**Citation – The Hon Jillian Skinner**

Wednesday, 20 April 2022 - 2.30pm

Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present The Honourable Jillian Skinner to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Health Sciences (honoris causa) for her services to health, medical research, and politics in Australia.

Jillian was a member of the NSW parliament for 23 years and Deputy Leader of the New South Wales Liberal Party from 2007 to 2014. She was the shadow minister for Health between 1995 to 2003 and 2005 to 2011. During her time in parliament, she also held the shadow portfolios of Education and Training, Youth Affairs and Arts. She also served as New South Wales Minister for Health for six years and Minister for Medical Research for five years.

When Jillian assumed the roles of Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research, she had a clear blueprint for her priorities and vision based on her investigations and conversations with patients, families, clinicians, and academics during her tenure as shadow Minister. Her passion and commitment to reform health was focussed on putting the patient at the centre of all decisions regarding health care. Her genuine regard for health policy was at the heart of her success.

In her role as NSW Health Minister, she was responsible for overseeing 200 public hospitals. She ensured smooth running of the hospital system, treatment of increasing numbers of people within appropriate timeframes whilst ensuring the best possible health outcomes for patients. In addition, Jillian wanted to fill the gaps in the health system including greater access to pain management and palliative care as well as providing incentives to increase organ donation. She was also committed to finding an end to the transmission of HIV and it was under her leadership that NSW became a leader in HIV prevention and management.

Jillian established the Office of Health and Medical Research to increase focus and foster investment in research including establishment of the Medical Devices Fund. Reform of NSW Health, including enhancement of eHealth initiatives led to improvement and development of new treatments and methods of delivering healthcare including expanding electronic medical records and introducing an electronic medication management system of improving patient care including telehealth. Together with her focus on establishing Public Health units in local health districts, these technological advancements have been critical in our response to COVID.

Jillian has consistently been a champion of preventive health, integrated and better healthcare for people with chronic and complex conditions. Her investment in the NSW Integrated Care Strategy recognised that while acute hospital care is the only suitable option for some, it is not necessary for most of the community. The strategy aimed to provide seamless, effective, and holistic care for patients and involved centralising and sharing each patient’s medical history with relevant health professionals to reduce duplication and avoid unnecessary hospital admissions.

Jillian also understood the need to increase the capacity of the health workforce, supporting professional development, and encouraging research to underpin practice. She helped to increase the number of healthcare workers with the addition of 4,000 nurses and 900 doctors as well as several hundred allied health professionals. She also had oversight of nearly $10 billion invested in building new and upgraded hospitals. This record in health spending in addition to an increase in health care workers delivered tens of thousands more emergency department treatments, and shorter waiting lists for elective surgeries.

Throughout her time in parliament, Jillian championed universities as essential partners for the health sector. She recognised the critical role of research to improving healthcare and health systems and promoted the potential of clinician-scientists to transform healthcare as we now know it. Additionally, she acknowledged the essential role of our students in health, not only to magnify the health workforce by expanding the number of treatments delivered, but also to bring fresh insights and innovations to old clinical problems, as well as to provide the future workforce. She foresaw the dramatic increase in the number of allied health professionals that will be required to meet the escalating needs in aged care and by the National Disability Insurance Scheme. She worked tirelessly to support universities and health reform, often in ways that were unpopular with her colleagues or powerful sections of the health sector.

Jillian is widely respected for her commitment to health and to medical research, particularly her support for innovative treatments arising from new understanding of disease and best models of care. She championed social policy programs including community-based preventive programs, increased organ donation, better access to pain management, improved palliative care and elimination of the transmission of HIV.

Chancellor, I present The Honourable Jillian Skinner for admission to the degree of Doctor of Health Sciences (honoris causa) in recognition of her extraordinary leadership and vision for the health sector.