



GREEK ORTHODOX COMMUNITY & CHURCH

of Canberra and District

2020 Annual Report



St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, Wentworth Ave & Telopea Park, Kingston ACT 2604



President's Report

It is my pleasure and honour to welcome you to the 2020 Annual Report for the Greek Orthodox Community and Church of Canberra.

2020 has been a very challenging and difficult year for our community as we have had to face many obstacles one after another. Australia battled the worst bushfires in our history (now known as the Black Summer) that smothered Canberra in toxic smoke and brought back memories of the catastrophic events of the 2003 Canberra bushfires. We then were hit by the vicious hail storm in January 2020 that severely damaged our much loved St Nicholas Church of Canberra, and finally the outbreak of the world pandemic, COVID-19, that plunged many countries into lockdowns triggering a global recession.

Throughout these events our Committee stayed united and focused on leading our community through the tough times and ensured we all emerged from each disaster stronger and more resilient.



Our vision for the future was established and we launched our new logo inline with our vision of the 3 important pillars to our community: **Faith, Culture and Language**. Using our Church windows and the great dome as inspiration, we have achieved a more meaningful and personal logo for our community. The community feedback during our launch was overwhelmingly supportive.

From our new vision we were determined to uphold our Faith by ensuring the successful completion of the restoration works on St Nicholas as well as the unplanned remediation works for the damage sustained during the Canberra hail storm. Our restoration works have captured the attention and praise of many people including His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, other church leaders from other denominations, local and interstate politicians, and the broader Canberra community as a whole.

We also made bold new changes to the way we support and connect with our community and share our Culture.

We provided our most vulnerable members in our community with electronic tablets to keep connected to family, friends and the wider community during COVID-19 lockdowns. Softening the strain on the mental wellness and the disconnection from loved-ones always being our main focus.

The introduction of internet live-streaming of important church services was also ground breaking for our Faith, Culture and Language! We provided a much desired connection with our local community while also provided support to other Greek communities around Australia, such as Melbourne, who were in severe lockdown measures and not allowed to attend church services. Being live-streamed also allowed family and friends overseas in Greece and other parts of the world to stay connected with our Greek Australians proudly living in the nations capital city.

Our work during this year did not stop there. We proudly hosted His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia and His Grace Bishop Emilianos of Meloa. Both of which were extremely proud of the achievements we had made towards the restoration of St Nicholas to its former glory and for our positive and forward thinking approach to supporting our community members during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Vision

*encourage, promote and maintain our
Faith, Culture and Language in our
Hellenic community in the ACT and
surrounding districts*

President's Report

Our Greek School of Canberra was revitalised to support our vision for our Language. As a result of the devastation inflicted on our hall, we organised the temporary relocation of the Greek School to the Hellenic Club (Woden). The Hellenic Club generously providing brand new classrooms and infrastructure to assist in teaching our children. Our gratitude to the Hellenic Club for their swift generosity is immense - thankyou. The relocation was positively received by parents and carers, as can be seen in the overwhelming uptake in new enrolments.

In the midst of all these changes were our teachers who shined brightly because of their dedication, hardworking ethos and an unwavering commitment to teaching our children through all the challenges thrown at them. We are very proud of our teachers and we would like to show our appreciation and gratitude.



Importantly, all these activities and many more that will be mentioned in this annual report, could not have been completed without the strong financial controls and procedures that we have put in place. Financial control within the not-for-profit sector is imperative if we are to survive well into the future and provide the opportunities to support our mission and vision for our community.

We present the annual financial report to all our members, that shows the organisations' financial activities and performance for the 2019/20 financial year. Proudly we can report a cash surplus for the first time in many years. This is a great achievement and allows this committee to continue with plans for the future that will benefit the community for many years to come.

I want to close my President's Report by thanking the unwavering support many community members and businesses have provided us during the year. Our community is strong and proud of its reputation of providing a helping hand to each other and to the wider community in the ACT and surrounding areas. I would also like to thank the Hellenic Club Board and their staff for their collaboration, co-operation and support throughout the year.

Finally I also acknowledge and provide a special thank you to our committee members who have worked tirelessly on a volunteer basis. Their dedication and professionalism has brought about many good changes for the future of our community and to help sustain our long term vision and goals for a financially stable organisation to be able to encourage, promote and maintain our Faith, Culture and Language for many future generations.

Thank you and I look forward to share with you many more successes in the next year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Loukadellis'.

