

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE**

**AWARD OF HONORARY DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MEDICINE**

**PROFESSOR FIONA STANLEY**

Professor Fiona Stanley graduated from the University of Western Australia in 1970 with a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery, and went on to complete a Master of Science in Epidemiology from The University of London 1976, and a Doctor of Medicine qualification from UWA in 1986.

Her training in maternal and child health epidemiology and public health provided the foundations for an auspicious research career studying the causes of major childhood illnesses. Her research was integral in establishing the link between folate deficiencies and neural tube defects, including spina bifida. Her other research interests include the gathering and analysis of population data for epidemiological and public health research; the causes and prevention of birth defects and major neurological disorders, particularly the cerebral palsies; patterns of maternal and child health in Aboriginal and Caucasian populations; various ways of determining the developmental origins of health and disease; collaborations to link research, policy and practice; and strategies to enhance health and well-being in populations.

Professor Stanley is the founding Director of the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, established in Perth in 1990, with the aim of conducting multi-disciplinary research to prevent major childhood illnesses and to enhance child and youth health and wellbeing. It currently has over 400 employees and students, from basic, clinical and population sciences. Through its unique collaborations, it is also committed to the translation of research into action (policy, practice and commercialisation).

Professor Stanley holds long-standing collaborations with the University of Melbourne and the Royal Children's Hospital. This partnership has been further consolidated by the siting of the ARC/NHMRC research network of the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth within the Department of Paediatrics at The University of Melbourne. Professor Stanley was the founding Chief Executive and now Chair of the Board of this national organisation that was formally constituted in June 2002, with an agenda to improve the health and wellbeing of young Australians through large scale innovative collaborations across disciplines and sectors.

Professor Stanley was appointed as a Companion in the Order of Australia in 1996, and in 2004 was honoured as an Australian "Living National Treasure" by the National Trust. She was made Australian of the Year in 2003 and has been a UNICEF Australia Ambassador for Early Childhood Development since 2006. She sits on the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council as well as the Australian Statistics Advisory Council and is an inaugural Board member of the Social Inclusion Board.

This honorary doctorate pays tribute to an outstanding Australian who is recognized as a world leader in early childhood health and development and acknowledges her exceptional commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of children and youth.