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C.F.A.N.Z.

CRETAN FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

ΚΟΥΡΗΤΕΣ

ΚΡΗΤΙΚΗ ΟΜΟΣΠΟΝΔΙΑ
ΑΥΣΤΡΑΛΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΝΕΑ ΖΗΛΑΝΔΙΑΣ

ΟΔΟΙΠΟΡΙΚΟ ΠΑΡΑΔΟΣΗΣ

Κρήτες Ομογενείς

Αφιέρωμα στην **Αυστραλία**

30/10 – 18/11

PERTH
HOBART
MELBOURNE
CANBERRA
SYDNEY
BRISBANE

7 ΣΥΛΛΟΓΟΙ

6 ΠΟΛΕΙΣ

20 ΗΜΕΡΕΣ



Artwork Dimitris Matakos

ΣΕΜΙΝΑΡΙΑ
- ΚΡΗΤΙΚΩΝ ΧΟΡΩΝ
- ΑΝΤΡΙΚΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΕΙΩΝ ΦΟΡΕΣΙΩΝ

ΚΑΘΟΔΗΓΗΣΗ ΧΟΡΟΔΙΔΑΣΚΑΛΩΝ

ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ ΣΥΛΛΟΓΩΝ

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ΣΤΟΥΣ ΚΡΗΤΕΣ ΟΜΟΓΕΝΕΙΣ

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGES



Dear Fellow Cretans and Friends of Crete,

Welcome to this next edition of our Cretan Times magazine.

A big welcome home, to all those who managed to travel to Crete/Greece for the European summer. Also, a big thank you to all those who stayed behind and held down the fort and carried on the hard work required to keep our Member Organisations active and thriving.

There are several events and happenings to highlight since our last edition. Starting with our Federation's participation at this year's Darwin Glenti. For the first time ever, our Federation sent a combined dancing group to perform at one of Australia's premier Greek Festivals. 13 dancers from Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne came together and performed brilliantly over the two days. Thank you once again, to the Greek Orthodox Community of Northern Australia, for the invitation to attend.

The 2026 Cretan Youth Trip to Athens & Crete took place in July and saw 14 youth from 4 cities and 5 organisations visit our homeland. Our youth enjoyed many unique experiences not normally available to others. See the inside story for more details and photos.

Our Federation's first ever Taverna Night in Hania was a great success with 100 people attending from all over Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Crete. The evening was filled with great music, great food and energetic dancing by all the youth present. A very memorable evening that I hope will be repeated in the future. This was preceded by our morning tea earlier in the day, where nearly two dozen Australians and New Zealanders gathered to greet and welcome each other to Hania.

The 7th World Council of Cretans Convention took place in Hania from the 23-26th of July. Our Federation took part through member delegation participation as well as the participation of our Youth Group. It was very pleasing to see our Youth interact and enjoy their time with the Cretan Youth from Europe and the USA.

We are preparing to host a tour of Australia from the "Kourites" Cultural Heritage Centre in Oct/Nov this year. The Kourites will visit Perth, Hobart, Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney & Brisbane on a month-long teaching/speaking tour that will help our Member Organisations, their dance groups and dance teachers. This will be a once in a lifetime opportunity to see and hear our Cretan Traditions explained in detail by the premier Cretan Dance Centre. The Kourites will also showcase our Member Organisations and their histories in their world-wide podcasts whilst they are here. Please contact your local Association for more details and dates.

On behalf of our Federation, I'd like to wish our brothers and sisters from the Cretan Brotherhood of Melbourne and Victoria a very happy 70th Anniversary. This is the oldest Cretan Association in Australia and New Zealand. A remarkable milestone that needs to be acknowledged. Congratulations to all past and present members and best wishes for the preparations leading to the celebrations this December.

Lastly, I invite all our members and friends to gather in Canberra in early January for the 45th Annual Cretan Federation Convention. Please see the information in the promotional flyers contained in this Cretan Times issue, as well as our social media platforms.

Emmanuel Mountakis
National President



As we approach the Arkadi commemorations this November, we are reminded of our responsibility as the next generation to honour the courage and sacrifice that have shaped our Cretan identity.

This year, our National Youth Art Competition will give young Cretans across Australia the opportunity to reflect on the legacy of Arkadi and express what this important chapter of our history means to them.

We are also proud to continue creating opportunities for our youth to actively engage with our culture through upcoming Cretan music seminars.

By bringing young people together through our history, music and traditions, we are not simply preserving our heritage, but ensuring it remains strong, relevant and proudly carried forward by the next generation.

Ari Paraskakis

National Youth President

Youth ART COMPETITION

160 YEARS OF ΑΡΚΑΔΙ

A LASTING SYMBOL IN CRETAN HISTORY

Join in commemorating 160 years since the events at Arkadi

PRIZES

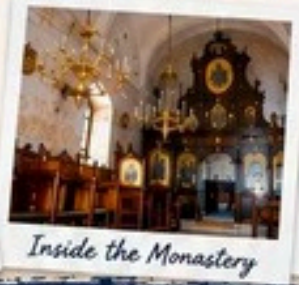
1st	2nd	3rd
$300	$200	$100

OPEN TO AGES UP TO 25

FORMS OF ART ACCEPTED:

Painting | Drawing | Mixed Media | Collage | Poetry | and more!


The Gun Room


Inside the Monastery


Arkadi

CONTACT YOUR CLUB PRESIDENT OR YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE FOR SUBMISSIONS AND ON HOW TO SUBMIT.

SUBMISSIONS DUE 30 NOVEMBER

CRETAN YOUTH FEDERATION ART COMPETITION 2026

To commemorate 160 years since the historic events at Arkadi, young people from across our Cretan community are invited to take part in the 160 Years of Arkadi Youth Art Competition.

Open to young people aged up to 25 years of age, the competition encourages participants to explore the history, meaning and enduring legacy of Arkadi through their own creativity. Entries can take many forms, including painting, drawing, mixed media, collage and poetry.

There are also prizes on offer, with:

- $300 for 1st place
- $200 for 2nd place
- $100 for 3rd place

We encourage our youth to learn about Arkadi, reflect on its importance to Cretan history and culture, and bring that story to life through their own artistic interpretation.

Submissions close 30 November. To enter, please contact your local club President or Youth Representative for details on how to submit your artwork.

We look forward to seeing the creativity of our young people and sharing their interpretations of one of the most significant chapters in Cretan history.

2026 CFANZ YOUTH TRIP: A JOURNEY OF HERITAGE, HISTORY AND CONNECTION

Athens & Crete | 7–26 July 2026

For 20 unforgettable days, young Cretans from across Australia and New Zealand embarked on a journey that would take them far beyond the places they visited. The Cretan Federation of Australia & New Zealand (CFANZ) Youth Trip 2026 brought together a new generation of Cretan youth to discover their heritage, deepen their understanding of Greece and Crete, honour the sacrifices of those who came before them and forge friendships that will endure long after their return home.

From the military bases and ancient monuments of Athens to the monasteries, villages, historic battlefields and beaches of Crete, the CFANZ Youth Trip from 7–26 July 2026 offered experiences rarely available to ordinary visitors. It was a journey of history and culture, faith and remembrance, music and dance — but, above all, of connection.

Athens: The Journey Begins

The adventure officially began on Tuesday 7 July, as we came together in Athens before settling into the Hellenic Defence Forces Beachside Resort at Agios Andreas, which would be our base for the week.

After a welcome luncheon and introduction to the facilities, there was little time to rest. We travelled to Megara for one of our trip's first experience — railbiking along Greece's coast on the historic inactive railway line. Travelling along the coast together provided a memorable and light-hearted beginning to a jam-packed program.

The following morning brought one of our first major highlights of the tour: a visit to Tanagra Airfield and the 114 Fighter Wing. The Youth group were given a rare opportunity to learn firsthand about the role, capabilities and responsibilities of the Hellenic Air Force, while also being able to get up-close with the Rafaele and Mirage 2000 fighter jets, before joining the base commanders for lunch at the Airfield Officers' Club.

That evening our focus shifted from defence to culture. We were warmly welcomed by the Kourites, whose members generously shared their dedication to preserving Cretan heritage. While at the Kourites Cultural Centre, we learnt about the history and significance of different Cretan dances, as well as an explanation of traditional costumes found throughout the island and toured the museum.

An early start on 9 July was rewarded with an entirely different view of Greece, as we sailed the Aegean Sea to Hydra, Poros and Aegina. Wandering through the picturesque streets and laneways, enjoying ice cream under the Greek summer sun and swimming in crystal-clear waters offered us an opportunity to relax and enjoy one another's company.

The following days in Athens provided us with extraordinary access to Greece's military and maritime institutions.

At Salamina Naval Base, we were welcomed aboard the HS Spetsai and HS Pipinos, experiencing the war ship and submarine firsthand and gaining an insight into the operations, service and dedication of the Hellenic Navy. The visit was followed by lunch at the Athens Armed Forces Officers' Club.



That evening at Agios Andreas, we experienced a traditional glendi at the Agios Andreas, with live musicians and a dance group showcasing the traditions and dances of Epirus — another opportunity to experience the diversity of Greek culture.

On Saturday 11 July, we visited the Hellenic Maritime Heritage Park at Flisvos, where we stepped aboard the legendary Battleship Georgios Averof and submarine Proteus, connecting with important chapters of modern Greek naval history. Our day of exploring the military history of Greece continued with our visit to the Athens War Museum.

Sunday 12 July brought together two very different eras of Greek history. In Syntagma Square, we witnessed the precision, discipline and pride of the Evzones during the official Sunday parade and ceremonial Changing of the Guard. From there, we stepped back thousands of years, walking among the timeless monuments of the Acropolis and Parthenon and exploring the treasures of the Acropolis Museum.

The experience with the Presidential Guard continued the following morning with special access to the Evzones' barracks. Through a dedicated presentation, we learnt about the history of this elite unit and the symbolism and significance of their different uniforms.

The Youth group then travelled to the Headquarters of the Hellenic National Defense General Staff, where the Athens component of the program drew to a fitting conclusion. A formal presentation was followed by a farewell luncheon attended by senior representatives of the Hellenic Defence Forces and CLIMS. The Chief of Staff presented us with a commemorative gift on behalf of the Hellenic Defence Forces, while the group was also honoured by a visit from the Deputy Chief of the Hellenic National Defence General Staff.

Before leaving Athens, we were afforded another significant opportunity — an official visit to the Australian Embassy in Greece, where they were warmly received by Australia's Ambassador to Greece, Her Excellency Alison Duncan.

Ambassador Duncan generously spent time

speaking with us about the Embassy's work and the relationship between Australia and Greece. The Youth Trip Participants had the opportunity to ask questions and gain firsthand insight into diplomacy, international relations and the work undertaken to strengthen the longstanding ties between the two countries.

The visit carried particular meaning for us as a group of young Australians of Greek and Cretan heritage and was a fitting conclusion to the formal part of our extraordinary week in Athens.



Crete: Coming Home to Their Heritage

On 14 July, the journey entered its next chapter as we flew from Athens to Heraklion and travelled south to the Hellenic Air Force facilities at Tympaki.

Our first evening on the island delivered a true Cretan welcome. The Lagouvardos family opened their arms and welcomed us with remarkable warmth and hospitality, hosting us for dinner in Kalamaki, setting the tone for our days ahead in Crete with food, friendship and parea.

The following day took us thousands of years into Crete's past. At Knossos, the remains of the Minoan civilisation came alive before we continued to the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, where many of the extraordinary artefacts discovered across the island are preserved.

While in Heraklion we also had the honour of meeting the Archbishop of Crete, His Eminence Evgenios. The Youth were privileged to receive His Eminence's blessing, hear his words of wisdom and be treated to his generous hospitality.

On 16 July, we travelled to the historic Preveli Monastery. Its spiritual significance and extraordinary wartime history provided us with a deeper appreciation of the role Preveli Monastery played not only for the allied forces during the Battle of Crete, but also during the Greek Revolution for Independence.

At the nearby Preveli Memorial, we paused to honour the courage, sacrifice and resilience of the Cretan people and Allied servicemen during the Second World War. That evening brought a very different but equally memorable experience. Renowned Cretan musician Manolis Kontaros opened his home to us for an evening filled with Cretan music, dancing, laughter, hospitality and parea. Having welcomed Kontaros and his band to Australia earlier in the year for the Battle of Crete commemorations, the evening in Crete was a special opportunity to reconnect and continue a friendship spanning continents.

The following day took us from the ancient ruins of Phaistos to the famous seaside village of Matala, combining another exploration of Crete's ancient civilisation with some well-earned time relaxing on the beach.

Our final evening at Tympaki was celebrated in true Cretan style. A traditional antikristo meal prepared by the Commandor of the base was followed by a farewell panigyri, bringing together music, dancing and the hospitality that had characterised our stay at Tymbaki.

As we made our way towards Rethymno on 18 July, a stop in Spili became another special encounter. Over coffee and loukoumades, we met with

His Eminence Metropolitan Ioakeim Karandinos of Sfakia, who warmly welcomed us before we explored the famous Lion Heads and fresh spring water of Spili.

Sunday morning began at one of Crete's most sacred historical sites, Arkadi Monastery. The Youth Group attended the Divine Liturgy before we received a guided tour of the monastery and learnt about its extraordinary history and enduring symbolism of faith, courage, and resistance.

The Cretan Federation of Australia and New Zealand together with the Participants of the Youth Trip extend our sincere gratitude to His Eminence Metropolitan Prodromos of Rethymno and Avlopotamos and Archimandrite Theologos for their warm welcome, generous hospitality and for sharing the spiritual and historical significance of this sacred place with the group, as well as hosting the Youth Group at the Theomitor Accommodation facilities.

The next morning, our journey through Crete continued, and we travelled west to Chania, for the final and particularly memorable last stop of our trip.

Our first stop in Chania was the 5th Airmobile Brigade, where an informative presentation gave us valuable insight into the Brigade's history, role and capabilities, with the opportunity to engage directly with personnel and ask questions.



From there, our focus turned to remembrance of those who fought in the Battle of Crete. We visited the Commonwealth War Cemetery at Souda Bay, which gave us the opportunity to walk quietly among the graves of servicemen who gave their lives during the Battle of Crete. As young Australians and New Zealanders of Greek and Cretan heritage, standing at the resting place of men who had travelled from their own countries to defend the island carried profound significance. We then visited the 42nd Street Memorial at Tsikalaria, commemorating the Australian and New Zealand soldiers who took part in the fierce bayonet counterattack during the Battle of Crete.

Our first evening in Chania was one that we had been eagerly waiting for – our first performance in Crete.



















