28/01/2021

Pontian Brotherhood of SA – Official Grand Opening of its new Club Rooms



Sunday 24th of January 2021 marked the official opening of the new headquarters of the Pontian Brotherhood of SA Inc. Founded in 1958, the Pontian Brotherhood of SA was the first Greek-Pontian association in South Australia. Headquartered at 674 Torrens Road, Pennington SA since 1986, the brotherhood recognised the need to replace their ageing hall. With the support and hard work of the community, they managed to rebuild the hall which has now been formally opened.



The opening began with a formal blessing (αγιασμός) service officiated by His Grace Bishop Silouan of Sinope, vicar of the Archdiocesan District of Adelaide, and assisted by Fr Christos Tsoraklidis (who is of Pontian descent), Fr Panagiotis Kouvoussis (Parish Priest of the neighbouring parish the Holy Monastery of St Nectarios) Fr Jeremy Krieg (Assistant Priest at St Nectarios, whose wife is also of Pontian descent). His Grace spoke fondly of Pontus and acknowledged the honour that he feels as having been appointed to the See of Sinope (once a capital of the region), and gave tribute to the strong witness to the Orthodox Faith that has been preserved by the Pontians throughout their difficult history. The ribbon was formally cut by Councillor Kelly Thomas (City of Charles Sturt), who was involved in advocating for the project at Council level. Both His Grace Bishop Silouan and Councillor Thomas were awarded honorary membership of the Brotherhood in recognition of their contributions.



Also present at the gathering were a number of special guests who were awarded honorary membership of the Brotherhood for their various contributions: the Consul-General the Hon Mr George Psiachas (who has supported many Pontian events with his presence), Mr Steve Georganas, Federal Member for Adelaide (who brought the issue of the Pontian Genocide to the forefront in Federal Parliament), Honourable Mr Michael Atkinson, former Speaker of SA Parliament (who moved the motion for the Parliament to formally recognise and condemn the Pontian Genocide, and who was informally given the Pontian name “Michalis Arkitsidis”), and Mr & Mrs John and Valerie Little (who have published important academic research around Pontian history). Mr Peter Stefanidis (President of the Pontian Federation of Australia) also came from Melbourne in support of this event.

Like the construction of the hall itself, the opening day was not without its challenges. In particular, on top of the COVID-19-related restrictions to which we’ve become accustomed, the 43°C temperature (the hottest of the summer so far) brought with it its own set of logistical problems. In spite of these challenges, the Brotherhood’s dedicated volunteers managed to put on a magnificent spit-roasted meal that was fully appreciated by the 200 patrons. The Pontian dance groups – senior and junior (including some 5th generation Pontian-Australians) – also braved the heat to put on an impressive performance of traditional Pontian dancing.

In all, the event was a great success and an important milestone in the history of the Brotherhood in South Australia. The establishment of the function centre as their new base should stand them in good stead for future generations to preserve the treasure that is their Pontian heritage.

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia – Archdiocesan District of Adelaide