

# **Murdoch University**

## **Investiture of Mr Gary Smith as Chancellor of Murdoch University**

### **Address by the Honourable Kim Beazley AC Governor of Western Australia**

**Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

I would firstly like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet – the Whadjuk Noongar people – and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. It is truly a pleasure to be with you on this special day in the history of Murdoch University with the formal appointment of this fine institution's seventh Chancellor.

On a personal note, it is wonderful to celebrate – and officiate, at this occasion, in this beautiful theatre, which bears the name of my father. Even more it is like coming home. I served as a student on the planning board for Murdoch. The excitement was palpable. 60 years after the establishment of UWA, a new University was emerging. A chance for experimentation. Then my first job on the staff here where the ethos revolved heavily around doing things differently. Then the University had a distinct outback ambience. Now it is unrecognisable. A lush campus, 23,000 students. The lead campus for five others onshore and offshore. Capable, as the new Phenome Centre evidences, of attracting peak research from an established campus in the UK. This is a University which would be a joy to lead.

As well as having the privilege of being Governor of this great State, under the Murdoch University Act, I also hold the title of Official Visitor.

Shortly, it will be my honour and duty to formally install Murdoch University's new Chancellor.

As you have heard, the investiture of a new university Chancellor is a ceremony steeped in tradition centuries old. Indeed, it is one of the oldest traditions in academia.

While an investiture ceremony celebrates tradition and enduring values that universities hold dear, it is also an occasion to look over the horizon and ponder "what might come", rather than "what has been".

For the installation of a new Chancellor, who stands at the apex of a university, always brings with it an important new perspective.

I turn your attention to the words of Murdoch University's Foundation Vice-Chancellor Professor Stephen Griew – words spoken almost 45 years ago in an address to the first cohort of undergraduate students. He was the boss when I joined the staff.

He said: "Learning takes many forms, and knowledge, of course, nowadays knows few limits. But both involve a search and respect for something more than the superficial. For evidence, for

rationality, for relentless inquiry, for impartiality, and for a belief in mastery and genuine understanding. In short, a commitment to integrity in the intellectual life that most of us strive to achieve in our personal dealings with other people. That is what a university education is all about, and we are here, in a few words, to encourage and demonstrate its value and integrity.”

So, Professor Griew was reflecting there not just on the purpose of the pursuit of knowledge, but also the importance of university leaders and teachers as providing an example and roadmap to a life and love of learning.

Of course, university leaders also need sources of wisdom and guidance and receive these from many quarters. For a Vice Chancellor and the University Senate, one of the most important of these sources of counsel is provided by the Chancellor.

As Chair of the University Senate, a Chancellor must have many fine qualities. They must be a person who is held in wide esteem, with a reputation for integrity and probity; they must be excellent listeners and negotiators; skilled communicators and of course, as the formal head of the University and Chair of the Senate, they must be passionate about the vision and purpose of the university.

As you have just heard from the Vice Chancellor, Mr Gary Smith has all these attributes in abundance.

He is an exceptional business and community leader. He has a deep and abiding commitment to facilitating reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Western Australians. And he has worked tirelessly to inspire and support Aboriginal people to move into positions of leadership for the betterment of their communities and families.

I have no doubt that all these fine qualities will guide Mr Smith’s words and actions as he leads Murdoch University through challenges, triumphs and every possibility in between.

To borrow from Professor Griew again: “In joining a community such as this, one voluntarily assumes a rather awe-inspiring responsibility which does not always lead to the most comfortable of lives.”

I now ask the new Chancellor of Murdoch University Mr Gary Smith to come forward to be presented with the Chancellor’s Gown.

As Governor of Western Australia and Visitor to Murdoch University, I welcome you as Chancellor. May you carry out your duties and fulfil your responsibilities with diligence and wisdom.

Thank you.