

Proposal for Award of Honorary Degree of Doctor of Commerce

Mr Ian J. Macfarlane, AC

Ian Macfarlane commenced his career in economics at Monash University where he received Honours and Masters degrees in economics. After graduation he worked at the Institute for Economics and Statistics at Oxford University, and the Economics Department of the OECD in Paris. In 1979 he joined the Reserve Bank of Australia where he has been Head of the Research Division, Chief Manager (Financial Markets), and Assistant Governor (Economic). In 1992 he was appointed deputy Governor, and in 1996 Governor of the Reserve Bank.

As Governor of the Reserve Bank for almost the past decade, Ian Macfarlane has held ultimate responsibility for the design and operation of monetary policy in Australia. Notably, this has been a period during which the Australian economy has exhibited consistently high rates of economic growth, and has avoided any recession.

Compared to the previous 20 years where three major recessions had occurred in the Australian economy, this is a notable achievement; and one that must be regarded as having significantly improved standards of living in Australia. It is also important to reflect that the past decade has included the Asian crisis, where many of Australia's neighbours and trading partners experienced major economic downturns. One commentator has remarked of Ian Macfarlane's role during this period that: "A more easily rattled Governor, someone with less monetary experience...would quite easily have cost Australia billions of dollars in lost output and a hundred thousand jobs".

Throughout his career Ian Macfarlane has been notable for his capacity and willingness to contribute to knowledge about economic policy in Australia through both his writings and his regular speeches. He has had many articles published in the prestigious Reserve Bank conference volume, as well as Australian economics journals; and has been invited to deliver the Shann Memorial Lecture, the Giblin Memorial Lecture, and the R.C. Mills Memorial Lecture. Ian Macfarlane's contributions have improved understanding of the design of monetary policy in Australia, and stimulated debate on a variety of issues that are integral to Australia's economic future.

In 1998, Ian Macfarlane was elected as Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, in 2002 he was voted by the influential magazine, *Euromoney* as Central Banker of the year, and in January 2004, he was appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia.

For his skilful management of monetary policy in Australia that has enabled consistent improvements in the material well-being of its citizens, his contribution to international economic affairs, and his role in promoting debate on economic policy in Australia, Ian Macfarlane is rightly regarded as the outstanding public economist of his generation.