



**Citation for the Award of  
Doctor of the University (DUniv) *honoris causa*  
Ms Maggie Beer AO**

Maggie Beer's down-to-earth charm and admirable work ethic has shaped her to be an Australian icon and one of the nation's most loved and respected foodies.

As a child growing up in Sydney's western suburbs, Maggie's family fell into financial turmoil. She then watched her parents reinvent themselves as caterers through using their knowledge of cookery, love of fresh food and skill in the garden.

Unable to finish her education and leaving school at the age of 14 to support family finances, for ten years Maggie worked various jobs across Australia, New Zealand and the world before returning to Sydney in 1968. It wasn't until her 30's she knew her passion for food would become her career. Having inherited an instinct and a love of cooking from her father, and despite not having any formal training as a chef, Maggie has accumulated a significant and very public career promoting good food and health practices over the last 40 years.

Making the move from Sydney to the Barossa Valley in 1973, which were actually her husband Colin's roots as the Beer family first arrived from Silesia in 1848, Maggie's career in the food industry began on opening the Pheasant Farm in 1979. After Colin winning a Churchill Fellowship to study game farming overseas, the idea led to the Farm Shop where Maggie cooked everything raised on the farm and produce from neighbours. Within a year it had morphed into the Pheasant Farm Restaurant that became nationally acclaimed until closing at the height of its fame in November 1993. In 1996 a commercial food production business began, named Maggie Beer Products. Each venture has always been driven by a passion to use only the highest quality ingredients without preservatives driven by flavour and uniqueness.

Throughout her career, Maggie has written ten successful cookbooks, and her television appearances have been numerous, starring in 154 episodes of *The Cook and the Chef* on the ABC and her involvement with Channel 10's *MasterChef*, set new ratings records for the episodes she featured in. Both the Lifestyle Channel and ABC have also shone the spotlight on Maggie with a Christmas Special devoted to seasonal menus and celebration and to share her family Christmas in the Barossa as well as five series of Foxtel's, *The Great Australian Bake Off*.

Awards and acclaim along the way have included winning the Telstra South Australia Business Woman of the Year in 1997, a Centenary Medal for service to Australian society through cooking and writing in 2001, both Senior Australian of the Year and South Australian of the Year 2010, appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia in 2012 for her service to the tourism and hospitality industries as a cook, restaurateur and author, and to the promotion of Australian produce and cuisine and earlier this year was made an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in the Australia Day Honours. Maggie has been awarded honorary doctorates from Macquarie University in 2013, and the University of South Australia in 2016.

Maggie sits on the Board of the ASX listed Maggie Beer Holdings (previously known as Longtable Group) and continues to play a role in the growth and strategy of the Maggie Beer

Products business as well remaining deeply involved in the development of new products under her name.

In 2014, Maggie established and continues to devote her time and energy to the Maggie Beer Foundation, with a mission to improve the food experiences for older Australians, particularly those living within aged care homes. In fellowship with her Board of industry leaders, professors and health advisors, Maggie has made it her personal mission to link the latest research of how the food we eat can impact brain health and general wellbeing, with her innate knowledge of what good food can do for everyone's emotional wellbeing.

During 2020 while locked down through COVID-19, despite grieving the loss of her eldest daughter, Maggie felt she had to do something to give back to the Australian public and so for five or six weeks, every day of the week, started cooking something that people would have had the ingredients for in their pantry, fridge or garden. People could view these videos on Instagram or social media and find inspiration to create healthy meals at home and cook along.

**Ms Beer is a deserving awardee for the Honorary Award of a Doctor of the University in recognition of her distinguished service to improving food experiences and wellbeing outcomes for older Australians, particularly those living within aged care homes through the Maggie Beer Foundation and for promoting principles of nutrition and nutritional access across the lifespan.**

**9 May 2022**