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GREEK TRIBUNE

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Nick Bolkus, long-time Labor senator dies aged 75

Nick Bolkus, the long-time Labor senator for South Australia who was a minister in the Hawke and Keating governments, has died aged 75.

The Labor stalwart was one of South Australia's longest-serving senators, first elected in 1980 and not retiring until 2005. He also played an influential role in shaping Australia's migration policy in the 1990s. He was elevated to the Hawke ministry in 1988 as minister for consumer affairs and continued to serve under prime minister Paul Keating as minister for immigration and ethnic affairs, where he is remembered for his contribution to multicultural Australia.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese led the tributes, saying the Labor family was mourning "one of our great sons". "Nick Bolkus came to public life as a young man with a young man's idealism and sense of urgency and he held true to those principles and that sense of purpose right through his long and distinguished career," Mr Albanese said in a statement.

"Fittingly for the first Greek Australian to serve as a Cabinet min-



ister, Nick Bolkus was a passionate believer in democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Mr Bolkus passed away peacefully on Christmas morning, SA Premier Peter Malinauskas said.

"Nick was deeply respected across the political divide," Mr Malinauskas said in a statement.

"He was a formidable intellect, a tireless advocate for the Labor Party and a generous mentor to many. He was much loved by his family, colleagues and friends," he said.

A private funeral service was conducted at the Taxiarchis Cathedral and a State Memorial Service was held at the Allan Scott Auditorium, Hawke Building, Adelaide University on 22 February.

South Australian MP Nick McBride in home detention

Independent state MP Nick McBride says his confinement in home detention will make him a stronger advocate for his regional electorate, suggesting those calling for his resignation are "quite desperate to find any reason why I should not be in this position".

As reported by ABC News, Mr McBride, an independent MP and former Liberal who represents South Australia's South East seat of MacKillop, faces charges of aggravated assault against his wife and breaching bail after an alleged incident at Conmurra on December 27.

His lawyers have told the court the allegations are "denied and disputed".

The regional MP was on Tuesday granted home detention bail at his Robe house after spending 10 days in Mount Gambier prison.

On Friday, Mr McBride said the conditions of his home detention do not preclude him from attending official events, saying it actually meant he was "more wedded" to his electorate.

"It doesn't rule me out from all the important stuff that I do in my work [and] need to do over the next four years and also towards the March election," Mr McBride told ABC South East SA Breakfast.

"The role that I'm now facing is more pointed; it's very well focused around all



South Australian independent MP Nick McBride

the work.

"I'm either going to be sort of in my office or at my house of residence or at work — there is no other alternative."

The South Australian MP has spent the Christmas

and New Year period in custody, after being arrested and charged over the weekend.

Mr McBride is facing charges including aggravated assault and breach of bail.

Unprecedented crowds at Henley for the Blessing of the Waters

Under perfect weather conditions, the traditional Epiphany festival organized by the Greek Orthodox Community was held at Henley Beach on Sunday, January 11.

Thousands of visitors flocked to the popular beach early in the morning to witness the major religious celebration, which marks the end of the Christmas season, turning the Epiphany into a genuine Greek summer festival.

At the same time, Henley Square had been transformed into an open-air Greek fair, with marquees full of food, barbecues, tables and chairs, abundant treats, and live music—all set against the backdrop of the blue sea.

The official ceremony began shortly after noon, as members of the public and distinguished guests gathered at the end of the jetty to witness the Blessing of the Waters, with members of the clergy performing the immersion of the Holy

Cross.

Around 20 young people dove into the calm waters of the Henley beach to retrieve the cross, with this year's lucky participant being Thomas Matsoulidis, who brought the cross ashore and received blessings from the clergy. As is customary every year, ten white doves were released into the sky, symbolizing purity and enlightenment, sending a message of peace and love.

The official ceremony continued at the square, where Father Ioannis blessed the young swimmer, and, together with the Community President Peter Ppiros, presented him with a commemorative trophy and a gold cross.

Among the dignitaries attending the festival were the Premier of South Australia Peter Malinauskas, Opposition Leader Ashton Hurn, Deputy Premier Kyam Maher, Minister for Multicultural Affairs Zoe Bettison, Federal MP Mark Butler, Liberal MP Matt



Cowdrey, Mayor of the City of Charles Sturt Angela Evans, Frank Pangallo MLC, Lord Mayor of Adelaide Dr. Jane Lomax-Smith, Mayor of West Torrens Michael Coxon, councilors Steven Finos (of Unley) and George Demitriou (of West Torrens), as well as candidates for the seat of Colton, Aria Bolkus (for Labor) and Rebecca Sutton (for Liberal).

The program continued with speeches by the official guests and a lively musical performance by the "Zorbas"

band, keeping the festive spirit high until the evening.

