



MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW BODY ESTABLISHED TO PROMOTE AND DEFEND MACEDONIAN INTERESTS IN AUSTRALIA

Macedonian Community leaders in Australia recently announced the formation of a new organization, which as part of its essential objects and purposes, aims to “*lobby, advocate, inform, assist and coordinate*” on behalf of all Australians of Macedonian origin. **The Macedonian Communities Council of Australia** was formally established in June 2020 following a successful general meeting, held by video-conference, of numerous delegates representing its foundation members, Macedonian community organizations from each major Australian state and territory.

The foundation members are amongst the longest established and best resourced Macedonian community organizations in Australia. The Council (**MCCA**) has already achieved registration under associations’ incorporation legislation, and following the first meeting of its executive committee, has resolved to quickly establish an administrative and financial base, with the necessary resources to ensure that it is able to carry out, both effectively and professionally, its essential mission.

An eight-person executive (**EC**) was elected at a meeting on 28 June 2020, which will guide the Council through its establishment phase to its first full general meeting of members, to be held during the first quarter of 2021. Strong efforts will be made to ensure that the membership base will be expanded prior to that general meeting to include significantly more Macedonian organizations from across the country. EC members agreed unanimously that in this regard, an important achievement would be to also broaden the Council’s gender and generational framework, and to identify individuals with the necessary “*talent, passion and commitment*” who may be able to contribute to the Council’s important work.

Chris Angelkov, from Perth, who was elected inaugural Chairperson of MCCA Inc., reflected upon the significant challenges facing the new Council. “*It is reasonable to suggest*” stated Angelkov, “*that the challenges facing all persons, not only Macedonians, at the present time are unparalleled. The members of the Council are acutely aware that we have an obligation*

to all work together generally across the board to ensure that our contemporary civilization remains intact, and that accordingly we can continue to promise our children and grandchildren a bright future.” Angelkov continued, and emphasized that the Council will adopt balanced perspectives about its role, adding that “our primary focus must be on the Australian landscape, where persons of Macedonian background have already made profound contributions to the well-being and development of one of the world’s premier multicultural nations. However, there is still much to be done to address issues of common concern for Australian Macedonians, to ensure that our own important sector of the broader society still retains, and in some instances, improves, its opportunities to achieve its potential in Australia at both an individual and a group level, in the same manner as all other Australians” the newly elected Chairperson commented.

“While with a strong view to its advocacy and coordinating role, the Council will focus on developing coherent policies in areas such as the economy, education, welfare, culture, technology, and the arts, we all also intuitively understand how vital the question of recognition and protection of our Macedonian identity and rights within this multicultural community is to all of our people.” Angelkov stated further that, in this regard, “the Council will be uncompromising in its efforts to ensure that the work of all Macedonian stake-holders in this respect can be better promoted, organized and unified. For too long now Macedonian community life has suffered disadvantage because of the absence of such an important vehicle, relative to the experiences of many of our counterparts.” He emphasized that “we have perhaps lost our way somewhat in recent years in this country, by focusing obsessively on singular issues, or alternatively, by ignoring the importance of united and coordinated work across the entire country in favour of simply continuing localized practices within the individual cities and states where we live and work, which has not advanced our common cause at all.”

Angelkov indicated however that the Council “constitutionally does not have the right nor purpose to establish itself as a ‘representative assembly’ of Macedonians in Australia. That has proven to be a pointless, often costly and energy-sapping exercise at various times in our past. Our mission is altogether more subtle, but nonetheless highly compelling and contemporary.”

The MCCA Inc Chairperson confirmed however that the Council, where it is appropriate, will not hesitate to become active around important developments which occur in the Macedonian homeland, whether that be related to, for example, the profoundly unsettling and misguided pathways taken recently by the political establishment in the Republic of Macedonia, or indeed, the continuing, unreconciled and unjust situation concerning the basic rights of Macedonians in the other parts of Macedonia. In this regard, Angelkov concluded his remarks by emphasizing, *“rest assured, we will continue to be the collective conscience of the Macedonian movement in this part of the world, and we will not hesitate to make publicly accountable all persons and institutions who fail to respect the fundamental tenets of our wonderful, shared Macedonian heritage”.*

For further information, contact either of the following :

Chris Angelkov, Chairperson , Michael Radin, Secretary, Josh Sherman, Media & Liaison on email macedoniancommunitiescouncil@gmail.com