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2026


























Zorbas Beach











The CFANZ proudly hosted their first Taverna Night in Chania, bringing together Cretans from Australia and New Zealand in celebration of our shared heritage. At the Taverna night the Youth Group dressed in their Traditional Costumes performed for everyone, showcasing their passion through the dances they had worked tirelessly to rehearse throughout the tour. CFANZ extends its sincere thanks to the talented musicians who helped make the evening possible: Νίκος Χριστουλάκης, Παναγιώτης Φουντεδάκης, Θωμάς Φραγκιαδάκης, Μάριος Μπουρδαντωνάκης and Αλέξανδρος Μουντάκης.

The following morning was dedicated to one of modern Greece's most influential figures, Eleftherios Venizelos. We visited the Venizelos Tombs, where we were able to pay our respects before visiting the statue honouring national hero Spyros Kagiales. We then toured the Eleftherios Venizelos Museum, learning more about the life, political career and legacy of the great Cretan statesman. The CFANZ sincerely thanks the Eleftherios Venizelos Foundation for its warm hospitality and the informative guided experience provided to the group.

The evening of 21 July was one of the defining moments of the Chania leg of the Youth Trip.

The opening events of the 7th World Convention of Cretans, organised by the World Council of Cretans, brought together Cretans from around the world in Chania. Representing Australia and New Zealand, we proudly joined Cretan groups from Crete, North America and Europe for the Flag raising ceremony at the Naval Museum. Our evening continued by participating in the Traditional Strata through Chania's Venetian Harbour. Dressed in our traditional costume and carrying the pride of generations of Cretans who built new lives on the other side of the world, we walked through one of Crete's most recognisable settings.

Then came an experience few could ever forget.

Against the breathtaking backdrop of Chania's Venetian Harbour, the CFANZ Youth Group danced alongside Cretan Youth from around the world and then performed on their own before a sea of spectators to the live music of Manolis Kontaros, Stelios Papadakis, Michalis Georvasakis, Kyriakos Kontekas and Kostas Frantzeskakis.

The harbour came alive as the crowd cheered and clapped along to the mesmerizing performance of the group. As young Greek- Australians who had travelled thousands of kilometres from Australia performing traditional Cretan dances on the island of their ancestors, surrounded by Cretans from across the world, it was more than a performance. It was a powerful expression of identity, belonging and continuity — and a memory we will cherish forever.

At the Maritime Museum of Crete, we learnt more about the island's naval history and its Battle of Crete exhibition. CFANZ extends its sincere thanks to Manoli Petrakis and the Museum's team for their warm welcome and engaging guided tour.

The World Council of Cretans Youth Beach Party at Neromylos offered us an opportunity to take a break from the formalities of the previous days of the Youth Trip tour, to meet and form friendships with Cretan youth from North America and Europe. With swimming, live Cretan music and plenty of parea, it demonstrated one of the most important purposes of gatherings such as the World Convention: connecting the next generation of the Cretan diaspora with one another.

The days that followed immersed us as participants in the **7th World Convention of Cretans** and the global Cretan community, where we continued to



proudly represent CFANZ at Convention dinner events alongside dance groups from America, Germany, Greece and elsewhere, celebrating a heritage that has travelled across oceans while remaining deeply connected to Crete.

There was also time to simply enjoy the Cretan summer and its unique landscape and of course beaches. Visits to Seitan Limania, Stavros and Falassarna gave us the chance to swim in crystal-clear waters, relax under the Grecian sun and enjoy the friendships that had grown stronger with every passing day. The morning of 24 July began with an extraordinary opportunity at one of Chania's most recognisable landmarks. Through the generosity of Manoli Petrakis and his team from the Maritime Museum of Crete, the iconic Venetian Lighthouse of Chania was specially opened for us. Wearing our traditional Cretan costumes, we were able to capture priceless photographs and experience the lighthouse in a way rarely available to visitors. The CFANZ and the Youth trip participants remain deeply grateful for the generosity that made this unique experience possible.

Later that morning, we travelled to Maleme Airfield, another significant site of the Battle of Crete. Exploring the wartime bunkers and seeing artifacts up close brought the events of May 1941 into sharper focus, reinforcing the human stories behind the history the Youth had spent much of the trip discovering.

Later that day, our focus returned to culture at the Orthodox Academy of Crete in Kolymbari, where we participated in a dance workshop with Sifis Viglakis and the Viglatores dance group, together with other Cretan Youth as part of the World Council Convention. Learning from someone whose passion for Cretan dance and tradition is so deeply felt was an inspiring experience.

Sifis' contribution, however, extended far beyond a single workshop. His continuing friendship and support of the CFANZ provided several of our Youth with the special honour of wearing his beautiful traditional Cretan costumes during their time on the island. In doing so, they were able to connect with their heritage not simply as spectators, but as active

participants in the preservation of Cretan tradition.

After nearly three weeks of early mornings, performances, official visits and travel, our last day of the trip began with one final early morning start, to hike the famous Samaria Gorge. That evening, the group had one last event together, where we attended the final dinner of the World Council of Cretans Convention at the Botanical Gardens of Crete, bringing the official program of the 2026 CFANZ Youth Trip to its conclusion.



More Than a Youth Trip

Twenty days earlier, we arrived in Athens for the beginning of an ambitious journey.
We return home, having stood aboard Hellenic naval vessels, entered military bases, met defence leaders and diplomats, walked through ancient Minoan sites, prayed inside historic monasteries and stood silently among the graves of those who sacrificed their lives during the Battle of Crete.

We danced through Chania's Venetian Harbour, performed before crowds in the land of our ancestors, wore traditional Cretan costumes, learnt from respected custodians of Cretan culture, walked the Samaria Gorge, swum in the waters of Crete and shared countless meals, laughs, conversations and moments of parea.
Most importantly, the participants of the Youth Trip experienced our heritage rather than simply hearing about it.

For diaspora communities, preserving culture requires more than remembering the past. It requires giving the next generation opportunities to form their own relationship with that heritage — to understand where their families came from, to build friendships with others who share that history, and to discover what being Cretan means to them.

The 2026 CFANZ Youth Trip sought to do exactly that.

The Youth Trip may have officially ended, and the 7th World Convention of Cretans may have come to a close, but the connections made, friendships formed and memories created will last a lifetime.

On behalf of the Cretan Federation of Australia & New Zealand and the participants of the 2026 CFANZ Youth Trip, we extend our sincere gratitude to the Hellenic National Defence General Staff, CLIMS, the World Council of Cretans, our hosts throughout Greece and Crete, the clergy, military personnel, cultural organisations, musicians, guides, families and individuals who opened their doors and welcomed our Youth so generously.

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to all sponsors, supporters and everyone who contributed to making the 2026 CFANZ Youth Trip possible. Your generosity provided a new generation of young Cretans from Australia with an opportunity to walk in the footsteps of their ancestors and experience their heritage firsthand. They left Australia and New Zealand as representatives of the Cretan diaspora and returned home sharing memories with friendships for life and carrying a little more of Crete with them.

Sophia Komarkowski
2026 CFANZ Youth Trip Tour Leader
and CFANZ Secretary.

45th
CRETAN FEDERATION
CONVENTION
CANBERRA
5-10 JANUARY 2027



C.F.A.N.Z.
CRETAN FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

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2026 CFANZ YOUTH TRIP
Voices of the tour

Antonia Komarkowski (Sydney, Aus)

There are some experiences that you enjoy in the moment and others that stay with you long after they are over. The 2026 CFANZ Youth Trip was one of those experiences that I know will stay with me for the rest of my life.

Over three weeks, we experienced Athens and Crete in a way I never would have been able to on my own. It wasn't just about visiting different places or seeing the sights. We were given the opportunity to learn more about our history, experience our traditions firsthand and connect with our Cretan heritage in a completely different way.

We were incredibly fortunate to be given access to places and experiences that most visitors to Greece would never have. From visiting Tanagra Airfield and Salamina Naval Base, stepping aboard Hellenic Navy vessels and learning more about Greece's military, to meeting representatives of the Hellenic Armed Forces, the Church and the Australian Embassy, there were so many moments when I found myself thinking, 'When would I ever get the chance to do this again?'

But among the busy days and incredible opportunities, some of the moments that left the greatest impression were the quietest. Standing at Souda Bay, 42nd Street and Maleme made the history of the Battle of Crete feel so much more real. These were places I had heard about through stories, commemorations and photographs, but actually being there was completely different. We were standing on the same ground where Australians, New Zealanders and Cretans fought alongside one another more than 80 years ago. As a young Australian of Cretan heritage, it was incredibly powerful to see just how closely those two parts of my identity are connected.

The trip also made me think more about what it means for our generation to keep our culture alive. Being proud to be Cretan is one thing, but our culture only continues if we actively participate in it - by learning the dances, speaking the language, understanding our history and passing those traditions on. Our dance workshop with Sifis Viglakis and the Viglatores was a highlight, filled with plenty of dancing, laughter and fun while learning from people who share such a genuine passion for Cretan culture.

I also want to give a very special thank you to our Tour Leader, Sophia Komarkowski, and to everyone across Australia and Greece who helped made this trip possible. To all those who welcomed us, hosted us and opened doors for our group, I am incredibly grateful for the time and effort you put into giving us an experience we will never forget.

I returned to Australia with much more than photos and memories. I came back with friendships that now stretch across the world, a greater appreciation for the generations who came before us and most importantly, a stronger connection to Crete.

To any young Cretan in Australia or New Zealand who gets the opportunity to take part in a future CFANZ Youth Trip - do it. Take every opportunity, embrace every experience and make the most of every moment. You may leave Australia knowing where your family comes from, but you will return understanding what it means to carry that connection with you.

Crete may be thousands of kilometres from Australia, but after an experience like this, it somehow feels closer than ever.

2026 CFANZ YOUTH TRIP
Voices of the tour

Angelique Belivanis (Sydney, Aus)

This trip was an extra special one for me, especially getting the opportunity to share Cretan culture and Hellenism with a new group of youth.

The activities we participated in and the experiences we were given the opportunity to witness in Athens, particularly alongside the Defence Forces, Air Force and Navy, were truly spectacular. Many of these experiences are not something the general public would normally have access to, which is why I strongly encourage more young people to take part in trips like these. They provide such a unique opportunity to learn, experience and connect with our culture in ways that you simply cannot get anywhere else.

The trip definitely came with plenty of eye-openers and new experiences. One of the highlights for me was participating in the traditional Strata in Chania alongside associations from Crete and Cretan communities from around the world. Being surrounded by people who share the same passion and connection to our heritage was something really special. Another highlight was meeting so many young people from America, Canada and different parts of Europe. I've made so many new connections and friendships throughout this trip, and it has genuinely inspired me to travel to these countries in the future to attend their own dinner dances, conventions and events.

More than anything, this trip reminded me of just how far Cretan culture and Hellenism reaches. It's not only about preserving where we come from, but creating connections with the next generation and with young people around the world who share the same love for our heritage. I'm incredibly grateful for the experiences, friendships and memories I'm taking home with me, and I'm excited to see where these new connections take me next.

2026 CFANZ IN CRETE

During July and August this year, the Cretan Federation of Australia and New Zealand (CFANZ), organised and/or participated in many events and activities before, during and after the 7th World Council of Cretans Convention. Many Cretans from around Australia and New Zealand travel to Crete every year for holidays and/or business. There is always someone to bump into whilst over there and whilst many of us do see others, many of us miss each other entirely!

Knowing the 2026 WCC Convention in Hania might draw some extra interest, as well as the presence of our Federation Youth Group, our Federation decided firstly, to create a social media chat group, in order for people to stay in touch with each other and for event/function information to be shared. Secondly, we organised some "gatherings", so visitors could get together and have some fun. We also co-ordinated some activities with our American brothers and sisters through the Pancretan Association of America (PAA).

On the morning of Monday the 20th of July, Cretans from across Australia and New Zealand gathered at the Kipos Historic Cafe in the beautiful Municipal Gardens of Hania, for a MORNING COFFEE and catch up. It was a wonderful warm morning and a great way to "welcome" everyone to Crete no matter how long everyone had been there. The conversations were numerous and there were laughs aplenty. It was a great way to start the week of the Convention and to see friendly faces from back home. Thank you to the PAA who gave us the idea and thank you to the wonderful owner and staff of the cafe, for looking after us and making us feel welcome.

Later that evening, the CFANZ held its first ever organised TAVERNA NIGHT outside of Australia and New Zealand at the Hania Officers Club. 100 people gathered from 6 different states of Australia and New Zealand. Also joining us, were visiting Cretans from Canada and the USA, as well as friends and guests from Crete. The food, venue and hospitality were provided by the Hellenic Army (courtesy of our Federation's relationship with the 5th Cretan Division and the Hellenic National Defence General Staff). Our 5 musicians for the night, led by Nikos Hristoulakis on lyra, played for free and entertained us with their energetic passion and musicianship. Our President presented some gifts to the VIP's who were present, then our Cretan Youth Tour dancers stole the show with their 1st full dress performance in Crete. These 13 dancers from 4 different states were wonderful! Their performance was remarkable given that they had to practice firstly via the internet and then come together only days before when they began their tour in Athens.

On Tuesday evening the 21st of July, our Federation, our Youth Tour Group and many, many members from Australia and New Zealand and Cretans from around the world, gathered at the Firka Fort at the Hania Old Port, to witness the raising of our WCC Federations' Flags. Our Flags flew proudly over the Old Port for the whole week. A great honour bestowed upon us by the City of Hania. This flag-raising ceremony was also the beginning of the TRADITIONAL STRATA that was dedicated to all Cretans Abroad. Nearly 80 young Cretans from around the world and Hania dressed in their traditional costumes, followed by over 200 visitors and supporters, paraded around the port singing and clapping to the music played by Cretan youth from Australia, Europe and the US. This strata made it's way to the stage where our good friend Manolis Kontaros and his troupe were waiting to entertain all that were present. After a warm welcome from the Deputy Mayor of Hania, all the dancers from around the world, entertained all onlookers with their passion and love for our traditional dances. The music was loud and powerful and the dancers responded with wonderful performances. Our Australian group had the opportunity to showcase their individual routine that they had premiered the previous evening. They did us proud!

For the remainder of that week in July, our National Board Members, our Youth Group and other visitors participated in the various activities during the WCC Convention. These included the Youth Beach Party, the various presentations and forums

of the Convention and the lunches and evening functions that were hosted by the Mayors of Hania, Platanias and Kissamos.

In early August, members from Australia and New Zealand attended the 4th Annual "Harilaos" Concert at Georgioupoli dedicated to all Cretans Abroad. This concert was special as young musicians from Europe and America got the chance to play for the crowd.

