

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



Friday, 8 May 2026

STATE FUNERAL FOR THE HON. ROBERT IAN KNOWLES AO

A State Funeral to celebrate the life of The Hon. Robert Ian Knowles AO will be held at 10.30am on Friday 15 May at the Cathedral Church of Christ the King, 49 Lydiard Street South, Ballarat.

Rob served Victoria with distinction both in Parliament and through a lifetime of public service.

A farmer and family man from Clarendon, Rob was elected to the Victorian Parliament in 1976 – representing Ballarat Province in the Legislative Council until 1999.

He went on to serve as Minister for Housing, Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Health.

In these roles, he strengthened palliative care and improved the quality and sustainability of Victoria’s health system.

Following his parliamentary career Rob took on leadership and board roles, including Commissioner of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission, Chair of the Victorian Health Reform and Innovation Council and Chair of the Board of the Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne.

He was also committed to improving mental health outcomes, serving on the board of Beyond Blue, later as Deputy Chair, and was one of the inaugural Commissioners of the National Mental Health Commission.

In Ballarat, he gave many years of service to Ballarat Grammar as Chair of the Board for a decade.

Then in 2007, Rob was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished service.

Rob’s legacy is one of compassion, reform and service. His work across health, aged care and mental health continues to make a difference to Victorians.

The funeral will be open to the public and livestreamed online. A private burial will follow.

More information, including how to attend or view the livestream and make a donation in lieu of flowers, is available at vic.gov.au/RobertKnowles.

Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

“Rob championed reform across our health, aged care and mental health sectors throughout his 23 years of parliamentary service and beyond.”

“He gave so much to his community and our state, and he will be remembered with deep respect and gratitude.”