



GREEK COMMUNITY  
OF MELBOURNE



▲ A view of the proposed new Greek Centre on the Yarra

# A new Greek Centre on the Yarra

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**T**he Greek Community of Melbourne (GCM) is pleased to announce a plan that will not only contribute to the development of the site at Bulleen, but will financially strengthen the GCM and create new facilities and services for all Greeks in Melbourne. The Plan focuses on the Community's core activities and services and brings together organizations from across Melbourne in a landmark development called "Greek Centre on the Yarra."

"The Plan is visionary and testament to the hard work of my fellow Board members," said GCM president Bill Papastergiadis of the Proposal. "The Plan resolves the significant difficulties associated with the Bulleen site and will create a space for Greek organisations to call home. The Plan compliments the work of the GCM in its CBD Centre and across its broad program of activity."

**The Plan is to:**

1. Secure the removal of the onerous overlays on close to 2.6 hectares of the site. This is something that the GCM has been working on for almost two years with specialist consultants.
2. Sell 1/6th of the site for \$11 million to a developer brought forward by consultants who plan to build housing onsite.
3. Collaborate with Government on the creation of wetlands on the flood prone and hence unusable part of the land. The earthworks and landscaping necessary estimated to cost \$2 million dollars will be paid for by the developer and Government. The ongoing maintenance of this land will be the responsibility of Government.
4. Partner with an appropriate organisation on the development of the GCM retained part of the site, for the construction of an iconic Greek Centre on the Yarra as conceptualised

by one of Australia's leading architects, Billy Kavallaris of KUD architects.

This new Centre will house:

- a. Aged Care facilities
  - b. Education facilities allowing the GCM to bring together a number of campuses in the region and save up to \$100,000 per annum in rent
  - c. Community meeting, gallery and function spaces that will offer a tangible location for community organisations to call home with spaces to meet, celebrate and exhibit their archives and collections.
  - d. Retail spaces for a café and or restaurant
  - e. On the balance of the GCM land that remains under a flood zone, the plan is to construct sporting fields that are in much demand by local clubs and schools. These are of little impact to the construction of the Centre.
5. It is important to stress the financial considerations for the GCM associated with this plan. As proposed, the GCM will net approximately \$10m from the sale, receive an ongoing profit share from the Aged Care facility once operational, receive rental from the retail outlets and from the sporting field and save close to \$100,000 annually from school rentals that will no longer need to be paid. Furthermore, with regard to the construction of the new building, a joint venture with a third party will be sought to fund the construction.

According to Mr. Papastergiadis the development of the Bulleen site has being a constant request raised with him by many community leaders. "Create a space for us to meet and keep our archives, then we will invest in it' is constantly said to me" says Papastergiadis. "Not only we are creating a space which is needed by the community, but the project adds so much more to the social and cultural

fabric of the community in Victoria. We will work with all of the key stakeholders to ensure that the needs of Greek Australians are appropriately met. This project along with the acclaimed 15 level Greek Centre in the CBD now defines Melbourne as the global Hellenic HQ."

"The Board's proposal is an ideal solution to a perennial dilemma with respect to the development of the old Bulleen Drive-In site that has preoccupied the Greek Community for 30 years," said the General Secretary of the organisation Costas Markos. "This multifaceted project will provide a cultural and educational infrastructure to accommodate the wealth of creativity within our community. The addition of an aged care facility will assist immensely to the current lack of facilities and services for the elderly within our community. The Board of the GCM strongly believes that the proposal will be adopted unanimously by the GCM members and will also be embraced by other Greek organisations."

The GCM's Vice President Nikolaos Koukouvatakis pointed out "that this is a dream coming true for the community... we have a unique opportunity to develop Bulleen. This is a project for all Greeks and the whole community must support it."

Theo Markos, GCM's Vice President and Education Coordinator, said: "As an active member of the GCM since the early 80s, I am familiar with the site and its problematic history. For the first time in 30 years, the circumstances are such that will allow us to constructively use this piece of land in a way that will benefit the entire community. Voting in favor of the proposal is the only way that will ensure the implementation of the future plans of our organization."



