

## **THE TEN PLEDGES OF COMMUNITY TRANSPARENCY**

1. We will make the GOCMV relevant
2. We will return financial stability to the GOCMV
3. We will introduce the principle of accountability.
4. We will regain the GOCMV's status as the premier advocate for all Greek Australians.
5. We will actively seek stronger partnerships with other key Greek organisations
6. We will invest in our community's educational future
7. We will redefine the Antipodes Festival to more than a two day party
8. We will introduce Constitutional change to be drafted and will involve all interested groups to ensure its' adoption.
9. We will introduce cultural change within our organisation
10. We will develop the GOCMV's presence beyond Lonsdale Street

## **RELEVANCE**

Is the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne & Victoria (GOCMV) relevant to the wider Greek Community?

This is the question constantly raised by 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Greek Australians.

We consider this to be the most important question that must be asked when planning the future of the GOCMV.

**Relevance** is the cornerstone of each and every one of our policies.

We consider this to be the theme that resonates throughout our wider community and that of our membership.

The GOCMV is at the generational crossroads and we will address the issue of relevance without undermining the key fundamentals of our organisation.

## **FINANCIAL STABILITY**

The GOCMV posted a \$54,645 loss in the 2009 Financial Year - the first for many years.

The figure is understated as significant debts for the Antipodes Festival (A separate Company for legal purposes) remained unpaid at that time.

We also claimed a breach of the relevant part of Corporations Act and Accounting Standards as over \$500,000 of transactions were not disclosed in the events post June 30.

Community Transparency believes in full and frank disclosure, and compliance with the relevant Act and Accounting Standards.

All losses are currently being funded from term deposits that are held in trust for Alphington Grammar School. The funds are meant to be used for the construction of the long awaited multi- purpose hall.

This points to a very grim reality which now confronts the organisation.

Without Financial Stability - the GOCMV will be unable to deliver current and future programmes.

In the short term we will correct the GOCMV budget and return it to surplus.

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## **POLITICAL AFFAIRS POLICY**

### **Advocate for our Community**

The GOCMV will regain its status as the premier advocate for all Greek Australians.

Strengthening relationships with key Federal, State and Local Governments will be a key policy for our administration.

### **Relationships with other Greek Organisations & Agencies**

The GOCMV will proactively seek to build relationships with all Greek Organisations & Agencies for the development and benefit of the community.

Many of our small organizations will require our assistance for lobbying to Government. We will assist them in their efforts.

In addition we will enter new joint ventures in the suburbs to provide better activities and services to all Greek persons.

## **EDUCATION**

### **Alphington Grammar School**

Our aim will be to develop Alphington Grammar School in to one of the premier academic institutions in the state.

We will invest heavily in to the School's resources to develop it much further. The School must have the best available infrastructure.

Infrastructure is not just defined as buildings and equipment.

It is also defined as teaching personnel.

A bold effort will be made to progressively introduce the best educators in the Country to reform our school. Improved teaching standards will translate in to increased students number and improved financial capability.

By aiming higher we can encourage both students and educators to reach their potential.

In turn we will introduce greater scholarship opportunities for academic high achievers and provide them the environment where they can ably excel.

Ancient Greek language and culture will also be introduced in to the school's curriculum.

Institutions all over the World dedicate their resources to the teaching of this subject.

Locally schools such as Methodist Ladies College (MLC) have also adopted the language in to their curriculum.

Principally, there will be greater emphasis on the school's Greek language and cultural aspects.

We also intend on making these programmes available to students of our Afternoon Greek School network.

### **Afternoon Greek School Networks**

The newest of technologies will be introduced in to this sector which will significantly improve the teaching of the Greek language for the benefit of third generation Greek Australians.

We understand that the requirements of this generation are significantly different to their parent's generation hence the material and method of teaching will be revised accordingly.

