

16 April 2012

Dear Mr Novachkov,

I hope that this statement, revised according to your latest proposal, will be acceptable:

*Statement by Professor John Melville-Jones*

I regret that some remarks made at the conclusion of an after-dinner speech given by me on October 1, 2010, at the invitation of the Australian Macedonian Advisory Council, at 'Moonlight Receptions' in North Fitzroy, Melbourne, when I was asked to explain why I had allowed my name to be added to those of the other signatories of the 'Obama Letter', caused distress to members of the Macedonian Community of Western Australia.

My statement that members of this community were 'not well educated' was inappropriate and might reasonably be considered offensive, because I had not adequately considered how these words might be interpreted. In the context of the after-dinner speech, I intended to refer only to the implications of the proposed erection of a statue of Alexander the Great in Skopje.

Because of the offence that my remarks have caused, I have asked the Australian Macedonian Advisory Council to remove the closing paragraph of my after-dinner speech from its web site, together with a heading which quotes some words from this paragraph, and an illustration. This has been done.

I wish to stress that my remarks were not intended to suggest that members of the Macedonian Community of Western Australia in Perth are not well educated, and agree that they have made positive contributions, both individually and as a community, to the economic, social and cultural development of Australia as an effective multicultural society, in which tolerance and mutual respect are practised.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Yours sincerely, JRMelvilleJones'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John R. Melville-Jones

Mr Sam Novachkov

President, Macedonian Community of WA

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