



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
ADELAIDE, S.A. 5000

The Right Honourable, The Lord Mayor of Adelaide
Dr Jane Lomax-Smith AM
City of Adelaide
GPO Box 2252
Adelaide SA 5001

Re: Adelaide-Greece city sister proposal

Dear Lord Mayor

We write to follow up on a recent meeting we attended with you and the Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs, the Hon Andrea Michaels, where we discussed the significant economic, business and cultural benefits that could be achieved with the establishment of a sister city program/relationship between Adelaide and Athens, Greece.

As you are aware, Adelaide and Greece share a strong and undeniable bond - the foundations of which were laid in the 1950s and 60s when thousands of Greek migrants sailed out to Australia and called Adelaide home.

So strong are those ties, the visionary former Labor Premier, the late Don Dunstan, once dubbed Adelaide the *Athens of the South*.

That proud influence is today found wherever you travel throughout South Australia – and is something we believe can only be made stronger should a sister city program be established.

We are not alone with our support for a sister city program between the two flourishing cities.

The Mayor of Athens, Kosta Bakoyiannis; the Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Development and Investments, Dr Christos Dimas; and Professor Nikolaos Stampolidis, the Director General of the Acropolis Museum in Athens, have all expressed a keen interest in strengthening ties between Greece and South Australia, where there is a large proportion of the population (in excess of 150,000) with some form of Greek heritage.

Mayor Bakoyiannis and Dr Dimas have also both expressed their appreciation for the support shown by South Australia in the reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures (Elgin Marbles) and have recognised the strong cultural, trade and economic links between our two countries.

The potential benefits of such a collaborative program cannot be under-estimated from an Adelaide/local perspective.

Last year, the city of Athens welcomed more than 40 million tourists. To put that in perspective, Australia - as an entire nation - attracts around nine million tourists annually.

The Greek economy is rebounding strongly from the fiscal crisis of previous decades. As a direct result, international corporations - including from Australia - are investing in construction and energy projects in Greece.

But the benefits do not just stop at investment and tourism opportunities for our state.

Australia is now looking at increasing skilled migration to meet demands required of industry. Greece is a highly educated and skilled society and places a strong emphasis on schooling. English is taught as a second language in many schools and universities.

A free trade agreement is about to be finalised between Australian and the European Union, which has the potential to introduce significant business opportunities between the two cities.

We know through talking with him personally that Mayor Bakoyiannis is supportive of a sister city program as he sees it as an innovative way to further strengthen the economic, business, cultural and heritage ties between the two cities.

Among his interests are exploring the many green energy innovations being developed in South Australia and at Lot 14, waste management developments, efficient and low emission transport options, our reputation for good governance, and our planning initiatives including high-density living and social housing.

Dr Dimas is interested to learn more about the exciting and dynamic science and innovation environment at Lot 14 having established similar entrepreneurial and innovation hubs in Athens and the city of Thessaloniki.

As we mentioned earlier, Greece's influence on Adelaide specifically – but Australia more generally – cannot be overstated.

This is evidenced by regular visits to South Australia by a Ministerial delegation of the Greek Government and the world-famous Evzones, members of the Presidential Guard.

Further, many SA and Federal MPs of Greek origin attend the bi-annual World Hellenic Interparliamentary Association in Athens. This a major parliamentary networking event.

As you are also aware, South Australia also has a proud history of Greek migrants contributing strongly to its development and growth.

A most recent example of this in South Australia was the official opening of the Hellenic Australia Chamber of Commerce and Industry's new SA chapter – or HACCI SA for short. It boasts more than 200 members and continues to grow.

Among other things, HACCI SA plans to host networking and other events, offer mentoring, and develop a business directory and app - all designed to build stronger connections between Greek Australians within the state as well as with their interstate and overseas peers, as well as support the further expansion of private enterprise among businesses between the two cities.

HACCI SA is committed to supporting and promoting the sister city program as one of its key objectives and principles and is excited about the ongoing opportunities this could deliver to the broader SA community.

This is yet another indication of the strong influence Greece has had on our state and city.

We believe a well-supported and well-managed sister city program between Adelaide and Athens will realise many wonderful opportunities for trade, tourism, education, science, and economic investment between the two countries.

We note that in July meetings are being arranged with the Mayor of Athens and others government officials to progress this proposal in Greece.

We look forward to your favourable support of this proposal.

Yours sincerely



Hon Connie Bonaros MLC
Tuesday, 2 May 2023



Hon Frank Pangallo MLC