for Indigenous and remote communities, I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters, *Honoris Causa*.