John Loukadellis

President of Greek Orthodox Community and Church of Canberra and District Inc

Committee Members



John Loukadellis - President

John is an Associate Director with Macquarie Bank and has been with them for 20 years. He is a multi award winning national mortgages business development manager. John was also President of the Antissian Association of NSW (Lesvos) for 10 years and involved with a number of other charities with his involvement with the Macquarie Group Foundation. Recently the Archdiocese of Australia has selected John as the ACT representative for the March 2021 National Committee. He has strong communication, negotiation and organisational skills and a strong ability to bring people together and change processes business/financial strategies of organisations for the better. John relocated to ACT in 2014 and now calls Canberra home with his wife Natalie and 3 sons.

After being elected on the 10th of November 2019, John has worked tirelessly on the vision to expand Canberra's Greek community by revitalising the 3 mantras that mean the most to the community; "faith, "culture and tradition" and the "Greek Language".

Theo Dimarhos - Vice President

Theo is a well known businessman and community volunteer in Canberra and its district for over 30 years. He has many years of experience as a board member including serving as Vice President for Diabetes Australia and President and Vice President for the Hellenic Club. Currently he is the Director of National Business Development & Philanthropy at Soldier On. Theo has always had a passion for family, the Greek Community and the greater Canberra community and how they can all be brought together to better our future generations.



Pana Tsironis - Secretary

Pana was elected as a committee member in 2019. He has over 20 years' experience in the construction industry and has represented financial institutions such as ABN Amro, RBS and Macquarie Capital on large scale public infrastructure projects including schools, hospitals, jails and courts. Pana and his wife decided to call Canberra home in 2015 as they saw it as the perfect place to start and raise a family. As secretary, he strives to work with his committee and the community to encourage its growth and ensure it thrives for future generations.

Yvonne Varela - Treasurer

Yvonne has over 20 years of finance expertise as a Chartered Accountant and is a registered Tax Agent. Originally hailing from Sydney, she has worked with a variety of business owners from small family operations through to publicly listed companies. Yvonne was elected as Treasurer in 2020 and brings her knowledge and skills in multiple areas of finance including compliance, audit and governance for the profit and not-for-profit sectors as well as Federal Government agencies. Yvonne is currently working at Gillespie Chartered Accountants as their Senior Business and Development Manager.



Committee Members



Dimitra Michalopoulos - Committee Member

Dimitra is a well known and respected member of the Greek Community of Canberra that has volunteered for many years on a variety of local community boards and at our St Nicholas church in Kingston. She is an experienced IT development consultant and a veteran of the federal public service. Dimitra was also a casual teacher with the Greek School of Canberra for many years and is able to draw on her extensive experience and knowledge to help contribute to the future plans for our community and organisation.

Dimitri Saragas - Committee Member

Dimitri is our local Greek voice and advocate for over 20 years, broadcasting the Hellenic Program on Cms 91.1 fm. He is a well loved and respected member of the Greek Community in Canberra and has served as committee member for over fifteen years. His ability to reach out to the broader community to keep them up to date with local news and events is pivotal to our Greek Community success.



Stan Piperoglou - Committee Member

Stan brings a wide range of experience to our Board, having served as board member with other not-for-profit organisations such as Suicide Prevention Australia. Stan has worked in Melbourne and Canberra in areas including education, multi-cultural affairs, aged care, biosecurity, chronic disease, mental health, and suicide prevention. He has also worked in ministerial offices as adviser and Chief of Staff. Stan is interested in further developing the role of the Greek Community across the generations ensuring that the Community has an innovative outlook to meeting the needs of its members and presenting a positive role in the further development of Canberra as a culturally diverse city.

George Pertsinidis - Committee Member

George was born and raised in Canberra and has been involved in volunteer work with the Greek Community of Canberra for many years. He is an experienced Electronic Engineering Technician and has been a member of the committee since 2009.



Leon Merkoureas - Committee Member

Leon has worked in the Public Service, both ACT and Federal Government. He is an experienced Project Manager, undertaking and successfully delivering projects in the fields of Construction, such as the design of CIT training facilities, IT restructure projects, as well as private renovating/refurbishing projects. He grew up and raised a family in Canberra, and has participated extensively in the local Greek community. This has included serving as a board member for the Greek Youth Club of Canberra, GOCCCD and Hellenic Club of Canberra.

Holy Blessing



Με την ευκαιρία του AGM ευχομαι στον νέο προεδρο και στα νέα μέλη του Συμβουλίου της Κοινότητας του Αγίου Νικολάου Καμπερας καλή δυναμη και καλή επιτυχία στους στόχους που έχουν βάλει για το μέλλον της παροικιας μας.

