

Greek Welfare Centres of NSW and SA partner for Strategic Planning

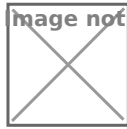


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Under the pastoral oversight of our Archbishop and Father, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, the Greek Welfare Centre of South Australia – St Philothei is the philanthropic arm of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia for the District of Adelaide. The Centre has been blessed to be serving the community for over 40 years – helping people in their diverse needs in the name of our Lord and our Orthodox Faith.

As with any large professional organisation, it is important to occasionally take stock of where an organisation is at and where it is headed, and thus the Greek Welfare Centre of South Australia has recently embarked on a Strategic Planning process to examine its current situation as well as its goals for the coming years. In the last 8 years, the Centre has grown from an organisation with a turnover of around \$900,000 to around \$1.8M, and also grown from around 7 staff members to 32 – servicing hundreds of clients (both Greek and non-Greek) across Adelaide and the Mid North. The challenge for the coming years will be to manage and direct that growth in a way that best serves the community and furthers the mission of the Archdiocese of which the Centre is blessed to be a part.

As part of this strategic planning process, the Welfare Centre of SA was blessed to be able to enlist the help of its sister organisation – GWC Community Services (GWCCS, also known as the Greek Welfare Centre of NSW). GWCCS is uniquely positioned to act in a mentoring role, not only because of its seniority in terms of age, size and experience, but also (and most importantly) because of the shared vision, goals and purposes rooted in the common ecclesiastical phronema.



Under the capable chairmanship of Dr Michael Ikonomos, the hard-working board of the Greek Welfare Centre of SA met on Monday September 4th, 2023, to discuss some initial thoughts in preparation for the arrival of their Sydney counterparts. Then on the early evening of Thursday 7th of September the board of GWCSA was blessed to receive three senior management representatives of GWCCS – the CEO Mr Steve Magdas, Programs Manager Mrs Maria Kladis, and Psychologist Mrs Maria Petrohilos – who came to lend their considerable experience to further guide the strategic planning process. Both meetings were catered by the ubiquitous Central Philoptochos of the District of Adelaide, who prepared a wonderful meal and desert for the board and their guests for their evening meeting. Their hard-working example and dedication to the mission of the Church was an added inspiration to the board members.

The Thursday meeting began with an inspiring talk by Mr Magdas, who expounded the principles of strategic planning within the ecclesiastical context – highlighting that the goal of a board was, from a theological perspective, a process of discerning the will of God for the organisation. After this, the two Marias led a discussion for the board members to discern its motivations, strengths and weaknesses, and listened to some of the goals and ideas of the board for the future. The GWCCS team were very encouraging of new ideas, but also reiterated the importance of not losing sight of the achievements and progress of the Centre thus far, nor of the significance of incremental progress that builds on these achievements into the future.

In all it was a fruitful and productive week for GWCSA, who are very thankful for the mentoring role provided by GWC-NSW and look forward to additional opportunities to collaborate towards our joint vision into the future.

