

MEDIA RELEASE



Polding Centre
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FORMER PREMIER RECEIVES PAPAL HONOUR

Australian Catholic University Chancellor and former NSW Premier, the Honourable John Fahey AC, along with lawyer and board director, Ms Rebecca Davies, have each been awarded Papal Honours.

Mr Fahey was made a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Gregory the Great, in recognition of his long-standing commitment to political life in both the NSW and Federal parliaments, guided by his deep Catholic faith.

He has also served as President of the World Anti-Doping Agency and as Patron and Director of the Men of League Foundation, which provides assistance to ageing Rugby League players.

Mr Fahey said the award was a great personal honour, but one he never anticipated.

“It is a great personal shock for me,” Mr Fahey said. “My Catholic faith has helped guide all the decisions I’ve ever made in public life and provided me with a strong moral compass.

“I never aspired for this sort of recognition and I feel quite unworthy to receive this sort of recognition, but obviously honoured as well.”

He was joined by close family and friends as the honour was bestowed on him by Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, the Most Rev. Anthony Fisher OP on behalf of the Holy Father on Friday 8 November.

Pope Gregory XVI introduced papal honours in the early 19th Century and today they are conferred to acknowledge members of the laity who have made a significant contribution to the Church and to the broader community. They are handed out only once a year.

At the same ceremony, Ms Davies was made a Dame Commander of the Order of St Gregory the Great. She was recognised for her exemplary service to the community through not-for-profit organisations, including as a Director of Catholic Healthcare and a board member of the Chris O’Brien Lifehouse and the National Heart Foundation.

Ms Davies said she was greatly humbled to receive the award.

“I don’t really deserve it. As Catholics, we believe in ensuring that people-centred healthcare is at the heart of everything we do. It doesn’t really matter who we are treating in healthcare because every person is intrinsically valuable”, Ms Davies said.

“Through this award, I hope I can inspire other lay Catholics to take on leadership roles.”

Archbishop Fisher said it was fitting to honour Mr Fahey and Ms Davies given their enormous contribution to Australian society.

“As State Premier and later as a Federal Minister, Mr Fahey took a very pro-life position on matters such as abortion, birth control and euthanasia,” Archbishop Fisher said.

“Ms Davies has made a significant contribution to helping the homeless and the disadvantaged, through the Order of Malta and through financing a unit at St Vincent’s Hospital to alleviate mental illness among the underprivileged.

“They are both very worthy award recipients who have put the Catholic faith into action in serving the Church and serving the broader community.”

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