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# GREEK TRIBUNE

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## AUSTRALIAN NEWS

### More funds required for housing supply

The Business Council of Australia has urged the Federal Government to establish a ten-billion-dollar housing reform fund to tackle regulatory and planning bottlenecks, which have contributed to the housing supply crisis.

In a new report, the Council highlighted the need for urgent action to meet the government's goal of building 1.2 million new homes by 2030.

The report called for reforms, including the removal of stamp duty,

which often acts as a disincentive for older Australians from downsizing and freeing up larger family homes and supplying them to the market.

The report also recommended boosting apprenticeships, streamlining trade licensing, and fast-tracking skilled migrants.

The proposal comes as the opposition unveils its five-billion-dollar infrastructure plan to address the housing shortage.

### Labor wins Black by-election in huge swing

The South Australian Liberals have conceded defeat in the seat of Black in Adelaide's south in a result that is a hammer blow to the party, which has now lost a second by-election (following Dunstan) in eight months.

Mr Alex Dighton, who has been deputy principal at Sacred Heart College in Adelaide's west won the seat with a massive 13 per cent swing in his favor.

Liberal candidate Amanda Wilson — who is the Mayor

of Holdfast Bay, said she was "flattered and grateful" to have been able to run in the seat.

"Unfortunately, I wasn't successful tonight, but I go back to being the mayor," she said.

Vincent Tarzia said voters in the seat had sent his party a message, in the electorate which was formerly held by the man Mr Tarzia replaced as Liberal leader, David Speirs.

In the primary vote Labor achieved 46.5%, the Liberals 32% while the Greens did very well with 15.5%. (Source: ABC)



New Labor MP Alex Dighton addressing a gathering of supporters

### Former SA Opposition leader David Speirs faces court

As reported by the ABC, former SA opposition leader David Speirs has appeared in court for the first time since being charged with drug offences.

Police say they arrested Mr Speirs in early August, and charged him with supplying a controlled substance.

In September, a video was published by News Corp, reportedly showing Mr Speirs snorting off a plate.

The former Liberal leader

resigned from politics following the charges, with a by-election in his seat of Black to be held on Saturday.

In the Christies Beach Magistrates Court on Friday, Mr Speirs successfully applied to have his bail conditions varied to allow him to travel overseas.

Mr Speirs will be required to pay a \$15,000 bail surety as part of his new conditions, as well as provide an itinerary to prosecution before travelling.

Former SA opposition leader David Speirs has been charged with two counts of supplying a controlled substance and will face court, police have confirmed.

The court wasn't told whether he'll defend the charge.

Speaking to the media outside court, Mr Speirs thanked his "many hundreds of" supporters who have "reached out" to him since his resignation from the party.

"It has meant a lot and it has actually sustained me during this time," he said.

"I'm not going to talk specifically about anything that happened in the court, that's not appropriate.

"However I acknowledge this has been a very difficult time for me personally, a very difficult time for friends and for family members."

Mr Speirs said being a member of parliament has been a "great privilege".

### QLD Premier wants to enforce stricter youth crime penalties

David Crisafulli was sworn in as Queensland's 41st Premier on Monday, with deputy Jarrod Bleijie, forming an interim Cabinet to begin governing immediately.

The Liberal National Party (LNP) secured a majority in Saturday's state election, marking a shift after Labor's defeat.

The Queensland Premier pledged to

create a "generational government" and prioritise safety laws, including tougher youth crime penalties. He also reaffirmed the LNP's commitment to net-zero emissions by 2050 and promised not to change abortion laws or back nuclear power.

Labor retained most south-east seats but struggled regionally, holding at least 29 seats to the LNP's 48.

### Workplace sexual harassment is common

A recent Our Watch survey has revealed that 40 per cent of workplace leaders are unaware of their legal responsibilities to prevent sexual harassment, despite new laws introduced in 2022.

The survey, which interviewed one thousand workers and 500 managers across various sectors, highlights a significant gap in understanding the "positive duty" regulations outlined in the updated Sex Discrimination Act.

These regulations require employers to take proactive measures to ensure workplace safety from harassment.

Employment lawyer Lisa Berton emphasised that organisations must adopt a trauma-informed, safety-first approach, when dealing with complaints and review existing policies.

Meanwhile, the overuse of non-disclosure agreements continues to face criticism for protecting repeat offenders and concealing patterns of misconduct.

In response, legislative reforms are being considered in Victoria to limit non-disclosure agreements, aiming to foster transparency while still respecting victims' privacy.

### The Community of Adelaide rejected the Archdiocese deed

The extraordinary general meeting of the Greek Orthodox Community South Australia, held Sunday 27 October in the afternoon, rejected the Administrative Council's (AC) motions for constitutional changes and a deed that would pave the way for the historic Community's accession to the Archdiocese of Australia.

The approximately 500 members who packed the Olympic Hall heard the proposals brought by the AC for approval and an intense debate took place on several controversial points.

The main points of contention were, the proposal that the council should have the right after a general meeting to sell or transfer community property after five years. What caused intense criticism was the word "transfer".

