

**UQ HONORARY DOCTORATE CONFERRAL
DOCTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY UPON
DR GREG POCHE AO AND DR KAY VAN NORTON POCHE**

**Friday 5 February 2016, 6.00pm for 6.30pm – 10.00pm
10 Addison Road, Manly, Sydney**

CITATION

Greg Poche AO and Kay Van Norton Poche are determined philanthropists who are enabling life-changing possibilities in health, and energising efforts to 'close the gap' between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Their commitment to sharing the rewards of their hard-earned business success with others is manifest in donations totalling well over \$100 million, for research, education and clinical initiatives

Greg came to notice in business circles early in the 1970s, when he injected a new level of innovation and competition into Australia's express freight industry by establishing a company that became Star Track Express. He earned a reputation for integrity and fair play, and his relentless efforts to break a major express freight transport cartel led to multi-million dollar fines against the main offenders. Always a modest and reserved businessman, Greg considers his leading role in this battle to be his greatest professional achievement.

Following sale of Star Track Express in 2003, the Poches began shaping one of Australia's most substantial philanthropic portfolios, in consultation with close friend Reg Richardson AM. In 2005 the couple gave more than \$40 million to Mater Hospital Sydney for construction of the world's largest melanoma research and treatment centre, Melanoma Institute Australia.

A discussion about their luck in life, having reached an age beyond the unacceptably low life expectancies of Indigenous Australians, seeded a Poche vision for a national network of university centres targeting improved health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Since 2008, when they gave \$10 million to found the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health at the University of Sydney, they have contributed a total of \$50 million for centres at five universities.

The newest is the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health at The University of Queensland. This centre's announcement was followed by a gift of \$1.5 million to secure the Poche Indigenous Health Network, which was launched in May 2015 by the Australian Health Minister, the Honourable Sussan Ley and its Patron and Chair, Professor Tom Calma AO.

With presence in all mainland states and the Northern Territory, the network is likely to be the most significant multi-university philanthropic action by *any* Australian couple. It shows genuine potential to become a national force for translating high-quality research into improved services and policies, whilst building a workforce that is expertly attuned to the needs of Indigenous Australians.

Making all donations upfront, Greg and Kay are among the most (if not the most) generous Australian couple. To date they have enabled the Poche network and Centres in Indigenous Health, the Melanoma Institute Australia and other ventures, Greg initially resisted publicity for the couple's generosity, believing that those who worked in the funded centres deserved all the credit.

Eventually he was persuaded to go public so as to encourage philanthropy by other successful Australians, and in recent years he and Kay have received thoroughly-justified recognition. This includes an Officer of the Order of Australia award for Greg in 2009; honorary doctorates for the couple from the University of Western Australia in 2014; Fellows of the University of Melbourne for the pair in 2015; and the naming of a new Mater Hospital Sydney neonatal centre as the Poche Van Norton Special Care Nursery.

Greg and Kay are a formidable team, and it is thanks to them that the staff, students and partners of the centre at The University of Queensland will accomplish milestones in workforce capacity, and offer scaled-up solutions to problems that affect thousands of Indigenous Australians.

Additionally, the Poches demonstrate that philanthropy is a deeply satisfying vocation which delivers incalculable benefits to recipients, to wider society, and to the givers themselves.

It is therefore appropriate for The University of Queensland to simultaneously – and proudly - bestow awards of Doctor of the University *honoris causa* on Gregory John Poche, Officer of the Order of Australia, Diploma of Technology Management and Bachelor of Business of the New South Wales Institute of Technology, Doctor of the University of Flinders University, Doctor of Letters *honoris causa* of the University of Sydney, Doctor of Business *honoris causa* of University of Technology Sydney, Doctor of Letters *honoris causa* of the University of Western Australia and Fellow of the University of Melbourne and Kay Van Norton Poche Doctor of Letters *honoris causa* of the University of Western Australia and Fellow of the University of Melbourne.