

Statement

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Friday, 2 December 2022

STATEMENT FROM THE PREMIER ON PROFESSOR DEREK DENTON AC

On behalf of the Victorian Government, I offer sincere condolences to the family and friends of decorated scientist Emeritus Professor Derek Denton AC FRS FAA FRCP FRACP LLD (Hon).

Professor Denton was the founding director of the Florey Institute, Victoria's internationally renowned brain research centre and a pioneer in medical research.

Professor Denton's career as a research physiologist began in 1947 at the Royal Melbourne Hospital where he made contributions to our understanding of kidney function only a few months after his graduation from the University of Melbourne.

He went on to lead numerous international research projects on instinctive behaviours in animals – such as thirst, hunger and the urge to reproduce – and the nature of consciousness.

He was the first to identify that an animal's salt appetite is innate, not learned, and emerges spontaneously in response to sodium deficiency.

In 1960, he established the Howard Florey Institute of Experimental Physiology and Medicine which, under his leadership, became one of the largest and most highly respected brain research centres in the world.

In 1987 Professor Denton was awarded the Macfarlane Burnet Medal and Lecture by the Australian Academy of Science for his lifetime's work, in 1995 he was elected to the National Academy of Sciences and in 1999 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of London. He was made a Companion of the Order of Australia in 2005 for leadership in medical research.

Professor Denton's family has accepted a State Memorial – details will be made available in due course.