

**Peter Wray Cullen, MAgSc, DipEd *Melb* FTSE**

a speech in presentation of Peter Cullen  
for the degree of  
Doctor of the University of Canberra *honoris causa*  
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**by Professor Don Aitkin  
Vice-Chancellor, University of Canberra**

Peter Cullen is the Chief Executive of the Co-operative Research Centre for Freshwater Ecology and recipient of the Prime Minister's Award for Environmentalist of the Year. That award recognised Professor Cullen's outstanding contribution to improving the performance of communities and their governments in the conservation and management of water resources.

This is not, of course, a new interest of his. Peter Cullen has been involved in freshwater ecology for thirty years, a period during which he has led the development of the knowledge basis upon which Australia can make improved decisions about the management of our natural resources. As the founding director of the CRC for Freshwater Ecology he has pioneered multi-disciplinary collaborative approaches to environmental research and initiated new models for the generation and exchange of knowledge. A tireless campaigner for reform of our water systems, Professor Cullen has contributed greatly to the public understanding of the science behind such issues as environmental flows, dryland salinity and the ecological processes that sustain our rivers.

He achieves his effects not simply through good science and exemplary presentation but also through involvement in decision-making and the organisations involved in these processes. He is a notable member of the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council and the Community Advisory Council of the Murray-Darling Ministerial Council. He is a member of the Natural Heritage Trust Advisory Committee and the Lake Eyre Catchment Management Co-ordinating Group. Professor Cullen is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, a past President of the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Sciences, A Director of Landcare Australia Limited and a Director of the Gungahlin Development Authority.

It is primarily through his vision, developed over nearly thirty years in the University of Canberra, that Water Science in Australia has achieved the prominence it has gained. He has been the driving force behind the push for knowledge and the underlying science needed to solve the problem of salinity and to develop the right approach to the control of the inland waters of our country, the world's driest continent. The work of the CRC is basic to this quest, and Peter Cullen's contributions to science and to the transmission of scientific knowledge to decision-makers represent a distinguished creative achievement worthy of recognition by his University.

Peter Cullen was one of the first two appointments to a personal chair, in 1988, just after the introduction of the new procedure. An outstanding teacher and a dedicated researcher, Professor Cullen went on to become Dean of the Faculty of Applied Science in 1992, until the establishment of the CRC in 1993, when he stood down as Dean in order to become its Director. Peter Cullen was Chair of the University Research Committee, bringing his enthusiasm and drive to the development of research across the University. It is quite understandable that his CRC has been widely regarded as a model for the rest of the CRC system to emulate, and that Professor Cullen himself has been a mentor for many researchers here and elsewhere.

It is most fitting that his own University recognise his distinguished achievements. In order that you may do so, Chancellor, I present to you **Peter Wray Cullen**.