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Inner West Courier

Courage to lead in Sydney Peace Prize

AUSTRALIANS are hungry for leaders who possess courage, Sydney Peace Foundation director Professor Stuart Rees says.



Citing the controversial Malaysia swap debate as an example of poor leadership, he said the foundation chose US professor Noam Chomsky as this year's Sydney Peace Prize recipient. Prof Chomsky's "enormous aspiration" was also cause for the foundation giving him the prize, he said.

"Courage is in short supply," Prof Rees said.

"There is huge interest in Chomsky, a huge thirst to hear a world citizen talk.

"People are actually thirsty they are fed up with the mediocrity of Canberra."

Prof Chomsky is scheduled to accept the award in November.

In response to the prize announcement he said: "I am grateful to the Sydney Peace Foundation in their pursuit of justice, as in their recent award to Julian Assange for his courageous exercise of his responsibilities as a citizen of free societies."

Prof Rees said the award would be given for several reasons.

"(Chomsky) has always been opposed to censorship of any kind. He's a champion of free speech," he said. "And he has been a champion of universal human rights and opposed dictators around the world."

MAKE PEACE

* US Professor Noam Chomsky will visit Australia from November 1-4 to accept the Sydney Peace Prize at Town Hall

* Prof Chomsky has exposed state crimes, induced by US foreign policy, in South America, the Middle East and in South East Asia, according to Sydney Peace Foundation director Prof Stuart Rees

* Previous recipients include Nobel laureates Prof Muhammad Yunus and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Indigenous leader Patrick Dodson and nuclear disarmament advocate Dr Hans Blix