

Citation for Professor Fiona Juliet Stanley AC FAA, FASSA, FAHMS, MSc, MBBSMD, FFPHM, FAFPHM, FRACP, FRANZCOG, FAHMS (Hon), HonDSc, Hon DUniv, Hon MD, HonFRACGP, Hon FRCPCH, Hon MD, Hon LLB (honoris causa), Hon DSc (honoris causa)

Wednesday 17 April 2019 at 10:30am

Officiator: Ms Pauline Carr, Chancellor

Award being conferred: Doctor of the University (DUniv)

Citation delivered by: Professor Roger Eston, Pro Vice Chancellor the Division of Health Sciences.

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 Professor Fiona Juliet Stanley AC for the honorary degree of Doctor of the University, in recognition of her distinguished service to the community.

Professor Stanley is a leading Australian epidemiologist well known and respected for her research into child and maternal health. As Founding Director of the Telethon Institute for Child Health she has worked to raise funds for, and awareness of, childhood disease and disorders. Professor Stanley currently holds the position of Distinguished Research Professor, Paediatrics and Child Health at University of Western Australia.

Professor Stanley's impact on the health of women and children all over the world has been extraordinary. Her two greatest research achievements, through her pivotal role in the Telethon Institute, are the discovery of the link between levels of folic acid during pregnancy and spina bifida and that cerebral palsy may be caused by factors other than birth trauma. It has become common practice for women in Australia, and many other countries, to take folic acid before and during pregnancy to prevent a range of birth defects. She has helped to change the behaviour, and subsequently the health, of the Australian population.

Professor Stanley is widely recognised for her contribution to Indigenous child and maternal health in Western Australia.

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The Telethon Institute continues to support four research focus areas: Aboriginal health; brain and behaviour; chronic and severe diseases; and early environment.

Current projects include:

- extending the life expectancy in children with cystic fibrosis;
- examining novel ways to fight aggressive children's cancers;
- developing new therapies for children with Type 1 diabetes;
- providing a better understanding of the risks and benefits of sun exposure;
- improving prevention, diagnosis and intervention for foetal alcohol syndrome; and
- reducing non-communicable diseases such as obesity, allergies, heart disease and poor mental health.

These are just a few of the programs and projects that continue to positively affect the health of Australians into future generations. Under Professor Stanley's stewardship, the Telethon Institute has had considerable commercial success allowing it to continue its broad program of research and application.

She has been the recipient of major honours; the largest and newest Western Australian public and teaching hospital was named in her honour and she was commemorated through a stamp issued by Australia Post.

Professor Stanley was also named Australian of the Year in 2003. In 2004, she was honoured as a "National Living Treasure" by the National Trust. She is the UNICEF Australia Ambassador for Early Childhood Development.

Chancellor: On behalf of the University of South Australia, I am pleased to present Professor Fiona Juliet Stanley AC for the honorary degree of Doctor of the University, in recognition of her distinguished service to the community.