**Citation – David Hill**

Honorary Award Doctor of Letters – Wednesday, 13 April 2022, 2.30pm

Chancellor, it is my pleasure to present Mr David Hill to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa), in recognition of his quite remarkable achievements in Australian public life.

David is an outstanding graduate of the University of Sydney, having obtained all three of his tertiary qualifications here.

Calling somebody a ‘renaissance man’ is usually hyperbole, but in David’s case it is the simple truth. Leading the economic and financial advisory unit for the NSW State Government; Chief Executive and Commissioner for NSW Railways at the age of 34; Managing Director of the ABC; Chairman of the Australian Soccer Federation; and a best-selling author.

All this from a boy who migrated from England without parents to work on a farm school in Molong, in the central west of NSW, where the typical career path was becoming a farm labourer. But that was not the path David followed. After leaving school aged fifteen and later attending East Sydney Technical College, David got a scholarship to come to the University of Sydney, and never looked back.

Here, David built a lifelong network of friends and colleagues, and would go on to obtain all three of his tertiary qualifications. From the beginning, he was heavily involved with student politics and university sports and would later return to serve on the Senate of the University of Sydney.

As an adviser to the former Premier of New South Wales Neville Wran from 1976 to 1980, he was instrumental in developing and shaping public policy in the areas of health, education and transport. He led a diverse workforce at the State Railways of New South Wales from 1980 to 1986, during a difficult period of industrial disputes, and achieved that most remarkable of things: he made the trains run on time.

Between 1986 and 1995 David served as Managing Director of the ABC. He was a fierce champion for the production of local content, fighting for government funding so the ABC could continue to serve the Australian community.

David has a great passion for sport. He received a University Blue for Rugby League at the University of Sydney in 1968. He was Chairman of the Australian Soccer Federation (now the FFA) from 1995 to 1998, tasked with bringing the sport into the mainstream Australian cultural conversation. He revitalised the image of soccer in this country by appointing top administrative staff and coaches, and bringing in former England manager Terry Venables to lead the Socceroos.

But David’s achievements do not end there.

His Diploma in Archaeology has enabled him to pursue his passion in this field, and he has been working with the Greek Ministry for Culture, managing an archaeological study of the ancient Greek city of Troizen since 2010. As Chairman of the Australians for the Return of the Parthenon Sculptures David has tirelessly campaigned on this issue.

He is a bestselling author of ten non-fiction books on Australian history, including 1788, The Gold Rush, The Great Race, and The Making of Australia.

But it was his first book, Forgotten Children, and its sequel The Reckoning, published last month, that deserves special mention. His vivid, honest account of his experiences as a child migrant sent from England to Fairbridge Farm School in Molong, New South Wales, was the catalyst for a longstanding legal case that culminated in a $24 million dollar compensation pay-out. His honesty and openness about the abuse suffered by hundreds of child migrants helped many to speak out and tell their stories and led ultimately to an official apology from all the institutions who failed to protect the children, including the British Government, the Australian Government, and the New South Wales state Government.

Chancellor, it is a great pleasure to present Mr David Hill for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa), and I invite you to confer the degree upon him.