

## **8.1. MM01: Vale Professor, the Honourable Dame Marie Bashir AC, CVO, 1930-2026**

Marie Bashir was born in Narrandera in 1930, the daughter of Michael and Victoria Bashir. Both her parents were of Lebanese heritage. Like many Lebanese immigrants in the early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Michael and Victoria established a manchester and menswear business.

Marie Bashir was educated at Sydney Girls' High School and the Conservatorium of Music.

In 1956 she graduated with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery from the University of Sydney. In February 1957, Marie married Nick Shehadie (later Lord Mayor of Sydney and Sir Nicholas Shehadie).

Marie began her medical practise in Pendle Hill before moving to Mosman and eventually specialising in mental and children's health.

In 1971 she was recognised as Australian Mother of the Year.

In 1972, Marie became the first Director of Rivendell, the child, adolescent, and family health unit established by the NSW Department of Health. By 1993 Marie was the Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Sydney and the following year became Director of Mental Health Services for the Central Sydney Area Health Service. Marie also served as Senior Consultant to the Aboriginal Medical Service, Redfern and to the Aboriginal Medical Service, Kempsey.

She became Governor of NSW at the request of Premier Bob Carr in 2001. She was the first woman and first person of Lebanese descent to hold the position. Her term lasted until 2014, having been extended several times.

Marie Bashir was a woman of great compassion and kindness with a particular passion to serve and respect the under privileged and vulnerable. That became a feature of her Governorship. She was the patron of many organisations including Opera Australia, the Australian Refugee Foundation, the Australia-Vietnam Medical Trust, Australian Indigenous Education Foundation, the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service, and the Sydney Peace Foundation.

She received many honours several from the Australian and foreign governments. They include Companion of the Order of Australia AC in 2001, Grand Officer in the Lebanese National of the Cedar in 2004, Commander of the Royal Victorian Order CVO from HM Queen Elizabeth in 2006, and Officer within the French Order of the National Legion of Honour in 2013.

In 2014 she was named as a Dame of the Order of Australia for extraordinary and pre-eminent achievement and merit in service to the administration, public life, and people of New South Wales, to medicine, particularly as an advocate for improved mental health outcomes for the

young, marginalised, and disadvantaged, to international relations, through the promotion of collaborative health programs, and as a leader in tertiary education.

In 2010 Marie Bashir became the Vice Regal Patron of Nutcote and remained an Honorary Life Friend of the house and museum. There is an example of the pink 'Governor Marie Bashir rose' in the garden there.

On 20 January 2026, Marie Bashir passed away surrounded by her family. A State Funeral is to be held on 4 February 2026.

Vale, Professor, the Honourable Dame Marie Bashir AC, CVO.

**I therefore recommend:**

- 1. THAT** Council write to Dame Marie Bashir's family expressing sincere condolences and gratitude for her extraordinary public service and the affection in which she was held by the people of North Sydney.
- 2. THAT** Council commemorate Dame Marie Bashir's contribution by planting a tree with a commemorative plaque in a suitable location to be decided in consultation with Dame Bashir's family.

**COUNCILLOR ZOË BAKER  
MAYOR**