

CITATION

Award of Doctor of Science *honoris causa*

Mrs Terri Irwin AM

Chancellor,

Terri Irwin, AM, is an internationally-acknowledged conservation advocate whose contributions to public understanding of wildlife and wild places are adding to the evidence-base for improved environmental management.

For more than a decade, Mrs Irwin has supported and participated in high-quality science at UQ, and enabled the discovery and communication of knowledge aimed at enhancing species and habitat conservation and management.

Her work with saltwater crocodiles has dominated her public image, but her efforts encompass a wide range of species, including koalas and sea turtles.

Demonstrating a clear appreciation of the imperative for excellent research to underpin conservation policies and practices, Mrs Irwin has granted UQ students and staff access to physical, intellectual and financial resources that would otherwise be beyond their reach.

As owner-operator of Australia Zoo, its wildlife hospital, and three other Queensland properties, she extends tremendous opportunities to PhD candidates, Study Abroad students, senior researchers and honours students.

For instance, Australia Zoo has partnered UQ in three Australian Research Council Linkage projects, and Mrs Irwin has co-authored two peer-reviewed scientific papers and is currently a co-investigator on a Linkage project. Since 2009 she has supported the annual Steve Irwin Memorial Lecture, one of the Science Faculty's most popular public lectures.

Moreover, through her unique role in the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve on Cape York Peninsula, Mrs Irwin enables researchers and students to continue the world's largest crocodile tracking program. The boats, vehicles, meals and shelter provided are deeply appreciated by the team that humanely captures, tags and releases some of the world's largest reptiles. This research not only enhances understanding of the apex predator's role in its natural habitat, it also informs sustainable tourism and the 'croc safe' awareness of locals and visitors.

Whilst it is estimated that Australia Zoo's investment in UQ research equates to more than \$3 million over the past decade, the profile that the relationship delivers is of incalculable worth. Annually the Sunshine Coast landmark attracts about 700,000 visitors - 25% of them international – who can learn about the UQ links, and occasionally hear guest lectures from academics and postgraduate students.

Made an Honorary Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia for her outstanding dedication to wildlife conservation and the tourism industry, Mrs Irwin has industry laurels including a Queensland Telstra Business Women award and a Marie Watson-Blake Award for outstanding contribution to Queensland tourism.

Chancellor, I present to you Mrs Terri Irwin, Member of the Order of Australia, Honorary Senior Fellow of the University of the Sunshine Coast, for the award of Doctor of Science *honoris causa*, bestowed by the Senate of The University of Queensland.

