

Case for Award of Honorary Degree of Doctor of Engineering Mr Don Hewitt

Don Hewitt completed his Bachelor of Science majoring in Physics and Electronics at the University of Melbourne in 1954, after which he travelled to the UK to work in the research laboratories of General Electric. He returned to Australia in 1959, working at Telecom Research Laboratories before accepting a position as Lecturer at the University of Melbourne. He completed a Master of Engineering by Research in 1965 and was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 1966 until he officially retired from the University in December 1995. He has held Honorary positions in the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering since that time, and for a decade from 2004-2014 was a researcher in the Victorian node of NICTA.

Throughout his several decades of tenure at the University of Melbourne, Mr Hewitt demonstrated a sustained commitment to teaching. This included teaching a wide variety of subjects in areas related to electromagnetics, communications, networks, antennas and semiconductor electronics. He was widely regarded as passionate and extremely knowledgeable, and inspired generations of undergraduate students both in lectures and laboratories.

However, his research supervision over this time is arguably even greater evidence of the impact Mr Hewitt has had on the photonics and electronics community. During his tenure, Mr Hewitt supervised approximately 35 Masters and PhD graduates at the University of Melbourne. These have included world class researchers such as Laureate Professor Rod Tucker (FIEEE, FAAS, FATSE); Ian Young (Senior Fellow and Director of Exploratory Integrated Circuits at Intel Corporation, FIEEE); Professor A. Richard Newton (former Dean at UC Berkeley); Don Sinnot (Chief of DSTO research divisions) and Trevor Bird (Chief Scientist of CSIRO ICT Centre, IEEE Millennium Medal, etc); amongst many others.

As a researcher in his own right, Mr Hewitt has made a sustained contribution to the field publishing over 30 conference and journal papers since 1990, with many appearing in the leading outlets for the field including IEEE Photonics. These are complemented by a number of Australian patents related to optical fibre transmission.

In his role as an honorary fellow, Mr Hewitt has continued to actively support research activity at the University of Melbourne. In the Centre for Neural Engineering for example, where he has been based most recently (2014-), he was working 2-3 days per week across a variety of research projects with a number of academics and students. The value of his contribution in this role cannot be understated.

In summary, Don Hewitt has made an exceptional, sustained contribution to the University of Melbourne over a period of six decades. The impact he has had on the Australian electronics and photonics research community through his work and dedicated supervision is nothing short of extraordinary and the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering and the Melbourne School of Engineering unequivocally support his nomination for Honorary Doctorate.