

Kingsford Greek Orthodox Church says souls 'outweigh' salads in cemetery debate

The Greek Orthodox Church has broken its silence to support a plan to expand the Botany cemetery into the neighbouring Chinese market gardens.

The parish priest at St Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church in Kingsford and spokesman for Archbishop Stylianos, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in Australia, Father Steven Scoutas has become a voice for the concerns about diminishing burial space.

"It's of great concern to the church that vegetables are regarded to be of greater heritage value than that of human beings," he said. "Nothing is more sacred than the human person."

Father Steven, who blamed consecutive governments for failing to secure additional land for the cemetery during the past 30 years, said thousands of his parishioners had signed a petition on the issue.

"The Greek Orthodox Church has voiced serious concerns for many years about this acute shortage of burial spaces. Archbishop Stylianos, Primate of the Church in Australia, again



Fr Steven Scoutas wants Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park to acquire the Chinese market gardens.

raised the matter in 2006 with the State Government.

"This is vital, not only for Christians, but for our brothers and sisters of other religions as well.

"The deceased should be afforded every dignity. Their personal contribu-

tion to the shaping of the nation and the heritage of the world should not be devalued."

A shortage of space in Sydney's east has led management of the Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park, which incorporates Botany cemetery, to submit a

plan to the State Government to acquire 60 per cent of the adjacent heritage-listed market gardens, a 7ha slice of crown land off Bunnerong Rd in Matraville.

The submission has divided the community between those who would prefer to see the land remain with the living, the three families who cultivate the gardens, and those more concerned about the diminishing space to bury their loved ones.

Chinese community and heritage groups are opposing the planned resumption of the market gardens at La Perouse for use as a cemetery. The land on which the market gardens sit has been used for food production for more than 150 years, and managed by Chinese gardeners for more than a century.

But the management of the cemetery has claimed that without the land transfer it will run out of burial space within 12 years. The situation has been worsened by cultural sensitivities surrounding burial practices. Cremation is forbidden by some religions.

Article from the Southern Courier

ETHNIC COMMUNITIES COME TOGETHER FOR THE 2010 COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION SYMPOSIUM

Minister for Citizenship John Hatzistergos opened the 2010 Community Relations Commission Symposium, the largest annual gathering of representatives of ethnic communities in NSW.

This year, the Symposium's theme, Am I being heard? seeks to encourage community leaders to speak up about issues affecting ethnic communities, migrants or refugees.

Mr Hatzistergos said the two-day symposium, being held at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Parramatta, is about more than canvassing views on government services and policies affecting ethnic communities.

"This important event is now in its 10th year and brings together the most respected and influential community representatives in NSW," Mr Hatzistergos said.

"The discussions and deliberations at this event are a prelude to action and highlight the benefit of cultural diversity."

"Today's outcomes will go towards informing the views of the NSW Government when it

comes to making important decisions on multicultural affairs."

"We look forward to hearing about significant projects being carried out throughout the year and any concerns or aspirations the leaders might have."

Mr Hatzistergos said the symposium is hearing from a range of speakers including Nathan Cassar, a Year 12 student from Elderslie High School who has developed an anti-racism program, It's Not Cool to be Cruel, which has been adopted by a number of schools in south-west Sydney.

Another speaker is Deputy Commissioner of NSW Police, Nick Kaldas, whose career spans many areas of major crime investigations. He has served Australia in Iraq and on the special Tribunal For Lebanon, following the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri.

Mr Hatzistergos said community representatives will also attend a number of workshops on issues such as media, grants, accessing government, retaining languages and social entrepreneurship.

*Hon. John Hatzistergos
MLC
Attorney General
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Family mourns death of soccer-mad Mitchel Carrasco

Mitchel Carrasco's heart sang the night Spain won the 2010 FIFA World Cup. And not just for the celebration of his heritage.

He and his large Illawarra-based family of cousins, aunts and uncles travelled to Darling Harbour for the FIFA Fan Fest and put their hands up for a football competition.

Their game, Team Villa vs Team Torres, consisting entirely of Carrascos, was projected on to a large TV screen and at the centre was a beaming 12-year-old child who revelled in the bond of his close-knit family.

"He told me afterwards, 'Mum, that was the best night of my life'," his mother Kylie said.

Yesterday, Mitchel's distressed family gathered at the Carrascos' Mt Warrigal home, trying to fathom how such a vibrant young personality could be gone.

Mitchel was playing for Oak Flats Football Club in the first round of a new seven-a-side competition at Kiama Leisure Centre on Thursday night when tragedy struck. Mum Kylie was cheering from the sidelines, his younger brother Lochlan and a multitude of cousins were among the 400 other children gathered at the field, and his father Luis, as always, was at the centre, guiding the team he had coached since Mitchel was a four-year-old.

The team was down 2-0 and there were calls from the sideline to put Mitchel in the forwards.

"I said, 'Come on, Mitch, you're going to get your chance, you're going up the front' ... But in the next run, he just went down," Luis said.

"I went to him, he was trying to breathe. It was just ... I was screaming for people to help me. 'Please help me. Please someone help me'."

Parent Zoran Joleski, who was CPR trained, ran to Mitchel's aid and an off-duty fireman ran to the leisure centre to grab a defibrillator.

"The first five minutes he was trying just so hard to fight ... The two gentlemen tried three times [with the defibrillator]," Luis said.

"They tried their absolute hearts out, but we couldn't bring him back." In a poignant moment that brought many onlookers to tears, the family, realising he was gone, lined up in the middle of the field to say farewell.

BY MICHELLE HOCTOR- Article from Illawarra Mercury