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MEDIA RELEASE

JOHN FAHEY – IN MEMORIAM

For immediate circulation

Yesterday, Rev Hon Fred Nile MLC contributed to the Condolence Motion debate concerning the sad passing of John Fahey AC. Below is an extract of Rev Nile's speech extracted from the Parliamentary *Hansard*.

Condolence Motion Debate

Tuesday 13 October 2020

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (20:10:06): I am pleased to take part in the commemoration of the life and practical service of former New South Wales Premier the Hon. John Fahey, Companion of the Order of Australia and man of considerable faith. He passed away on 12 September 2020 from complications caused by leukaemia. I understand that he had already experienced a major operation with the removal of a lung. He was an inspiration to many, myself included. I was particularly impressed by his commitment to his faith and the productive role it played in his political career. During an interview in 2017 for *Catholic Outlook*, John stated:

I believe that I had to practise the values that the Catholic Church has and teaches but they are, in the proper use of the word 'Catholic' – they're universal values. No one can argue with those universal values ...

In practical terms those values are founded on the Judeo-Christian ethic, the Ten Commandments and the Bible, but they are also defined by the compassion and public service that is vital for any community. John Fahey was the kind of leader that seems to be getting rarer and rarer to find in our complex modern world. We thank God for all that we know about John and his contribution to our State and

nation. John Fahey had a sincerity about him, a commitment to principle, and was well respected by both sides of Parliament. One can always respect another politician, even one with whom one is passionately in disagreement—although in this case I am in complete agreement with the Hon. John Fahey. It makes a big difference if that politician has a sense of personal integrity which makes him a very attractive personality. John was one such leader. He was first elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1984 and served there until 1996. John was the Premier of this State between 1992 and 1995 before moving to Canberra to become the Commonwealth Minister for Finance between 1996 and 2001.

His contributions to our State have been immense, but in his personal life John was a courageous man who never shied away from danger. During the visit of Prince Charles to Australia in 1994, a radical student named David Kang rushed the podium with what looked like a pistol in his hand. It later turned out to be a starting pistol. Nobody at the time knew that it was a starting pistol; John Fahey certainly did not know that. The immediate assumption was that it was a real gun. For all they knew, it could have been a public assassination, which we believe was the intention of David Kang. But both John and the then-Australian of the Year Ian Kiernan rushed the shooter, putting their own lives and safety at risk by tackling him to the ground. John had learned how to tackle through his lifelong experience with Rugby League. That was the kind of man John was.

He was instrumental in the Sydney bid for the Olympic Games. I still remember seeing him jump for joy at the announcement on television that Sydney had won the bid—a tremendous achievement for which he can take a great deal of credit. John continued his public service with the World Anti-Doping Agency and as the Chancellor of the Australian Catholic University. He is survived by his wife, Colleen; his children, Matthew and Melanie; and his grandchildren, Campbell and Amber. He became the guardian of his grandchildren after his daughter Tiffany died in a tragic road accident in 2006. That is another example of his loving care, particularly for the members of his family. John's legacy of service to the people of New South Wales is something that his family can be tremendously proud of. I am sure that John will be missed by many, including in this Chamber. May John Fahey rest in peace.

Media inquiries:

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