

**Citation for the Award of Doctor of the University *honoris causa***

**Mr Alister Haigh**

Alister Haigh is the Chief Executive of Haigh's Chocolates, Australia's oldest family-owned chocolate manufacturing retailer. Haigh's specialises in artisan premium chocolate making from raw cocoa beans and their chocolates are sold in their own retail stores.

Alister is the fourth generation Haigh to work in this family-owned and run business which celebrated its centenary in 2015. After completing a four-year traineeship in the Haigh's factory learning every aspect of the production process, Alister went on to become Company Secretary, Factory Manager and then General Manager of the Haigh's Group in 1984. Six years later, Alister was appointed Joint Managing Director with his brother Simon and in 1995 became Chief Executive. Since then, Haigh's Chocolates has more than trebled in size and now has a network of 21 retail stores across Adelaide (8), Melbourne (6), Sydney (6) and Canberra (1), plus its online store.

Under Alister's leadership, in late 2023, Haigh's unveiled plans for its upcoming \$130 million Salisbury South manufacturing facility. This development is the single largest infrastructure investment in the history of Haigh's as they prepare for further expansion and growth. It will see their current chocolate production capacity double, allowing them to meet increased demand and leverage interstate growth opportunities, including entering new markets.

The state-of-the-art facility is planned to be fully operational in the second half of 2025, accommodating up to 400 employees over the course of the growth phase, including the creation of approximately 150 new jobs.

Alister has been leading the company in his role as Chief Executive for nearly thirty years, growing the family business substantially. Haigh's now employs more than 900 people and currently produces over 1,000 tonnes of chocolate annually, used across their two existing manufacturing sites in Mile End and Parkside which is also home to their head office, artisan chocolate production and Visitor Centre.

Haigh's Chocolates is serious about its responsibilities for sustainable farming. Eighty percent of the cocoa beans they source from around the world come from Rainforest Alliance certified farms and their aim is to achieve buying 100 percent certified cocoa beans within the next two-to-three years.

Since 2011, Haigh's have been supporting Variety, the Children's Charity of South Australia, with part proceeds from the sale of their Large Milk Chocolate Heart being contributed to the not-for-profit organisation.

Alister is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a committee member of the Australian Industry Group (SA Branch). He was previously on the board of Service Skills SA representing the retail industry. In 2018, Alister was awarded life membership of Family Business Australia (SA), having served for more than 20 years as a committee member and on the national board. Earlier this year Alister received the prestigious Alfred Stauder Award for Excellence from the Australian Industry Group, for his outstanding contribution to the confectionery sector in Australia.

Alister is a longstanding supporter of various charities, including of course Variety SA. He also enjoys spending time with his family, snow skiing, fishing and riding his motorcycles.

**Mr Haigh is a richly deserving recipient of the award of Doctor of the University *honoris causa* in recognition of his outstanding leadership and innovation at the helm of the South Australian family owned and run business, Haigh's Chocolates.**