Also, intense controversy surrounded the proposal that in the event of conflict and disagreement between the Community and the clergy

(though the priests are paid by GOCSA), the Archbishop would have the final say and his decision would be final and binding on the Community. Additionally, there was no guarantee from the archdiocese that the current GOCSA priests would keep their positions in the community churches. As for the fate of the priests, the Archbishop would make the final decision after the signing of the agreement.

Among other controversial points in the agreement which were strongly protested by the members, was the paragraph according to which, in order for the Community to leave the agreement, it must give a two years' notice, while the Archdiocese can break the agreement with sixty days' notice before withdrawing the priests.

On the other hand, interventions were made by members who argued that the approval of the three



Franklin Street Cathedral. The first Greek Church in Adelaide

motions put forward by the Council would help to bring "unity" under the auspices of the Archdiocese.

With the exception of the proposal for the Community assets, which was approved, the main proposals concerning the withdrawal from the Autocephaly and joining the Archdiocese were rejected at a percentage of around 61%.

According to the Administrative Council's agenda, the motions required at least 75% support to be passed.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ADJOURNED

In an unprecedented development, the annual general meeting which started at 3.00pm on November 17 at the Olympic Hall has been adjourned to continue in December. Following member protests that they did not receive the Board's reports in time, the meeting was adjourned with a members' motion that was approved by the overwhelming majority.

### Cashless society not just yet

Australian businesses selling essential goods and services will be forced to accept cash payments. Elderly advocates in Australia, particularly in regional Australia, have lobbied the Government not to allow a totally cashless way of living just yet.

From 1 January 2026, Australian businesses selling essential goods and services, such as grocer-

ies, medicines and fuel, must accept cash unless exempt under a federal government mandate.

This measure aims to support Australians who rely on cash as a payment method, particularly in regional areas or during emergencies.

Treasury will consult to define essential goods and services, considering business size, location, and

### Community Life



capacity to handle cash, with businesses likely to be included being supermarkets, pharmacies, pet-

rol stations and health services.

The government also announced a phased transition away from cheques, which will cease to be issued by mid-2028, and not accepted by late 2029.

Treasurer Jim Chalmers stated the reforms aim to modernise payments, while ensuring cash remains accessible, highlighting its importance for 1.5 million Australians who rely on it for most transactions.

### GREEK COMMUNITY TRIBUNE

ABN: 55 829 388 691

Correspondence to: The Editor, BOX 330, FULHAM GARDENS, SOUTH AUSTRALIA, 5024

Phone: 0408 865004

Website: www.greektribune.com.au

E-mail: info@greektribune.com.au

## Cultural, social and political events in South Australia

Contact: Harri on 0484 387 818 - or email your community's news or a photo: info@greektribune.com.au



Members of the Evian Society of SA, pose for the Greek Tribune at a recent function at their hall in Woodville



Visual artist Maria Tsounis, won the first prize of the Odyssey Festival 2024 with her painting titled "The Departure".

## The future of Western Hospital has been secured!

A letter sent to the Greek Tribune by the Premier of South Australia, Peter Malinauskas, states that the future of the (private) Western Hospital, which was in danger of being closed down, has now been secured! We publish below the Premier's letter in its entirety:

"The Malinauskas Labor Government has successfully supported the sale of Western Hospital to a new operator, keeping its doors open and its services available to residents of the western suburbs.

This positive outcome is supported by the actions of western suburbs residents who called for action to save

this community asset.

To assist with the successful sale, the Malinauskas Labor Government has agreed for the hospital to undertake nearly 4000 elective surgery cases from our public health system over the next three years, boosting its workload, while taking pressure off our health system.

The hospital will operate as Western Adelaide Private Hospital, providing short stay clinical care with a focus on orthopaedics, ophthalmology, general surgery, gastroenterology and other procedures.

The Malinauskas Government will also provide a \$3

million grant over two years to support critical changes to clinical services and patient care models, as part of a broader package of investment from the owner of the hospital building, Australian Unity, along with Medibank & doctors, to ensure the hospital's long-term viability.

Today is a great day for the western suburbs, with Western Hospital to continue to operate in Henley Beach.

Since Western Hospital entered voluntary administration, the Malinauskas Labor Government has been working hard with the administrators to ensure this important hospital continued to operate.



Yours sincerely,  
Peter Malinauskas MP  
PREMIER"

## GREEK COMMUNITY MEMBERS SPEAK ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE CHURCH TO THE GREEK-AUSTRALIAN AFFAIRS

### A Response to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese

"During the recent visit of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, for the centenary celebrations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, the Prime Minister stated publicly that "For a century, the Church has preserved the culture and language of Australia's Greek community, connecting generations to their heritage".

With all due respect Prime Minister, you got it wrong! It is our communities that have fought for the preservation of Greek language and culture.

As Australians of Greek background who have been actively involved for many decades now, in the affairs of our own community, as well as of the wider Australian society, via community organisations, trade unions, political parties and social movements, we express our disapproval of this historically inaccurate statement.

