

## **Ceremony No 39 - Thursday 9 November 2017**

PROFESSOR HELEN LOCHHEAD reads citation.

Today, we honour Emeritus Professor Alec Tzannes AM for his eminent service to the education sector and the Australian community through his work as an architect and an academic.

Born in Sydney, Alec Tzannes attended Sydney Boys High School in Moore Park and was School Captain in 1969. Alec went on to study architecture at Sydney University graduating in 1976 with First Class Honours, the University Medal and the Sir John Sulman Prize for Architectural Design.

A student of exceptional talent, Alec received a Fulbright Award, a NSW Department of Public Works Award, and a scholarship to undertake post-graduate study in the United States. He relocated to New York to study Architectural Rendering at Parsons School of Design, and between 1977 and 1978 he undertook further study at the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, and completed a Master of Science in Architecture and Urban Design at Columbia University. Alec began his career in the New South Wales Government Architects Office, before briefly working as an Associate of architect Glenn Murcutt. Alec founded Tzannes Associates in 1982 and subsequently built the company into one of Australia's most successful and well known architectural practices. Testament to his talent and generosity of spirit, Alec was named a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2014 for his significant service to architecture, as a practitioner and educator, and through professional organisations.

A visionary leader, Alec is one of Australia's most accomplished architects, designers, and urban strategists. He is a consummate creator and an insightful thinker with a multiple award-winning portfolio of work from over three decades of professional practice. Tzannes Associates' projects have been recognised by Australia's most prestigious design awards, including: The Robin Boyd Award for Residential Architecture, The Wilkinson Award, The Blakett Award for Outstanding Architecture, and the Australian Institute of Architect's Lachlan Macquarie Award - Australia's top award for conservation architecture. On the global stage, Alec has been awarded the President's Medal by the American Institute of Architects and the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, and he is an Honorary Member of both bodies. Alec is also an Honorary Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Architects and became a Life Fellow of the Australian Institute of Architects in 2008, and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Building in 2012.

In 2016, Alec directed or co-directed design produced by the studio that has been internationally recognised with awards that include: the UNESCO Heritage Award for 'New Design in Heritage Contexts'; a Chicago Athenaeum International Architecture Award, and a Red Dot Award for 'Product Design'. This has continued in 2017 with a Chicago Athenaeum and European Centre for Architecture and Design 'International Architecture Award.'

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Alec is actively engaged in public life lending his expertise to multiple boards and committees, including: design review panels for Sydney Olympic Park, Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust, the Heritage Council of NSW and the Transport Infrastructure Development Corporation. He previously served as the National President of the Australian Institute of Architects (AIA) (2006-07), Australia's peak body for the architectural profession representing 11,000 members. He presently chairs the Institute's Foundation which is a not-for-profit national body committed to fostering and promoting the art and creativity of architecture for the benefit of the Australian community.

Alec was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Built Environment in 2008. At UNSW his considerable achievements are hallmarks of a watershed time for design education at this University. As Dean, his commitment to excellence in design studio education drove curriculum change that has led the world. He enabled closer partnerships with industry, giving UNSW students unprecedented access to the best practitioners in Australia and overseas. Alec oversaw the appointment of the inaugural Seidler, Judith Neilson and Anita Lawrence Chairs in Architecture, the first of their kind in Australia.

Under Alec's leadership the Faculty enjoyed increased philanthropic support and a number of firsts, such as winning the bid for the CRC for Low Carbon Living research with UNSW academic staff now working with industry, government and other universities to lower carbon emissions in the built environment while driving Australia's competitive advantage. Alec also initiated and presided over the introduction of the UNSW-Tongji University Double Degree in Architecture, offering students a unique architectural education with a global focus. On his retirement as Dean in 2016, Alec was named an Emeritus Professor in recognition of his meritorious and distinctive service to UNSW.

Alec's impact on the UNSW community and society more generally are immeasurable, and his leadership and design work have undoubtedly enhanced the quality of life of our communities and the public discourse on how architecture and design can make our cities better. As an academic and thought leader in his field, Alec believes that architecture has a social purpose and can fundamentally improve the liveability, sustainability and productivity of cities. As a practitioner, his architectural work exemplifies quality, refinement and integrity contributing positively to improving places through design of enduring cultural and material value.

Alec remains closely involved in the life of this University as an Emeritus Professor and a Director of the UNSW Foundation Board. He will continue to foster closer ties between industry and academia, and inspire future generations of architectural students to utilise their talents to make a positive difference in the world.

The University Council, noting his eminent service to UNSW and the practice of architecture, resolved that it would be fitting if the degree of Doctor of the University, *honoris causa*, were to be conferred on Emeritus Professor Alec Tzannes AM, and today we admit him to the University's highest honour.