Είναι η αρχή μιας νέας πορειας για αλλαγή σελίδας στην ιστορία της ενορίας μας και να ξέρετε ότι θα μας έχετε βοηθούς και θα είμαστε παντοτε δίπλα σας.

Ο Άγιος Νικόλαος να σας σκεπαζει με την χάρη του εσας και τις οικογένειες σας.

Π. Πέτρος

On the occasion of the AGM, I wish the new president and the new committee members for St Nicholas of Canberra, strength and great success in the goals that they have set for the future of our parish.

It is the beginning of a new course to change the page in the history of our parish, and to know that you will have our help and we will always be by your side.

May Saint Nicholas to protect you and your families with his grace.

Reverend Father Petros Kipouros



Greek School of Canberra



by Greek Orthodox Community & Church of Canberra & District Inc

The St Nicholas Greek School of Canberra has seen a very busy 2020 year that included many challenges and triumphant changes.

Our Greek School started the 2020 financial year, like so many before, with approximately 20 - 25 children enrolled in the old Church Hall. This area of our community's 3 pillar values was of a great concern, as our faith, culture and language is passed on to the next generation through the teachings to our children.

In recent years many European languages in Australia have lost their position as the most widely spoken language at home. Greeks are the seventh largest ethnic community in Australia, however, recent census data shows most Greeks are speaking English at home as their first (and main) language. This comes from the greater use of English on the internet, social media, the change towards teaching Asian languages in mainstream schools and the change in the makeup of its community including inter-racial marriages.

This year the committee undertook the vast challenge of improving the school with the help of community feedback to understand where we could do better. The feedback received from students and parents, teachers and the greater community provided us with fantastic insight.

The temporary relocation of the school to the Hellenic Club after the Canberra hail storm, did not dampen the enthusiasm of parents and children wanting to enrol into the revitalised Greek School of Canberra.

Enrolments soared to in excess of 80 children; with over 110 at the time of publishing this report.

During the year COVID-19 restrictions in Canberra resulted in the lockdown of most schools including afterschool language classes.

Despite this challenge, our Greek School of Canberra was hailed by the ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs, as being one of the only language schools that continued to provide learning opportunities for its students before, during and after COVID-19.

This all could not have been successfully achieved without the support from the Hellenic Club and our wonderful and dedicated teachers.



Brand new classrooms at the Hellenic Club



Update the curriculum and teaching methods to allow non-Greek parents to participate



Multiple classes on Tuesday and Friday



Provide a light dinner to each child



Provide supplementary online learning and zoom sessions during COVID-19 and beyond



Brand new dedicated website and image www.greekschoolcanberra.com.au



Multiple parent communication lines, including Facebook, email, website and face-to-face

St Nicholas Restoration



In the previous year, Savil Construction Group (Savil) was engaged to undertake much needed repairs to our St Nicholas Church. These works were being undertaken to assist in emphasising our churches historical significance and better position it to be nominated to the ACT Heritage Register.

Prior to these works being completed, our church was severely damaged from the massive hail storm that swept through Canberra in January 2020. Hail as big as lemons and ferocious winds of up to 120 km p/hr tore through the church roof smashing over 300 tiles, filled the ceiling with water that extended and caused extensive water damage to the interior of our church, smashed the copper domes and 60 stained glass windows.

Savil attended the church within an hour of the storm and within 24 hours made the area safe, limited any further damage, and assessed the extent of the damage.

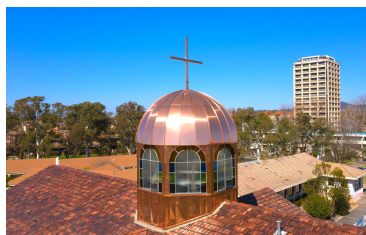
Savil continued working on the church, also repairing damage caused by the hail storm. These restoration works have been undertaken, giving consideration to the pursuit of Heritage status and ensure that our church is listed on the ACT Heritage Register.

It is noted that the ACT Heritage Council considered that the proposed development of the Aged Care Facility and the Hall designs are unlikely to diminish the heritage status being sought for St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church.