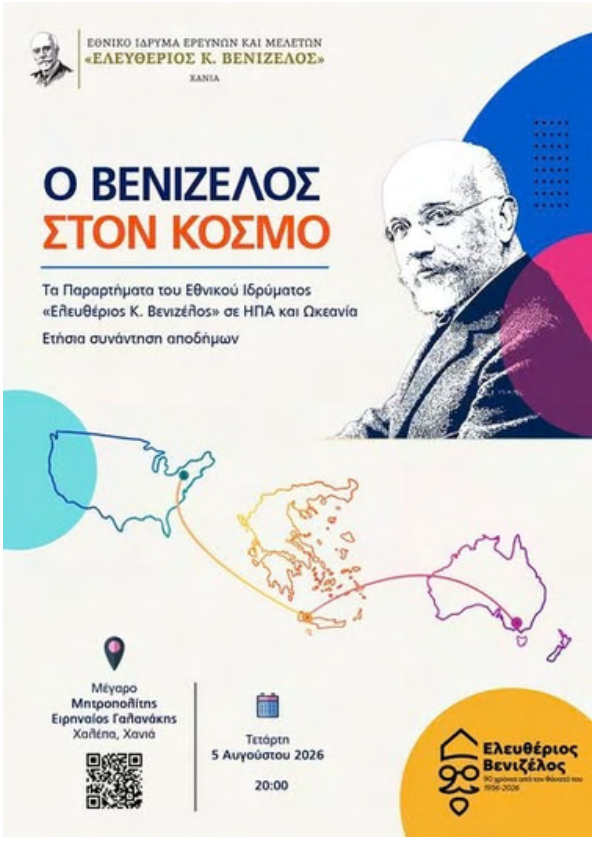
Our Federation was also well represented at the Annual Venizelos Foundation Presentation at its headquarters in Halepa, Hania. The Australian Sub-Branch of the Foundation had the opportunity to present its activities and achievements over the past 12 months as well as highlight its plans for the coming year.

The 2026 CFANZ in Crete initiative and social media group was a great success. As long as our members keep travelling to Crete, our Federation will try and maintain this central focus and information sharing forum. Perhaps one day, if enough people travel during the European summer, our Federation will have its own Convention in Crete?












CRETAN TAVERNA NIGHT
WITH LIVE CRETAN MUSIC
COME EAT, DRINK & DANCE WITH THE AUSTRALIANS AND NEW ZEALANDERS
WHEN: From 7:00 pm MONDAY 20 JULY
WHERE: Hania Guard Officers' Club, entry via Municipal Gardens Hania
HOW: Book through Trybooking Link – https://www.trybooking.com/DNHRW
COST: $36AUD per person (limited seating)
INCLUDES: Includes entertainment and food
MORE INFO AT: president@cretan.com.au or +30 695 737 5921 after 14/07/2026








4η Γιορτή του Απόδημου Κρητικού
ΠΑΡΑΔΟΣΙΑΚΟΣ ΜΟΥΣΙΚΟΣ ΣΥΛΛΟΓΟΣ ΑΠΟΚΟΡΩΝΟΥ
Ο ΧΑΡΙΛΑΟΣ
ΕΤΟΣ ΙΑΡΥΣΕΩΣ 2012
ΠΑΡΚΟ Γ.ΠΑΠΑΔΑΚΗ
ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥΠΟΛΗ
ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ 3 ΑΥΓΟΥΣΤΟΥ 2026
ΩΡΑ: 20:30 | ΕΙΣΟΔΟΣ ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΗ
ΔΙΟΡΓΑΝΩΣΗ
ΠΑΡΑΔΟΣΙΑΚΟΣ ΜΟΥΣΙΚΟΣ ΣΥΛΛΟΓΟΣ ΑΠΟΚΟΡΩΝΟΥ "Ο ΧΑΡΙΛΑΟΣ"
ΜΕ ΤΗΝ ΥΠΟΣΤΗΡΙΞΗ
Παρουσίαση : Αμαλία Καλογριδάκη





«ΟΔΟΣ ΑΠΟΔΗΜΩΝ ΚΡΗΤΩΝ» Ο ΣΥΜΒΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΔΕΣΜΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΔΗΜΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ ΜΕ ΤΟΥΣ ΑΠΟΔΗΜΟΥΣ ΚΡΗΤΕΣ

Μαρία Κασωτάκη
Άγιος Νικόλαος Κρήτης

Με μια ιδιαίτερα συμβολική εκδήλωση, ο Δήμος Αγίου Νικολάου προχώρησε την Τρίτη 28 Ιουλίου 2026, στην επίσημη ονοματοδοσία της «Οδός Αποδήμων Κρητών», τιμώντας τους Απόδημους Κρήτες όπου γης για τη διαχρονική προσφορά τους στην Κρήτη και στον Ελληνισμό.

Η εκδήλωση πραγματοποιήθηκε στον παράλληλο δρόμο της οδού Γουόλτ Ντίσνεϊ, μεταξύ των οδών Γαληνού και Ιπποκράτους, παρουσία εκπροσώπων της Τοπικής Αυτοδιοίκησης, φορέων της Κρητικής Ομογένειας και πλήθους πολιτών. Τον συντονισμό της εκδήλωσης είχε αναλάβει η γράφουσα και την παρουσίαση έκανε ο Νίκος Τζώρτζης.





Χαιρετισμούς απηύθυναν ο Δήμαρχος Αγίου Νικολάου Μανώλης Μενεγάκης, ο Πρόεδρος του Παγκοσμίου Συμβουλίου Κρητών Νίκος Καστρινάκης και ο π. Γεώργιος Τζάβλας, εκ μέρους της Μητρόπολης Πέτρας και Χερρονήσου.

Μετά την αποκάλυψη της πινακίδας με την ονομασία της νέας οδού, ο Πρόεδρος του Παγκοσμίου Συμβουλίου Κρητών Νίκος Καστρινάκης και ο Δήμαρχος Αγίου Νικολάου Μανώλης Μενεγάκης προχώρησαν στη συμβολική φύτευση μιας ελιάς, ως σύμβολο ειρήνης, ενότητας και των διαχρονικών δεσμών των Αποδήμων Κρητών με τη γενέτειρα τους.

Η εκδήλωση πλαισιώθηκε μουσικά από τον Ζαχαρία Επιτροπάκη και τους συνεργάτες του, με Κρητική μουσική και μαντινάδες, ενώ παραδοσιακοί χοροί παρουσιάστηκαν από το χορευτικό συγκρότημα της Σχολής Χορού Γιαννίκου – Ταμιωλάκη.

Ακολούθησε κέρασμα με τοπικά εδέσματα και παραδοσιακή ρακή. Στη συνέχεια, το πρόγραμμα μεταφέρθηκε στη λίμνη του Αγίου Νικολάου, όπου πραγματοποιήθηκαν τιμητικές απονομές.



Ο Δήμαρχος Αγίου Νικολάου Μανώλης Μενεγάκης απένειμε τιμητική πλακέτα στο Παγκόσμιο Συμβούλιο Κρητών, την οποία παρέλαβε ο Πρόεδρος του Νίκος Καστρινάκης, ως αναγνώριση της προσφοράς του στην ενότητα και την προβολή της Κρητικής Ομογένειας.

Η Πρόεδρος του Περιφερειακού Συμβουλίου Κρήτης, Σοφία Μαλανδράκη απένειμε τιμητική πλακέτα στον Ιστορικό Σωκράτη Τσουρδαλάκη, ως ελάχιστη ένδειξη αναγνώρισης και ευγνωμοσύνης για τη συμβολή του στην καταγραφή και διατήρηση της ιστορίας των Αποδήμων Κρητών.

Την πλακέτα παρέλαβε εκ μέρους του ο γιος του, Σήφης Τσουρδαλάκης.

Στη συνέχεια απηύθυνε χαιρετισμό ο Αντιπεριφερειάρχης Εξωστρέφειας Μιχάλης Κλώντζας, ενώ η βραδιά ολοκληρώθηκε με παραδοσιακούς χορούς και τραγούδια, κρατώντας ζωντανή την εικόνα και το μεγαλείο της Κρητικής παράδοσης.

Η ονοματοδοσία της «Οδού Αποδήμων Κρητών» αποτελεί μια σημαντική πράξη τιμής προς τους Κρήτες της διασποράς και μια ακόμη ευκαιρία ενίσχυσης των δεσμών της Κρήτης με την Παγκόσμια Κρητική Ομογένεια, σε συνέχεια και της επιτυχημένης διοργάνωσης του Παγκοσμίου Συνεδρίου Κρητών που πραγματοποιήθηκε στον Δήμο Αγίου Νικολάου το 2023. Η νέα οδός θα αποτελεί ένα διαρκές σημείο αναφοράς και έναν συμβολικό δεσμό ανάμεσα στην Κρήτη και τους ανθρώπους της που ζουν και δημιουργούν σε κάθε γωνιά του κόσμου.















SUMMER IN CRETE

A few of us from Tasmania were lucky enough to be in Hania Crete this summer and were able to attend events organized by the CFANZ.

Our members attended the Morning Tea at Kipos Café, the Taverna night at the Military Officer's Club in Hania, experienced the World Council of Cretans strata and some of our Youth participated in the dance performance in traditional Cretan dress provided by Mr Iosif Viglakis.

They were very proud and honored to be included and to be wearing the beautiful costumes provided.

Our Youth also attended a Cretan dance workshop held by the Viglatores as part of the 7th World Convention of Cretans, a great opportunity to learn and make new friends.

Thank you to President Emmanuel Mountakis for all his hard work organizing the events for the Aussies, it was wonderful catching up with many of our friends who were there from the other Cretan Associations.













DARWIN GleNTi 2026

On the June King's Birthday long-weekend this year (June 6th & 7th), 13 youth dancers from the Cretan Federation's Member Organisations from Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne, came together to perform at the Darwin "GleNTi" Greek Festival. This two-day event is one of the premier annual Greek festivals in Australia. Tens of thousands of people from all over Australia and overseas, come together to experience Greek Culture and Hospitality in the warm "winter" weather of the Northern Territory.

After weeks of co-ordination and practices over the internet, all 13 dancers (plus Mascot Odysseus), arrived in Darwin with enthusiasm and a willingness to bond and to represent the unique Cretan culture. Their energy and cooperation were a joy to experience.

This version of the National Federation Dance Group was invited to Darwin by the Greek Orthodox Community of Northern Australia (GOCNA), as a direct result of the positive impact our Cretan Convention had on Darwin's Greek Community in January 2025. Thank you to GOCNA President Michael Koulianos, for inviting the Federation to participate and for the warm welcome and hospitality by him and all the Committee and volunteers.

The President of the Cretan Association of the Northern Territory, Mr George Mamounis, the Dance Co-ordinator Sophia Mamounis and all of the Association's members and dancers, were by our Federation's Dance Group side all day and shared the stage in two unforgettable combined performances that raised the roof and blew everyone away. It was a tremendous effort and a great example of how great things can be achieved through co-operation and love for our Cretan Culture. This is what the Cretan Federation is all about.

On the Sunday night, the combined performance by the Cretan Association of the Northern Territory and the Cretan Federation of Australia and New Zealand closed the formal part of the two-day GleNTi Festival. It was a great honour given to the Cretans by the organisers of the festival.

After another great performance by the Canberra Hellenic Dancers and a passionate and emotional display by the OPA School of Hellenic Dancers, who dedicated their performance to the memory of the late John Halikos, the Cretans came out and gave the crowd a powerful display of Cretan passion and pride.

Thanks to the wonderful collaboration between the two groups' dancers and the wonderful choreography they come up with, over 40 dancers in Cretan costume filled the dance floor and provided the crowd with a performance that won't be forgotten.

This performance capped off a memorable and historic Cretan presence at the two-day Darwin GleNTi.

Not only did the two groups perform on both evenings, the Australian Branch of the Venizelos Foundation, with Chairman Tony Tsourdalakis, operated a stall promoting the great leader's accomplishments and arranged a memorial service to mark the 90th Anniversary of his passing.

Ana Tsourdalakis also performed wonderfully with her band over the two days and evenings as well.

The National Dance Group members volunteered and helped out at the Greek Community's food stalls and took surveys of visitors. Then as the last evening drew to a close, Sydney musicians Dylan Giannoulis and Alexander Mountakis got up played live Cretan music in an impromptu performance with good friends Paddy Montgomery and Tony Iliou.

Despite the limited numbers and resources of our Cretan brothers and sisters in Darwin, the Cretan presence there is strong and vibrant!

Please enjoy these photos from this wonderful weekend.
















K.O.A.N.Z.
ΚΡΗΤΙΚΗ ΟΜΟΣΠΟΝΔΙΑ
ΑΥΣΤΡΑΛΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΝΕΑ ΖΗΛΑΝΔΙΑΣ


















Darwin
GLENTI
Since 1988
GEORGIA POLITIS
PHOTOGRAPHY
EST 2017




Κ. Ο. Α. Ν. Ζ.
ΚΡΗΤΙΚΗ ΟΜΟΣΠΟΝΔΙΑ
ΔΥΣΤΡΑΛΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΝΕΑ ΖΗΛΑΝΔΙΑΣ



Message from our youth president

Lily Koukouvitakis

Our youth group are looking forward to continuing working towards delivering events for all!
watch this space for exciting news about christmas carols, festival stalls, end of year parties and more!

MORE THAN JUST DANCING: OUR TRIP TO DARWIN GLENTI

Our recent trip to Darwin for the Glenti was an opportunity to perform, meet dancers from around Australia and, more than anything, grow closer as a group. What started as a dance trip quickly became a shared experience that gave all of us a renewed appreciation for the friendships and community that come with Cretan dancing.

We decided to arrive a few days before the Glenti and stay a little longer afterwards, which gave us the chance to experience Darwin together outside of dancing. We explored the markets, went out on a boat to see crocodiles being fed, visited wildlife attractions, went out for dinners and met new friends and their families along the way.

Even the simple everyday things became part of the experience. We would all go to Woolies together, come back to the hotel and cook breakfast and lunch. I love cooking, so naturally I ended up making everyone bacon, egg, cheese and hash brown breakfasts, huge chicken toasties for lunch and whatever else we could put together. Everyone helped out, and those little moments of just cooking, eating and spending time together ended up being some of the best parts of the trip.

The Glenti itself also gave us the opportunity to meet and perform alongside dancers from interstate, including Sydney and Canberra. We practised together in the mornings, shared meals and, despite many of us having never met before, formed friendships incredibly quickly.

For the more experienced dancers in our group, like Evie and Anastasia, the trip was another opportunity to enjoy something they have loved and worked at for years. For newer dancers like Adrian and myself, being surrounded by dancers with years of experience was particularly inspiring.

You start to notice all the little things that separate a good dancer from a great one. The technique, the movement, the confidence and all those small details that might only make a one percent difference individually, but together completely change the way someone dances. It gave us a taste of what is possible if we keep training, and it genuinely ignited a stronger passion to improve and see where we can take our own dancing.

By the time we came home, I think all of us had gained something from the trip. We made new friendships, strengthened the ones we already had, experienced a completely different part of Australia and came home with plenty of photos, videos, stories and memories.

More than anything, the trip reminded me that being part of a dance group is about much more than learning steps and performing. Dancing might be what brings us together in the first place, but trips like Darwin give us the opportunity to actually get to know one another, share experiences and become closer as a group.

