



MEDIA RELEASE

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Priest recognised as a Queensland Great

In its 20th year, the Premier of Queensland, Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk has added nine Queensland Greats to list.

The awards recognise and celebrate extraordinary achievements and life time contributions by Queenslanders to our state and often the world.

Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk said the 2020 Queensland Greats shared a common trait: service to the community.

Ms Palaszczuk said it was particularly pleasing that so many of this year's recipients are from regional Queensland.

One of those is long serving Parish Priest of Mount Isa, Fr Mick Lowcock OAM.

"Every one of our Queensland Greats has worked to make other people's lives better, some after overcoming incredible adversity themselves," she said.

Fr Mick has been recognised for his dedication to his local community through his work in the Parish.

Through the Catholic Church, Father Mick set about establishing North West Queensland Indigenous Catholic Social Services Limited (NWQICSS) as an organisation which today employs more than 70 people of which over 80 per cent are Indigenous. The group provides assistance and numerous programs to those in need, mostly Aboriginal people and their families. NWQICSS enjoys a strong community profile and actively engages the community it serves.

Fr Mick said "it's all a bit embarrassing really, when I think of all the other Priests and religious who pioneered the mid-west and western Queensland, they didn't have the luxuries we have today. I remember a story from Fr Tom O'dwyer who said during winter they had no hot water and he used to shower around 3pm in the afternoon because the pipes had had a bit of sun and the water was warm."

When asked why set up NWQICSS when the life of a Priest is already so busy, he said "you can't have people in your own backyard struggling and not do anything about it."

NWQICSS started as an employment agency and Fr Mick soon realised that the people he wanted to help weren't actually ready for employment, they had too many other issues that needed fixing before they were ready.

"We have nearly 70 indigenous people employed at NWQICSS which is something we are proud of" Fr Mick said. "One family had nothing, no employment, issues of domestic violence, they are now both employed and living as a family."

"I also see this as a good thing for Priests and religious in our community, good people trying to do good things" he said.

When asked if there was a time when he thought it was all too hard? Fr Mick said "yes there are days when I could just spend time visiting families that didn't need my help, but then I see others walking the streets, families fighting and I know I need to do more for those who are forgotten."

Bishop of Townsville Most Rev. Tim Harris said “the news that Fr Mick Lowcock the Parish Priest of Mt Isa and Vicar General of the Catholic Diocese of Townsville has been acknowledged as a Queensland Great affirms the extraordinary work and vision of a man who has never thought about himself but rather who has devoted his Priestly life to those in society who deserve our special care and consideration.”

“Fr Mick, as I have said on previous occasions, gives the Catholic Church a good name.”

“His outreach to our indigenous brothers and sisters is renowned and he holds their trust and respect. His advocacy on their behalf is legendary and they have no greater friend.”

“On behalf of all the Catholic people in this part of the world and the wider community that Fr Mick continues to serve, regardless of colour or creed, I sincerely welcome this honour bestowed on a great individual and a great Queenslander. Well done good and faithful servant: Bishop Tim said.

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