



## FUNDRAISER DINNER FOR SYRIAN-ARMENIAN RELIEF EFFORT RAISES OVER \$80,000

On Sunday 28th July, the Joint Committee for Syrian-Armenian Relief of which the Armenian Apostolic church is a key member held a Fundraiser Dinner at Miramare Gardens Reception Centre in Terrey Hills attended and supported by more than 500 community members. Primate of the Diocese of Australia, His Grace Bishop Haigazoun Najarian presided over the evening highlighting the importance of extending support and hands of benevolence to help our Armenian brothers and sisters facing hardship and devastation in the midst of the Syrian conflict.

The evening was opened by the masters of ceremony, Mrs Zepur Mouradian and Mr Ara Megeurditchian outlining the effect of the civil unrest on the Armenian population and community infrastructures in the most afflicted areas of Aleppo and Homs where large Armenian communities are established. Through the course of the evening, a video presentation with images of devastation and destitution underscored the large humanitarian plight and the aid that is so desperately needed.



A cultural program, showcasing for the most part the youth of our community, not only entertained the guests during the function but demonstrated a vibrant and healthy community, free and autonomous, able to thrive in peace and harmony, attributes to remind us of our blessed circumstances in contrast to our Syrian counterparts. It was the community at its best represented by most organisations, schools, churches and political parties. In a spirit of unity and goodwill, giving magnified throughout the night.

Guests were treated to an array of performances which included lively songs by students of AGBU Alexander School and Galstaun College; Armenian folkloric and graceful dances performed by the Hamazkaine Sydney Dance Company and Nairi Dance Group; musical pieces by the All Armenian Youth Ensemble with vocalist Lilit Mouradian; soloist Isabelle Marcarian and operatic vocalist Natalie Aroyan with piano accompaniment by Christopher Nazarian; poetic recitation by Azniv Ingilizian; entertainment by Blackbird Band with vocalist Raffy Adourian.



A video presentation prepared by Church Councillor, Mr Sarkis Mouradian showed on ground footage of the churches, schools and buildings in Aleppo and Homs destroyed in the civil conflict with confronting images of how Armenian lives are being affected. The gravity of the situation was further emphasised in a written message from His Grace Bishop Armash Nalbandian, Primate of the Armenian Church of Damascus, read by Reverend Father Avetis Hambarzumyan outlining the predicament of the once thriving Armenian communities now under siege. In his letter the Primate commended the relief effort in force and the high value of support of the Armenian Community of Australia.

The evening closed with the Primate's final remarks, when his encouraging words earlier in the evening to dig deep to ensure a sizeable target would be attained were realised. He commended the support and generosity of the guests as well as the admirable efforts of the organising committee for such a successful event.

