

MR IAN COLIN DAVIDGE

Citation for the conferral of a Doctor of Applied Science (*honoris causa*)

Ian Colin Davidge was born in Griffith on 4 October 1933, the second son of Charles and Vera Davidge. He was educated at Griffith High School. He married Beth Solomon on 24 August 1963.

Ian inherited the affability of his father and the organisational skills of his mother and is highly regarded as an intelligent strategic thinker and speaker. He developed his public speaking skills early through a career in the Junior Farmers movement and in Rural Youth. Ian joined the Ricegrowers' Association in 1954, playing a key role in developing the co-operative movement through a policy of vertical integration to benefit both shareholders and customers. He was passionate in his commitment to developing an independent, efficient, value-adding organisation.

In 1958 Ian succeeded his father as Secretary of the Ricegrowers' Mirrool Branch. Soon after, he was elected to the Board of Ricegrowers' Co-operative Mills Ltd, becoming Chairman in 1975. He also served on the Irrigation Research and Extension Committee and the Board of the Griffith Co-operative Society. He was elected as a delegate to the National Farmers Federation and chaired the Rice Industry Co-ordination Committee.

Ian's outstanding service to the Australian rice industry included thirty-six years as a Director of the Ricegrowers' Co-operative Ltd and twenty-two years as Chairman of the Ricegrowers' Cooperative Ltd. He served as a delegate to the Central Executive for thirty-eight years from 1958; and was Chairman of the Rice Growers' Association of Australia for twelve years from 1963 to 1975, when he retired to become Chairman of the Cooperative. He is a trustee of the McCaughey Memorial Trust, a member of the Ministerial Co-operatives Council and a director and chairman of several of the Co-operative's subsidiaries.

Ian led the industry through a period of volatility in international trade that included Britain's entry into the Common Market. During his period as Chairman: rice production increased nearly ten-fold; total payments to rice growers increased from \$6 million to \$250 million; and industry turnover grew from \$14 million to over \$600 million.

Under Ian's chairmanship, the Ricegrowers' Co-operative achieved its long term objective of marketing branded Australian rice to Japan - a vision Ian first communicated during a grower meeting at Whitton in 1953. Today the industry exports eighty-five percent of its rice as a premium, packaged, branded product to over forty destinations including Japan, Hong Kong, the Middle East and the Pacific.

Ian was awarded the Churchill Fellowship to study in the USA for nine months in 1965. He was the first farmer in New South Wales to win such an award. In 1970 he was elected as an honorary councillor of the Ricegrowers' Association of Australia which is the highest honour the industry can bestow on an individual. In 1999 he was awarded the Order of Australia for service to the rice industry and for developing export markets. At his retirement from the Co-operative in 1996 the Managing Director said, "Ian's absolute support of, and trust in, staff has been the spark that has kept people here. It has made us all go the extra yard when times were hard. This truly international business rests on personal relationships and Ian has set the standard."

Ian continues to serve the rice industry in many ways. He led a successful application to obtain \$15 million of Federal Government support for the Co-operative Research Centre (CRC) for Sustainable Rice Production, and currently chairs the CRC Board. He has also worked tirelessly to develop links between Charles Sturt University and the irrigation industry in New South Wales.

The University is proud to honour a man of remarkable service and vision. In recognition of his contribution to the public good and acknowledging in particular his generosity towards Charles Sturt University, the award of Doctor of Applied Science (*honoris causa*) is conferred this day on Ian Colin Davidge.

Dated this Tenth Day of May Two Thousand