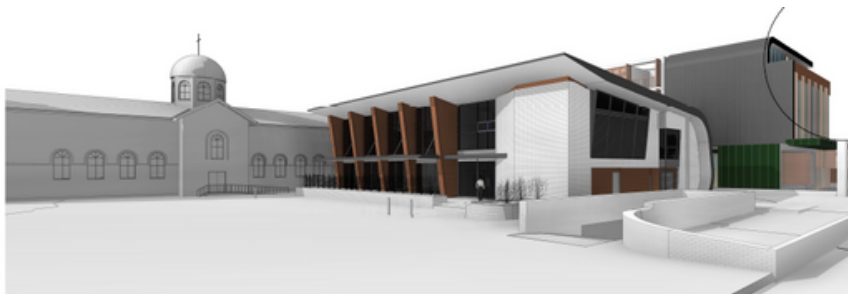
We are proud to say that the renovation and restoration works were successfully completed by the end of August 2020, whilst hundreds of other buildings in Canberra have still not even started works to repair their structures.

Also we are proud that the restoration works captured the attention of many people, organisations and media outlets both within Australia and world wide. Providing regular media updates on the status of the restoration works, provided many people with spiritual comfort as they were dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The committee will continue to review the state of the Church on a yearly basis and address any issues in a timely manner, to ensure the church remains in its glorious state for the enjoyment of generations to come.

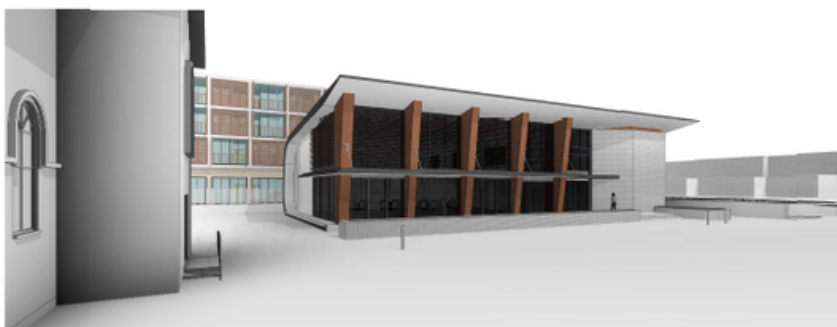


St Nicholas Church Hall



As part of the transfer of the St Nicholas Home for the Aged, St Basils offered to assist with the redevelopment of our church hall. St Basils engaged their consultants to prepare a suitable design that met the needs of the community and extensively consulted with the ACT Planning Authority (ACTPLA) to ensure the new church hall met the various building and development regulations. Development application (DA) comments from the public was sought, before the application for the new church hall was approved by ACTPLA.

The design of the hall was developed giving consideration from the clear advice from ACTPLA at the time was that a modern building, respectful of its residential context and streetscape, was preferred over a “mock” neo-classical design. Given the residential context and the architectural language of the St Nicholas Church, the design of the DA approved church hall is respectful of the streetscape and will have no adverse implications to the Heritage Listing sought to be obtained for the Church.



With DA approval received 9 October 2019, St Basils commenced preparing their tender documentation to approach the market for pricing. The hailstorm that hit Canberra in January 2020 caused extensive damage to the hall rendering it unsafe for use. As a result, the Greek School of Canberra has been relocated on a temporary basis to the Hellenic Club in Woden.

The President and Secretary of the committee have continued to hold strong discussions with St Basils since taking office, to ensure that St Basils attention is maintained and the church hall is completed as a separate project to the Aged Care Facility. We have received an in-principle agreement that St Basils intend to separate the two projects and commence the rebuild of the church hall before commencing the Aged Care Facility rebuild.

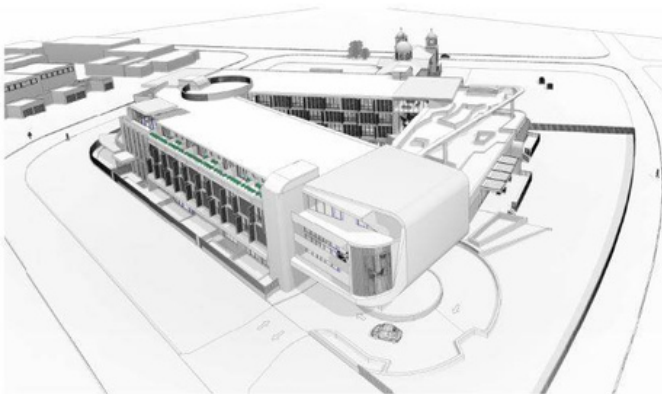
The committee has also been exploring options for a temporary or makeshift hall to be erected on the other side of the Church to provide services to the community, until such time that the new church hall is completed. This was highlighted as an important project to be completed in the 2020/21 year.

