Citation for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of the University (DUniv)

Dr Peter Toyne
MSc(Path) *Melbourne*, DipEd *Melbourne*, PhD *La Trobe*

Over three decades, Dr Peter Toyne has made an extraordinary and distinguished contribution to the social development of the Northern Territory and the nation as a remote community advisor, educator, researcher, technology innovator, legislator, artist and vigorous advocate for Flinders University.

After completing degrees in science and education at the University of Melbourne and postgraduate experience in the Victorian education system, Dr Toyne came to the Northern Territory in 1981 to work as a community advisor at Utopia community. His extensive community development activities there introduced him to both the complexity and potential of remote communities.

From 1983 to 1993 Dr Toyne returned to the education system in the largest remote community in Central Australia, Yuendumu, and continued his community development activities. He played critical roles in the establishment of Warlukurlangu Artists as an early artists' co-operative; the establishment and development of the Warlpiri Media Association; and the establishment and development of teacher education programs in association with Batchelor College.

In 1987 Dr Toyne assumed leadership of all education programs at Yuendumu - from pre-school to adult education. His focus on community development with due regard to cultural issues resulted in numerous reform activities over this time that included a strong process of Aboriginalisation, resulting in five Aboriginal teachers joining the staff with a further nineteen people in training; the introduction of annual school camps in traditional country attended by 500 people; and bilingual teaching programs. Dr Toyne's remote area experience at Yuendumu inspired his doctoral research pertaining to the relationships between Warlpiri and non-Aboriginal people, resulting in the confirmation of a PhD from La Trobe University in 2000.

In the 1990s, Dr Toyne was an early pioneer of videoconferencing, remarkably establishing, with Warlpiri co-workers, a compressed video network linking seven centres in the Northern Territory, including four remote Western Desert Aboriginal communities. This was an extraordinary achievement that improved communication and service provision for those remote residents and was a landmark information communication technology initiative in Australia and globally.

Dr Toyne's political career commenced in 1996 when he was elected to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly as the Labor Member for Stuart. As Shadow Minister for Education and Training, Aboriginal Affairs, Advanced Technology and Primary Industry he developed policies on education, Aboriginal affairs, Telecommunications, crime prevention, and youth affairs. These were taken to the electorate in 2001when the Labor Party won government and subsequently implemented.

Dr Toyne served with distinction as Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, Minister for Health and Minister for Telecommunications from 2001 to 2006. He was the intellectual driving force in Cabinet and oversaw, inter alia, reform to Freedom of Information and criminal code legislation; to preventable chronic disease, child and maternal health, and Indigenous health policy. As Health Minister, he was strong supporter of Flinders University and Centre for Remote Health (CRH) growth in the Northern Territory.

Since Dr Toyne's retirement from Parliament in 2006, he has resumed his art career as an exhibited oil painter and is now a nationally recognised glass worker. During this period he has also worked tirelessly as a member of the CRH Board of Management. He has selflessly utilised his extensive Northern Territory and national networks to promote CRH and Flinders activities and expansion in the Northern Territory. He was essential to the commitment, including financial commitment, of the Northern Territory Government to the development of a Centre of Excellence for education and research in the Katherine region. Drawing on his earlier Tanami Network initiative and PhD work, he is currently leading advocacy efforts in ensuring a fair share of National Broadband Network resources to remote Australia.