

Citation for the Honourable Gregory Ivan Combet AM

B Eng (Mining); BEc, Grad Dip Labour Relations and the Law

Wednesday 19 September 2018 at 3:00pm

Officiator: **The Hon John Hill, Pro Chancellor**

Award being conferred: **Doctor of the University (DUniv)**

Citation delivered by: **Professor Joanne Cys, Pro Vice Chancellor Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences.**

Pro Chancellor, the University of South Australia awards the Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University to a person of eminence who has made a distinguished contribution to public service, or a field of academic endeavour or artistic pursuit. It is my pleasure to present the Honourable Gregory Ivan Combet AM for the honorary degree of Doctor of the University, in recognition of his distinguished service to the community.

Greg Combet is a former federal Labor Government Minister and former leader of the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

He began as a trades assistant, then as a miner and in minerals exploration before being employed by the NSW Tenants' Union as a project officer and then by the Lidcombe Workers' Health Centre. He became a Senior Industrial Officer at the ACTU in 1993 and was elected its Assistant Secretary in 1996. Following the resignation of Bill Kelty, Mr Combet became Secretary of the ACTU. During his time at the head of the Union group, Mr Combet oversaw numerous national wage cases to secure pay rises for low-paid Australian workers. Most notably, he led the "Your Rights at Work" Campaign against the industrial relations legislation changes in 2005-06.

Mr Combet was elected to the House of Representatives for Charlton, New South Wales in 2007 and 2010, and retired prior to the general elections in 2013. He held various cabinet, ministerial and parliamentary roles within the Australian Government, among them Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science;

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Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency; and Minister for Industry and Innovation.

Post-retirement the South Australian government appointed him Chairman of the state's Automotive Transformation Taskforce to help South Australian auto-suppliers diversify their business models ahead of the closure of Holden.

In April 2016, he was appointed by the Victorian State Government as a Victorian Defence Industry Advocate with the purpose of: providing advice, growing the sector and creating new jobs.

Mr Combet is a proven leader, strategist, complex problem solver and crisis manager with extensive, hands-on knowledge of Australian industry. He is adept in advocacy, governance and financial management.

He has been a Director on the Board of ME Bank and has also been Deputy Chair of IFM Investors Board. He is Deputy Chair of Industry Super Australia and has been involved in industry superannuation for 30 years.

Mr Combet was named Patron of the Black Lung Victims Group shortly after its formation in August 2016. With their numbers growing, Black Lung disease (or coal workers' pneumoconiosis) victims in Queensland came together to form a victims' group to focus on advocacy, support and guidance for coalmine workers living with the disease.

On 12 June 2006, Mr Combet was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for 'service to industrial relations and through advocacy for the improved health and safety of workers, including people affected by asbestos-related diseases, and to the community.'

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