

# **CAPTAIN RICHARD CHAMPION DE CRESPIGNY**

## **Citation for Conferral of Doctor of the University (*honoris causa*)**

Deputy Chancellor, I present Captain Richard Champion de Crespigny for the award of Doctor of the University (*honoris causa*).

The Melbourne born and educated Richard de Crespigny received his first taste of a future flying career as a 14-year-old when his father organised a tour of the RAAF Academy at Point Cook in Victoria.

He had never seen such extraordinary facilities before. He knew then that he needed to get a university degree and become an RAAF Officer and Pilot. In 1975, aged 17, he joined the RAAF. One year later, he started flying. During his 11 years with the RAAF, he was seconded as Aide-de-Camp to two Australian Governors General – Sir Zelman Cowan and Sir Ninian Stephen.

Richard remained with the RAAF until 1986 when he joined Qantas, converting to Boeing 747s. He converted to A380 command in 2008 as one of Qantas' most senior captains. He was at the control of the world's largest and most advanced commercial jetliner when he and his fellow officers were faced with their greatest challenge on 4 November 2010.

Early into the Singapore/Sydney leg of flight QF32, one of four engines exploded. The damage to the aircraft was extensive. On top of ensuring that 440 passengers remained calm during the ordeal, Captain de Crespigny had a mammoth task on the flight deck to keep the aircraft in the air and then get it back on the ground. For two hours he and his fellow crew (technical and cabin) remained calm as they planned to stabilise the damage, configure the overweight aircraft, then manoeuvre it towards Changi Airport in Singapore.

Once on the ground, a recalcitrant engine refused to shut down, fuel was leaking near white hot brakes and a new environment was set for potential disaster. Passengers remained on board for two nervous hours before they safely disembarked.

The incident brought into play Captain de Crespigny's considerable skills involving teamwork, problem solving, judgement, knowledge, experience and putting years of highly-skilled training into practice.

This pivotal event has changed his life forever. His autobiography QF32, which tells the story of the incident in gripping detail, is a best-seller. QF32 also won the Best Non Fiction award in the 2013 Australian Book Industry Awards and the Australian Independent Booksellers Best Non Fiction award for books released in Australia in 2012.

Captain Richard de Crespigny has developed into one of Australia's most sought-after corporate speakers; his presentations focusing on crisis management, leadership, problem solving and teamwork. He has presented to Fortune 500 companies, the Federal Government and its agencies, including defence, safety, security and investigation.

Charles Sturt University was privileged to host a presentation by Captain de Crespigny in March this year. He has graciously allowed a video of that event to be used in the University's teaching programs in subjects such as emergency management, leadership and teamwork. He is also a visiting lecturer at the University's Australian Graduate School of Policing and Security.

Deputy Chancellor, I present Captain Richard Champion de Crespigny, a modern aviation hero on whom Charles Sturt University is very proud to confer the award of Doctor of the University (*honoris causa*).

**Dated this Fifteenth Day of December Two Thousand and Fourteen**