

CHANCELLOR,

I have the honour to present to you Dr Sadhana Arun Mahajani whom Council has determined should be awarded the Doctor of Science Honoris Causa.

Dr Sadhana Mahajani is one of the Northern Territory's quiet achievers. Coming from a medical family, she trained as a doctor in England before emigrating to Darwin in 1972 with her husband Dr Arun Mahajani.

Darwin was a remote population centre at the time and had a shortage of medical staff and an even shorter supply of doctors in private practice. In those days it was possible for local residents to name every doctor in Darwin. Dr Mahajani was initially assigned to provide medical checks to school aged children in the Darwin region. This was important in improving health outcomes across the region.

Dr Mahajani was instrumental in establishing the Northern Territory's first community health centre in Peel Street, Darwin. The centre provided for the first time health education programs, immunisation, and importantly, antenatal services to nursing mothers.

After the disastrous Cyclone Tracy in 1974, Dr Mahajani provided medical services from a demountable building in the grounds of the then Berrimah Primary School. Travelling throughout the Top End, she provided medical services in many remote locations, including Labelle Station and Daly River. It was at this time that she worked to make Pap smear tests available to Indigenous and remote women.

Throughout her long career in the Northern Territory, Dr Mahajani has constantly devoted her time to a variety of public health service initiatives, including drug rehabilitation services, palliative care, women's cancer prevention, breast screening and sexual assault services, Alzheimer's support services and gerontology.

Dr Mahajani was instrumental in validating the Kimberley Indigenous Cognitive Assessment Tool across the Northern Territory. This tool is used to assess the extent of dementia and other cognitive impairments in older Indigenous people. Before the development of this tool, the health care needs of these people living in remote and rural regions was hindered by a lack of culturally appropriate assessment tools. Through her work in validating this assessment tool in the Northern Territory, Dr Mahajani has helped to close a significant gap in the provision of health care services to older Indigenous Territorians.

In 2005 she was recognised by the Australian Association of Gerontology with the Distinguished Member Award. Earlier this year, the Northern Territory Government recognised

her achievements when they named her as one of the women who have made their mark in the Northern Territory for 2010.

CHANCELLOR

In recognition of her outstanding contribution and long-term dedication to improving the health and well-being of Territorians I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Science Honoris Causa – Sadhana Arun Mahajani