

MR RICHARD PRATT

Richard Pratt was born in Poland in 1934. His family emigrated to Australia in 1938. He attended Shepparton High School and University High School before enrolling for the Bachelor of Commerce degree at the University of Melbourne in 1953.

By age 18 he was juggling study, acting in the Union Repertory Company, and working as salesman in Visy Board, the family business. Following a brief career in theatre in London and New York he returned to Melbourne and Visy Board, and took over the company following the death of his father. Under Richard Pratt's direction, the company expanded from a suburban factory in Melbourne to more than 55 plants across Australia, U.S, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea. From cardboard boxes and packaging, the Visy Group expanded into waste reclamation and paper recycling, including one of the world's most advanced paper recycling facilities in Staten Island, New York and one of the world's cleanest kraft paper mills in Tumut, NSW. Visy is now in partnership with Indigenous communities near Alice Springs in growing crops using advanced dry-land irrigation methods.

Richard Pratt has long believed in service to the community and in corporate philanthropy. His service to the community includes positions as Foundation Chancellor of Swinburne University of Technology, President of the Victorian Arts Centre Trust, Chairman of the Australia Foundation for Culture and Humanities, Chairman of the Australian Business Arts Foundation, Chairman Mental Health Research Institute of Victoria, Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Australian United States Coral Sea Commemorative Council, and Breakthrough Appeal Chairman for the McFarlane Burnet Centre for Medical Research. He is an active participant in national debates on population and immigration policy, irrigation and water conservation policy, and the need for greater business philanthropy.

Through the Pratt Foundation established in 1978, the Pratt family is among Australia's most generous business families, giving directly and indirectly over \$10 million each year to charity and other causes. This philanthropy supports medical research, social and cultural development encompassing aboriginal health, social welfare, arts, education, and the environment. In 1996, the Pratt Foundation established the Visy Cares Centre, a provider of services to underprivileged youth.

Richard Pratt's support for the University through the Pratt Foundation includes generous gifts to the Union Theatre redevelopment project, establishment of the Pratt Family Chair in the Melbourne Business School, the Pratt Foundation Scholarship to the highest ranked Melbourne Research Scholarship applicant, donations to the Centre for Palliative Care Education, the Ian Potter gallery, the Department of Fine Arts, and the Richard Pratt Oration in the Centre for Jewish History and Culture.

In recognition of his major contribution to manufacturing industry, and his exemplary support for the arts, higher education, medical research, aboriginal health and community, youth welfare, and philanthropy across many spheres, Richard Pratt was awarded an AO in 1985 and Australia's highest honour, the AC, in 1998. He has received honorary doctorates from Swinburne University of Technology and Monash University.

Richard Pratt has made a very special contribution to Australia and to the University. It is fitting that his contribution is recognised by the highest award of the University of Melbourne.