

Biography – Professor Edwina Cornish



Professor Edwina Cornish is inaugural Provost at Monash University. As the chief academic officer the Provost and Senior Vice-President is responsible for setting the University's academic strategy and priorities with a view to improving education, research and the financial performance of the University; oversight of faculties, academic related portfolios and University-wide centres and institutes; leading academic staffing strategies, including recruitment, probation, performance management, promotion, reward and recognition and fostering interdisciplinary areas of excellence and collaboration.

Professor Cornish was appointed to the position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at Monash University in February 2004. In August 2009 she also appointed Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor. In 2012 she was appointed to the role of Provost and Senior Vice-President of the University.

She is an experienced board member and current board memberships include the Museums Board of Victoria, the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay-Monash Research Academy and the ClimateWorks Australia Board. Former board memberships include on the Board of the Australian Research Council (2001-2004) and the AusIndustry Board (1994–1996). Professor Cornish has also served on the Prime Minister's Science and Engineering Council (appointed in 1996) and the Victorian Government Science and Engineering Technology Taskforce.

Professor Cornish played a key role in building one of Australia's first biotechnology companies, Florigene Limited. Under her leadership the company established global research and development and marketing operations and successfully commercialised the world's first genetically modified flowers.

Professor Cornish holds a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Biochemistry and a Doctor of Philosophy in Microbiology from the University of Melbourne. Professor Cornish is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering.

Recognition of Professor Cornish's work includes being awarded the Centenary Medal for service to Australian society in biotechnology and university administration in 2001. In 2013 she was inducted onto the Victorian Honour Roll of Women for providing inspirational leadership as a pioneer in the biotechnology industry and as a transformational leader at Monash University. In 2014 Professor Cornish was made an Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished service to higher education, to advances in biotechnology and horticultural genetic modification, and through fostering of partnerships with government, industry and the community.