

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



Thursday, 28 May, 2026

STATE FUNERAL SERVICE FOR NEALE DANIHER AO

A State Funeral to celebrate the life of Neale Daniher AO will be held at 1:00pm on Wednesday, 10 June at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Neale lived a life that expanded beyond the bounds of the football field.

He made his first mark on the field at 17, before going on to play 82 games for the Essendon Football Club from 1970 to 1990.

It was during his time with the Bombers that Neale would face his first test of resilience, with a series of knee injuries that would prematurely end his playing career.

However, his talent and passion for the sport led to him becoming senior coach for the Melbourne Football Club in 1998. His ambitious and dedicated leadership guided the Demons to the 2000 AFL Grand Final and through a ten-year coaching tenure, where he became affectionately known as 'The Reverend'.

In 2013, Neale was diagnosed with motor neurone disease (MND), or 'The Beast' as he called it.

Determined to help others living with the disease, Neale co-founded FightMND. Together with his family and supporters, FightMND has committed over \$141 million to medical research and care, to improve the lives of those living with MND, and to find treatments and ultimately a cure.

Neale was named the Victorian of the Year in 2019 and the Australian of the Year in 2025, in recognition of his extraordinary contributions in leading the fight against MND, inspiring millions of Australians with hope.

At the request of the Daniher family and in lieu of flowers, donations may be made to FightMND. To donate, visit fightmnd.org.au.

Further details on the State Funeral Service, including how to register, will soon be available at vic.gov.au/Neale-Daniher.

Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

"Neale championed resilience and determination in every aspect of his life – as a football player, coach and tireless advocate for MND research."

"Neale has left an incredible legacy and he will be remembered for his generosity, humility and courage."

Quotes attributable to the Daniher family

"Neale was deeply grateful for the extraordinary support and kindness he received from the Australian community throughout his life. That generosity lifted him, sustained him, and meant more to him than words could express."

"As a family, we warmly welcome all those whose lives he touched to join us in celebrating his life and honouring his remarkable legacy."

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