Newer technologies will be deployed that will utilise our Community's website as a fully fledged resource centre for our students and parents benefit. (see Thinking Outside the Square – An Online Resource Centre) Reading material will now be available online in the same way that many of the Universities and Secondary schools currently operate.

The Greek Government is facilitating web television which assists in the teaching of the Greek language. We intend to deploy the appropriate hardware to all of our schools to provide the latest in technologies so that the learning of Greek can be both fun and effective.

The GOCMV will also look consider the feasibility of creating an expansive library with the aim of making it the most comprehensive in the southern hemisphere.

This state of ours is considered to be the biggest Greek Communities in the World which requires a resource centre that fits its' reputation.

Current teaching conditions will also be reviewed and better remuneration structures will be considered as a matter of urgency.

We consider our educators as an asset of our organisation and will reward them appropriately.

### **New Tertiary Programmes**

Launched in 2001 - the RMIT tertiary programme and resource centre was abandoned immediately after Mr. Papastergiadis' elevation to the Presidency in 2008.

Currently the remnants of the RMIT Cultural Centre are located in a storage facility in Oakleigh.

We have commenced negotiations with the University of Peloponnese to develop a programme that will provide interested persons the opportunity in studying to attain qualifications for the teaching of Modern Greek.

This programme will be supported by the Department of Education - Greece and will involve a local Tertiary institution.

The programme will address significant problems which currently involve the lack of availability of Australian born Greek language teachers as well the dwindling availability of Greek language teachers who are being dispatched by the Greek Government.

In the short term we will engage with both the private and public sectors in Greece to procure the best available personnel for the needs of Australian born children.

### **Thinking Outside the Square – An Online Resource Centre**

The teaching of the Greek language has traditionally been performed in class rooms with text books and other reading material.

In a world that is constantly evolving – we as a Community cannot be left behind.

An online resource centre will be developed in conjunction with the Greek Government's – Department of Education.

For those wishing to qualify or simply improve their Greek speaking and writing skills – this will provide a welcome opportunity.

## **ARTS POLICY**

### **Redefining the Antipodes Festival**

We consider the Arts to be one of the most important sectors and wish to provide it the support it deserves.

The Arts arouse considerable interest from 2nd and 3rd generation Greek Australians and thereby maintaining their involvement in our broader Greek Community.

In addition it is an impressive display of Greek culture for all Australians to enjoy.

The GOCMV's current involvement is negligible.

Former Festival board members will testify to organising over 20 events which were an inspiring display of Greek music, art, dance and other cultural activities.

Today's Festival is predominantly geared to a 2 day party which flourishes or perishes on the ability of securing a headline act. The Greek language media has also been conditioned to make this determination on this criterion alone.

This is a clear distraction from the Festival's original charter.

The only exception to this rule is the Greek Film Festival. We were very pleased with its success but wish to see greater consistency each and every year.

### **A New Charter**

In association with other Arts bodies and interested persons, we will develop a new charter that will reflect the objectives of a genuine artistic body.

### **Funding Opportunities**

The 2009 Antipodes Festival was only able to procure \$40,000 in private sponsorship with over 15 months of preparation. It relied on the GOCMV and Government to finance the Festival. At a time where the GOCMV's finances are becoming more limited – other revenue raising measures must be discovered.

We believe that Private Sector support is an area where no effort has been made and could immediately turn the Festival's fortunes.

A professionally run Festival will also inspire private donors as well as benefactors who will want to leave a lasting legacy.

## **Eliminating Wastage and Poor Decision Making**

The final net cost of the Antipodes Festival to the GOCMV arrived at the grand figure of \$300,000.

This was double the average spending over the previous 10 years and that promised by the Festival's Chairman – only 19 days prior to the event.

The cost of catering for over 500 persons on a two day event was \$100,000.

The vast majority of people who wined and dined at the Community's expense were friends/ family and political allies of the Papastergiadis' faction.

This is not acceptable.