We went to Darwin to dance, but I think we all came home with a little more than that.

James Sarris

MORE THAN JUST DANCING: OUR TRIP TO DARWIN GLENTI



COMMEMORATION OF ELEFTHERIOS VENIZELOS' 90TH ANNIVERSARY HELD IN SYDNEY

On Sunday, 15 March, the Oceania Branch of the National Research Foundation "Eleftherios Venizelos" and the Cretan Association of Sydney and New South Wales with the support of the Cretan Federation of Australia & New Zealand, held a solemn memorial service to mark the 90th anniversary of the great statesman and ethnarch, Eleftherios Venizelos. The service took place at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation of the Theotokos and was attended by a distinguished gathering of clergy, dignitaries, and community leaders as well as the Cretan Youth of Sydney dressed in traditional Cretan Costumes.

The memorial service was presided by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, and assisted by His Grace Bishop Athenagoras of Canberra, His Grace Bishop Christophoros of Kerasounta, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Father Stefanos Tinkashvili, and Elder Antipas of Mount Athos.

Among the official representatives present were Mr Athanasios Lambrou, First Counsellor for Public Diplomacy of the Consulate General of Greece in Sydney, representing the Consul General of Greece in Sydney, Mr Georgios Skemperis as well Archons of the Great Church of Christ of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The service brought together a broad cross-section of the Greek-Australian community, underscoring Venizelos' enduring influence and the pride that his legacy continues to inspire among Hellenes worldwide. Representatives from various community organisations were present, including board members and representatives of the Cretan Association of Sydney & NSW, the Cretan Federation of Australia and New Zealand, AHEPA Sydney & NSW, the Athenian Association of NSW, the Cyprus Community of NSW, the Greek Australian Society, and the Greek Returned Services League of NSW.

Their presence reflected the unity and strength of the Greek community in Australia, with Venizelos remaining a central figure in the collective historical identity of Hellenism.



Gift and Tribute

Following the service, attendees moved to St Andrew's Theological College Hall, where a special tribute to Eleftherios Venizelos took place. In a gesture of deep respect, a bust of Venizelos was presented as a gift to His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia.

The commemoration also included a screening of the documentary "For Crete and Freedom – A Journey towards Unification", that showcased the historic union of Greece and Crete, and the influence of Venizelos. As the architect of Cretan union with Greece, Venizelos played an instrumental role in the island's integration into the Greek state, a fact that was highlighted in the documentary and resonated with many attendees who deeply honour this aspect of his legacy.

Quote from National Research Foundation Oceania Branch President Mr Tony Tsourdakakis

"With deep respect for our historical memory and national heritage, the Oceania Branch of the National Research and Studies Foundation "Eleftherios K. Venizelos" continues its work with dedication in preserving, studying, and promoting the political and historical legacy of the great Greek statesman Eleftherios Venizelos was one of the most significant figures in modern Greek history, whose leadership played a decisive role in shaping modern Greece and strengthening the country's democratic institutions and European orientation.

For Hellenism worldwide, and particularly for the Greek diaspora in Oceania, preserving historical memory and highlighting the work and principles of Venizelos is both a duty of honour and a responsibility to future generations. Through initiatives, events, and research activities, the Oceania Branch seeks to enhance knowledge of our history and maintain a living connection between Greeks of the diaspora and the values, ideals, and vision that Eleftherios Venizelos championed. This work also serves as a bridge of memory, education, and national consciousness, uniting Hellenism across borders and generations."



Quote from Cretan Association of Sydney & New South Wales President Mr Terry Saviolakis

"When one thinks of a Cretan revolutionary fighter, the image that often comes to mind is that of a Kapetanios, dressed in traditional costume and armed with a mahera. In 2026, however, we honour a great Greek statesman, Eleftherios Venizelos — truly a revolutionary fighter in his own right — who used diplomacy to secure the union of Crete with Greece and to expand Greek territory following the First World War.

Crete did not gain its freedom during the Greek War of Independence in 1821, but instead continued its struggle through decades of revolts until its eventual union with Greece in 1913 — a cause realised through the leadership of Eleftherios Venizelos.

It was an honour to commemorate the great statesman and Ethnarch, Eleftherios Venizelos, in Sydney on the 90th anniversary of his passing.















CRETAN TAVERNA NIGHT

Good Food. Great Music. Cretan Spirit.

A taste of Crete in Canberra

- Tuesday 5th January 2027
- 7:00pm
- "Kivotos" Taverna
  (inside Canberra Hellenic Club)
  1 Matilda Street, Phillip ACT 2606
- Open to all
- $90 per person
  (includes food and live Cretan music)
- Trybooking link -
  https://www.trybooking.com/DPVRE
- Limited seating!
- Bookings close 30/11/2026
- Contact for more details - 0418 125 081



THE AMAZING RACE

CRETAN FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

WEDNESDAY, 6 JANUARY 2027
RACE BEGINS AT 9:00 AM
LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN, CANBERRA
MEETING POINT: REGATTA POINT (MEET AT 8:30 AM)
SUITABLE FOR AGES 16+
$12 PER PARTICIPANT
REGISTRATION IS ESSENTIAL - PLACES ARE LIMITED!
LUNCH TO FOLLOW AT THE JETTY

HTTPS://WWW.TRYBOOKING.COM/DPVRH
BOOKINGS CLOSE 30/11/2026

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT JAMES 0478-023-035

WEDNESDAY
06 JANUARY 2027

QUESTACON
NATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CENTRE

9 AM START

OPEN TO ALL YOUTH PARTICIPANTS FROM 4+

EXPLORE, DISCOVER & ENJOY A MORNING FILLED WITH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

$15 PER STUDENT
$20.50 PER ADULT (17+)
(INCLUDES ENTRY AND ACTIVITIES)

ARCADIA
AT THE HELLENIC CLUB

LUNCH, GAMES & FUN FOR KIDS

FOLLOWING QUESTACON

$30 PER PERSON

BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL FOR BOTH ACTIVITIES

HTTPS://WWW.TRYBOOKING.COM/DPVRG
BOOKINGS CLOSE 30/11/2026

CRETAN FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT ANGELIQUE 0423-119-245

CRETAN CONVENTION 2027

TWILIGHT/SUNSET LAKE CRUISE

GOOD COMPANY. GREAT VIEWS. CRETAN SPIRIT.

- Wednesday 6th January 2027
- 7:00pm sharp!
- "Love Boats" Canberra
  Jetty 5/8 Trevillian Quay, Kingston ACT 2604
- Open to all
- $90 per person
  (includes canapes food)
- Trybooking link -
  https://www.trybooking.com/DPVRM
- Limited places!
- Booking close 30/11/2026
- Contact for more details - 0418 125 081

Sunsets are better together

Lake views, Cretan vibes.


YOUTH
13 +
EURO SUMMER
GREEK SUMMER PARTY
WEDNESDAY
06 - 01 - 2027
6PM - 11PM
DOORS CLOSE 6:30PM
APOLLO ROOM @ HELLENIC CLUB CANBERRA
$40
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT FROM KRITIKA SYDNEY & DJ DEAN VATOS
VALID IDS REQUIRED UPON ENTRY
HTTPS://WWW.TRYBOOKING.COM/DPVRK
BOOKINGS CLOSE 30/11/2026
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT
JAMES 0478-023-035
ANGELIQUE 0423-119-245


SPORTS DAY
THURSDAY 7TH JANUARY, 2027
8:45 AM
MELROSE SYNTHETIC
41 MARR ST, PEARCE ACT 2607
$10 PER PARTICIPANT
STATE VS STATE
HTTPS://WWW.TRYBOOKING.COM/DPVRN
BOOKINGS CLOSE 30/11/2026
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT ZAC 0432-465-240


CRETAN CONVENTION 2027
CRETAN FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND
1ST DANCE WORKSHOP
LEARN • MOVE • CONNECT
Cretan tradition lives on
Thursday 7th January 2027
3:30 - 5:30pm
Presented by Special Guests from Crete
The Viglatores Traditional Dance Academy
"Olympus Room" - inside Canberra Hellenic Club
1 Matilda Street, Phillip ACT 2606
Open to under 18's and inexperienced dancers
Trybooking link -
https://www.trybooking.com/DPVRP
Bookings close 30/11/2026
Contact for more details - 0418 125 081


BOWLING NIGHT
THURSDAY
07 JANUARY, 2027
7 PM
1 EMU BANK, BELCONNEN ACT 2617, AUSTRALIA
2X GAMES OF BOWLING, FOOD + DRINKS INC
ALL AGES 4+
$35
HTTPS://WWW.TRYBOOKING.COM/DPURR
BOOKINGS CLOSE 30/11/2026
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT ANGELIQUE 0423-119-245

STRICTLY 18+

88 MPH

NEON NIGHTS

DJ DEAN VATOS

WITH SURPRISE ENTERTAINMENT ON THE NIGHT!

THURSDAY 7TH JANUARY 2027

$60 | **7 PM**
DOORS CLOSE 7:30PM

COME DRESSED TO GLOW! BEST DRESSED WINS A PRIZE!
LIGHTS. COLOURS. NEON.

88MPH LEVEL 7/10 HOBART PL, CANBERRA ACT 2601

HTTPS://WWW.TRYBOOKING.COM/DPVRT
BOOKINGS CLOSE 30/11/2026

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT JAMES 0478-023-035 OR ANGELIQUE 0423-119-245

CRETAN CONVENTION 2027

C.F.A.N.Z.
CRETAN FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

"STATE OF ORIGIN" TRIVIA NIGHT

ALL STATES. ALL TERRITORIES.
AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND.



Thursday 7th January 2027

7:00pm

"Apollo Room" - inside Canberra Hellenic Club
1 Matilda Street, Phillip ACT 2606

Open to all

$50 per person
(includes trivia master and food platters)

Trybooking link -
https://www.trybooking.com/DPVRU

Contact for more details - 0418 125 081

CRETAN CONVENTION 2027

C.F.A.N.Z.
CRETAN FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

YOUTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OUR YOUTH • OUR HERITAGE • OUR FUTURE

Building a stronger tomorrow

Friday 8th January 2027

10:00am

"Apollo Room" - inside Canberra Hellenic Club
1 Matilda Street, Phillip ACT 2606

Open to CYFANZ Delegates only

Trybooking link -
https://www.trybooking.com/DPVRX

Bookings close 06/01/2027

Contact for more details - 0432 140 568

CRETAN CONVENTION 2027

C.F.A.N.Z.
CRETAN FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

2ND DANCE WORKSHOP

LEARN • MOVE • CONNECT

Cretan tradition lives on

Friday 8th January 2027

3:30 - 5:30pm

Presented by Special Guests from Crete
The Viglatores Traditional Dance Academy

"Olympus Room" - inside Canberra Hellenic Club
1 Matilda Street, Phillip ACT 2606

Open to over 18's and experienced dancers

Trybooking link -
https://www.trybooking.com/DPVRY

Bookings close 30/11/2026

Contact for more details - 0418 125 081

ΠΑΡΑΔΟΣΙΑΚΟΣ ΣΥΛΛΟΓΟΣ ΒΑΝΙΩΝ
Βιγλάτορες

45th
CRETAN FEDERATION
CONVENTION

WELCOME RECEPTION AT THE EMBASSY OF GREECE

FRIDAY 8 JANUARY 2027 • 7:00PM - 9:00PM



EMBASSY OF GREECE, CANBERRA

9 TURRANA ST, YARRALUMLA ACT

JOIN US AS WE OFFICIALLY WELCOME DELEGATES AND GUESTS TO CANBERRA FOR *THE 45TH CFANZ CONVENTION.*

GUESTS WILL ENJOY AN EVENING OF HOSPITALITY AND FELLOWSHIP WHILE MEETING FELLOW DELEGATES AND FRIENDS FROM ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND IN THE ELEGANT SURROUNDINGS OF THE EMBASSY OF GREECE.

THE CRETAN ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA EXTENDS ITS SINCERE APPRECIATION TO H.E. THE AMBASSADOR MR. STAVROS VENIZELOS AND MRS. LARA TIKAIDI VENIZELOU FOR THEIR GENEROUS HOSPITALITY IN HOSTING THIS SPECIAL OPENING EVENT OF THE 45TH CFANZ CONVENTION.

IMPORTANT BOOKING INFORMATION

- THIS IS A COMPLIMENTARY EVENT, HOWEVER BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL.
- PLACES ARE STRICTLY LIMITED AND TICKETS MUST BE RESERVED THROUGH TRYBOOKING.
- FOR SECURITY PURPOSES, ENTRY TO THE EMBASSY OF GREECE IS STRICTLY LIMITED TO REGISTERED TICKET HOLDERS. ONLY GUESTS WHOSE NAMES APPEAR ON THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION LIST WILL BE ADMITTED.
- IF YOU ARE NO LONGER ABLE TO ATTEND, PLEASE NOTIFY THE EVENT ORGANISERS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SO YOUR PLACE CAN BE OFFERED TO A GUEST ON THE WAITING LIST.
- TICKET SALES CLOSE ON 20 NOVEMBER 2026, UNLESS SOLD OUT PRIOR.

REGISTER

WWW.TRYBOOKING.COM/DOOKA

As Canberra is hosting a major event during the CFANZ Convention weekend, accommodation demand is expected to be high. We recommend that Canberra visitors book their accommodation early to secure best availability and rates.

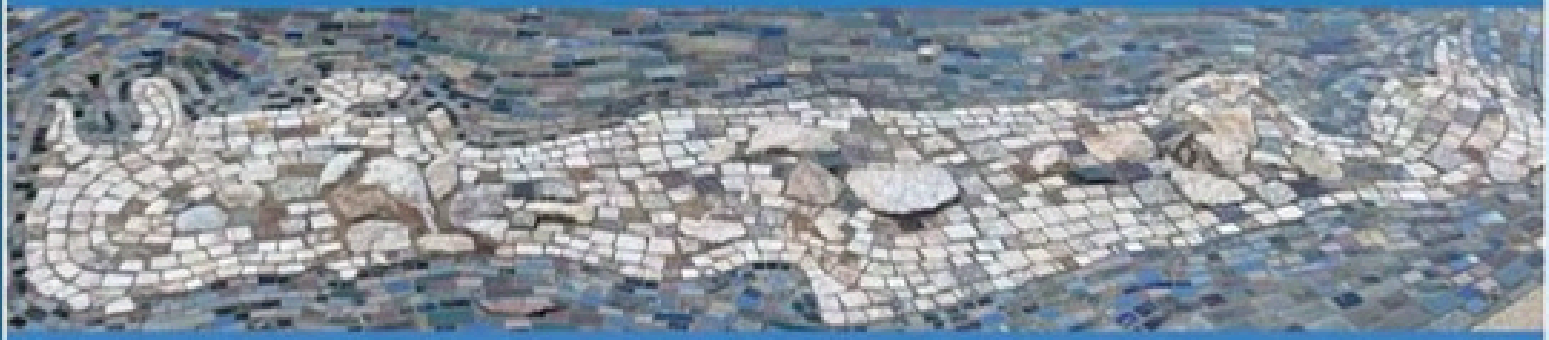
45th

CRETAN FEDERATION

CONVENTION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SATURDAY 9 JANUARY 2027 - 9:30AM SHARP



C.F.A.N.Z.

