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MEDIA RELEASE

AHC active in ANC Advocacy Week

Sydney, 28 November 2010: During the week of 21-26 November, the Armenian National Committee of Australia held its annual Advocacy Week. In the words of the ANC America Chairman, Mr. Ken Hachikian: "If we find that we only agree on 1 thing, and disagree on 9, let's cooperate on that one thing. That's thinking politically." In the spirit of this statement, the NSW and ACT branches of the Australian Hellenic Council were actively involved in this year's events.

The joint ANC-AHC meetings in Parliament House Canberra and the ANC Banquet were the highlights of Advocacy Week 2010.

Meetings with Federal parliamentarians organised by ANC Australia were attended by representatives of AHC (NSW) and AHC (ACT). Part of the visit to Federal Parliament was the special presentation of a unique public history exhibition developed by the Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

"BEYOND ANZAC COVE" presented parliamentarians and their staffers with the story of the Armenian, Assyrian and Hellenic Genocides through the photographs, letters and publications of the Australian prisoners-of-war and the Australian relief effort on behalf of the Genocide Survivors.

The AHC (NSW) also made its presence felt at the ANC Annual Banquet, held last Friday night. Amongst those who represented the AHC at this prestigious Australian Armenian community function, the event which closes Advocacy Week, were **GACC President Yiannis Kallimanis, Pontoxeniteas Secretary Mrs Helen Macris and AHC (NSW) Secretary Dr Panayiotis Diamadis.**

The keynote speaker was the International Guest of Honour, **ANC America Chairman, Mr. Ken Hachikian. In a powerful address, that clearly summed up the aims of the ANC (and AHC), Mr Hachikian stated:** "We seek, in this difficult environment, nothing less than truth, justice, freedom and - ultimately, based on these foundations, a fair and lasting peace for the Armenian nation.

"We seek the truth, justice and freedom:

-- Required for our sense of morality - as Armenians and as citizens of the world.

-- Required for justice - for the past wrongs committed against our nation.

And, most urgently . . .

-- Required for Armenia's future security and survival - our very ability to join with other countries and cultures at the table of nations, so that we can bring our contribution to the peace and progress of mankind".

Mr Hachikian's address held a number of messages for the Australian Hellenic community. **The work of public affairs bodies such as the ANC and AHC require "three basic ingredients":**

- 1) **The first is a community that cares.** A constituency of shared values and consensus around a common cause. Thankfully - as a result of our community groups, churches, youth programs, and families - we are blessed with caring, devoted Armenians. And, for all our differences, we are remarkably united on the key issues facing our nation. This reality represents, truly, our greatest resource.
- 2) **The second ingredient is a community that understands.** By this I mean, Armenians with a solid understanding of the political environment of their home countries - be that Australia or America - who can see the opportunities before them, and have the skills and knowledge to engage effectively and advance the Armenian Cause, In this regard too, we are blessed with great strengths.
- 3) The third ingredient is the most important one, and yet the hardest to measure. The first, caring, is in our hearts, the second, understanding, is in our minds. **The third is in our spirit.** It is the belief - the faith - that our actions will deliver results.

Mr Hachikian continued: "I am reminded, whenever speaking of organizing, of an expression by A. Philip Randolph. He said: "At the banquet table of nature, there are no reserved seats. You get what you can take, and you keep what you can hold. If you can not take anything, you won't get anything, and if you can not hold anything, you won't keep anything. And you can not take anything without organisation". These words, spoken so many decades ago, are just as powerful today.

"For all the criticism that organizations take - especially, it seems, in our community - they do represent our most effective way to advance our commonly held aims. It is also, however, an encouraging measure of our growth, that the value of teamwork is, today, increasingly understood and appreciated".

The AHC NSW and ACT were honoured to be invited to participate in the ANC's Annual Advocacy Week and look forward to working with ANC and other like-minded community organisations on a range of common issues in the future.

The complete text of Mr Hachikian's address can be found at:

<http://anc.org.au/news/Speech+by+Ken+Hachikian+-+ANC+Australia+Annual+Banquet>