

## **Community groups condemn criticism of Archbishop Makarios over \$6.5 million purchase**



‘We are unable to accept the irrational criticisms against the decision of the Consolidated Trust of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia to purchase a property in Sydney’

Greek associations across Australia have sent public messages of support for Archbishop Makarios of Australia following the press reports regarding the purchase of a \$6.5 million investment property.

The purchase first came to media attention in March following a report by Neos Kosmos. At the time there was speculation regarding the purpose of the purchase, however the Archdiocese of Australia did not respond to questions regarding the apartment.

Another article by news.com.au as well as articles in the Greek press condemned the purchase and sparked fresh debate this month. On Friday, the Archdiocese finally addressed the issue with a statement that the purchase by the Consolidated Trust of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia was not for the Archbishop to permanently live in but as an investment property.

There was also mention that the hierarch may live there temporarily if it is deemed

necessary while renovations take place in his quarters in Redfern.

Following Archbishop Makarios' announcement, a number of organisations have come out in support of the Greek primate.

Below are statements made by various organisations.

St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College



**St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College**  
την Παιδείαν

Public Statement of Support to our Dean

In relation to all the media frenzy surrounding the recent purchase, by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia Consolidated Trust, of a Sydney property, St Andrew's Theological College unequivocally stands behind, and expresses its undivided support to His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia during this difficult and trying time when many irresponsible reports are being circulated with the intent of wanting to damage the good...

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Byzantine Music School of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia

The Byzantine Music School of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, condemns the defamatory, unfair and inaccurate reports and comments currently being expressed and published irresponsibly and maliciously by various media outlets (mainly in Greece) targeting the Archbishop of Australia, Makarios.

Our conscience does not allow us to remain inactive and silent while our Church is being targeted via the recent attacks against him.

We unequivocally support our virtuous Archbishop. Our trust and confidence in him have not been affected in the slightest by the recent malicious reports and insulting comments appearing in the media.

We cannot stress enough our love and support for His Eminence who silently and patiently endures the hate speech and the orchestrated war attacking his person and by extension, the Orthodox Church. We are unable to accept the irrational criticisms against the decision of the Consolidated Trust of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia to purchase a property in Sydney. We discern that jealousy and intolerance are most likely the sources of this evil reaction. We call upon anyone affected by the whole controversy to show patience and not rush to conclusions.

A year ago we welcomed amongst us our newly elected Archbishop. His election by the Holy Synod of our Ecumenical Patriarchate was not by chance. It was a divinely inspired decision. A worthy leader was appointed to lead the Orthodox Church in Australia during these troubled times. His Eminence instantly demonstrated his qualities, and we proclaim with certainty that Archbishop Makarios is a genuine bearer of the spirit of the Orthodox patristic tradition, an industrious and pious hierarch, who performs his ministry with the fear of God and who has inspired us all in our spiritual struggle.

During these times where the world is characterised by its passivity and which is facing its future with fear and uncertainty, His Eminence has recruited his perspicacity and creativeness to shape a Church that cares, is creative and brave. One of the many examples of His Eminence's initiatives and concerns is the establishment of the Byzantine Music School of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese.

We are indebted to the Primate of the Orthodox Church in Australia and we feel compelled to publicly express our devotion and faith to His Eminence. We stand by him, helping him in bearing this Cross, like Simon of Cyrene, knowing that the Resurrection will follow for him and for us.

On behalf the Byzantine Music School of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia

Australian Hellenic Educators' Association, Sydney

As the Australian Hellenic Educators' Association, based in Sydney, we declare our

full support for our Archbishop His Eminence Makarios who at this time is the recipient a rabid and completely unethical attack.

From the first moment of his arrival in Australia, His Eminence's spirit of paternal love, unity and spiritual guidance has opened new opportunities for Hellenic education in the Antipodes. The educational work of our Archdiocese through St Andrew's Theological College, the network of day schools, as well as the afternoon and Sunday schools of the parishes as much as through the state and independent schools which provide programs of study of Hellenic language, history and civilisation.

The actions and announcements of His Eminence the last twelve months, which have opened our Archdiocese to First nations' peoples and other peoples of multicultural Australia, have created conditions of dialogue and cooperation with all the members of the society in which we live.

As educators, we believe that by his example, His Eminence is incorporating Orthodoxy within the Australian society in which we all live and clearly demonstrates the future of the community. The next generation does not live in a Hellenic region. It will live and will be developed in a multilingual and multicultural Australian environment.

Those who fight Hellenic-speaking and Orthodox education – and as a consequence our identity – in the ranks of the community are jannisaries who we all have the duty to uproot.

The future of the Australian Hellenic community is in our hands. As educators, we do not accept the dishonourable and without sincerity attacks of Archbishop Makarios, a spiritual man who by his example illustrates the methods to cultivate our Hellenic identity in the Australian context: with Hellenic language and mind, with Orthodox faith.

On behalf of the Committee and the membership,

Dr Panayiotis Diamadis

President

AHEPA MSW

In recent years I have had the opportunity to get involved with the Australian Hellenic community through my work with AHEPA NSW INC. However, the recent internal fighting has detracted from the programs that the organisation is trying to

achieve for the Hellenic community and Australian society at large. Unfortunately, AHEPA NSW Inc is not an isolated incident within community. Many other Hellenic organisations throughout Australia have been plagued by the myopic views, stubborn resistance to change and personal agendas of those entrusted by their associations to enact in the best interest of their organisation.

When will we learn that only as a united Australian Hellenic community can we establish the foundations to keep our culture and language alive in Australia for future generations? It has been a blight within our community to bicker and squabble amongst ourselves for years. It is time for us to learn that only through unity can we achieve the foundations required to keep Hellenism alive for the future. We need to guide the next generation to ensure they do not repeat the mistakes by the past generations to ensure they have the best opportunity to build and maintain on the foundations that we start.

The recent attacks on the Primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in Australia is a shameful example of how some attack those who can see a better future for the community. His Eminence holds the values and virtues of Hellenism deep in his heart and has demonstrated those repeatedly ever since taking his post in Australia. His belief in seeking the truth, his demonstration of respect for all individuals, his endeavour to create an environment for the common good by offering a harmonious life through the teachings of the church and mostly by his openness to adopting change within the church. It is only through change that we as individuals and a community will be able to grow and develop both spiritually and emotionally.

The people behind these attacks are misusing old traditions and misguided values to suppress the changes his Eminence has embarked on, which I believe to be actions that are fundamentally an enemy of the spirit of Hellenism. These actions threaten the good work that our Spiritual Leader is trying to achieve. We all need to remember that His Eminence is a man of true faith and the people and not a man of commerce and industry. It is only when we are united can we move forward to achieve the common good for everyone.

If you observe closely none of the attacks have been about Archbishop Makarios' character; they have been about decisions made by others within the Archdiocese. It is important that we all play a role to ensure unity prevails within our community. This does not mean that we follow blindly as sheep; it does mean that we create an environment where we can air our grievances with respect and amicability; that the consensus reached is supported to ensure the common good and future of our Hellenic community in Australia.

Bill Skandalakis

President AHEPA NSW Inc

[neoskosmos.com](http://neoskosmos.com)