To state that it was the Greek Orthodox Church that maintained and promoted Greek culture and language in Australia is simply wrong! It ignores the hard work and commitment of numerous community groups and individuals who have worked tirelessly and selflessly to build a new home and a new identity, that draws upon the history and culture of both Greece and Australia.

Greek community organisations existed long before

the arrival of the organised church and until that time, and even after that, they served the religious needs of their members. Prime Minister, it was the established Greek Communities of Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and others, that in the early to mid-20th century created the schools that taught and continue to teach Greek to thousands of young Greek Australians for over a century.

These same organisations, together with many ordinary working-class Greek Australians during the 70s, lobbied respective state governments to ensure that Greek was taught in the public education system, because apart from a community language it is also an Australian language, thus, making it accessible to all and not just the few.

The Prime Minister should know it was cultural and workers organisations that were established in individual states, that provided cultural activities such as theatre, dances, lectures, concerts, sporting events, as well as social services, to the ever-growing Greek communities of that time.

Dear Prime Minister, it was members and supporters of various Australian political parties, but especially of your party, that during the 50s, 60s and 70s were at the forefront of the struggle to lay the foundations and principles of



Australian multiculturalism? It was the secular communities and their activists not the Church, that fought for the establishment of multiculturalism!

In short, Hellenism is broader than Orthodox Christianity, in the same way that Australian culture is broader and more complex than religious denomination.

We acknowledge and respect the spiritual and religious role played by the Greek Orthodox Church, but we do not accept your inaccurate historical reference that it "preserved the culture and language of Australia's Greek community". This claim does not accord with the historical reality as lived by Greek-Australian communities.

Prime Minister, please respect the contributions and the legacy of all those community minded ordinary Greek-Australians and Greek

migrants, who built today's community and today's Australia. It is the Greek community in its broad and secular forms that continues to nourish education, artistic and cultural development that is inclusive and without discrimination based on gender, sexuality or religious/political beliefs".

The above statement was sent to the Prime Minister of Australia Anthony Albanese MP.

The 114 respondents, signing the document, come from the entire spectrum of democratic politics in Australia, and from all walks of life, academics, professionals, business people, unionists, activists, retired and others. A number of them served for a long period of time on the Boards of the three largest secular Greek Australian organisations, namely the Communities of Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide.

## Decriminalisation of drugs has not led to increased use

A year after the ACT decriminalised personal drug use, fears it would become "the drug capital of Australia" have not materialised.

Safety advocates, including the Alcohol and Drug Foundation's Erin Lalor, reported no significant negative impact, emphasising that criminalisation elsewhere causes more harm by discouraging help-seeking behaviour.

The ACT's reforms prioritise health-based approaches, with small fines, cautions, and diversion programs

replacing prison sentences.

Organisations such as the Salvation Army and Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT, have stated that demand for services has remained stable.

Advocates highlighted that decriminalisation reduces stigma and improves access to treatment.

However, they have also stressed the need for ongoing reform, better prevention, and early intervention, to address drug and alcohol harm effectively.

## Country workers better off than city workers

A new report by data analysis group Research Institute E61, has revealed that regional workers are now financially better off than many of their city counterparts

Blue-collar workers in the regions, such as truck drivers and childcare educators, earn up to ten-thousand dollars more annually than those in the city, with higher wages and lower housing costs driving the trend.

Even city professionals like doctors now earn only 700 dollars more than their regional peers, compared to a ten thousand dollar gap

a decade ago.

Rising urban housing costs are also pushing young families out of cities like Sydney and Melbourne, and causing them to seek affordability in nearby regional centres.

The shift raises concerns about productivity, as workers leave city jobs.

The report also suggests easing zoning laws and reforming taxes to improve housing affordability near job hubs.

However, the report notes that the region's gain, as the trend, could boost regional economies.

## Millions avoid health treatment due to cost

A new poll has found that almost half of all Australians have put off the medical treatment they need due to the cost.

National polling results, done by You Gov as part of exclusive research done for the ABC's Q+A program, also revealed three-quarters of Australians have struggled to find a

bulk-billing doctor.

This comes despite billions of dollars of incentives to GPs from the government at both federal and state levels.

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler was shown the new polling ahead of his appearance on Q+A this week, and admitted there was a more to be done.

## Financial distress drives record crisis call numbers

Record numbers of Australians experiencing financial hardship are contacting crisis support services.

This comes as the ongoing cost-of-living pressures continue to impact people's mental health.

Lifeline has received 110-thousand calls related to financial distress in 2024 to date.

This has included calls about financial management, employment and homelessness.

The service's highest-ever daily

demand was recorded on October 7, when it received 4405 calls and messages.

This overtook the previous one-day benchmark, with eight of the busiest 10 days ever recorded all seen in 2024.

Lifeline Australia chief executive Colin Seery says the service is doing everything it can to keep up with the unprecedented demand, and that there was a pressing need to invest in community-based programs that help people build financial resilience.