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## **It's official! Greek language program to continue at La Trobe University**



Following a commitment made by the Greek Community of Melbourne to provide both additional funding and assistance in increasing student enrolments, La Trobe University has agreed to continue the teaching of its Greek language program for three years. The situation will be reviewed after semester 1 census in 2023 and the future of the program will be dependent on whether enrolment targets have been met.

The commitment follows a change proposal shared with staff for consultation on 11 November, as well as feedback from key external stakeholders of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HUSS). This change proposal is part of La Trobe's response to the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the University.

The Greek language program was considered financially unviable because of consistently low enrolments and was proposed for closure from 2022 as part of the

change proposal.

Following constructive meetings between La Trobe's Vice-Chancellor Professor John Dewar AO and other University senior executives and Mr Bill Papastergiadis OAM, President Greek Community of Melbourne, and other senior figures from the Greek community, the Greek Community of Melbourne has committed to providing \$192,000 over three years as well as proactive assistance in ensuring the program reaches a financially viable enrolment target after semester 1 census in 2023.

La Trobe Vice-Chancellor Professor John Dewar AO warmly welcomed the support from the Greek Community of Melbourne and said he looked forward to continuing a fruitful collaboration to find constructive solutions to enrolments in the Greek language program.

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"La Trobe University plays a significant role in providing quality higher education to communities in Melbourne's north, including the Greek community," Professor Dewar said.

"It has been pleasing to see such a strong and passionate response to the proposed closure of our Greek language program and that senior leaders from the Greek Community have come to the table to offer positive solutions - both financial and to assist with enrolments - to ensure the program can survive and, hopefully, flourish in the future."



Bill Papastergiadis OAM, President Greek Community of Melbourne, said, “As the sole provider of a major in Greek Studies in Victoria, it is heartening that an agreement has been reached to save this program. The Greek Language is a critical part of our culture. It plays a vital role in strengthening the multicultural and cosmopolitan fabric of Victoria. A broad coalition of interested persons and groups worked tirelessly with the University to ensure that the Program not only survives but thrives. I am excited about what the future will bring for our Greek language program. I thank the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor of La Trobe University for being open and honest in their dialogue and workings during this process. Today is an important moment for our community.”

Father Evmenios Vasilopoulos, Archiepiscopal Vicar for the District of Northcote Victoria said, “The continuation of the La Trobe University Modern Greek programme evidences the sensitivity of La Trobe University towards the broader multicultural community and its nuanced appreciation of language learning, as intrinsic to the promotion and enhancement of cultural diversity within our polyglot state. The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and its primate, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios eagerly look forward to an enduring partnership with the University and other key community stakeholders so as to maintain and advance the study of a linguistic corpus that has exercised such a profound influence on the

political, cultural and religious development of world civilisation.”

The agreement reached today continues a tradition of the Greek community’s commitment to Greek language studies, including through the bequest of Mr Anastassios Vassilogiannis, which supports part of the costs of the program at La Trobe.

The La Trobe University Library continues to house, maintain and make available to the community the Dardalis Archives of the Hellenic Diaspora.

The University also remains committed to providing teaching and research related to Greek culture, history and heritage through the A.D Trendall Research Centre for Ancient Mediterranean Studies and other teaching programs.

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