



**STATEMENT FROM THE MACEDONIAN COMMUNITIES COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA
7 FEBRUARY 2021**

The Macedonian Communities Council of Australia, representing Macedonian émigré communities throughout Australia, is extremely concerned with the news reports emanating from Macedonia that a contrived Census is hastily being planned to be held on 1 April 2021.

Some leaders of Albanian political parties are openly and unashamedly threatening to disregard the results of the Census if their estimates of their particular ethnic group's numbers are below suggested percentages. In which country in the world is this gross abuse of power allowed to happen? Why even have a Census if ruthless, bullying, and unprincipled powerbrokers are allowed to predetermine the results?

The Macedonian Government has refused to guarantee that the Macedonian ethnic majority will even have the option of ticking "Macedonian" as their ethnicity and "Macedonian" as their first language spoken and "Macedonian Orthodox" as their religion, whilst all the ethnic minorities will be afforded this basic human right.

We are very concerned that the census rules which will be put in place could allow émigré Albanians living in Western Europe to fly into Macedonia to falsely bolster the numbers of Albanians that purport to live in Macedonia whilst émigré Macedonians throughout the world will be denied such a privilege.

To understand the importance of fair and accurate Census counts it is important to understand how Census data are used. There are many practical and policy-related reasons why it is important to have transparent, fair and accurate Censuses undertaken regularly.

Data from a Census is used for allocating political power, distribution of federal funds through funding formulas for health, education and infrastructure, civil rights enforcement, business applications, Post-Census population estimates and projections, community planning and economic and social science research.

In a multicultural country like the Republic of Macedonia with a majority of ethnic Macedonian citizens and sizeable minorities of ethnic Albanians, Serbs, Turks, Romas and Vlachs, it is an absolute disgrace and abuse of power that a Census has not been held for more than 18 years with the last one having occurred in 2002. Therefore, the possibility that after waiting 18 years for a Census the proposed Census could be unfair and inaccurate with contrived results is absolutely shameful and unacceptable.

If the proposed Census is not based on internationally accepted principles of fairness and accuracy with a very strong and transparent contingent of international observers from the United Nations, the CSCE and independent Human Rights Non-Government Organizations, then we strongly urge the citizens of Macedonia to boycott this undemocratic and dishonest charade and refuse to fill in their Census forms.

Chris Angelkov,
Chairman, Macedonian Communities Council of Australia