



MASSEY University Chancellor Nigel Gould, left, and Neil Pearce share the moment as the university's highest honour — a Doctor of Science degree — is conferred on Professor Pearce at graduation ceremonies yesterday. Picture: JONATHAN CAMERON

Scientist awarded rare honour

By LEE MATTHEWS

THE highest degree any university can confer was awarded to Neil Pearce in Palmerston North yesterday.

Professor Pearce was conferred a doctor of science degree by Massey University. This is an earned degree — not an honorary one — and means he has made outstanding and original contributions to the world's body of knowledge, over a long period of time.

Most DSci recipients have

written more than 100 papers and are acknowledged world leaders in their fields.

Prof Pearce is director of Massey University's Wellington-based Centre for Public Health Research, where he has applied epidemiological methods to research into non-communicable diseases, such as asthma and cancer.

His investigations into asthma and allergies in children have seen him lead what has become one of the largest health studies in the world, in-

volving one million children at more than 280 health centres in 100 countries.

Prof Pearce gained a doctor of philosophy degree in epidemiology from the Wellington School of Medicine.

He conducted some of the first occupational epidemiology studies in New Zealand, including a series that led to the discovery that meat workers were at greater risk from certain forms of cancer. He also found links between exposure to electromagnetic fields and in-

creased risk of leukemia in electrical workers.

His research interests — respiratory disease, occupational health, cancer, Maori health, Pacific health and socio-economic factors in health — have contributed to key areas in the Government's new health strategies.

Massey University's College of Humanities and Social Sciences research director Nigel Long said Prof Pearce's DSci was the first awarded to a member of this college.

1
1
3
ti
fi
a
re
N
in
T
A
in
tel
dic
co
be
co
wa
bre
it
\$3
the
wh
py
be
We
Ch
A
Au
gro
Ma
cha
stu
22
cri
fla
mi
We
Ro
aft
ev
N
A
wh
mc
die
int
rac
of
by
wa

Notes on f... D... 1