CRETAN FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

SATURDAY 9 JANUARY 2027 • 9:30AM SHARP

APOLLO ROOM • HELLENIC CLUB OF CANBERRA

1 MATILDA ST, WODEN ACT

A LIGHT LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED FOR AGM DELEGATES

REGISTRATION IS MANDATORY FOR CATERING PURPOSES

REGISTER

WWW.TRYBOOKING.COM/DOPHX

As Canberra is hosting a major event during the CFANZ Convention weekend, accommodation demand is expected to be high. We recommend that Canberra visitors book their accommodation early to secure best availability and rates.

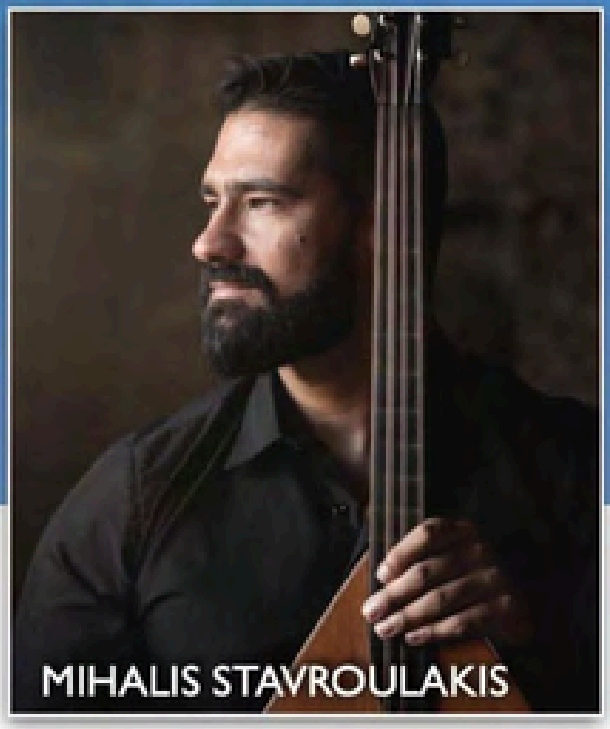
45th
CRETAN FEDERATION
CONVENTION
DINNER DANCE

SATURDAY 9 JANUARY 2027

FEATURING - LIVE CRETAN MUSICIANS

SIFI TSOURDALAKIS - LYRA
MIHALI STAVROULAKIS - LAOUTO


SIFI TSOURDALAKIS


MIHALIS STAVROULAKIS

7:00PM • Hellenic Club of Canberra
1 Matilda St, Woden ACT

$120 ADULTS *
$90 ADULT MEALS DANCING GROUP *
$45 CHILDREN MEAL (UNDER 12) *
ADULT MEAL INCLUDES 3 COURSE MEAL

*A TryBooking booking fee will be added to the ticket price
Ticket sales close on 30 November 2026, unless sold out prior.

C.F.A.N.Z.
CRETAN FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

CRETAN ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA & DISTRICTS INCORPORATED

BUY TICKETS
WWW.TRYBOOKING.COM/DNUXS

As Canberra is hosting a major event during the CFANZ Convention weekend, accommodation demand is expected to be high. We recommend that Canberra visitors book their accommodation early to secure best availability and rates.

5-10 January 2027

CONVENTION PROGRAM

Welcome to the CFANZ Canberra Discovery Program. Arrive before the AGM and Convention weekend to explore Australia's capital city. Enjoy Canberra's most notable attractions, cultural landmarks, and local experiences while connecting and strengthening bonds with other fellow Cretans.

CFANZ CBR DISCOVERY

ARRIVAL	Tuesday 5 Jan
WELCOME ***Cretan Taverna Night (open to everyone)***	Evening Tuesday 5 Jan
CBR ACTIVITIES ***Various Canberra Locations***	Morning, Afternoon Wednesday 6 Jan
Cretans in CBR Evening Event (Adults)	Evening, Wednesday 6 Jan
CBR ACTIVITIES ***Various Canberra Locations***	Afternoon Thursday 7 Jan
State of Origin Trivia Night (Adults)	Evening, Thursday 7 Jan

CFANZ CBR DISCOVERY

CFANZ YOUTH PROGRAM 2027

Prior to their AGM, CFANZ youth are invited to enjoy a dedicated program designed to deliver a fun Canberra experience and events alongside their fellow peers.

CFANZ YOUTH PROGRAM

ARRIVAL OF YOUTH DELEGATES	Tuesday 5 Jan
WELCOME ***Cretan Taverna Night (open to everyone)***	Evening Tuesday 5 Jan
Questacon Experience (Under 16's) Cretans in CBR Amazing Race (Over 16's)	Morning, Wednesday 6 Jan
Youth Sports Day (all youth welcome)	Morning, Thursday 7 Jan
1st Cretan Dance Workshop (Under 18's + beginners)	Afternoon, Thursday 7 Jan
Zone Bowling Night (Under 18's) Neon Nights Party (Over 18's)	Evening, Thursday 7 Jan
CYANZ AGM (Youth Delegates)	Morning, Friday 8 Jan
2nd Cretan Dance Workshop (Over 18 + experienced)	Afternoon, Friday 8 Jan

CFANZ YOUTH PROGRAM

CFANZ CBR DISCOVERY AND YOUTH PROGRAM EVENTS ORGANISED BY CFANZ

5-10 January 2027

CONVENTION PROGRAM

JOIN THE CELEBRATION IN CANBERRA

Whether you attend the full CFANZ Canberra Discovery or Youth programs, or just the Convention Program, know you will be part of an exciting gathering of members, friends and families eager to mingle and strengthen relationships. From the AGM and planned social activities to the spectacular Dinner Dance, the weekend promises something exciting for everyone.

ARRIVAL OF DELEGATES	Friday 8 Jan
WELCOME *hosted by the Embassy of Greece, Yarralumla*	Evening Friday 8 Jan
CRETAN FEDERATION AGM ***Hellenic Club of Canberra***	Morning Saturday 9 Jan
CONVENTION DINNER DANCE ***Hellenic Club of Canberra***	Evening Saturday 9 Jan
CHURCH SERVICE ***Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, Canberra***	Morning Sunday 10 Jan

Details, booking information and tickets for the CFANZ Canberra Discovery Program, the CFANZ Youth Program, and the CFANZ Convention Program including the AGM and Dinner Dance, will be made available shortly.

As Canberra is hosting a major event during the CFANZ Convention weekend, accommodation demand is expected to be high. We recommend that Canberra visitors book their accommodation early to secure best availability and rates.

We look forward to welcoming you to the nation's capital for an exciting program of special events and Cretan hospitality!

WELCOME ON FRIDAY, CFANZ AGM AND DINNER DANCE EVENTS ORGANISED BY
CRETAN ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA & DISTRICTS



HOTEL OPTIONS

We are excited that our convention takes place during Summernats in Canberra – one of the city's most vibrant and popular weekends of the year. With the city buzzing and accommodation in high demand, we recommend booking accommodation **early** to secure your preferred option.

To make things easier, we've curated a selection of hotels in the Woden area and across Canberra's Southside for your convenience.

ABODE PHILLIP ← *WALKING DISTANCE FROM HELLENIC CLUB CANBERRA*

ABODE WODEN ←

ABODE KINGSTON

ADINA SERVICED APARTMENTS KINGSTON

BRASSEY HOTEL

BURBURY HOTEL

EAST HOTEL

FORREST HOTEL

GARDEN CITY MOTEL NARRABUNDAH

HOTEL KURRAJONG

HOTEL REALM

HYATT CANBERRA

MANUKA PARK SERVICED APARTMENTS

MERITON

PUNTHILL NARRABUNDAH

RAMADA DIPLOMAT CANBERRA

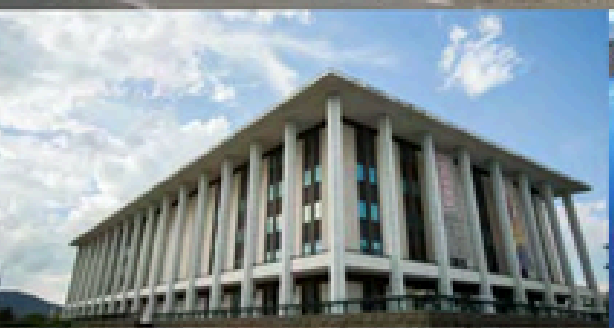
RYDGES CANBERRA

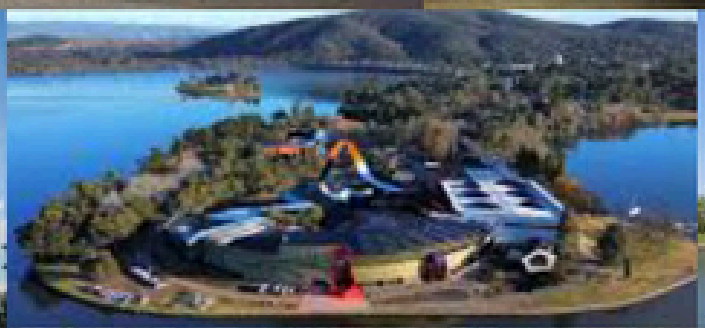
THE STATESMAN HOTEL CURTIN

For more options, including heritage-listed hotels, eco stays, major hotel chains, caravan parks and charming B&Bs, visit visitcanberra.com.au/accommodation











TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

VISIT

- Australian Parliament House
- Australian War Memorial
- Blundells Cottage
- High Court of Australia
- National Arboretum
- National Archives of Australia
- National Capital Exhibition
- National Gallery of Australia
- National Library of Australia
- National Museum of Australia
- Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House
- Questacon (National Science and Technology Centre)
- Reconciliation Place



EXPLORE

memorials and monuments that tell our nation's stories

- Anzac Parade
- Australian Hellenic War Memorial
- Last Post Ceremony 4:30pm AWM



DISCOVER

places of commemoration, remembrance and reflection

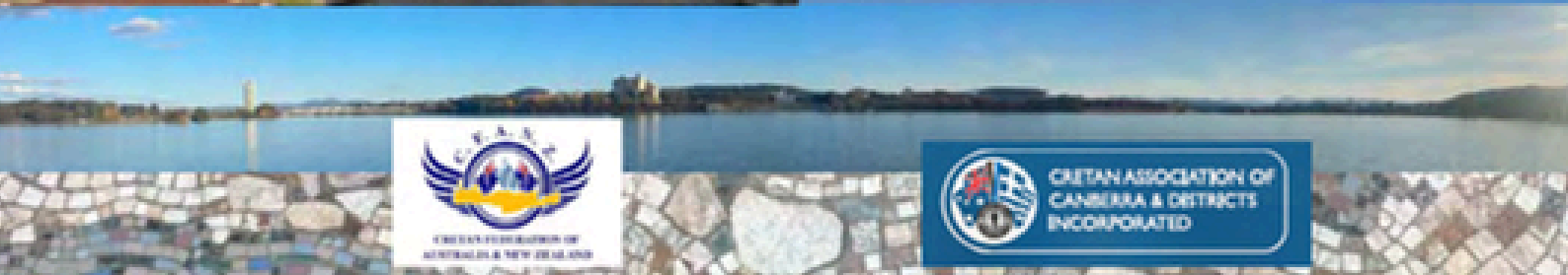
- Australian of the Year Walk
- Citizenship Place
- National Site of Recognition for Thalidomide Survivors and Their Families
- Reconciliation Place
- The Centenary of Women's Suffrage Commemorative Fountain

Choose from a variety of Guided or Self-Guided Walking Tours.

Fancy taking a tour of the Diplomatic Missions of Canberra? Download our Driving Tour here.

https://www.nca.gov.au/attractions/take-tour/diplomatic-missions-self-guided-driving-tour

https://www.nca.gov.au/attractions/national-triangle#



CRETAN ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA & DISTRICTS INCORPORATED

CONTACT INFORMATION

CRETAN FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND (CFANZ)

Please contact CFANZ for any information on the

- CFANZ CBR Discovery Program
- CFANZ Youth Program

✉: president@cretan.com.au

CRETAN ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA & DISTRICTS

Please contact Cretan Association of Canberra for any information on the

- Welcome - Friday 8/1/27
- CFANZ AGM - Saturday 9/1/27
- Convention Dinner Dance - Saturday 9/1/27

✉: info@cretanact.org.au



SHARING THE SPIRIT OF CRETE WITH THE NEXT GENERATION

The Cretan Association of Queensland was recently honoured to accept an invitation from the Greek Ethnic School of St Anna on the Gold Coast to present to its students on the rich history, culture and traditions of Crete. As President of the Association, I was delighted to spend an evening with the school's enthusiastic students, dedicated teachers and supportive families.

What made the evening particularly special was learning that the students had spent much of the semester studying Crete and had already developed a genuine interest in our island's rich history, traditions and unique cultural identity. The presentation provided an opportunity to build on that knowledge.

The session explored many aspects of Cretan life and culture, including our customs, language, music, dance and the enduring values of filoxenia, courage and resilience that continue to define the Cretan people. Students were introduced to significant moments in Cretan history, including the sacrifice of almost 1000 rebels and civilians at Arkadi Monastery in 1866 and the heroic resistance shown during the Battle of Crete in 1941. These events remain powerful symbols of the Cretan spirit and continue to inspire generations of Cretans.



One of the highlights of the evening was the opportunity for students to see and handle authentic Cretan traditional costumes. Elements of traditional Cretan costumes were explained as well as the significance of the various garments and accessories that form part of the island's distinctive garments.



Music also featured prominently during the presentation. The students eagerly examined the Cretan lyra and laouto and learned about their history, construction and role in preserving Cretan traditions and storytelling across countless generations. Many enjoyed the opportunity to hold the lyra themselves and gain a deeper appreciation of an instrument that remains central to Cretan cultural expression.

What stood out most throughout the evening was the curiosity and enthusiasm of the students. Their thoughtful questions about life in Crete, traditional customs, local dialects and historical events demonstrated a genuine desire to connect with their heritage. It was encouraging to see such strong interest from young people and a reminder of the important role that Greek language schools play in preserving our culture and identity within Australia.

For the Cretan Association of Queensland, opportunities such as this are invaluable. They help strengthen the bonds between our community organisations while ensuring that the stories, values and traditions of our ancestors continue to be shared with future generations.

The preservation of our heritage depends not only on remembering our past but also on inspiring our young people to embrace and celebrate their cultural roots.

