

DR THOMAS UREN

Citation for the conferral of a Doctor of the University (*honoris causa*)

Thomas Uren has made a distinguished contribution to the vigour of Australian democracy and the practice of parliamentary government in Australia. His entry in 'Who's Who' chronicles his parliamentary and ministerial career. He was a member of the Australian Parliament for a total of thirty-two years, and served in two ministries. In the Hawke Government, he was Minister for Territories and Local Government in 1983 and 1984, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Community Development and Regional Affairs in those two years, and Minister for Local Government and Administrative Services in 1984.

In the Whitlam Government, he was Minister for Urban and Regional Development for the years 1972 - 75. The remainder of his entry in "Who's Who" mainly summarises his parliamentary appointments and offices. These take up some five inches of very small type. They range in time from his appointment as leader of the Parliamentary Delegation to the International Parliamentary Union in 1990, back to his membership of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Delegation to the inauguration of the Papua New Guinea House of Assembly in 1964. In between, he had been Deputy Leader of the Opposition and a member of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party Executive, as well as holding a number of lesser posts.

Impressive as the "Who's Who" list is, it barely hints at three other aspects of the man. They have to do with other forms of service to his country. Tom Uren enlisted in the Second Australian Infantry Forces, was captured and forced to labour on the Burma-Thailand Railway. There his courage, stamina and his calmness under severe provocation was an inspiration to his fellow Australian prisoners.

Second, and also part of his service to his country, Tom Uren has spent much of his life as a constructive oppositionist. He has not been afraid to grasp poison chalices, or support unpopular causes if he thought they were right. Those of us who know something of the politics of Australia's part in the war in Vietnam, know that Tom Uren was prepared to spend time in gaol in support of a cause that he thought was right, and they will know too that history has since vindicated him.

The third aspect of the man is the one that most closely associates Tom Uren with this ceremony. He has a strong sense of place. He demonstrated that quality in his establishment of the Australian Heritage Commission and the National Estate Program. But besides having a sense of place in history, he also had a sense of place in the future. On 20 November 1973 he introduced legislation to establish the Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation, a statutory body comprising representatives of Federal, State and Local governments. Its charter was to promote the growth of the region.

If Mr Uren seeks a monument to that achievement, then all he has to do is to look around him. Charles Sturt University would like to honour him in a more tangible and formal way.

Chancellor it is my privilege to present to you Thomas Uren, Officer of the Order of Australia, parliamentarian, patriot and a truly distinguished Australian, for the admission to the Degree of Doctor of the University (*honoris causa*).

Dated this Eighteenth Day of April One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety Seven