

AWARD OF HONORARY DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF ENGINEERING

MR EDGAR ROGER BANKS

Roger Banks finished his secondary schooling at Brighton Grammar School in 1947 and went on to complete a First Class Honours Degree in Electrical Engineering at the University of Melbourne. In 1948, while studying for his degree he was appointed a cadet engineer with the Post Master Generals (PMG) Department. Between 1953 and 1955 he worked in the areas of country installations and long lines and then departed for a year in the UK and Europe on a Federation of British Industries Overseas Fellowship.

From 1956 to 1968 he held a number of positions with the PMG and was responsible for recommending the adoption of Crossbar Switching Equipment for the introduction of STD in Australia. During this time he discovered a method of assessing and comparing competing switching systems. As Assistant Director General – Switching and Facilities Planning Roger was responsible for the integration, planning and design of Crossbar for the introduction of STD operation in Australia and in 1969-70 the selection of the first electronic trunk exchanges for Australia.

For a period of some eight years from 1961 Roger Chaired the ‘Group Autonomous Special 1’ (G.A.S.1) a special group of international experts commissioned by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) to be responsible for the first manuals of guidance for developing countries for the planning and development of national automatic telephone networks. From 1964 to 1968 Roger was Vice-Chairman of the Special Study Group B – Worldwide Telephony – of the ITU which supervised the planning for worldwide International Direct Dialing (IDD) following the laying of the first submarine telephone cables across the Atlantic.

Roger Banks has been employed in many positions in the Telecommunications Industry in Australia and in the UK and has made a significant contribution to the Engineering community in Australia. Up to his retirement in 1988 he has held such positions as Director Business Planning and Strategy for Plessey Telecommunications (UK); General Manager (Customer Services) Telecom Australia; and Director Business Development & Executive Director Corporate Strategy Telecom. He was an RACV Councilor from 1982 to 2001 and for the three years 1990 to 1993 he was President of that organization. He has shown a particular interest in traffic and safety issues and has been very much involved in various Victorian Roads Authorities.

His contributions to the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Melbourne have been exercised through very strong leadership of the Melbourne University Engineering Foundation (MUEF) during a period of time when this body has strongly supported the Faculty of Engineering in its quest to expand its research activities and provide additional space for some of the advanced research centers within the Faculty. He has been at the forefront of a major appeal for funds to provide for phase 2 of the construction of the extension to the Chemical Engineering building. Mr Banks has introduced the Faculty to many senior chief executives in Australia who have been willing to consider supporting the Faculty in its appeal for funding and have certainly offered support in many other ways. The Engineering Foundation under Mr Banks’ leadership has provided support funds for three Professorships in the Faculty in recent times and has also contributed significantly to helping the Faculty to establish an International Student Support Office within the Faculty Office for the marketing of the Faculty’s programs overseas and the support of the students who come here to study. Mr Banks’ Chairmanship and leadership of the Foundation has significantly benefited the Faculty and the University.