It is noteworthy that Premier Malinauskas stated that, from now on, state funding for the festival will increase to a total of \$80,000 every four years.

Special attention was also given to the dance performances by the Greek Orthodox Community of SA Dance Academy and the Pontian Dance Group, which once again showcased their remarkable talent and dedication to Greek traditions.

Victoria has declared a state of disaster

Victoria has declared a state of disaster after severe bushfires swept across the state, with at least 60 new fires igniting during extreme heat and dangerous conditions. Three people—a man, woman and child—remain missing after being seen near a home in Longwood that was later destroyed.

As of late Friday, four emergency-level fires were burning in Longwood, Ravenswood South, the Alpine National Park, and Walwa near the NSW border. The disaster declaration covers 18 local government areas and one alpine resort, granting

authorities powers to seize private property, restrict movement and force evacuations to protect lives.

More than 130,000 hectares had burned by Friday evening. The Longwood fire, which began midweek and devastated Ruffly, spread rapidly in unpredictable winds, threatening towns including Euroa and Benalla, and placing communities previously hit by the 2009 Black Saturday fires, such as Marysville and Kinglake, at risk.

A man in his 60s was found dead in Harcourt, though police say his death is not believed to be directly linked to the fires.

Adelaide Festival apologises to Palestinian author

The Adelaide Festival Corporation, which oversees Adelaide Writers' Week, has apologised to Palestinian author Randa Abdel-Fattah and says she will be invited to speak at its next event in 2027.

This year's Writers' Week was cancelled after more than 180 authors and participants withdrew from the event.

That followed a decision to cancel an invitation to Abdel-Fattah over her commentary on Israel and Zionism.

After a new Adelaide Festival board was installed last week, the corporation said it had reversed its previous decision to exclude Abdel-Fattah and retracted its previous statement.

"Intellectual and artistic freedom is a powerful human right. "Our goal is to uphold it, and

Community Life



Internationally renowned Adelaide Writers' Week 2026 was cancelled last week. (ABC News)

in this instance Adelaide Festival Corporation fell well short."

In a post on social media, Abdel-Fattah said she accepted the apology and would consider

the board's invitation to participate in the 2027 festival "at the appropriate time but would be there in a heartbeat if Louise Adler was the director again".

In a further statement, new Adelaide Festival Board chair Judy Potter said it also wished to apologise to Ms Adler "that the incredible Adelaide Writers' Week program she had worked so hard to curate for 2026 has been cancelled as a result of the events that have unfolded over the last week after the announcement of the decision to rescind the invitation to Dr Abdel-Fattah".

Ms Adler resigned as director of Adelaide Writers' Week last week.

Adelaide Festival chief executive Mr Hobba said the "sincere apology" was issued today "in good faith" that "retracted the statements that were of most concern" for Abdel-Fattah.

"We recognise the harm of the situation and what it's done to her," he said.

"I'm sorry that she won't get to come to talk to an Adelaide literary audience about the novel that she's written".

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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

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LEFT: The Epiphany festival organized by the Greek Orthodox Community of SA was held at Henley Beach on Sunday, January 11. In the photo, among others, were the Deputy Premier Kyam Maher MP, Minister for Multi-cultural Affairs Zoe Bettison MP, Liberal MP for Colton Matt Cowdrey, Mayor of the City of Charles Sturt Angela Evans and Lord Mayor of Adelaide Dr. Jane Lomax-Smith.

VALE
THE HON. NICK BOLKUS



The Greek Orthodox Community of South Australia Inc. mourns the passing of The Hon. Nick Bolkus, a long-standing supporter of the Greek community, its values, and its commitment to assisting those in need.

We honour Nick as a respected leader within the Greek community and as the first Greek Australian to serve as a Federal Cabinet Minister. He was deeply passionate about the contribution Greek migrants made to the development of Australia during the

1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, and he held a special affection for Adelaide's West End, where he grew up near Olympic Hall and the Cathedral of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel.

Nick's legacy of service, advocacy, and pride in his heritage will be long remembered.

On behalf of our community, I extend our sincere condolences to his family and close friends.

May his memory be eternal.

Peter Ppiros
President
Greek Orthodox
Community of South
Australia Inc.

Earthquake due 'in foreseeable future'

Adelaide is considered to have a stable climate that rarely delivers destructive weather on a large scale, but beneath the surface lurks a serious danger.

The City of Churches is the most earthquake-prone of Australia's capitals.

Its last major earthquake, which at the time was the most damaging on record in Australia, was in 1954.

The magnitude-5.4 earthquake on March 1 resulted in three serious injuries, damaged more than 3,000 buildings, and resulted in about 30,000 insurance claims for collapsed or cracked walls, chimneys and smashed windows.