Aged Care Facility

The St Nicholas Home for the Aged was a 20 bed aged care facility located next to the St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church. It was operating from the late 1990s and closed early March 2017.

In 2014, with the St Nicholas Home for the Aged making a loss for consecutive years, previous committees entered into discussions with St Basil's to seek their expertise in operating the facility. An agreement was executed in September 2014 that gave rights to St Basils to take control of the Aged Care Facility and the land that it was on.

St Basils saw and pursued the opportunity to improve the aged care facility by preparing a new facility design that required the redevelopment of the site and lodged a DA for a new 129 bed facility. The DA submitted to ACTPLA for the 129 bed facility was approved.



The 2019/20 year has been a very difficult year for everybody and has resulted in a delay of the redevelopment of the Aged Care Facility and the adjoining church hall. Like other entities around Australia, St Basils have also been financially impacted by this year's events, including COVID-19, and we understand they are currently reviewing how and when they will be progressing with the redevelopment of the Aged Care Facility.

The committee executives have continued to work with St Basils to encourage the prompt delivery of the new proposed Aged Care Facility. We have also kept our responsibility in keeping other surrounding members of the community informed of the progress, including the neighbouring Kingston Neighbourhood Association.

We are hopeful that 2021 will bring about the much desired forward momentum of the rebuilding of the Aged Care Facility, as this will provide our Greek Community and the Kingston region with the much needed facilities as demand rises because of Canberra's ageing population.

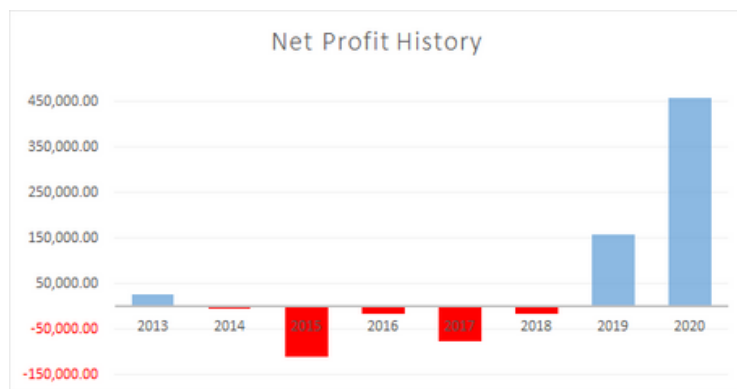
Financial Report

The 2019/20 financial year was an eventful year for most businesses around Australia, including Canberra that received a continuous battering from threats of catastrophic bushfires and toxic smoke, hailstorms delivering \$514 million in damages across the region and then the crippling affects of the global pandemic caused by COVID-19. This was a tumultuous time for our Greek Community in Canberra and the surrounding district.

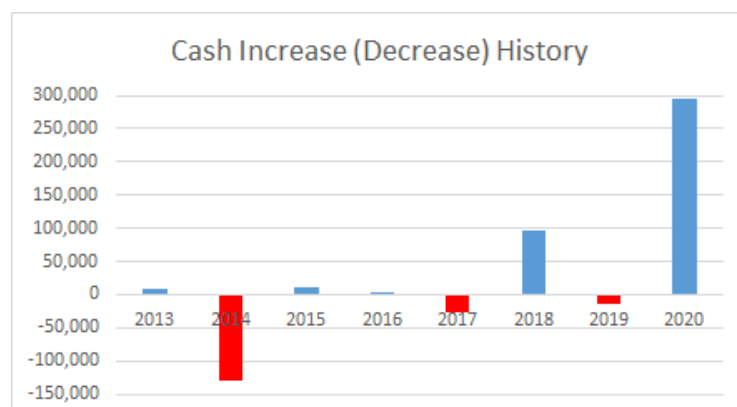
Despite this, the association completed the financial year with good momentum and a cash surplus for the first time in many years. We are pleased to present this as a result of the many ambitus changes made during the year as we plan for a stronger future.

The current year has provided a net accounting surplus of \$458,032 as compared to the prior year of \$158,999. It must also be noted that the cash movement position of the association was a surplus of \$294,025, whilst the prior year the cash movement position was a deficit of \$13,635.

