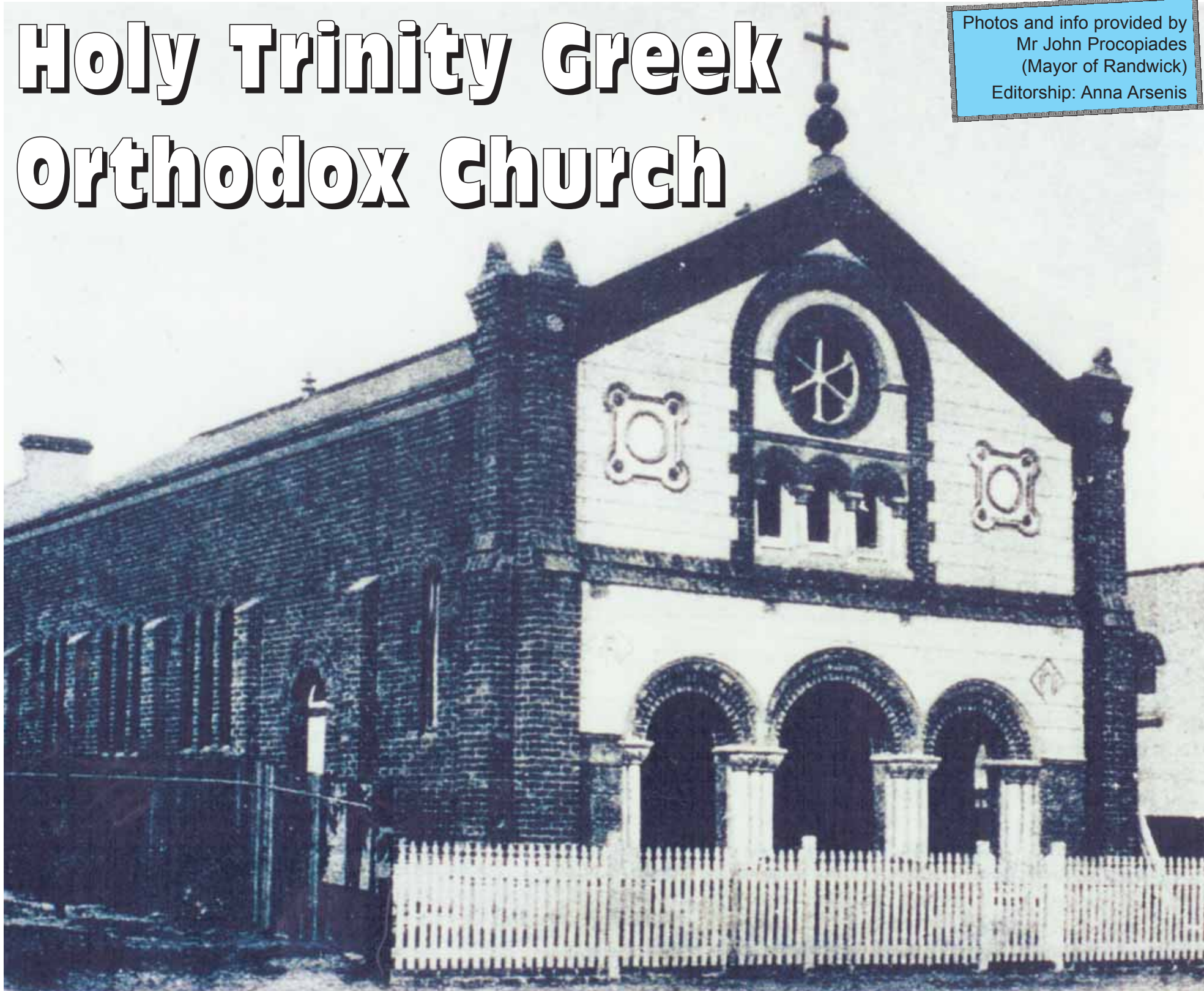


Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

Photos and info provided by
Mr John Procopiades
(Mayor of Randwick)
Editorship: Anna Arsenis



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Ayia Trias (Holy Trinity) Greek Orthodox Church has State Significance as the first dedicated Greek Orthodox Church to be built in Australia. Constructed in 1898 to serve the growing migrant Orthodox Community in Sydney, the Holy Trinity Church (along with the land it sits on and the adjacent priest's residence) was funded entirely by the congregation. Since the late nineteenth century when the early members migrated and settled in Sydney, the church has been a centre of stability to its congregation and a place where people could meet and practice their traditional culture, values and language. The subsequent interaction and support network was essential to the settlement of these communities in Australia and, as a result, the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church has been a dedicated place for

Christian Orthodox worship for over 100 years.

Historical Notes or Provenance:

Orthodox arrived in Australia in the late nineteenth century when significant numbers of Greek, Lebanese and Russian immigrants made their way here from their homelands. The early migrants were attracted to Australia for a number of reasons, but particularly by the prospect of a new land and the chance to better their lives by amassing their fortunes in a developing settlement. Although the Lebanese migrants, known originally as Syrians, made a more permanent move by bringing their families and culture with them, the Greek migrants saw their Australian experience as a temporary measure to build their financial security before returning home to the Motherland and their families in Greece. As such these mi-

grants were largely young single men with no intention of settling in Australia or at least not until they were financially well established and could bring their wives and families from Greece to join them. From the majority, however, Australia was a place where they could make a fortune and then return to Greece and enjoy the hard-earned fruits of their labour (Yiannis E Dimitreas, 1998, p. 96)

(Gilchrist, vol 1; Yiannis E Dimitreas, 1998; Lebanese Settlement Committee, 1983)

When some did return to Greece, news of Australia spread and chain migration began with family and friends of migrants going abroad to join them. As migration continued, a community developed in Australia with the implementation of the necessary organisations and structures needed to support the new immigrants who were still, overwhelmingly, single men with little to no understanding of the language and with few

marketable employment skills. This institutional structure was important to the new migrants in helping them get established in a new country and integrate into their own community and the broader Australian society while maintaining their traditions, values and cultural identity.

(Gilchrist, vol 1; Yiannis E Dimitreas, 1998; Dept of Immigration & Ethnic Affairs, 1984; Paul Convy & Dr Anne Monsour, 2008)

The migration experience was a binding force within these communities and these newly-established institutions were able to provide food, shelter, supplies and a stable family-type environment for the migrants that followed. These strong connections promoted ethnic unity and enabled the newly-settled communities to sustain the cultural and religious practices brought with them from their homeland, as well as being an inclusive unit that could withstand the cultural and social isolation of the

new country. Through the assistance of these communities, the new migrants tended to settle in clusters and, with the Greek and Lebanese communities, these areas were Surry Hills, Waterloo and Redfern (which was to become the hub of Orthodox immigration by the late nineteenth century).

(Gilchrist, vol 1; Paul Convy & Dr Anne Monsour, 2008; Maria Costadopoulos - Hill, 1979; Anne Monsour & Paul Convy, 2008).

Religious institutions were also particularly important in the experiences and settlement of the new immigrants in Australia. In the very early days of the migration of Orthodox Greeks, Lebanese and Russians, there were no dedicated churches in which the migrants could worship but the celebration of major religious holidays (particularly Christmas and Easter) did continue through makeshift services being conducted by travelling priests. (Gilchrist, vol 1; Yiannis E Dimitreas, 1998)