A more modest function could have been organised with lesser persons to acknowledge those who have financially supported the Festival.

The spending of such money is not promoting "culture"; it instead promotes other aims which are not consistent with those of a Not for Profit Organisation.

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENT POLICY

### **The Greek Community of Melbourne and Victoria or the Lonsdale Street Greek Community?**

The Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne & Victoria – is a very impressive name that was formed by our founding fathers and denotes a broader focus and responsibility.

Does the Community facilitate what its name implies?

Public perception suggests that our Community has an unhealthy obsession with the once great Greek precinct of Lonsdale Street and the City of Melbourne.

To be **relevant** we must make a concerted effort in engaging Greater Melbourne and the state of Victoria.

A number of well researched initiatives will be launched to address this issue.

These initiatives will vary in both format and form with the constant being increasing the Community's sphere of influence.

Our increased visibility in both the suburbs and regional Victoria will provide for a more **relevant** Community.

Lonsdale Street will remain our spiritual home – but to be **relevant** we require the courage to look well beyond.

### **GOCMV Strategic Plan - Bulleen, Community Cultural Centres and “Towers in the Sky”**

We believe that prior to make any commitment that would involve either selling or utilising assets of a significant value that certain steps must be followed first.

We will develop the **GOCMV Strategic Plan** to be approved by both our board of management as well as a Special General Meeting of the membership.

The **GOCMV Strategic Plan** will be a defined and binding “road map” for future board of managements. It will clearly outline the GOCMV's future direction and eliminate sporadic decision making.

The need for the GOCMV **Strategic Plan** was evident in 2008 when Mr. Papastergiadis released to the media the “Tower Project” without board sanction or discussion.

The costings of this project proved to be unworkable by a volunteer group of members, who were derided in the media but ultimately vindicated.

The disappointment felt by a large part of the Community for the failure of this proposal was significant

Any document presented to the media must be carefully considered.

We believe that these promises were erratic and the sheer stubbornness to not include interested persons who have had a long standing relationship with the GOCMV was incorrect and proved fatal for this project.

Melbourne is one of the largest geographical cities in the World. Clearly the urban sprawl will continue unabated as the South Eastern corridor continues to gain momentum. Today's Central Business District (CBD) no longer is the "Centre" and is now more like North West Melbourne.

The creation of one centre, particularly in the CBD is not relevant.

Most Melbournians' lives revolve within an area of 5 kilometres where generally:

- Relatives and friends reside
- Schools are located
- Shopping facilities for both food and clothing are located
- Hospitals and other medical facilities are located
- Sporting and other recreational facilities

For many if not most Melbournians, very rarely if at all visit the CBD.

The successful development of any site must be based on logic which could suggest multiple sites around Melbourne that would service a greater geographic area. What Mr. Papastergiadis has failed to comprehend is the need to engage with the wider Greek Community - and are located in the suburbs.

### **A Study First**

Prudent decision making is about commissioning a study that will advise this or any board of management. With grants that could be acquired through the Multicultural Commission of Victoria, a study would be commissioned that would provide independent guidance on what and where we should be focusing on.

Spontaneous decision making based on no research could result in many millions of dollars being spent on projects that most will never be accessed due to a variety of factors.

## **What can be done for Lonsdale Street?**

The GOCMV's head office will be maintained for historical reasons at Lonsdale Street and the existing building can be refurbished with the assistance of the State Government.

It is important to note that the State Government's steering committee's report for the funding works to Lygon Street, China Town and Lonsdale Street, does not state that funding will only be provided for a new building.

In stark contrast, the original submission by the GOCMV (Fountas Administration) was for the funding of renovations to the existing building and/or the addition of 4 -5 storeys. This submission we believe was withdrawn by the new committee and replaced with the more ambitious plan of the 28 storey tower).

We are of the view that the State Government can be persuaded to fund the total renovation and possible extensions to the existing building.

