

Mr Greg Poche AO

The honorary degree of Doctor of Letters was conferred upon Greg Poche AO at the Faculty of Medicine graduation ceremony at 11.30am on 13 December 2013.



The Vice-Chancellor conferring the honorary degree upon Mr Poche, *photo, University of Sydney.*



Mr and Mrs Poche, *photo, University of Sydney.*

Citation

Deputy Chancellor, I have the honour to present Greg Poche for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa).

Greg Poche was born in Marrickville, leaving school after completing his Intermediate Certificate.

Greg took a desk job with the NSW Railways before resigning to become a builder's labourer; in the evenings he would head to Sydney Technical College where he finished his Leaving Certificate.

When he joined the sales team of a pharmaceuticals company, the evening studies continued - first in Western Australia, where he began a degree in business at the Institute of Technology, Perth which he completed at the Institute of Technology, Sydney when a promotion brought him back to his home city.

Greg was still studying part-time for his two diplomas in business management and operations management in 1972 when he set up the company which would be his focus for the next 30 years.

By the time he came to sell the company 30 years later, Star Track Express had a 15 per cent share of the market. On any given day it employed the equivalent of 2500 full-time staff across Australia.

When it came to selling Star Track Express invitations were sent out to a select group of companies which were not in competition with the business but were involved in the general transport and distribution sphere. Among them were Qantas and Australia Post, and in December 2003 both companies put in a joint bid that provided Poche with the guarantees of protection for his workforce and his customers that he had been looking for.

During this period, Greg accumulated evidence of the existence of a transport cartel, members of which would not tender for work against each other. They particularly targeted Star Track. He presented this evidence to the Trade Practices Commission who undertook a lengthy enquiry, resulting in TNT and Mayne Nickless being fined \$ 14 million. Commissioner Alan Fels has written that this was the coming of age of the Trade Practices Act in Australia.

Greg Poche considered the breaking of the transport cartel his greatest achievement as it benefited millions of Australians

Greg, with his wife Kay, then turned his attention to philanthropy. In his own words he "was looking for causes which needed investment". As a businessman, his view was that "they had to have very sound structures, people and skills and only lacked financial resources and infrastructure." He identified two areas of need: Indigenous Health and Melanoma and proceeded to apply his business acumen to establishing programs that would both support immediate need and change the face of future treatment and early intervention.

In 2008 Greg Poche donated \$10 million to help establish a groundbreaking Centre for Indigenous Health at the Sydney Medical School. The Poche Centre was established to build excellence in research, clinical training and health service delivery to improve the health of Indigenous Australians. Greg's gift can and will shape Aboriginal health policy in Australia.

Professor Marie Bashir, former Chancellor of the University of Sydney and Governor of NSW, has many years of experience in indigenous health and maintains a keen professional interest. She describes Greg Poche as "a visionary philanthropist who appreciates the dire need for health education among our indigenous population".

In 2005, Greg gave \$40 million to kickstart the Melanoma Institute of Australia, a world-class cancer research and treatment facility born out of the existing Sydney Melanoma Unit.

Since the establishment of these two Centres, a further two with a focus on Indigenous health have been established through donations from Greg, in Alice Springs and Adelaide (hosted by Flinders University). Just two weeks ago he donated another \$10 million to the University of Western Australia for a similar program in Western Australia. There is also a plan to set up two more, in Queensland and Victoria.

Greg is a humble man who only agreed to put his name to his donations on the strenuous urging of others who knew that examples of philanthropy such as these would lead to others also contributing . His generosity is truly exceptional and worthy of recognition.

Deputy Chancellor, I have great pleasure in presenting Greg Poche for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa), and I invite you to confer the degree upon him.

University of Sydney honours Poche Centre donors

13 December 2013



The University awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters to Greg Poche and the title of Honorary Fellow to Reg Richardson in recognition of their contribution to the University's Poche Centre for Indigenous Health: Dr Tom Calma AO (Patron of the Poche Centres), Greg Poche AO, Reg Richardson AM.

The University of Sydney today recognised two key of its primary philanthropic donors, presenting Greg Poche AO and Reg Richardson AM with honorary awards during a special ceremony in the Great Hall.

The awards were conferred in a ceremony attended by Mr Poche and Mr Richardson, following citations read by the Dean of Sydney Medical School, Professor Bruce Robinson.

In the citation for Mr Poche, Professor Robinson described him as a visionary leader, who had made a far-sighted commitment to the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians with his donation of \$10 million to allow the establishment of the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health.

"Greg Poche is a visionary leader who has made a farsighted commitment to, and support of, Indigenous Australians," the citation read.

"He acknowledged that an enormous amount of work was needed to provide Indigenous people with a standard of health care and life expectancy which matched that of non-Indigenous Australians. He believed, however, that a specialist University centre would be able to make a lasting impact if it adopted a strategic and co-ordinated approach, which included Aboriginal people and communities in design and delivery of programs.

His approach to understanding and dealing with the health problems of Indigenous communities has been insightful and creative and he conceptualised how the Centre for Indigenous Health would function.

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Mr Poche also contributed \$50 million to the Melanoma Institute of Australia, now a world-class cancer research and treatment facility.

Reg Richardson is a Sydney businessman who is involved with a number of philanthropic organisations including the Melanoma Institute Australia, of which he has been Chair since 2007, and the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health at the University of Sydney. He also serves on advisory committees of Indigenous health at the University.

In the citation for Mr Richardson for his award of Honorary Fellow of the University of Sydney, Professor Robinson described him as a passionate advocate for philanthropy and promoter of its vital role in innovation, creating new knowledge and pursuing the unknown.

"It is his passion for art that has motivated him to support and mentor many emerging artists, particularly Aboriginal artists. From these beginnings he extended into fundraising for research and treatment into melanoma and the improvement of indigenous health - he has now raised more than \$90 million for these causes which are close to his heart.

"Reg lets no opportunity pass to encourage others with the capacity, to contribute. Originally it was Reg who convinced his friend and colleague Greg Poche that going public in his philanthropy would lead to more giving and in his own words, "My argument was it would allow others to follow and create some push."

"Reg is a recognised leader in philanthropy in Australia and we are so proud of his association with our University. For us Reg does more than link donors to great ideas, he actively participates in many of our programs including encouraging and mentoring students and staff in the Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Health Promotion; successfully lobbying government to recognise this qualification for Aboriginal Health Workers; promoting collaboration with our neighbours the South Sydney Rabbitohs and their charity arm, Souths Cares - this partnership alone has resulted in health care checks this week for 1500 kids living in the bush."

During 2013 Mr Richardson, jointly with Mr Poche, has been working to set up new Poche centres for Indigenous health. Along with the Centre at Sydney University and Flinders, a new Centre at the University of Western Australia received \$10m last month with other Centres slated for 2014.

About the Poche Centre: The Centre has three primary aims:

- to work with local and community health services to improve Indigenous health in western NSW and the Northern Territory
- to conduct essential research into critical aspects of Indigenous health
- to educate medical and health students in matters concerning the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.