

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



Thursday, 15 May 2025

STATE MEMORIAL FOR THE HONOURABLE DR RACE MATHEWS

A State Memorial Service to celebrate the life of The Honourable Dr Race Mathews will be held at 11.30 am on Friday, 23 May at the Arts Centre Melbourne, The Leaper Family Pavilion.

Race Mathews lived a rich and fulfilling life as a family man and politician who served in all three levels of government (local, state, federal), academic, author, social reformer, and champion of the arts.

Joining the Labor Party in 1956, he went on to serve as Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Community Services.

During his time as Principal Private Secretary to former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, he most notably contributed to the early design for what would later become Medicare – marking the beginning of a transformative healthcare system for Australians.

As a Minister, Race strengthened child protection, led reforms in gun control, modernised Victoria Police and improved emergency management responses following the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires.

Race also left a remarkable legacy promoting accessibility in Victoria's arts and cultural scene. He served on the boards of the Melbourne Recital Centre and the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI), and helped establish the Arts Centre and the Melbourne Writers' Festival.

The State Memorial will be open to the public, and for those unable to attend, the Service will be live streamed.

At the request of the Mathews family and in lieu of flowers, tributes may be made in the form of a contribution to Alzheimer's Research Australia or The Australian Fabian Society. To donate, please visit alzheimersresearch.org.au or fabians.org.au.

Further details about how to attend or how to view the live stream will be shared in due course, with the most up to date information available at vic.gov.au/RaceMathews.

Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

"Race Mathews has left an incredible legacy and will be remembered for his kindness, passion for social justice and fairness – both inside and outside of his political career."

"Race helped shape the early design of Medibank – laying the groundwork for Medicare and helping build a health system that treated care as a right, not a privilege."

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