

**Submission  
No 430**

**INQUIRY INTO THE MACEDONIAN ORTHODOX  
CHURCH PROPERTY TRUST BILL 2010**

**Organisation:** Macedonian Orthodox Community of WA Inc

**Date Received:** 12 August 2010

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## INQUIRY INTO THE MACEDONIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH PROPERTY TRUST BILL 2010

**Organisation:** Macedonian Community of WA Inc  
**Name:** Mr Sotir Novachkov  
**Position:** President  
**Date received:** 12/08/2010

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# Macedonian Community of W.A. Inc.

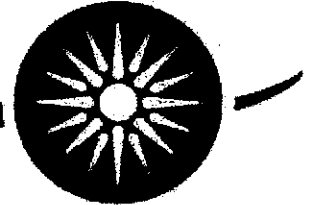
Macedonian Orthodox Church of St Nikola

W.A. Macedonian Club Inc.

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11 August 2010

**Parliamentary Inquiry into THE PROPOSED  
MACEDONIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH PROPERTY TRUST BILL 2010**

**Dear Members of the Parliamentary Inquiry into the proposed MACEDONIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH PROPERTY TRUST BILL 2010,**

As active and good standing members of the Macedonian Orthodox Church Diocese of Australia and on behalf of the Macedonian Community of WA (Inc) and our church, the Macedonian Orthodox Church of St Nikola situated at 8 Macedonia Place North Perth, Western Australia, we would like to express our very serious concerns about this Bill for the following reasons:

1. There has been no consultation with Macedonian Churches and Community groups in relation to this Bill. Our first correspondence in relation to this Bill was in a Circular accompanied by a prepared letter of support for the Bill from the Bishop's Deputy requesting our parish priest to sign without amendment.

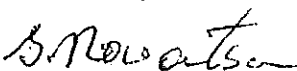
The circular letters were received by us after the Second Reading Speech in Parliament by the Hon. Fred Nile. Our organisation which currently owns property valued at almost \$20 million has never been directly consulted by the Bishop, nor have we been invited to a community consultation in this regard. We became aware of the Bill on 12 June 2010 by a general Notice faxed from the Bishop's residence in Bitola, Macedonia, clearly after the second reading speech.

2. The sole purpose of this Bill is an attempt by the Bishop Petar Karevski and the Macedonian Orthodox Church to gain control of the hard earned assets that Australian Macedonians have acquired through significant toil, effort, donation and commitment, ALL in a voluntary capacity. Our Community has built churches, community centres and cultural and sporting associations for the general benefit of members and fellow Australian supporters. There has been NO financial contribution from the Macedonian Orthodox Church towards the building or running of any of the Macedonian Orthodox Churches or Community Organizations in Australia.

3. This Bill empowers the Bishop and his selected cronies to control this Property Trust in a dictatorial manner which has no affinity to the democratic principles and processes that we so dearly cherish in Australia, as evidenced in Part 2, clause 5.2 (the majority of Trust members are already under the direct line management or authority of the Metropolitan / Bishop). The looseness and lack of accountability to Law of the State appears to be hallmark of this legislation. There is clearly a complete lack of any control in the manner in which the trust will be administered. Those controlling the Trust will not be subject to any regulatory requirements, auditing procedures or corporate governance and regulations to which existing incorporated associations are subject
4. In the 2 Circular Letters received from the Bishop and his Deputy, there has been a brazen attempt to cover the real reason for this Bill with reasons such as "allowing the Macedonian Orthodox Church in Australia to be properly registered and recognized in Australia like other churches". We fully support the Macedonian Orthodox Church being officially registered in Australia but we strongly believe that the provisions of the current Incorporations and Associations Act more than adequately allow this to happen in an orderly and proper manner. There is absolutely no good reason for the Bishop seeking an Act of Parliament to incorporate the Macedonian Orthodox Church into a Property Trust. The reasons why he has not chosen to simply incorporate under the Incorporations and Associations Act is that this legislation is based on very stringent and transparent democratic principles that do not sit well with the Bishop's autocratic style. The mid to longer term implications of passing this Bill will result in a disenfranchisement of many thousands of dedicated, loyal and hard working Australians of Macedonian origin.
5. Over the past 15 years there has been a very unfortunate and wasteful procession of legal action taken by Bishop Petar against a number of Macedonian Orthodox Church Communities around Australia in his ruthless pursuit to take over financial control of the assets that these communities have been building for over 50 years. These actions have divided and financially devastated Macedonian Orthodox Church communities and the proposed legislation will continue to add to the wounds created by this self-serving attack. This proposed Bill is inflaming and exacerbating the deep divisions that these legal actions have caused.
6. If the only property that is vested automatically in MOC under the Bill, is that which is already in the name of the Bishop and his colleagues then why does this require this proposed legislation unless the Bill is a means to acquire other properties presently owned by Macedonian Community organisations? To our knowledge, apart from the properties in the Bishop's own name, the rest of the property is owned and managed by the various Macedonian Community organisations. In particular, Clause 19 of the proposed Bill opens the door for other Macedonian Churches to be included in this MOC Property Trust. If the "sign here" letters we received asking us to support this Bill are any indication, how long will it be before Bishop Petar sends out "sign here" letters which state that "we the XYZ Macedonian Orthodox Church wish to transfer our church property into the MOC Property Trust"?

In view of the reasons outlined above, we respectfully plead that the Parliament of NSW rejects this ill-conceived Bill which would have very divisive and financially devastating consequences on Macedonian Churches, Community organizations and their tens of thousands of members and supporters throughout Australia.

Yours faithfully,



Sotir Novachkov

President

Macedonian Community of WA Inc