

Award of Honorary Degree of Doctor of Surveying

Professor Ian Philip Williamson AM BSurv (Hons), MSurv Sc, PhD (NSW)

Ian Williamson followed a family tradition to become a land surveyor due to his love of science and the outdoors. In 1965 he won a scholarship to study surveying at the University of New South Wales. Following government service he worked for an engineering company in the USA before returning to Australia to enter private practice. He subsequently joined the University of NSW in 1975 as a lecturer. He obtained the PhD in 1983 from the UNSW. He moved to the University of Melbourne in 1986 to take up the foundation Chair of Surveying and Land Information, an appointment he held to 2012. He is a Chartered Professional Engineer and Licensed Land Surveyor.

Ian Williamson is a world authority on land surveying, land administration, cadastre and spatial data infrastructures, with a focus on spatially enabling society. Spatially enabling society is at the heart of reforming the way we manage and administer land globally to assist the delivery of the sustainable development objectives of economic development, environmental management, social justice and good governance. Developing a clear vision, the technological framework and the road map to pursue these objectives have been his contribution, passion and lifetime work. He has developed many of the principles and concepts in his discipline that have been adopted by countries around the world. He has authored or co-authored over 400 publications. He has undertaken research or consultancies worldwide, including for various country development assistance agencies, the United Nations, the Asian Development Bank and The World Bank, as well as for most governments in Australia. He has received numerous prizes and awards during his career.

His contributions to research, his profession and academia have been recognised by being elected as a Fellow of the Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering Australia in 1998, appointed a Member of the Order of Australia and being awarded the Centenary Medal for service to Australian society in research and geomatics engineering and surveying, both in 2003. His contributions to land administration in Europe after the communist era were recognised in 1998 with a Doctor Honoris Causa from the University of Warmia and Mazury, Poland. He is a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, a Fellow of the Institution of Surveyors Australia, a Fellow of the Institution of Engineers Australia, an Honorary Fellow of the Surveying and Spatial Sciences Institute, Australia and an Honorary Member of the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG). He was Chairperson of FIG Commission 7 (Cadastre and Land Management) from 1994-98 and Director United Nations Liaison for the FIG from 1998 – 2002. He was a member of the Executive of the UN sponsored Permanent Committee for GIS Infrastructure for Asia and the Pacific and chaired its Working Group on Spatially Enabling Government (formerly Cadastre) (2002-2009). He has chaired or been a member of numerous professional and government committees and working groups in Australia.

Professor Williamson believes that in addition to scholarship, research excellence and professional leadership, academic leadership includes a commitment to university administration. As a result at Melbourne he has been President of the Academic Board (1993-4) and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (1991-4), a member of University Council and has chaired numerous and varied central committees such as Academic Committee, Selection Procedures Committee, Aboriginal Education Committee, VCA Studies Committee and the Cultural Diversity Forum. He chaired the Selection Processes Committee and Scaling Sub-Committee that developed the original Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER) for the Victorian Vice Chancellors' Committee (1993-4). As President of the Academic Board and Pro-Vice-Chancellor he worked closely with the then Vice Chancellor Professor David Penington AC to introduce staff appraisal, student evaluation of teaching, combined degrees, cultural diversity policies, strategic planning and marketing to the culture of the university.

He was Head, Department of Surveying and Land Information from 1986-1993 and Head, Department of Geomatics from 1998-2007. He was founding Director of the Centre for Spatial Data Infrastructures and Land Administration from 2000-2007.

Professor Williamson continues to be an active researcher and mentor.