▲ Another view of the proposed new Greek Centre on the Yarra

# Huge support for Bulleen

*The overwhelmingly positive support in relation to the recent announcement of the GCM's plan for the development of the Bulleen site has been conveyed by numerous Greek organisations in Melbourne in the past couple of days, providing impetus to the Board's decision to create a landmark multifaceted Greek Centre at the former Bulleen Drive-In site. After the realisation of the Greek Centre in the heart of Melbourne, the Greek Community of Melbourne is now focusing on the development of a derelict site that will be transformed into an impressive "Greek Centre on the Yarra".*

**Panagiotis Iassonidis (President, Pan-Macedonian Association of Melbourne and Victoria):**

"The Bulleen property has a turbulent 30 year history. A new chapter commences by creating a multidimensional and multi-purpose space that will serve many of the cultural and social needs of the Greek community. Kudos to Bill Papastergiadis and his worthy and capable team of second and third generation associates."

**Sofie Mercoulia (President, State Council AHEPA Vic):**

"On behalf of the State Council of AHEPA Vic I would like to congratulate the GOCMV on this fantastic initiative which will not only fill an important need in the Greek Australian community for the elderly, but will also become a centre of excellence for our heritage and culture, fostering relationships with the future generations of Greek Australians. This initiative will serve as an example of that even after 120 years, the GOCMV can continue to be the beacon organization our fore fathers had intended. Congratulations again."

**Anthony Drakopoulos (President, Ithacan Philanthropic Society "The Ulysses"):**

"The executive board of management of the Ithacan Philanthropic Society "The Ulysses", congratulates the GOCMV board of management for the unprecedented progress that they have made in recent times, in not only developing their prime site in

Melbourne's CBD, but also having the foresight and courage to proceed with the much anticipated development of the Bulleen land, which was purchased by the Greek Community some 40 years ago. We wish the GOCMV well in their efforts to accomplish and fulfil their plans, to create a much needed multifaceted complex, which will no doubt become a pillar of support not only for the Greek Community of Melbourne but to all citizens of this magnificent city."

**Steven Tsalikidis (President, Heidelberg United FC):**

"As President of HUFV and a proud Greek I would like to congratulate Bill Papastergiadis and the team at the GOCMV for their dedication and tireless work. The proposal of the New Greek Centre at Bulleen would be an amazing achievement for our community and unlocking the value of this land is a master stroke. Well done again."

**Jim Grivokostopoulos (President, Federation of Messinian Organisations, Melbourne and Victoria):**

"On behalf of the Federation of Messinian Organisations, Melbourne and Victoria we write to [...] to offer our support to the proposal that will enhance the character of the site, from an unused derelict site to a multifaceted built form, for the use by not only the GCM but also other Greek community organisations as well as the wider community. Our committee believe that this concept plan is a great one and

look forward to the long term sustainability of the Bulleen site."

**Kyriacos Karaolides (President, NUGAS Vic):**

"We at NUGAS Victoria would like to show our support for the Greek Community of Melbourne in their bid to build the proposed 'Greek Centre on the Yarra' infrastructure. In turning this vacant land into a complex which houses a proposed landmark building available for use by various Greek communities of Melbourne, spaces for functions and events and schools to run Greek language classes in, among many other wonderful initiatives, we believe this is an exciting proposition that must come to fruition for the Greek community. The potential benefits to the Greek community are immeasurable and will further strengthen our position to meet our main goal: to continue the Greek culture for future generations to enjoy and thrive in. We believe it's in the best intentions of all involved parties to see this idea become a reality and know that the Greek community will further flourish and prosper as a result of it, continuing to be a driving force in the service of Australia and its people."

**Peter Stefanidis (President, Akrites tou Pontou Victoria):**

An absolutely fantastic ideal Please convey the Federation of Pontian Associations of Australia's full endorsement of this plan to the committee. On a personal note, having gone through some-

thing similar for a Pontian association who sold its property, I take off my hat for your committees due diligence in negotiating with the State Government to overcome these obstacles and agree on a favourable outcome for the Greek Community. I am impressed. Note that I will be there and encouraging other members to vote for the resolution."

**Anastasios Orfanidis (Panagia Soumela Thomastown):**

"Congratulations for the proposed Greek Centre on the Yarra. Good work!"

