**Citation – Dr George Miller AO**

Thursday, 18 May 2023 – 2.30pm

Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present Dr George Miller AO to you for the admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa) in recognition of his extraordinary contribution to the Australian and global film industries as a multi-talented director, producer and screenwriter.

One of four sons, George began to develop his storytelling imagination in the rural Queensland town of Chinchilla. George attended Ipswich Grammar School and later Sydney Boys High School, then studied medicine at the University of New South Wales with his fraternal twin John. While in his final year at medical school (1970) he made a one minute short film that won first prize in a student competition. Consequently he attended a Film Workshop at Melbourne University where he met fellow student, Byron Kennedy, with whom he formed a lasting partnership. In 1972, Miller completed his residency at Sydney’s St Vincent’s Hospital and began working as a doctor while spending his spare time making experimental shorts. He became intensely curious about cinema and its evolution. This eventually led to the release of his first feature length film the low budget *Mad Max* in 1979.

The film was hugely successful, becoming one of Australia’s top-grossing films and going on to have an impact worldwide. George has since released another three films in the franchise. The fourth instalment, premiering in 2015, *Mad Max: Fury Road* is regarded as one of greatest action films of all time and has been lauded by critics universally. The film gained ten nominations at the 88th Academy Awards, winning six of them. The fifth instalment of the saga, *Furiosa*, is currently in production.

During the 80’s and 90’s, George’s production house, Kennedy Miller Mitchell, delivered a variety of landmark film and television series. *The Dismissal* in 1983 and over the following years, *Bodyline*, *The Cowra Breakout, Vietnam, Dead Calm, The Year My Voice Broke* and *The Witches of Eastwick.*

In 1992 he directed, a medical drama based on a true story, *Lorenzo’s Oil*. The film received two nominations at the 65th Academy Awards and a nomination for Best Original Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen at the Writers Guild of America Awards.

George’s storytelling genius is not just limited to the confines of live action films. He experimented combining live action, animatronic puppets, motion capture and animation to create unique family films. He co-wrote and produced *Babe,* and its sequel, Babe *Pig in the City*. It gained both critical and commercial success and received several Academy Award nominations. In the years that followed, George directed *Happy Feet*, delving into the digital possibilities of computer animation. The film had international success and earned him an Academy Award for Best Animated Feature.

In 2022, George’s latest project was shown at Cannes. *Three Thousand Years of Longing,* starring Tilda Swinton and Idris Elba. Interviewed for the film, Idris describes George as a master of every aspect of filmmaking, including acting. Tilda stated, ‘I was not fortunate enough to live in a time when I could work with Hitchcock, but I’ve worked with George Miller’.

George Miller describes his work as a lifelong inquiry into storytelling by means of the moving image.

With his versatility, he has created an eclectic and influential body of work which was also significant in launching the international careers of many Australians on both sides of the camera. These include the actors Nicole Kidman, Mel Gibson and Hugo Weaving, several filmmakers, writers, art directors, visual effects and sound designers, plus the Oscar winning cinematographers Andrew Lesnie and Dean Semler.

In 1996, George became an Officer of the Order of Australia for his services to the Australian Film industry and as founding board member of the Museum of Contemporary Art. In 2010 he was awarded an Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government. He has been the longstanding Patron of the Australian Film Institute and AACTA and has served as the President of the Jury at the Cannes Film Festival.

Chancellor, I present Dr George Miller AO for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa) and invite you to confer the degree upon him.