



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

**VICTORIA UNIVERSITY  
CHANCELLOR INSTALLATION  
Wednesday 5 May 2021**

**The Honourable Dr Steve Bracks AC, Dr Terry Bracks AM and Bracks family members  
Ms Gaye Hamilton, Deputy Chancellor of Victoria University  
Professor Adam Shoemaker, Vice-Chancellor and President and Council members  
Former Victoria University Chancellors and Chancellors from other universities  
Distinguished guests**

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we are gathering, and I pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to any Elders here with us.

Tony and I are pleased to join you here today on the important occasion of the installation of the Hon Steve Bracks AC, as the 7<sup>th</sup> Chancellor of Victoria University.

I am attending with several different connections to this University.

The first is as *Visitor*: an ancient title for an ancient role. Although in earlier times the University Visitor's primary role was to settle high-level disputes within a university, today – happily – I am here for this ceremonial and celebratory purpose.

My second connection with VU is as the Patron of your Sir Zelman Cowen Centre of legal education, training and research.

It is a patronage that I was keen to take up, for the Centre's emphasis on cultural diversity, access to justice and the use of innovative technology.

I also have a nice personal connection, as a relative of Sir Zelman's – a distant relative but, for obvious reasons, one that I'm always happy to mention!

Finally, I am here as the proud Governor of a State renowned for its emphasis on education, training and knowledge. And as an admirer of VU's important place amongst Victoria's ten very fine universities.

I should add that I am here too as an admirer of your new Chancellor, but I will come to him in a moment!

First, a brief word about this University.

VU is particularly interesting for being old and young at the same time.

It carries with it the ethos and experience of a place of learning for more than 100 years – a place that, from the outset, was determined to equip students not only with vocational skills, but to educate them *'for a life as well as a living'*. To grow them as 'responsible citizens', competent to play a *'decisive part in directing, shaping and improving the industrial system.'*

You, and the caretakers who have come before you, have ensured that, in this young university of just 30 years, that ethos lives on.

It is expressed today in VU's stated *'moral purpose'*, directed to *'transform[ing] the [life] of any student from any background and to transform[ing] our communities...'*

VU can be proud. In keeping with your stated purpose, you have built strong links to industry and embedded community partnerships. You have attracted both local and international attention and awards, and have seen student performance rates greatly enhanced with your Block Model of teaching.

In combination, this young University's rankings are on the rise and, importantly, your students are gaining the work and community opportunities that you have hoped.

All those who have overseen these achievements can be proud: amongst them, VU's former Chancellor, George Pappas AO, and subsequently, Wayne Kayler-Thompson and Gaye Hamilton each of whom took a six month role as Chancellor during last year

I have said that this University is both young and old at the same time. Although I would not frame it in quite the same way, something similar might be said of your new Chancellor!

Steve Bracks brings to this role not an 'old' head, but a wise and experienced one, but coupled with a fresh and innovative outlook.

He is, of course, no stranger to education. He started his career as a school teacher. And, subsequently, during his time as Victoria's Premier, education was one of his Government's priority areas.

Indeed, his education initiatives were recognised within his citation when he was made a Companion of the Order of Australia in 2010.

Steve is also no stranger to Victoria University, nor the community in which it sits. Across decades, he has shown his commitment to the economic and social well-being of the west of Melbourne, and has been a proven friend and advocate for the University, culminating in his admission to an Honorary Doctorate in 2017.

It is well known that your new Chancellor has held and continues to hold leadership positions across a broad range of organisations, too many to mention here. They traverse almost every sector dear to this State – and further afield as well. Suffice it to say that his genuine commitment to equity in education and the bread of his experience, equips him perfectly for the role of Chancellor of this University.

Lest you think your new Chancellor is perfect, I am pleased to say that, like all of us, he does have imperfections. Well one. He is a one-eyed Geelong supporter. Fortunately, as a drawback, it is not a critical one and, even more fortunately, it is balanced by the fact that he is married to Dr Terry Bracks AM!

Terry is every bit as committed to and active in Melbourne's west, as well as to the wider community in a huge number of roles.

Perhaps I can say, by way of summary, that in 2012 Terry was admitted as a Member of the Order of Australia for her service to youth, particularly as the Founder of Western Chances, and as a contributor to health, social development and arts organisations in Victoria. Since then, she has continued to work for the material and cultural betterment of the community.

Terry Bracks also holds an Honorary Doctorate from VU!

The Bracks's make for an uncommon double! A wonderful team.

In short, your seventh Chancellor is ideally placed to lead and promote this University's aspirations. It is in eminently capable hands, and I am delighted to formally install The Honourable Steve Bracks AC into the role today.

My husband, Tony, joins me in congratulating you, Chancellor, and wishing you, your family and Victoria University well.