

Mr Ronni Kahn AO – CITATION (Tuesday 12 April 2022 at 9:30 am)

Chancellor, the University of South Australia confers the Honorary Award 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 Ronni Kahn AO for the honorary award of Doctor of the University, in recognition of her distinguished service to the community.

Ronni Kahn is a passionate advocate and activist, renowned for disrupting the food waste landscape in Australia. The South-African born Australian is a social entrepreneur who founded the food rescue charity OzHarvest.

As the owner of a successful event company, Ronni saw huge volumes of food going to waste every day and soon realised she was part of the problem. Knowing that millions of people were going hungry, she determined that this was something that had to be fixed. Ronni's simple solution of taking her own surplus food to local charities quickly took off and in 2004, OzHarvest was born.

Ronni's determination shone through when together with pro bono lawyers, she lobbied government to have the law changed to allow good food to be given away for free without fear of liability to the donor. In 2005 the Civil Liabilities Amendment Act was passed in NSW, with other states following.

Today, OzHarvest is Australia's leading food rescue organisation. With Ronni at the helm, a dedicated team of nearly 300 staff and more than 3000 volunteers share her devotion for the cause. The charity has grown under Ronni's stewardship from humble beginnings in Sydney to delivering food and educational programs across Australia. The charity's model has been shared globally and is now established in New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

Ronni's quest to tackle Australia's food waste problem makes her a lead spokesperson on the issue, appearing regularly in national media, on expert panels and in an advisory capacity to the government. She is a keynote speaker all over the world, inspiring people to find their own purpose.

Always on the lookout for new ways to innovate, Ronni started the world's first free supermarket – the OzHarvest Market – based on a 'take what you need give if you can' philosophy and founded ForPurposeCo - a sustainable, social focused business to create revenue for OzHarvest.

Ronni has received various accolades recognising her achievements, most notably her appointment as Officer of the Order of Australia (AO), Boss Magazine Top 21 True Leaders, Gourmet Traveller's Outstanding Contribution to Hospitality, Griffith University's Doctor of the University (honoris causa) and Australian Local Hero of the Year.

Ronni's journey in the fight against food waste became the feature of an independent film *Food Fighter*. Her memoir *A Re-Purposed Life* was published by Murdoch Books Australia.

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