The Lonsdale Street building can be refurbished with the possible addition of a rooftop terrace to incorporate an outdoor cafe restaurant and the building housing a Greek culture centre/museum community offices etc. and possibly housing the Greek consulate offices therefore offering rental income and the Greek community retaining full ownership.

This is a much better option than the 28 storey tower proposal which may yield the community 8 floors of the building and losing control of the rest of the building.

## **And Bulleen?**

The Bulleen property which has remained dormant for many years can also be developed in to an exciting opportunity for the wider Greek Community.

The property is in very close proximity to the City of Manningham where there is a high concentration of Greek Australians.

On face value this provides a more sensible option which warrants greater consideration than what the current board has been willing to provide.

Detailed plans have been already been prepared by a working group headed by Dimitri Paikopoulos which can be reviewed in our "DOWNLOADS" section.

## **ORGANISATIONAL POLICY**

### **Analysis of Current Structure**

In our first term we will correct a number of the anomalies which exist in the Community's operating structure.

All sectors will undergo a rigorous review process and where required will introduce best practice initiatives.

The lack of willingness to act has been very evident in the last two years.

The Community and its stakeholders will see a significant improvement in the quality and quantity of services as well as the safeguarding of its financial wellbeing.

### **Prudent and Responsible Decision Making**

We will introduce the principle of accountability to the running affairs of the GOCMV.

All spontaneous decision making will be terminated immediately.

All major projects requiring significant funding will undergo independent review and feasibility. A report of the findings will be available to all members upon request or through the GOCMV website.

Decisions were made that blatantly violated binding board and General Meeting decisions.

This was evident on the tower project where the submission to government proposed that the Community would expend all remaining funds held in term deposit for the construction of "The Tower".

In addition it would realise over \$2 Million in asset sales to initiate the project.

Naturally this provoked an angry reaction from the stakeholders of Alphington Grammar School who had been previously promised by General Meetings of both the membership and the Board of Management that all funds would be specifically used for the construction of the long awaited Multi Purpose Hall.

Board members loyal to Mr. Papastergiadis voted in favour of a document they had not read and for that matter – were dangerously under qualified to evaluate.

Your representatives on the board of management are ultimately elected to defend your interests as a member of the organisation.

## **Women's Participation. A real cultural change**

Constitutional reform will be introduced that will both encourage and increase the participation of women in our organisation.

Traditional frontiers will be challenged and this will lead to real cultural change.

We will implement a quota electoral system that will ensure at least 35% of the board's participants to be women.

Over 25% of our candidates are women and we are very confident in their ability to take a lead role in the running of the Community.

This is the highest percentage in the history of the Community and this is just the beginning.

## **Constitutional Reform**

The current constitution is seriously outdated and lacks appropriate safeguards on matters of conflict of interest.

It makes no reference to the board's power in creating and administering new Companies (as has occurred with the Antipodes Festival and Alphington Grammar School).

All three Constitutions (Greek Community, Antipodes Festival and Alphington Grammar School) must be streamlined accordingly.

Ultimate control of these Companies will vest with the general membership of the Greek Community.

Time and time again, attempts have been made by various interest groups to amend the Greek Community Constitution. Inevitably these have failed to receive the 75% majority necessary to succeed.

We will advocate for a new Constitution to be drafted and will involve all interested groups to ensure its' adoption.

The new Constitution will be introduced at a Special General Meeting in 2011.

## **Meaningful Member Engagement**

We genuinely believe in more regular engagement with our membership where all members can address their concerns with the running of the organisation.

This can and will be done in the form of quarterly open forums where members are invited to ask questions or provide ideas on how to improve our Community.

We believe our members' views are very valuable and wish to provide a constructive forum where there can be meaningful interaction between the key decision makers and all members.

A similar platform was promoted by the Papastergiadis group in the previous election but once in power was promptly dismantled.

Boards are elected by their membership and their duties extend well beyond an Annual General Meeting and General Elections every three years.