**Professor Marinis Pirpiris (President, Hellenic Medical Society of Australia):**

The HMSA would like to congratulate the GOC on their vision to create an exceptional centre, which will promote community, friendship and an appreciation for Hellenism. We are excited by the creativity and imagination that will ultimately lead to yet another great initiative for the whole of the Greek Australian community. This venue will bring together all elements of our "paroikia" and allow the Greek community to continue promoting and growing the wider Australian community's interest and passion in our language, history and traditions."

**Kon Glekas (President, Pallacoin Brotherhood 'Leonidas'):**

"On behalf of the Pallacoin Brotherhood 'Leonidas' we see merit in your proposal regarding the Bulleen property redevelopment and it is our observe that your board has come to a logical conclusion in using this valuable acquisition. I am sure that whatever the outcome, it will be in the best interests of the Greek Community Melbourne."

**Leonidas Ouzounis (President of the Victorian association of Argos Orestikon and district, Kastoria Inc.):**

"What a wonderful initiative. Bravo on your efforts and foresight."

**Leo Athanasakos (President, South Melbourne FC):**

"This is a visionary project which the community has been in need of for 40 years. Combining sport with culture is a masterstroke."

**Peter Andrinopoulos (President, Pan-Australian Federation of Messinian Organisations):**

"[...] We believe that it is a sympathetic, innovative, high quality and well planned development that will help to meet the demands of the community with a long-term positive sustainability of the site. We are confident that it will be a facility that will service all the community from young to old well into the future."

**Michael Houdalakis (President, Cretan Federation of Australia and New Zealand):**

"Congratulations to the Greek Community of Melbourne for another terrific initiative ensuring our culture remains strong for generations to come."

**Georgina Poulos (Chair, Hellenic Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc.):**

"On behalf of the Board of the Hellenic Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. I offer HACCI's unreserved support of the GCM's vision for a new Greek Centre on the Yarra. This important project will undoubtedly continue the legacy of the GCM for generations to come, providing for the continued maintenance and preservation of our Greek culture. HACCI congratulates the GCM on this initiative."

**Jim Papadimitriou (President, Cretan Brotherhood):**

"A wonderful initiative that will provide a massive step forward in the cause to promote Greek culture and support the Greek and wider community."

**Christos Ntostas (General Secretary, Panepirotic Union of Melbourne & Victoria):**

"Yes we support the proposal for the new project at 49 Greenaway Street Bulleen."

**Litsa Athanasiadou (President, 'Merimna' of Pontian Women of Oceania):**

"The outcomes speak for themselves. Today, the Greek Centre in the city is the pride of our diaspora. I believe the Bulleen property is the correct next step. Vassilis Papastergiadis and the GCM Board, deserve a lot of credit."

**Stefanos Konstantinidis (Pontian Association of Melbourne and Victoria 'Black Sea'):**

"The GCM's proposal for Bulleen offers an excellent solution utilizing a space that will serve our community in the future. The GCM's Board deserves our congratulations for this initiative and we wish them their vision to become reality soon."

**Ioanna Theodorou (President, Philanthropic Association of Kastorians "Grammos"):**

"The proposal for Bulleen is a major new initiative of the GCM. We support you in every positive and constructive way."

**Maria Vassilakis (President, Pancretan Association of Melbourne and Victoria):**

"Our Association congratulates the Greek Community of Melbourne for its proposed future development of a new Greek Centre on the vacant Bulleen site. It has been a dream for many years for this



▲ Aerial views of the proposed new Greek Centre on the Yarra

property to be used to serve the needs of the broader Greek community for generations to come. The Pancretan Association has and will continue to support the Greek Community of Melbourne in all its endeavours. Well done and good luck!"

**Paul Mavroudis (President, Thessaloniki Association "White Tower"):**

"I received the notice of the Special General Meeting and to my surprise and great joy I saw that the Board had taken the decision to develop the Bulleen property. This follows the completion of the significant and beautiful building in central Melbourne, for which we are all extremely proud. The Board of our Association supports your decision and it will always be on the GCM's side."

**Spyros Robotis (President, Lefkada Brotherhood):**

"I am glad that finally something is going to happen at the Bulleen property after so many years. Congratulations to president Bill

Papastergiadis and the Board for their decisions and I wish them every success."