The surplus provided this year included the receipt of \$255,000 in insurance claims from damages sustained during the January 2020 hailstorm. These funds were partially used to extinguish debts owing for immediate remedial and safety works undertaken by Savil, to stop further damage being caused to the St Nicholas Church and the adjacent church hall before restoration works could be conducted. The vast majority of the insurance claim was placed in a high interest term deposit to provide for the future longevity of the association to ensure it can pay its debts as-and-when-due, such as the community loan provided by the Hellenic Club for the \$1.1m church restoration works undertaken.



The association has previously provided minimal or no profit for a number of years



The association has historically experienced a turbulent history of inconsistent cash increases and decreases

Financial Report

Strong revenues were experienced this year predominantly from \$323,480 of donations provided by both businesses and individuals. This showed a marked increase of 515% compared to the 2019 year, where donations were only contributing \$52,557 to overall revenue.

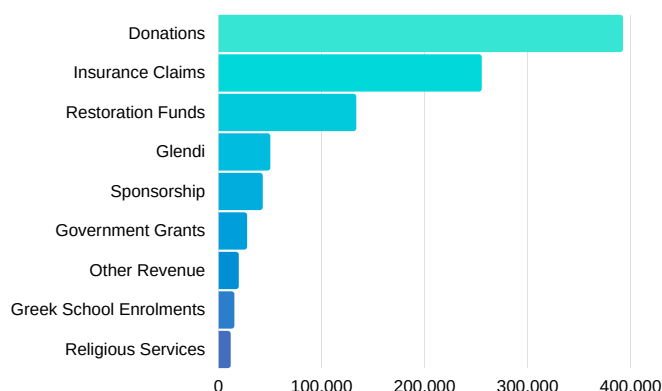
Contributions towards the restoration of St Nicholas Church and a successful Glendi also contributed significantly towards the current years total revenues. With the restoration works having been completed on St Nicholas in the early part of the 2020/21 financial year, reconstruction works relating to the church hall are now beginning to proceed.

Government funding included the ATO Cash Flow Boost relief and Hands Across Canberra Foundation for Project Apollo, which provided the opportunity for the association to provide tablets free of charge to our vulnerable elderly.

\$946,314

TOTAL REVENUE

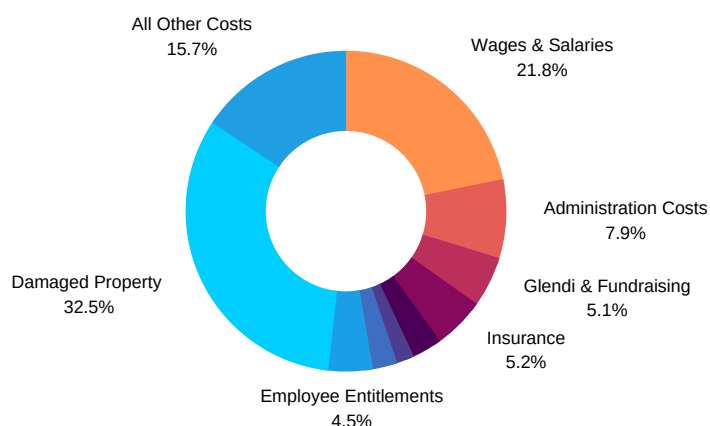
Revenue this year increased by 116% compared to the 2019 year. The major classes of revenue and their contribution to the total revenue is illustrated from highest to lowest.



\$488,282

TOTAL EXPENDITURE

Expenditure this year increased by 75% compared to the 2019 year, primarily due to hail damaged property being written off.



Overall costs associated with administering the business of the association increased mainly due to the the write-off of assets that were destroyed during the Canberra hailstorm and the recording of accumulated employee entitlements that had previously been kept off-the balance sheet.

Administrative costs were capped and ceased this year due to efficiencies and modernisation of the role. Modernisation included the implementation of a new accounting system that fetches and automated the majority of the historical multiple-handling of administrative tasks. This also contributed to meeting the associations taxation obligations in a timely manner without incurring late penalties as was situation in recent years.

Insurance policies were also revised and coverage increased after an in-depth review on all policies held. It was determined that the association was underinsured or had no insurance coverage in particular areas.

Overall the financial affairs of the association have been steered with a great degree of change management skills and high degree of financial skills, in a time where many businesses have struggled with similar adversities. It has been a busy maiden year as the incoming Treasurer, however, I hope the community is as proud of the financial achievements of the association as I am.

Yvonne Varela

Treasurer of the Greek Orthodox Community & Church of Canberra & District Inc.











Connect and Support

SUPPORT US AND YOUR COMMUNITY!

What are you waiting for? Join us and your community online to keep up to date with news, events, important announcements, connecting to others in your community and much much more!



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