



10 October 2023

Gala Opening of the Macedonian Cultural Centre, Epping, Melbourne, Victoria



On **Sunday 01 October 2023**, the Macedonian Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria (“**MOCMV**”) held a gala opening ceremony for its new \$2m **Macedonian Cultural Centre**, located immediately behind its Macedonian Orthodox Church “*Sv. Gjorgi & Sveta Bogorodica*” on High Street, Epping and alongside the Macedonian Community Hall.



The building of this state-of-the-art Cultural Centre, which houses numerous Community facilities and amenities, as well as a commercial hospitality section, was assisted by a generous grant from the Victorian state government. Although commenced some years ago, completion of the Centre was unfortunately held up during the pandemic. The opening was initially scheduled to take place in 2020 to coincide with the 60th anniversary of MOCMV, one of Australia's oldest Community organizations, and certainly one of its largest and most successful. The MOCMV also holds a significant tract of land at Kinglake, some 100 kilometres north of Melbourne, where the Monastery "Sv. Kliment" is located.



Some 200 patrons attended the event, which commenced at 6.00 pm with the unveiling of a ceremonial plaque at the entrance of the building, presided over by Victorian government Minister *Lily D'Ambrosio*, representing the (new) Victorian premier and government, together with the popular and long-term MP for the seat of Thomastown, *Bronwyn Halfpenny*.

Following the ceremony, guests were ushered into the Cultural Centre, and after an official tour of the premises, all present took their seats for a lavish multi-course dinner and cultural program. Other VIPs present included the Federal Minister for Migration and Multicultural Affairs, *Hon. Andrew Giles*, who also addressed patrons, *Evan Mulholland* MP, the architects, builders and financiers of the project, as well as *Vesna Angelovska*, spouse of the former and late MOCMV President Mirco Angelovski, together with her son *Kristian*.





The MOCMV President *John Branov*, on behalf of the Project committee, welcomed all guests to the function in his address, which followed the formal blessing of the Centre by members of the Macedonian clergy, local parish priest Rev. *Kliment Stankovski*, Archimandrite Father *Gavril Galev* (Monastery “*Sv. Kliment*”) and Arch-priest of the sibling Melbourne Church “*Presveta Bogorodica*”, Rev. *Eftim Betinski*, from Sydenham.

The VIPs all gave interesting addresses. Delegates from sibling Macedonian Communities and Churches from **Perth, Adelaide, Geelong, Wollongong and Sydney** were also in attendance. The Secretary of the *Macedonian Community of Adelaide and South Australia Inc. (MCASA)*, **A. Michael Radin**, Chairperson of the Committee of the Macedonian Orthodox Church “*St. Naum of Ohrid*”, who was accompanied by his wife **Jennie Trampeva-Radin** (as Assistant Secretary of MCASA and also a delegate at the function), gave a formal address on behalf of these delegates, speaking also on behalf of the federal body, the **Macedonian Communities Council of Australia Inc (MCCA)**.



Michael Radin read a congratulatory message from *Chris Angelkov* (Perth), Chairperson of MCCA Inc, and both Chris and Michael acknowledged the tremendous work of the late **Mirco Angelovski**, former MOCMV President, whose tireless energy, vision, passion and sacrifice drove this project to its successful completion, although sadly his premature death in 2022 prevented him from being present at this auspicious occasion.



Radin presented John Branov on stage with congratulatory gifts from the federal Council and MCASA inc. He spoke passionately about the fact that the **MOCMV**, **MCASA** (founded in 1947) and the **Macedonian Community of WA** (founded in 1942), were bonded together not only as the oldest Macedonian Community organizations in Australia, but also as the natural home of Macedonians with origins predominantly from the Aegean region of Macedonia. His remarks in this regard were greeted with warm applause from all of those present.

Guests then enjoyed a cultural program which featured traditional Macedonian folk dances from the ensemble “*Cekor*”, backed by musicians playing traditional instruments, as well as wonderful performances by Macedonian vocalists.



The Macedonian Cultural Centre at Epping will remain a significantly poignant monument of the wonderful contribution made to multicultural Australian society not only by the families, members and supporters of the MOCMV, but will also be vicariously enjoyed across Australia by all proud Macedonians for many generations to come.