I extend my sincere thanks to the Principal, teachers, students and families for their warm hospitality and generous welcome. We greatly appreciated the opportunity to share the story of Crete and look forward to continuing our relationship with the school in the years ahead.

Anthony Katsanevas
President
Cretan Association of Queensland Inc.



THE CRETAN ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND THROUGHOUT 50 YEARS OF THE BRISBANE PANIYIRI

As we get ready to prepare for our first Paniyiri on the Gold Coast, we remember all the past festivals we have experienced in Queensland. This year among many special occasions/milestones marked 50 years of the Paniyiri here in Brisbane. Since the very first Paniyiri in 1976, the Cretan Association has proudly contributed to the festival through the sale of a wide range of traditional Greek foods, including chicken and lamb yiros, octopus, and honey puffs (loukoumades). Our presence has also been reflected through our cultural performances, showcasing the rich traditions of Crete and Greece.

Together, the Brisbane community has shared countless memories of hard work, dancing, friendship, and community spirit as we have proudly shared our culture with generations of festival-goers.

Many generations of Cretans have participated in Paniyiri over the past five decades, volunteering, performing, cooking, and supporting the festival. Their dedication has helped preserve our traditions and strengthen the bonds between our community and the wider Brisbane community.

In particular, current committee members Filia Ghorayeb, Herc Kaselakis and Tony Katsanevas share the privilege of continuing a proud family tradition of involvement in Paniyiri. Following in the footsteps of their parents, they have remained actively engaged in the festival and have now seen that commitment passed on to their own children, who currently perform and volunteer at Paniyiri. Their families represent three generations of participation, reflecting the enduring spirit of community, culture, and service that has been at the heart of Paniyiri for 50 years.

As we celebrate this significant anniversary, we honour all those who have contributed over the years and look forward to continuing this proud tradition for generations to come.

Until next year. OPA!

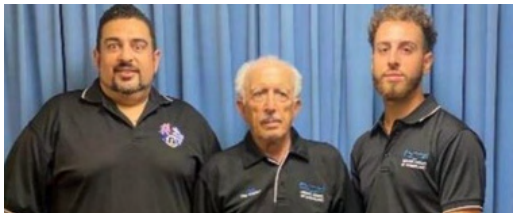












JT JOHN TRIPIDAKIS
& ASSOCIATES LAW OFFICES

ΕΧΕΤΕ ΝΟΜΙΚΕΣ ΥΠΟΘΕΣΕΙΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΑΔΑ;

Μιλήστε με τον Δικηγόρο της Διασποράς.

Υπηρεσίες:

- Ακίνητα & Κληρονομιές στην Ελλάδα
- Ελληνική Ιθαγένεια
- Ελληνική "Golden Visa"



45+ ΧΡΟΝΙΑ ΝΟΜΙΚΗ ΕΜΠΕΙΡΙΑ

Σε έναν χώρο όπου η εμπειρία κάνει τη διαφορά, ο John Tripidakis με πάνω από τέσσερις δεκαετίες ενεργής παρουσίας και επιτυχημένης εκπροσώπησης ομογενών, παρέχει νομικές υπηρεσίες υψηλού επιπέδου, προσαρμοσμένες στις απαιτήσεις κάθε υπόθεσης για τη μέγιστη διασφάλιση των συμφερόντων σας.

0402 751 102

Σύδνεϋ | Μελβούρνη
mail@greeklawyers.com.au
www.greeklawyers.com.au

VISIT THE CLUB WHERE CANBERRA MEETS.

HELLENIC CLUB
Where Canberra Meets



Matilda St, Woden • 02 6281 0899 • www.hellenicclub.com.au • Open Daily - 9am-4am

ΟΛΓΑ ΚΑΝΙΤΣΑΚΗ

Η συγκλονιστική ιστορία μιας Ελληνίδας νοσοκόμας της Αυστραλίας, από τον Πρασέ Κυδωνίας, Χανίων.

Οι άνθρωποι που φτάνοντας κατά χιλιάδες την εποχή εκείνη στις αυστραλιανές ακτές, στερέωσαν και γιγάντωσαν την παρουσία του Ελληνισμού στους Αντίποδες και «έχτισαν» εδώ μία δεύτερη Ελλάδα, η οποία άνθισε σε όλους τους τομείς.

Πώς θα μπορούσε να διασωθεί ο ανεκτίμητος αυτός θησαυρός μνήμης, προτού παρασυρθεί από τα αδυσώπητα κύματα του χρόνου; Μέσα από την καταγραφή των προσωπικών ιστοριών των γηραιότερων συμπαροίκων μας!

Αυτή είναι η απάντηση που δίνουν οι συντελεστές του έργου **«Οι Ανθρωποί μας, οι Ιστορίες τους – Our People Their Stories»**, μιας «κιβωτού» ιστορικής μνήμης που έχει ξεκινήσει το ταξίδι της εδώ και μήνες.

Συνοπτικά, στο πλαίσιο του έργου «Our People Their Stories» καταγράφονται με οπτικοακουστικά μέσα προσωπικές ιστορίες μεταναστών πρώτης και δεύτερης γενιάς, οι οποίες συνθέτουν ένα «ζωντανό» Μουσείο που φιλοξενείται στον ιστότοπο: opts.org.au

Οι επισκέπτες έχουν ελεύθερη πρόσβαση σε προφορικές αφηγήσεις υπό τη μορφή τηλεοπτικών και ηχητικών ντοκουμέντων (Video Stories & Podcasts), ενώ και στις δύο κατηγορίες, το περιεχόμενο είναι δίγλωσσο (Ελληνικά και Αγγλικά).

Με την άδεια των συντελεστών του συγκεκριμένου έργου, η Κρητική Ομοσπονδία Αυστραλίας & Νέας Ζηλανδίας μέσω του περιοδικού "Cretan Times" κατά καιρούς θα δημοσιεύει περιλήψεις από κάποιες ιστορίες ομογενών που έχουν ήδη



καταγραφεί από το «Οι Άνθρωποί μας, οι Ιστορίες τους – Our People Their Stories» οι οποίοι κατάγονται από την Κρήτη.

Ξεκινάμε σήμερα με την ιστορία της Όλγας Κανιτσάκη που είναι μια από τις πιο ανθρώπινες και δυνατές αφηγήσεις που φέρνουν στο φως τις πληγές του Εμφυλίου Πολέμου, αλλά και το σθένος μιας γενιάς που άφησε πίσω της την πατρίδα για να χτίσει μια νέα ζωή μακριά.

Γεννημένη το 1940 στον Πρασέ Κυδωνίας Χανίων, ένα ορεινό χωριό της Κρήτης που έζησε έντονα τον διχασμό και τη βία της εποχής, η Όλγα μεγάλωσε ανάμεσα σε φόβους, απώλειες και μια οικογενειακή τραγωδία που στιγμάτισε το μέλλον της.

Ο ΠΟΝΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΔΙΧΑΣΜΟΥ ΚΑΙ Η ΑΠΩΛΕΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ

Ήταν το μικρότερο από τα οκτώ παιδιά μιας οικογένειας μεσαίας τάξης, που ζούσε από τη γη και τις επιχειρήσεις της. Ο μεγαλύτερος αδελφός της, ο Γιώργος, είχε διαφορετική μοίρα: σκοτώθηκε το 1949 σε ενέδρα ανταρτών, ενώ επέστρεφε με το λεωφορείο στο χωριό για έναν αρραβώνα.

«Του είχαν στήσει καρτέρι… σκοτώθηκαν πέντε άτομα εκείνη τη μέρα. Ανάμεσά τους και ο αδερφός μου», αφηγείται με τρεμάμενη φωνή η Όλγα. «Ήταν τρομερό, ακόμα το θυμάμαι σαν να ήταν χθες».

Το δράμα δεν σταμάτησε εκεί. Λίγο αργότερα, μέσα στη νύχτα, οι αντάρτες έβαλαν φωτιά στο σπίτι της οικογένειας, ενώ η μητέρα της τρέχει με την μικρή Όλγα στην αγκαλιά της προσπαθώντας να γλιτώσουν. Η φωτιά καταστρέφει όχι μόνο τις στέγες, αλλά και τα όνειρα μιας ολόκληρης ζωής. Παρά τον πόνο και τις πολιτικές διαφορές, οι συγχωριανοί βρέθηκαν εκεί για να βοηθήσουν όπως μπορούσαν.



Ο πατέρας της, άνθρωπος προοδευτικός και ευκατάστατος με ελαιοτριβείο και χωράφια, αρνήθηκε να στείλει τον γιο του στον πόλεμο, μια στάση που η οικογένεια πιστεύει πως οδήγησε στην τραγωδία. «Του στοίχισε πολύ ο χαμός του Γιώργου. Δεν άντεξε, πέθανε λίγα χρόνια αργότερα», θυμάται η Όλγα, «ήταν σαν να πήρε μαζί του το βάρος όλου του πόνου».

Παρά τον οδυνηρό χαμό, η μητέρα της επέδειξε μια συγκινητική στάση συγχώρεσης και αξιοπρέπειας, δίνοντας ένα μάθημα ανθρωπιάς μέσα στον διχασμό: «Μου έλεγε πάντα πως ο Θεός ξέρει να κρίνει και πως η αγάπη πρέπει να νικά το μίσος».

Η ΠΑΙΔΙΚΗ ΑΘΩΟΤΗΤΑ ΣΕ ΕΝΑΝ ΚΟΣΜΟ ΔΙΧΑΣΜΕΝΟ

Η Όλγα θυμάται τα παιδικά της χρόνια μέσα στο φόβο και το διχασμό που είχε χωρίσει την πατρίδα της. «Ήμασταν παιδιά… και ρώτησα μια φίλη μου, αν θα με σκότωνε αν της το ζητούσαν οι αντάρτες. Μου είπε ‘ναι’…». Αυτή η αθωότητα που συνάντησε τη σκληρή πραγματικότητα της βίας την σημάδεψε βαθιά.

Σήμερα, πολλά χρόνια μετά, η ίδια δεν κρατά μίσος. Αντίθετα, με την πείρα της ζωής και την ωριμότητα, μιλά για τη μεγάλη τραγικότητα του διχασμού και στέλνει μήνυμα συμφιλίωσης στις επόμενες γενιές.

Η ΑΠΟΦΑΣΗ ΤΗΣ ΦΥΓΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΟ ΟΝΕΙΡΟ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΑΣ

Το τέλος της δεκαετίας του 1950 βρήκε την Όλγα να αγωνιά για το μέλλον της. Η ζωή στην επαρχία ήταν σκληρή, ειδικά για τις γυναίκες, που ένιωθαν συχνά ότι «δεν υπήρχαν». Η μοδιστρική, που ακολούθησε αρχικά σαν επάγγελμα όπως και η αδερφή της, ήταν ένα μέσο επιβίωσης, όχι όμως η πραγματική της επιλογή.

Όταν άρχισε να ακούει για τη μετανάστευση στην Αυστραλία μέσα από ταινίες και αφηγήσεις αγνώστων που περνούσαν από το χωριό, μέσα της άναψε μια φλόγα ελπίδας. Η λέξη «σπουδή» ήταν αυτή που την έμαθε να σκέφτεται διαφορετικά — όχι απλά να βγάλει λεφτά, αλλά να χτίσει μια καλύτερη ζωή.

Ο αδελφός της, Μανώλης, ήταν ο πρώτος που έκανε αίτηση για να φύγει. Αν και αρχικά διστακτικός, τελικά της έστειλε πρόσκληση, και η Όλγα πήρε την απόφαση να φύγει, παρά τις ανησυχίες και τις δυσκολίες.

Η ΜΕΓΑΛΗ ΑΝΑΧΩΡΗΣΗ ΚΑΙ ΤΟ ΤΑΞΙΔΙ ΣΤΟ ΑΓΝΩΣΤΟ

Το 1961 η Όλγα αποχαιρέτησε με δάκρυα την μητέρα της. Η γυναίκα που την είχε μεγαλώσει με αγάπη και θρησκευτική πίστη, έκλαιγε φορώντας τα μαύρα της. «Μου έλεγε 'Στην ευχή μου, παιδάκι μου. Να μου γράφεις', κι όμως δεν ήξερε ούτε να γράψει», θυμάται η Όλγα. Πέταξε πίσω της μια μαύρη πέτρα σαν σύμβολο ότι δεν θα γυρίσει ποτέ πίσω.

Το ταξίδι διήρκεσε τέσσερις εβδομάδες με το πλοίο «Πατρίς». Αν και αρχικά προοριζόταν για το Περθ, ένας κυκλώνας τους έφερε στη Μελβούρνη. Στο πλοίο η Όλγα βοήθησε τον γιατρό να φροντίσει τους άρρωστους επιβάτες, αποδεικνύοντας από νωρίς το έμφυτο ενδιαφέρον της για τη φροντίδα των ανθρώπων.

Η ΣΚΛΗΡΗ ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΟΤΗΤΑ ΚΑΙ Η ΜΑΧΗ ΜΕ ΤΗ ΓΛΩΣΣΑ

Η νέα ζωή στην Αυστραλία δεν ήταν εύκολη. Με μια βαλίτσα και λίγα ρούχα, η Όλγα βρέθηκε σε μια ξένη χώρα, όπου η γλώσσα και οι συνήθειες ήταν άγνωστες. Έμειναν αρχικά με τον αδελφό της στο Westgarth, και εκείνη δούλεψε σε εργοστάσιο τροφίμων, ξεκινώντας από νωρίς το πρωί, καθαρίζοντας κρεμμύδια.

Η εμπειρία της ήταν σκληρή. Σε μια περίπτωση, γλίτωσε από απόπειρα βιασμού, όταν ένας άγνωστος την οδήγησε σε μια σκοτεινή γωνιά.

«Ήμουν δυνατή από την Ελλάδα. Δούλευα στα χωράφια και δεν φοβόμουν», λέει, αλλά το περιστατικό της δίδαξε να μην εμπιστεύεται εύκολα τους αγνώστους.

Σύντομα απολύθηκε γιατί… μιλούσε αγγλικά, σε μια παράδοξη στιγμή που δείχνει το πόσο δύσκολη ήταν η ένταξη. Παρ' όλα αυτά, η Όλγα δεν το έβαλε κάτω. Με ένα λεξικό στα χέρια, ξεκίνησε να μαθαίνει τη γλώσσα, να καταλαβαίνει και να επικοινωνεί.

Η ΠΟΡΕΙΑ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΗ ΝΟΣΗΛΕΥΤΙΚΗ ΚΑΙ Η ΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΑ ΣΤΗ ΦΡΟΝΤΙΔΑ

Η φροντίδα των ανθρώπων ήταν η αληθινή της κλήση. Αρχικά, εργαστηκε εθελοντικά στο Νοσοκομείο Παίδων, καθαρίζοντας και βοηθώντας με κάθε τρόπο. Η αγάπη της για τη νοσηλευτική την οδήγησε σε σπουδές και επιμόρφωση.

