



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**NOTRE DAME**  
A U S T R A L I A

# Media Release

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## Former NSW Deputy Premier awarded Honorary Doctorate

The University of Notre Dame Australia has awarded an Honorary Doctorate to former NSW Deputy Premier John Watkins in recognition of his outstanding contribution to health, education and the Catholic community.

A Doctor of Education was conferred on Dr Watkins yesterday at one of the University's graduation ceremonies in Sydney.

Dr Watkins started his working life as a secondary school teacher and was elected to the NSW State Parliament in 1995.

He held the positions of Minister for Finance, Police, State Development, Education and Training, Corrective Services, Fair Trading, Sport and Recreation and Transport, and served as Deputy Premier in the NSW Labor Government.

The University's Chancellor, The Honourable Christopher Ellison, said it is an honour to recognise Dr Watkins' exceptional leadership in health and education in Australia and his devotion to the Catholic community.

"Dr Watkins is a passionate advocate for Catholic education and healthcare and has been a great supporter of our University. He has helped facilitate a number of joint research and professional development activities to advance our strategic priorities in Catholic healthcare across Australia," Mr Ellison said.

After leaving politics in 2008, Dr Watkins served as Chief Executive Officer of Alzheimer's Australia (NSW) for nine years.

He was also appointed to the Board of Catholic Professional Standards in 2016 and has held non-executive Director roles with a number of organisations including Calvary Healthcare, the Catholic Health Australia Board, and Mary MacKillop Today, a company that provides overseas aid and assistance to communities in the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and Peru, in addition to supporting indigenous tertiary students throughout Australia.

Mr Watkins was announced as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2015 Queens Birthday Honours List for his significant service to the community through leadership in health, education and to the

Parliament of NSW.

Addressing the University's latest graduates from the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing, Midwifery and Health Sciences yesterday, Dr Watkins reflected on his career and shared an important lesson on kindness.

"The one life lesson that stands out for me after my career is that kindness matters – above all else really," he said.

"Kindness to all, but especially the lonely, aged and infirm, indeed all in need.

"Those who come into our lives in need of care are really gifts given to us so that we can show our best selves."

**Media contact: [media@nd.edu.au](mailto:media@nd.edu.au)**