



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

Media Release

Wednesday, 3 May 2023

Honorary Doctorate awarded to inspiring advocate Jacinta Collins

A former politician and passionate education advocate who champions the needs of Catholic schools, teachers and students has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Notre Dame Australia.

The exceptional career of the Honourable Jacinta Collins was celebrated yesterday when she was awarded a Doctor of Letters during one of the University's graduation ceremonies in Sydney.

Dr Collins is the Executive Director of the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) and previously spent more than 20 years serving the Australian community in Federal Parliament as a Minister and Senator.

The University's Chancellor, The Honourable Christopher Ellison, said Dr Collins had dedicated most of her working life to public service and is passionate about ensuring disadvantaged children have access to quality education.

"Dr Collins is a tireless champion for equitable and accessible education and has a deep understanding of the values that underpin a Catholic education," Mr Ellison said.

"Dr Collins has supported the University by expanding our relationship with the NCEC, most notably through support of the development of the University's new Centre for Excellence in Catholic Education. We are delighted to recognise her decades of exceptional work and service to the Australian public and the education sector."

Dr Collins has always been a passionate supporter of Australians in need, having started her career as a social worker and welfare officer.

She was a Labor Senator for Victoria from 1995 to 2005 and from 2008 to 2019, serving as the Federal Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Deputy Leader in the Senate and Manager of Government Business in the Senate.

Dr Collins played a key role in the Gonski school education reforms and was a strong supporter of funding for all schools.

As part of her role with the NCEC she advocates on behalf of 1750 Catholic schools, more than 750,000 students and about 90,000 education staff.

Addressing the University's latest graduates from the Faculty of Arts, Sciences, Law and Business, and the Faculty of Education, Philosophy & Theology, Dr Collins spoke of the importance of passion, the art of co-operation and the search for meaning.

"Each of us is called in our capacity of being both flesh and spirit to walk this life in connection and love, using our passions and gifts and the values and beliefs we hold most dearly for the betterment of all humankind," Dr Collins said.

"No small feat, but the beauty is you don't have to do it alone or complete it in your lifetime."

Media contact: media@nd.edu.au