**Dimitris Alexopoulos (President, Panarcadian Federation of Victoria):**

"Considering the size of our community and its diverse, social and cultural needs, we support the initiatives of the GCM Board and greet with enthusiasm the plan to develop the Bulleen property, which aims to benefit Hellenism in Melbourne. We wish them good luck and every success."

**Constantine Tseprailidis (President, Central Association of Melbourne and Victoria "Pontiaki Estia"):**

"This project at the Bulleen site is a significant deal that meets the needs of Melbourne's Greek community. We congratulate the Board led by Bill Papastergiadis. All Greek organisations should help the GCM and participate in the realization of this new project."

**Nikos Makridis (President,**

**Pontian Community of Victoria):**

"[...] We congratulate the GCM on securing a new future for the Bulleen site. We look forward to the launch of the Centre. Good luck and know always that we are at your side."

**Theodoros Giourtis (President of HACSA):**

"Such ventures embolden the GCM and all of Hellenism. In such endeavour the GCM will have our full support."

**Anastasios Orfanidis (President Panagia Soumela):**

"[...]We congratulate the GCM on its plans for Bulleen and the creation of a new Greek Centre on the Yarra."

**Tom Pappas (President, New Union of Villages of Florina):**

"[...]Congratulations to the GCM who under the leadership of Bill Papastergiadis have achieved many great things, Bulleen also looks like it is one of these."

NICK ANDRIANAKOS:

# ‘A significant project for the community’



▲ View of the proposed new building

**A**s a benefactor of the Greek Community of Melbourne I wish to offer my full support to this new and exciting project” was the initial comment made by the well-known businessman Mr. Nick Andrianakos, who spoke enthusiastically about the Board’s vision for the Bulleen site.

“This project is neither exclusively for the Board nor for myself, it is for the whole community,” he added. “It is a major project that unites and helps the community and we should all support it. I wish to convey my congratulations the GCM Board for their efforts and I fully endorse the project”.

Many Greek Community leaders and organisations have expressed their support for the Greek Community’s plans to develop the Bulleen site. In their messages of support they all emphasised that “this project is well overdue” and that “it fulfills the needs and requirements of our community”.

Both leaders and many Greek or-

ganisations congratulated the GCM Board for its vision and plans and noted the Board’s determination and effectiveness to fulfill its program and vision. “After the completion of the 15 floor Cultural Centre in the heart of Melbourne’s CBD we have implicit trust in the Board to deliver to the Greek community another project that will equally benefit all members of our community” was a comment articulated by many Community leaders.

**John Pandazopoulos (Former State Minister):** “I am very much aware of the complex history of the Bulleen site and it’s severe planning restrictions that limit development and usage of the site. The current proposal is a realistic proposition that acknowledges both the needs of the community and the site limitations. I particularly endorse the proposal for aged care on the site and a large multipurpose space for community needs and education purposes. I am keen to work with the community to achieve this outcome.”

**Steve Koukouvitakis:** “I have absolute trust in the GCM Board, its

members have proven that they have the vision and energy to carry out and deliver major projects, such as the Greek Centre, in the heart of Melbourne. The GCM has owned this piece of land in Bulleen for so many years and unfortunately nothing has been done, now with the current Board’s proposal, we must all embrace the idea so that this unique opportunity is not missed. We all need to support the Board’s plan and it is imperative that it is approved unanimously at the forthcoming Special General Meeting. The current Board of Management has proven capable of “taking on” such large projects and we should all assist them with this project which will significantly benefit our community.”

**Jim Grivokostopoulos (Former Councillor and former Mayor of the city of Manningham):**

“[...] As a Councillor with the Manningham City Council over the past 4 years I understand the complexities of the planning requirements for this site as this has been discussed on numerous occasions by Manningham Councillors and Planners and Directors. I understand that this

project will also be supported by other Greek community organisation within Victoria and we also wish to offer our support and endorsement to the proposed plans. These plans will enhance its character from an unused derelict site to a multi-faceted built form, for the use by not only the GOCMV but also other Greek Community organisations as well as the wider community within the surrounding Municipal areas. I believe that this concept plan is a great one and look forward to the long sustainability of the Bulleen site.”