Professor Alan Collins from the University of Adelaide's Tectonics and Earth Systems said another big one was almost certainly going to happen in his lifetime.

"Whether it happens this year, or in 10 to 15 or 20 years, who knows, but it's

likely to happen in that sort of timeframe — so in the foreseeable future," Professor Collins said.

The university's School of Civil and Environmental Engineering estimated in 2011 that if a repeat of the 1954 earthquake was to occur in Adelaide that year, it would cause a billion dollars in damage. Adelaide is Australia's most seismically active region.

A number of faults run below the Greater Adelaide area, including the Willunga fault to the city's south, the Para fault to the north, and the Eden-Burnside fault, which runs from near Seaciff into the Hills Face Zone.

Professor Collins said there was even a fault that ran through Bonython Park towards Thebarton Theatre, "crossing the line to the new tunnel they're drilling".

"That's also an active fault, so they certainly had to consider that in the planning of



Sellicks Beach shows evidence of the Willunga fault. (ABC)

the new tunnel [for the Torrens to Darlington project]."

The country itself sits atop the Indo-Australian tectonic plate, which includes the Indian subcontinent and about half of New Zealand, and moves about 7 centimetres north-east each year.

"We're in a weak zone within that plate, so when the forces get big enough from us grinding into those other plates, the weak rocks under Adelaide break and we create

the Mount Lofty Ranges, which is exactly why they're uplifted."

He said the Mount Lofty Ranges had been constructed over about three million years by earthquakes, which could push the earth upwards by one to two metres in short bursts of power.

"They do creep upwards as well, but it's mainly from those earthquakes, and the staccato-like nature of the earth breaking," Professor Collins said.

Greek Radio Program of SA celebrates 50 years on 5EBI FM

Along with four other ethnic community groups, the Italian, Dutch, Polish and Ukrainian, the Greek community was one of the pioneer groups who helped to establish the 5EBI in Adelaide as the mainstream multicultural radio station in South Australia, in 1975.

Some of the individuals who left their mark in the history of the Greek radio during the first difficult years, were George Kokotis, Emanuel Koutelas, Stamatis Itsines, Chris Despotakis, Loizos Kontozis, Costas Economou, Kostas Flabouris, George Katsibris and Michael Makestas who lodged the Constitution of the newly incorporated Greek Radio Community Program of SA in 1980.

Back in those years, there were tens of thousands of migrants whose first language was Greek and who needed to communicate and be informed in their language, as did forty other ethnicities in Adelaide. The EBI radio station was their mainstream source of information and entertainment.

In the 80's, the number of hours of Greek programs, increased from five to thirteen. A total number of fifty two men and women participated in the production and the presentation of the programs!

More than 150 Greek associations in South Australia, were given access to the Greek Radio to conduct their own specific programs at least once a year.

One of the main milestones in the history of the Greek Radio, was a massive election, contested by three opposing groups of candidates in the year 1991, held at the Colossus Hall on Henley Beach Road Torrensville, which attracted almost 4000 voters.

The current Greek Radio Board, under the Presidency of Peter Ppiros since 2017 (also a member of the EBI Board of Directors) is facing new and different challenges compared to the 70's and 80's.

With the number of first generation Greek speaking listeners shrinking, in recent years its becoming more difficult to recruit new volunteers and to raise funds for the continuation of the Greek Radio.

Given today's technology, like every other ethnic group, the Greek community does not rely on our multicultural radio station as much, because they have direct television and radio from Greece and Cyprus and a number of private radio stations operating in Australia. Also, young people are able to find everything they



Members of the Greek Community Radio Program, radio presenters, long time volunteers and supporters of the Greek Radio attended the AGM at the 5EBI Auditorium late last year.

want on their phones, they listen to any foreign radio station they want and the songs they like 24 hours a day.

However, we still manage to maintain a good presence on air with four hourly, very well organised weekly programs on EBI Radio which pretty much cover the needs of our listeners in local and international news, culture, history, community, sports etc.

Financially, the Greek Radio is still in a reasonably healthy state due to fundraisings and donations

by our listeners and supporters.

Recently the Greek Radio committee donated to the EBI station an amount of \$5000, towards the purchase of studio equipment and furniture for use by the whole of the EBI community.

In closing, we would like to thank the Greek Radio Board of Directors, all the volunteers of the Greek Radio Program, the advertisers and financial supporters and of course the Greek audience that listens to us and keeps the Greek radio alive.

We would like to thank the 5EBI Radio Station and especially the CEO Patti Marinos Todorovic, who is always there for us, supporting us, inspiring us and working with us in unity and harmony to keep our beloved multicultural station going.

The Greek Radio Board, would like to take the opportunity to congratulate 5EBI and all the groups and individuals associated with it, for the station's 50th anniversary. Let's now work towards the next 50 years!