Η Όλγα θυμάται τη δυσκολία της γλώσσας, αλλά και τη στήριξη που βρήκε από τη διευθύντρια Vivian Bullwinkel, μια γυναίκα που της έμαθε πώς η δύναμη της ψυχής και η αφοσίωση μπορούν να ξεπεράσουν κάθε εμπόδιο.

Η ίδια βίωσε από κοντά τις προκλήσεις των μεταναστών ασθενών, που συχνά δεν μιλούσαν καλά αγγλικά ή δεν κατανοούνταν από το προσωπικό. Ήταν η γέφυρα ανάμεσα σε δύο κόσμους, βοηθώντας να γεφυρωθούν οι διαφορές μέσα από τη φροντίδα και την κατανόηση.

ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΗ ΑΛΛΗΛΕΓΓΥΗ ΚΑΙ Η ΣΥΜΒΟΛΗ ΣΤΗΝ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΤΑ

Πέρα από την εργασία της στο νοσοκομείο, η Όλγα συμμετείχε ενεργά σε κοινότητες μεταναστών, βοηθώντας τους νέους που έφταναν με φόβο και ελπίδα στην Αυστραλία. Η υποστήριξη της μητρικής γλώσσας και της πολιτισμικής κατανόησης ήταν για εκείνη βασικά στοιχεία για την επιτυχία της θεραπείας και την ένταξη των ασθενών.



Η προσπάθειά της και η αγάπη της για το επάγγελμά της άνοιξαν πόρτες σε ανώτερες θέσεις, καθώς από απλή νοσοκόμα έγινε επιμελήτρια, με ευθύνη και σεβασμό από τους συναδέλφους της.

Η ΑΓΑΠΗ ΓΙΑ ΤΗ ΝΟΣΗΛΕΥΤΙΚΗ ΚΑΙ Η ΔΙΑΤΗΡΗΣΗ ΤΩΝ ΡΙΖΩΝ

Κοιτώντας πίσω, η Όλγα καταλαβαίνει ότι κάθε δυσκολία που αντιμετώπισε, κάθε εμπόδιο, την έκανε πιο δυνατή. Η αγάπη για τη νοσηλευτική δεν έσβησε ποτέ, και η επιθυμία να προσφέρει στους συνανθρώπους της κράτησε ζωντανό το πάθος της.

Παράλληλα, διατήρησε ζωντανή τη γλώσσα και τις παραδόσεις της πατρίδας, αγκαλιάζοντας τη νέα της πατρίδα με σεβασμό και αφοσίωση.

Η ιστορία της Όλγας Κανιτσάκη είναι όχι μόνο μια μαρτυρία για τα δεινά του Εμφυλίου και της μετανάστευσης, αλλά και ένα φωτεινό παράδειγμα δύναμης, αξιοπρέπειας και ανθρωπιάς. Ένα μήνυμα ελπίδας και συμφιλίωσης που αξίζει να θυμόμαστε και να τιμούμε.

Πηγή: Βήμα της Εκκλησίας
Vema.com.au

GREECE HONOURS ANZAC LEGACY WITH COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Descendants recognised for family service in WWII operations in Greece across Australia and New Zealand.

The Hellenic Republic has honoured the legacy of ANZAC servicemen who fought in Greece during the Second World War, with a series of commemorative medal presentations held across Australia and New Zealand.

At a ceremony at the Embassy of Greece in Canberra, Greece's Ambassador to Australia, Stavros Venizelos, and Defence Attaché Colonel Kyriakos Kyriakakos presented Commemorative Medals of the Hellenic Republic to Maria Robson and Cadet James Callen.

The awards recognised the service of Ms Robson's father and Mr Callen's grandfather, who both participated in the ANZAC operations in Greece during WWII.

In New Zealand, similar ceremonies were held to honour additional descendants. At the Air Force Museum in Christchurch on 26 February 2026, Colonel Kyriakakos presented a commemorative medal to Phillipa Redmond, in recognition of her father's service in the same campaign.

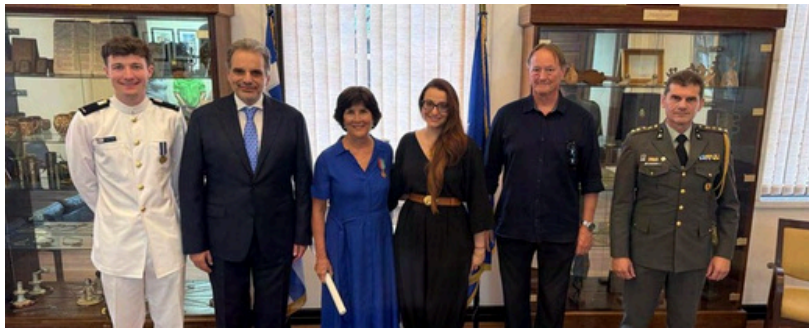
Two days later, on 28 February, a further ceremony took place at the Cathedral of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary in Wellington, where Graeme Reeves received a medal acknowledging his father's contribution during the ANZAC operations in Greece. The presentation was attended by the Honorary Consul of Greece in New Zealand, Georgios Neonakis.

The commemorations form part of Greece's ongoing effort to recognise and honour those who stood alongside the country during one of the most challenging periods in its modern history. "Greece never forgets those who fought by its side," officials said.









Η ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΑΥΣΤΡΑΛΙΑΣ ΤΙΜΗΣΕ ΤΗΝ ΗΜΕΡΑ ΤΩΝ ANZAC



Η Ιερά Αρχιεπισκοπή Αυστραλίας τίμησε με ευλάβεια την Ημέρα των ANZAC, αποδίδοντας τον οφειλόμενο σεβασμό στους Αυστραλούς και Νεοζηλανδούς στρατιώτες που επέδειξαν απαράμιλλο θάρρος και ηρωισμό κατά τη διάρκεια του Α΄ Παγκοσμίου Πολέμου.

Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, η Αρχιεπισκοπική Περιφέρεια Χώρας και ειδικότερα η Ενορία της Μεταμόρφωσης του Σωτήρος στο Thomastown διοργάνωσε επιμνημόσυνη δέηση και τελετή κατάθεσης στεφάνων για τους Αυστραλούς και Νεοζηλανδούς στρατιώτες, υπό την αιγίδα του Συντονιστικού Συμβουλίου Μνήμης Μάχης της Κρήτης και Υπόλοιπης Ελλάδας, την Κυριακή 26 Απριλίου, στο Αυστραλοελληνικό Μνημείο των Βορείων Προαστείων.

Η Ημέρα των ANZAC αποτελεί ημέρα μνήμης για τους στρατιώτες της Αυστραλίας και της Νέας Ζηλανδίας που πολέμησαν και θυσιάστηκαν στον Α΄ Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο, με ιδιαίτερη αναφορά στη Μάχη της Καλλίπολης το 1915. Η εκστρατεία της Καλλίπολης υπήρξε από τις πρώτες σημαντικές πολεμικές επιχειρήσεις των ANZAC, με στόχο την επικράτηση έναντι της Οθωμανικής Αυτοκρατορίας. Η Ελλάδα διαδραμάτισε ουσιαστικό ρόλο ως σύμμαχος, προσφέροντας πολύτιμη στρατιωτική και στρατηγική στήριξη. Οι δεσμοί μεταξύ Ελλάδας και των αυστραλιανών και νεοζηλανδικών δυνάμεων ενισχύθηκαν μέσα από κοινές θυσίες και συνεργασία, ιδίως αργότερα στη Μάχη της Κρήτης κατά τον Β΄ Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο. Η επέτειος των ANZAC δεν περιορίζεται σε μια εθνική μνήμη, αλλά αναδεικνύει και τη βαθιά φιλία και τον αμοιβαίο σεβασμό μεταξύ Ελλάδας και Αυστραλίας.

Η εκδήλωση ξεκίνησε με επιμνημόσυνη δέηση υπέρ αναπαύσεως των πεσόντων, η οποία τελέστηκε από τον Θεοφιλέστατο Επίσκοπο Χώρας κ. Ευμένιο, με τη συμμετοχή του Αιδεσιμολογιωτάτου Πάτερ Γεωργίου Φράγκου, εφημερίου της Ενορίας της Μεταμόρφωσης του Σωτήρος. Στη συνέχεια, ο Θεοφιλέστατος μετέφερε τις εγκάρδιες ευχές του

Σεβασμιωτάτου Αρχιεπισκόπου Αυστραλίας κ.κ. Μακαρίου και ανέγνωσε το επίσημο μήνυμά του για την ημέρα.

Τους παρευρισκόμενους καλωσόρισε η τελετάρχης κα. Λουκία Ανδρέου, Διευθύντρια της Μονάδας Μεταμόρφωσης του Σωτήρος–Reservoir του Ελληνικού Απογευματινού Κολλεγίου «Άγιος Κοσμάς ο Αιτωλός» (Aetolian College). Το κεντρικό μήνυμα της ημέρας παρουσίασε ο Πρόεδρος της Ένωσης Κοινοτήτων και Ενοριών της Ιεράς Αρχιεπισκοπής κ. Αντώνης Τσουρδαλάκης, ενώ εκ μέρους των Αυστραλιανών Ενόπλων Δυνάμεων, ο Δεκανέας John Matheison απηύθυνε σύντομο χαιρετισμό.

Ιδιαίτερη συγκίνηση προκάλεσαν οι μαθήτριες … και η Γεωργία Ρούπκα από το Κολλέγιο «Άγιος Κοσμάς ο Αιτωλός» (Μονάδα Reservoir), οι οποίες απήγγειλαν ποιήματα αφιερωμένα στους ANZAC, τιμώντας τη μνήμη τους με ευαισθησία και σεβασμό.

Στεφάνια κατέθεσαν: ο Θεοφιλέστατος Επίσκοπος Χώρας κ. Ευμένιος συνοδευόμενος, η Γενική Πρόξενος της Ελλάδας στην Μελβούρνη κα. Δήμητρα Γεωργαντζόγλου, η βουλευτής της τοπικής περιφέρειας κα. Bronwyn Halfpenny μαζί με τον τέως Δήμαρχο του Whittlesea κ. Laurie Cox, ο βουλευτής της αντιπολίτευσης κ. Ιωάννης Πύρρος, ο Πρόεδρος της Ένωσης Κοινοτήτων & Ενοριών Αρχιεπισκοπής κ. Αντώνης Τσουρδαλακης, η Πρόεδρος της Ελληνικής Κοινότητας Whittlesea κ. Κρις Παυλίδου, ο Πρόεδρος της Πανελλήνιας Ένωσης Αποστράτων Εφέδρων εν Αυστραλία κ. Νικόλαος Μακρίδης, η Πρόεδρος του Συντονιστικού Συμβουλίου Μνήμης της Μάχης της Κρήτης & Ελλάδας κα. Νατάσα Σπανού, η Πρόεδρος του Πολιτισμικού Συλλόγου Φλώρινας «Ο Αριστοτέλης» κα. Χρύσα Γεωργίου, ο Αντιπρόεδρος της Κυπριακής Κοινότητας Βορείων Προαστείων κ. Κυριάκος Κυριάκου, ο Διευθυντής της Χορευτικής Σχολής «Πήγασος» κ. Σωτήρης Σωτηρίου, ο Αρχηγός του Μαθητικού Σώματος του Ελληνορθόδοξου Κολλεγίου Άγιος Ιωάννης Archer Kozaris, η μαθήτρια από το Σχολείο Oakleigh Grammar Αλεξάνδρα Χατζηπαναγιώτου και οι μαθητές από το Ελληνικού Απογευματινού Κολλεγίου «Άγιος Κοσμάς ο Αιτωλός» Ραφαέλια Πατσιαβού και Άννα-Μαρία Λασκαράκη.

Είναι ουσιώδες να διατηρούμε ζωντανή τη μνήμη των Αυστραλών και Νεοζηλανδών που αγωνίστηκαν και θυσιάστηκαν στον Α΄ Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο, καθώς μέσα από την ανδρεία, την αφοσίωση και το πνεύμα αυτοθυσίας τους ανέδειξαν αξίες που παραμένουν επίκαιρες μέχρι σήμερα. Η προσφορά τους δεν αφορούσε μόνο την προάσπιση της ελευθερίας, αλλά και τη διαφύλαξη της δικαιοσύνης, της ενότητας και της ελπίδας. Τιμώντας τους, αντλούμε έμπνευση για να πορευόμαστε με υπευθυνότητα, σεβασμό και αλληλεγγύη, κρατώντας ζωντανή την κληρονομιά τους μέσα από τις πράξεις και τις αρχές μας. Αιωνία η μνήμη τους!











ANZAC TREK OF CRETE PROJECT: A TRIBUTE TO HISTORY AND HOPE

In 2013, as Con Kanellis lay on a hospital bed receiving chemotherapy for stage 4 metastatic throat cancer, he had no idea that this harrowing experience would lead to the creation of a community-driven movement dedicated to raising awareness and funds for pancreatic cancer. Today, the Wish You Were Here, a team of Greek Australians, is preparing for its most ambitious project yet: the Crete 2025 Trek, a 100 km journey across the rugged terrain of Crete to honor the ANZACs who fought and made sacrifices of WWII soldiers and raise vital funds for pancreatic cancer research.

Wish You Were Here, the team's latest initiative, the Crete 2025 Project, is deeply personal and rooted in history. As a Greek Australian with roots in Crete, Con's has always been passionate about Greek history and culture. During the Kokoda trek, he learned about the Australian 6th Division, which fought in both Papua New Guinea and the Battle of Crete in 1941.

The Battle of Crete was a brutal chapter in WWII, where Australian, New Zealand, Greek, and British soldiers fought against the German invasion. The soldiers' fighting retreat from Maleme to Chora Sfakion was a harrowing journey, mirroring the struggles faced by pancreatic cancer patients today.

In May 2025, seven Wish You Were Here team members retraced this historic route, trekking 100 km over five days from Maleme to Chora Sfakion. The team includes Greek Australians and passionate Philhellenes, all of whom have been directly affected by cancer. The goal is to raise awareness of pancreatic cancer, honor the sacrifices of WWII soldiers, and strengthen the bonds between Australia and Greece.



CON KANELLIS, A CRETAN FROM SYDNEY

A Journey Born from Personal Struggle

Con's battle with cancer began in 2013 when he was diagnosed with stage 4 metastatic throat cancer. Over seven weeks, he underwent grueling chemotherapy sessions, each lasting up to seven hours. At the time, he felt like he had been handed a death sentence. However, against the odds, Con survived. This experience was transformative, not only in how he viewed life but also in how Con wanted to contribute to the world.

Con Kanellis felt an overwhelming sense of privilege and gratitude for having beaten cancer, especially as he had lost family members to the disease. This gratitude compelled him to give back to the community, particularly to the Cancer Centre at Royal North Shore Hospital, which had played a crucial role in my treatment.