**Harry Patras:** “I am optimistic and excited that we finally have the opportunity to provide this well needed and world class facility to our community, further cementing us as the capital of Hellenes in the Diaspora. Congratulations to the Board for the incentive and hard work. We all need to use our strength to truly support and see this pioneering incentive through to realisation. Bravo.”

**Makis Gylopidis:** “This land remains untapped for many years, although at times there were plans and proposals no positive outcomes

were realised. The current Board’s proposal is very interesting and certainly well thought out and, I am sure, that there will not be a single member of Community that will not support the motion. I am confident that the proposal will pass, and it must pass unanimously. Personally, I endorse the project without any reservation and I suggest that all GCM members support the proposal.”

**Chris Kalavritinos:** “I received the Greek Community’s notification of the Bulleen proposal and I was thoroughly impressed. This in fact is a real opportunity to develop the Bulleen site. I have discussed the project with both young and elderly members of our community and they all had positive comments to say. I believe that the motion must be approved by everyone, this is a real and unique opportunity that will benefit all.”

**Spiros Korosidis:** “I congratulate the GCM Board for their Plan to develop the Bulleen property. It is a significant project for the whole community and we must support it. Congratulations.”

## Bulleen: A turbulent 30 years history

**I**t has been 30 years since the Greek Community of Melbourne (GCM) acquired the Bulleen site, and numerous proposals have been discussed and debated in regard its future use and potential development however without any fruition. The main restrictions were that of financial constraints and the fact that the site was and is subject to many overlays and zoning restrictions.

Currently, the majority (over 95%) of the property is zoned as an Urban Floodway Zone, with a small portion (under 2%) being zoned as a Residential Growth Zone.

The property is also subject to: An Environmental Significance Overlay; Heritage Overlay; Land Subject to Inundation Overlay; and Public Acceptation Overlay.

A large portion of the property has also been identified as being an area of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity which requires surveys to be conducted before any rezoning or development is permitted.

These zoning restrictions and overlays mean that currently, no permanent structures can be constructed on the property. The current use is generally limited to animal grazing and non-permanent stall markets (i.e. Sunday farmers’ market).

The Bulleen site was purchased by the GCM in 1986 for \$ 500,000 for the purpose of building a school and a cultural centre as well as providing other services to its members and to the general public.

It must be noted that from the beginning there were difficulties regarding the development of the site, and as a result, respective GCM Boards considered on numerous occasions the sale or leasing of the Bulleen site. Ongoing delays with the planning authorities, restrictive planning regulations, as well as financial constraints as a result of the purchase of the Alphington school, meant that the property remained idle for many years. The sale of the property was discussed and approved at numerous Annual General Meet-

ings, but for various reasons the property was not sold. Such decisions were approved at the respective Annual General Meetings of 1989, 1990 and 1991.

In 1989, media reports make reference to statements by the former GCM President, Savvas Papasavvas, who noted that if the land was rezoned it would increase its value and hence the numerous financial issues faced by the Greek Community of Melbourne at that time would be resolved with the sale of the site. However, the then Board was unsuccessful in obtaining the rezoning of the site. At the 1990 Annual General Meeting, a proposal for the sale of Bulleen was adopted with the provision that if the price did not reach the \$2 million an Extraordinary General Meeting will be called for the members to decide which other properties could be sold to reduce the Community’s debt. Eventually the decision was not implemented due to differences amongst members.

Finally, the decision at the 1992 Annual Gen-

eral Meeting, for the construction of a club at the Bulleen site was unsuccessful because of disagreements amongst Board members.

### Gibson Report

The Gibson report was the result of an Advisory committee (chaired by Helen Gibson) that was appointed by the former Minister for planning, Hon John Thwaites, to specifically consider the future of the Bulleen site (former Bulleen Drive Inn) in September 2000. In March 2001, the Advisory committee held a public hearing to consider the Greek Community of Melbourne and BBC Hardware development proposal. Finally, in early to 2003, the Advisory committee released its recommendations and its terms of reference noting that the key stakeholders had arrived at a consensus regarding the future of the site.

Unfortunately, the joint venture project between BBC Hardware and the Greek Community of Melbourne lapsed after the withdrawal of BBC Hardware thus rendering the project unattainable.