

Australian of the Year David Morrison donates gifted luxury car to Karinya House

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Australian of the Year David Morrison has donated the use of a gifted luxury car to Canberra organisation Karinya House which supports vulnerable pregnant women and new mothers.

Canberra car dealer, philanthropist and 2014 Australian of the Year ACT finalist, Richard Rolfe, gave all four winners in this year's Australian of the Year awards use of an Audi A4 for the 12 months they would hold their positions.

The cars are due to be delivered to each winner over the next week.

The others due to receive the cars for the year will be Senior Australian of the Year Professor Gordian Fulde, Local Hero of the Year Catherine Keenan and Young Australian of the Year joint winners Nic Marchesi and Lucas Patchett, who will share their car.

Mr Rolfe confirmed on Friday that retired Lieutenant General Morrison had wanted to donate his 12 months' use of the car to a local charity and he had settled on Karinya House.

The two men will hand over the keys of the car allocated to Lieutenant General Morrison to Karinya House representatives in Canberra next Friday.

Karinya House president Sarah Kelly said the car would be used to transport clients to medical and other appointments and to ferry them to the house to attend outreach programs.

The not-for-profit community organisation provides accommodation and other support to women in need who are pregnant and to new mothers and their babies.

"We are so grateful to David for his acknowledgement of Karinya House and the work we do and I think it's testament to his desire to help vulnerable women," Mrs Kelly said.

Mr Rolfe and his wife Deborah were the ACT finalists in the Local Hero section of the Australian of the Year awards in 2014, recognised for their contributions to local charities.

Mr Rolfe said that involvement in the award and seeing how last year's Australian of the Year, Rosie Batty, had attended more than 250 speaking engagements, led him to want to give something that would help each of this year's winners fulfil the demands of their role.

Mr Rolfe said he approached the National Australia Day Council offering the use of the cars to each of the 2016 winners.

He said the donation of the use of the cars was announced by the council chair, Ben Roberts-Smith VC, at Government House on January 24 – the night before the winners were announced.

Mr Rolfe said the gift also included the registration, insurance and servicing of the cars, which were each worth \$50,000 to \$60,000. Each car would be returned at the end of the 12 months.

He said Lieutenant General Morrison and his wife both had cars and wanted to donate the use of the Audi to Karinya House.

"I'm very pleased he has made that decision, that is a great thing," he said.

Mr Rolfe said he had not wanted any kudos from his donations but the media had been invited to next Friday's handover of the car in the wake of criticism of the Australian of the Year this week.

Lieutenant General Morrison has endured a week of public pummelling, including by some news outlets which suggested he would be charging for his speaking engagements as Australian of the Year.

National Australia Day Council chief executive Jeremy Lasek released a statement this week saying the Australian of the Year Award did not come with any financial remuneration from the council.

"On occasions when award recipients take part in official events at the invitation of the NADC, the travel and accommodation costs associated with the invitation are covered by the National Australia Day Council," the statement read.

A spokesman for Lieutenant General Morrison said he would be at the handover of the car next Friday but would not be speaking on the matter before then.



This story was found at:

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/australian-of-the-year-david-morrison-donates-gifted-luxury-car-to-karinya-house-20160205-gmmwgk.html>