



Association Number: A04492  
email [info@canberrapontianclub.org.au](mailto:info@canberrapontianclub.org.au)  
PO Box 4317, Manuka ACT 2603

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It may have started as a social club, intended for people who belong to a unique historical, social and linguistic heritage but there is more to the newest association recently established in Canberra.

The Canberra Pontian Club, was set up primarily for the purposes of being the social unifying centre and a cultural outlet for those in Canberra and the areas around it hailing from Pontus or Pontos, a region that is occupying the south of the Black Sea in today's north of Turkey.

This was an area that was reached by the Greeks around 1000 BC, and has remained Hellenic in cultural and ethnographic terms until the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and its inhabitants have been known as the 'Pontians'. The trip of Jason and the Argonauts, the adventures of Ulysses in the country of the Cimmerians, the punishment of Prometheus by Zeus and the arresting of his body to the mountains of Caucasus, the sailing of Hercules on the Black Sea, testify the connection between the mainland Greeks with those living in the southern coast of the Black Sea.

However the history and culture of the Pontians came to a tragic end after the persecution they faced by the Turkish state which by the early 1920s turned into a full scale genocide. The ultimate historical station for the Pontians remains the treaty of Lausanne in 1923. This treaty brought about the forceful expulsion of Greek people living on Turkish territory; a process referred to as the 'the Catastrophe of Asia Minor'.

Beyond this dense historical background, the Canberra Pontian Club, remains forever guided by and devoted to the vision of the late Tom Efkarpidis, he whom the community refers to as the "Great Pontian". His tireless efforts to maintain this tradition alive form the direction and the backbone of the Canberra Pontian Club.

With so many profound historical and personal points of reference, the Canberra Pontian Club promises to be an agent and a catalyst of cohesion and reflection for those who can appreciate the necessity that becomes history in the years ahead, with social, cultural and political expression of these concerns as its central manifesto.

For more information contact the President of the Canberra Pontian Club John Efkarpidis at [president@canberrapontianclub.org.au](mailto:president@canberrapontianclub.org.au)..

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