

Peter Christophersen

Chancellor,

I have the pleasure of presenting Peter Christophersen for the honorary Doctor of Letters.

Peter has dedicated nearly four decades to caring for the land and fostering a deep connection between his family's traditional knowledge, country, and ecological science in Kakadu.

Over the years, he has demonstrated a remarkable commitment to environmental conservation and a profound understanding of native plants and wildlife. His collaboration with various researchers, including at CSIRO, CDU and the Office of the Supervising Scientist, and partnerships with First Nations organisations such as the Northern Land Council, Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Cooperation, and Werenbun Aboriginal Association Corporation have inspired innovative holistic approaches to land management.

A driver behind nationally and internationally significant research and livelihood development projects, Peter has pioneered the use of wet season burning to reduce the prominence of spear grass hence reducing wildfire risk, whilst enhancing understorey recovery. In the early 2000s, the Boggy Plain Fire Project in Kakadu not only restored productive wetland ecosystems but set a precedent for rigorous yet sustainable fire management practices within wetlands that

benefit both the environment and the Traditional Owners.

Peter's expertise extends beyond traditional plant propagation and seed collection.

As managing director of Kakadu Native Plants, he has played a pivotal role in rehabilitation efforts at the Ranger Uranium Mine, working closely with the Mirarr Traditional Owners to restore and rejuvenate landscapes impacted by mining activities. His work with Energy Resources Australia and other stakeholders has led to successful progressive rehabilitation projects at Jabiluka and Ranger Uranium Mines, establishing a gold standard for community engagement and long-term resource management.

Peter and his extended family's commitment to passing on knowledge and skills to younger generations is exemplary. Through Kakadu Native Plants, they have created employment opportunities and educational experiences through integrating traditional knowledge and science into a business model that provides First Nations people, particularly youth, with a career pathway to care for country.

Chancellor,

In recognition of his outstanding contributions to integrating science and Indigenous knowledge into land management, highlighting how Indigenous expertise can improve mine restoration, and for supporting businesses to empower young

First Nations people, Charles Darwin University Council awards Peter Christophersen the title of Honorary Doctor of Letters.