

FLINDERS UNIVERSITY

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

Mr Robert Hannaford AM

Robert Hannaford AM is recognised as one of Australia's premier realist painters. Largely self-taught, Hannaford grew up on his family farm near the small town of Riverton in South Australia's mid-north having been an ancestor of South Australian colonial widow pioneer, Susannah Hannaford.

Before spending three years as the political cartoonist on the *Adelaide Advertiser* from 1964 to 1967, Hannaford joined an advertising agency and worked with artists Hugo Shaw and Des Hurcombe. Hannaford received no formal training as a painter and did not attend art school, instead seeking the guidance from his great mentors which included Sir Hans Heysen and Sir Ivor Hele, whom he befriended in the 1960s.

Hannaford would go on to make his living from painting and sculpture, living in Ballarat between 1967 to 1968 where he attended the School of Mines. He lived in Melbourne from 1969 to 1973 where he was the inaugural winner of the AME Bale residential art scholarship.

Hannaford has subsequently become one of the nation's foremost portraitists and landscape painter. His works feature many prominent public figures, including Dame Joan Sutherland for the Elizabethan Theatre Trust and one of Sir Donald Bradman for Lord's cricket ground. He has also painted three prime ministers, two governors general, many vice-chancellors, chancellors, academics and various heads of industry. He has been a favourite in both the Archibald Prize – in which he has been a finalist 26 times, and won the People's Choice Award three times – and the Doug Moran Portrait Prize, which he won in 1990. He won the inaugural Fleurieu Landscape Prize in 1998.

Much in demand as an official portraitist, he painted the Historic Memorials Committee's official prime-ministerial portrait of Paul Keating and the official Centenary of Federation painting that now hangs in Parliament House alongside Tom Roberts' *Big Picture*.

He has lived in country South Australia, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney, where he was artist-in-residence at Sydney Grammar School.

After returning to his roots, Hannaford bought a disused farmhouse and outbuildings at Peters Hill near Riverton in South Australia and has converted them into a dwelling and studio, where he now lives with his wife, artist Alison Mitchell. They were married in 2007 and own and operate Riverton Light Gallery, where they have exhibited in collaborative exhibitions. Hannaford's studio at Riverton is where he has painted many portraits, his easel placed beneath a skylight that enables him to exploit the full range of daylight.

Hannaford was recognised with a Member of the Order of Australia in the 2014 Queen's Birthday Honours list for significant service to the visual arts as a painter and sculptor.

In 2015, the Art Gallery of South Australia showed more than 200 of his works in the solo exhibition *Robert Hannaford*. The National Portrait Gallery owns his portraits of Dame Joan Sutherland, Robert Dessaix, Alexander Ramsay, Tim Flannery and Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue, the latter painted on commission.

Hannaford is also a committed lover of the Australian native flora and fauna and was the visionary and founding member of the Bushland Conservation Company and Hesters Conservation Company which aims to preserve biodiversity by buying land on Kangaroo Island, and elsewhere in South Australia, and planting regional flora.

Bushland Conservation was an early leader in corporate nature conservation in SA and the shareholders have been successful in conserving and enjoying some of SA's remaining natural bushland, using the corporate model to allow their shareholders to jointly achieve what individuals may have previously found impossible.

Robert Hannaford AM is an extremely worthy recipient of a Doctor of the University *honoris causa* from Flinders University in recognition of his contribution to the art world across the past 60 years and his ongoing commitment to conservation in South Australia.