In 2016, Con's world was shaken again when his best friend and mentor, Nick Stamatakis, was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Around the same time, another close friend, Scott Hunt, lost his friend Peter Grima to the same disease. Witnessing the devastating impact of pancreatic cancer on his loved ones ignited a fire within him to take action.

The Birth of the Wish You Were Here Team

Scott and Con quickly realized that pancreatic cancer was a vastly underfunded and misunderstood disease. Unlike breast cancer or melanoma, pancreatic cancer lacked a vocal advocacy community, and resources for patients and their families were scarce. We learned about the Avner Pancreatic Cancer Foundation (now known as Pankind), an organization dedicated to improving outcomes for pancreatic cancer patients.

Inspired by their work, they created the Wish You Were Here team, a group of ordinary Australians committed to raising awareness and funds for pancreatic cancer research. The approach was unique: "We would undertake physically challenging activities that symbolized the pain and trauma experienced by pancreatic cancer patients."



In August 2017, they took the first team of seven to Papua New Guinea to trek the Kokoda Track. The journey was brutal, both physically and emotionally, but it was also transformative. Later that year, they organized a gala dinner that raised over $200,000 for the Avner Foundation.

Tragically, Nick Stamatakis passed away in early 2018, but his memory continues to inspire our work. In 2019, they trekked to Mt. Everest Base Camp and raised over $300,000 through another gala dinner.

Source: Greek City Times

CON KANELLIS, A CRETAN FROM SYDNEY



Περπατώντας στα μονοπάτια της μνήμης: Η διαδρομή της ομάδας ξεκίνησε την Τρίτη 20 Μαΐου 2025 από το Μάλεμε στις 8 το πρωί, ημερομηνία και ώρα κατά την οποία έπεσαν οι πρώτοι Γερμανοί αλεξιπτωτιστές το 1941, σηματοδοτώντας την έναρξη της Μάχης της Κρήτης.

Ογδόντα τέσσερα χρόνια από την Μάχη της Κρήτης, μια ομάδα Αυστραλών και Ελληνοαυστραλών ταξίδεψε από την άλλη άκρη του πλανήτη, για να περπατήσει στους δρόμους και τα μονοπάτια που περπάτησαν τον Μάιο του 1941 οι συμμαχικές δυνάμεις και να τιμήσει τον αγώνα τους. Ταυτόχρονα μέσα από την Προσκυνηματική τους πεζοπορία, ήθελαν να ταυτίσουν τον αγώνα των Κρητικών και των συμμάχων, με τον αγώνα κάθε ασθενούς που παλεύει με τον καρκίνο. Είναι όλοι μέλη της εθελοντικής ομάδας "Wish you were here" και δηλώνουν υπερήφανοι και συγκινημένοι για το εγχείρημά τους και τον σκοπό του.

Την δεύτερη μέρα της πεζοπορίας, τα μέλη της ομάδας ξεκινώντας από την Πλατεία Δικαστηρίων έφτασαν μέχρι τον Στύλο Αποκορώνου, με ενδιάμεσο σταθμό το μνημείο της 42ης οδού Τσικαλαριών, όπου κατέθεσαν στέφανο.

Το neakriti.gr συνάντησε τους περιπατητές στη διαδρομή ανάμεσα στη Μαλάξα και τον Στύλο. Τραγουδούσαν το γνωστό ριζίτικο «Σε ψηλό βουνό» ενώ περπατούσαν. Ο κ. Κώστας Κανέλλης, ομογενής από την Αυστραλία με καταγωγή από τη Κρήτη και ιδρυτικό μέλος της ομάδας «Wish you were here» για τον καρκίνο του παγκρέατος, εξήγησε ότι ο χαρακτήρας της Προσκυνηματικής πεζοπορίας είναι διττός. Αφενός τιμάται η μνήμη των πολεμιστών, αφετέρου συνδέεται ο αγώνας τους με αυτόν κάθε ασθενούς που παλεύει με τον καρκίνο.

Φέτος συνδέσαμε τον σκοπό μας με τη Μάχη της Κρήτης διότι, εκτός του ότι καταγόμαστε από την Κρήτη, αυτά που περάσανε οι στρατιώτες αλλά και οι άμαχοι το 1941 έχουν κοινά στοιχεία με αυτά που υποφέρουν οι ασθενείς του καρκίνου. Εμείς υλοποιούμε δράσεις με σωματικές δυσκολίες αντίστοιχες αυτών που περνάνε οι άνθρωποι που νοσούν. Όσο πιο δύσκολη η πορεία, τόσο μεγαλύτερη πρόκληση για μας», σημείωσε χαρακτηριστικά ο κ. Κανέλλης.

Την Πέμπτη η ομάδα θα διασχίσει μια πορεία έξι ωρών μέσα από τα χωριά Στύλος, Νιό Χωριό, Άγιοι Πάντες και Μετόχι, για να καταλήξει στις Βρύσες. Από εκεί θα ξεκινήσει προς τα Ασκύφου Σφακίων περνώντας μέσα από τον Εμπρόσνερο. Ο κ. Γιώργος Γιακουμάκης, μέλος της ομάδας «Wish you were here», έκανε λόγο για μια «αξέχαστη εμπειρία» τονίζοντας πως οι συμμετέχοντες, συνδέονται μεταξύ τους σαν μια οικογένεια και πως τους ενώνει ο σκοπός της δράσης που είναι να αποδώσουν τιμή στους ήρωες της Μάχης της Κρήτης.



Συγκινημένος εμφανίστηκε ο κ. Χρήστος Χαραλάμπους, ένας εκ των επτά περιπατητών, μελών της εθελοντικής ομάδας «Εύχομαι να ήσουν εδώ», ο οποίος περιέγραψε πώς βίωσε τη σημερινή διαδρομή από τα Τσικαλαριά προς τη Μαλάξα, μέσα από ένα ιδιαίτερα ανηφορικό και κακοτράχαλο μονοπάτι. «Καθώς ανεβαίναμε τον χωματόδρομο, ένιωθα το πνεύμα των Κρητικών, των Αυστραλών, των Νεοζηλανδών και αυτό το συναίσθημα μας δίνει δύναμη να συνεχίσουμε αυτή τη συμβολική διαδρομή μνήμης», είπε ο κ. Χαραλάμπους.

Το εγχείρημα των Ελληνοαυστραλών και Αυστραλών ολοκληρώνεται το Σάββατο στα Σφακιά, αφού προηγουμένως διανύσουν την ίδια διαδρομή που ακολούθησαν τα συμμαχικά στρατεύματα τον Μάιο του 1941, πριν η περιοχή βομβαρδιστεί από τους Γερμανούς.

Πηγή: Νέα Κρήτη

ΚΥΠΡΟΣ 1974 - ΜΑΝΩΛΗΣ ΜΠΙΚΑΚΗΣ

Διέλυσε μόνος του μια ίλη τουρκικών αρμάτων και ένα τάγμα πεζικού



Η τουρκική εισβολή του 1974 στη Κύπρο, 40 χρόνια μετά συνεχίζει να αποτελεί στίγμα της νεότερης ιστορίας μας. Ο ελληνισμός υπέστη μια από τις χειρότερες στρατιωτικές και πολιτικές ήττες και πλήρωσε το τίμημα της επτάχρονης χούντας που άφησε τη Κύπρο βορά στις ορέξεις του «Αττίλα».

Μέσα στο σκοτάδι της απώλειας της μισής Κύπρου, η σκόνη της ιστορίας κάλυψε μορφές που αποτέλεσαν πρότυπα αυταπάρνησης και ηρωισμού. Μια από αυτές ήταν ο καταδρομέας – αλεξιπτωτιστής Μανώλης Μπικάκης από τη Κρήτη. Γεννημένος το 1954 στο χωριό Ασή Γωνιά μεταξύ Χανίων και Ρεθύμνου, το 1974 υπηρετούσε στη Α' Μοίρα Αλεξιπτωτιστών στο Μάλεμε.

Η Μοίρα ήταν αυτή που κλήθηκε να επιβιβαστεί στα ιπτάμενα φέρετρα Noratlas και να πραγματοποιήσει μια από τις πιο παράτολμες επιχειρήσεις στη Κύπρο.

Όταν τα αεροπλάνα πλησίαζαν στο αεροδρόμιο Λευκωσίας μετά από μια χαμηλή πτήση δύο τριών μέτρων πάνω από τη θάλασσα, άρχισαν να δέχονται πυρά. Τα πυρά προέρχονταν και από τους Τούρκους αλλά και από τους Ελληνοκύπριους που εξέλαβαν τα αεροπλάνα για τουρκικά. Ένα από τα Noratlas καταρρίφθηκε από φίλια πυρά οδηγώντας στο θάνατο όλους τους καταδρομείς και το πλήρωμα πλην του Θανάση Ζαφειρίου που πήδηξε στο κενό και σώθηκε με βαριά τραύματα.

Διέλυσε έξι άρματα

Ο Μανώλης Μπικάκης, 20 χρονών παλικάρι βρέθηκε σε έναν άγνωστο χώρο τον οποίο κλήθηκε να υπερασπίσει μαζί με τους υπόλοιπους καταδρομείς. Στο χάος των μαχών έχοντας στη διάθεση του ένα ΠΑΟ (Πυροβόλο Άνευ Οπισθοδρομήσεως) και 8 βλήματα είναι σε ένα ύψωμα στα δυτικά της Λευκωσίας στη περιοχή του Αγίου Δομετίου.

Μαζί του είναι μόνος ακόμα ένας καταδρομέας από τη Κρήτη. Ενώ δίπλα τους πέφτουν όλμοι, βόμβες από τα τουρκικά αεροπλάνα και ριπές από τα πολυβόλα που έχουν στήσει οι Τούρκοι, χάνονται μεταξύ τους. Ο ένας νομίζει τον άλλο νεκρό. Ο φίλος του Μπικάκη βρίσκει τους υπόλοιπους καταδρομείς και αναφέρει την απώλεια του.

Ο Μανώλης Μπικάκης δεν σκέφτηκε καν να εγκαταλείψει τον λόφο και να σωθεί, καθώς έβλεπε απέναντι του να πλησιάζει μια Ίλη τουρκικών αρμάτων Μ48 και να την ακολουθεί ένα τάγμα πεζικού. Άφησε τα άρματα να πλησιάσουν και με το πρώτο βλήμα καταστρέφει το πρώτο κάνοντας το πλήρωμα να το εγκαταλείψει και να τρέχει πανικόβλητο. Επειδή η θέση του από τη βολή έγινε αντιληπτή από τους Τούρκους, σύρθηκε στο χώμα και άλλαξε θέση με ιδιαίτερη δυσκολία αφού θα έπρεπε να μεταφέρει το ΠΑΟ και ακόμα 7 βλήματα. Από τη νέα θέση σημάδεψε το δεύτερο τουρκικό άρμα το οποίο έγινε λαμαρίνες ενώ δεν έζησε κανένας από το πλήρωμα. Δημιουργήθηκε σύγχυση και τα επόμενα δύο τουρκικά άρματα άλλαξαν κατεύθυνση. Ο Μανώλης Μπικάκης έβαλε στο στόχαστρο το επόμενο άρμα το οποίο επίσης κατέστρεψε με μία εύστοχη βολή. Ακολούθησε η καταστροφή ακόμα τριών τουρκικών αρμάτων και η επέλαση τους προς τη Λευκωσία σταμάτησε.

Ο Μανώλης Μπικάκης είχε μείνει μόνο με δύο βλήματα

Όταν είδε τους τούρκους στρατιώτες να τρέχουν να καλυφθούν σε ένα κτήριο, όπλισε και πάλι το ΠΑΟ. Τα δύο τελευταία βλήματα χτύπησαν το κτήριο στο οποίο είχε καλυφθεί το τουρκικό τάγμα πεζικού. Κανείς δεν ξέρει πόσοι σκοτώθηκαν. Κατάφερε μόνος του να αποτρέψει την τουρκική επίθεση η οποία στόχευε στη κατάληψη του Αγίου Δομετίου κάτι που θα σήμαινε περικύκλωση της Λευκωσία και αποκοπή της πρόσβασης στο αεροδρόμιο Λευκωσίας.

Μέσα στο κατακαλόκαιρο ο Μανώλης Μπικάκης έμεινε τρεις μέρες μόνος του αναζητώντας τους άλλους καταδρομείς έχοντας μαζί του ένα πολυβόλο που βρήκε στο ύψωμα. Τα κατάφερε και ενώθηκε με τη μονάδα του και μετά την εισβολή επέστρεψε στην Ελλάδα.

Άδοξος Θάνατος

Παρά το ότι ο διοικητής του υπέβαλε αναφορά για να παρασημοφορηθεί, το ελληνικό κράτος ουδέποτε τον τίμησε. Οι στρατηγοί τον άφησαν να ξεχαστεί όπως ξεχάστηκε και η ηρωική του προσφορά στη Κύπρο. Ο Μανώλης Μπικάκης παντρεύτηκε και έκανε οικογένεια εργαζόμενος ως οικοδόμος στη Κρήτη.

Δεν διεκδίκησε ούτε δάφνες ούτε τιμές. Το 1994 βρήκε τραγικό θάνατο σε τροχαίο δυστύχημα στον δρόμο Κορίνθου – Πατρών και η ιστορία του έκλεισε με δύο παιδιά που έμειναν ορφανά και «μια κηδεία σαν των πολλών ανθρώπων τις κηδείες».



Πηγή: Τα Νέα

Ο ΑΥΣΤΡΑΛΟΣ ΣΑΙΜΟΝ ΠΕΚ ΨΑΧΝΕΙ ΤΟΥΣ ΣΩΤΗΡΕΣ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΤΕΡΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΠΟ ΤΗΝ ΜΑΧΗ ΤΗΣ ΚΡΗΤΗΣ

«Ο πατέρας μου σπάνια μιλούσε για τον πόλεμο, πέρα από το να εκφράζει τη βαθιά του ευγνωμοσύνη προς τον κρητικό λαό για τη γενναιότητα και τη βοήθεια που του προσέφεραν όσο κρυβόταν στα βουνά» λέει ο Σάιμον Πεκ, γιος του Λόρενς Λέοναρντ Πεκ, που τον Μάιο του 1941 πολέμησε στην Κρήτη, συνελήφθη, δραπέτευσε, φυγαδεύτηκε από τους ντόπιους.

Σήμερα, 85 χρόνια μετά, ο γιος του μέσα από μια φωτογραφία της εποχής αναζητεί στοιχεία και απόγονους των Κρητικών που στάθηκαν δίπλα στον πατέρα του. Μιλώντας στα "Χανιώτικα νέα " ο κ. Σάιμον περιγράφει την περιπέτεια του πατέρα του: «Κατατάχθηκε εθελοντικά το 1939 και στάλθηκε με το πρώτο στρατιωτικό πλοίο στην Αίγυπτο με το 2/2ο Σύνταγμα Πυροβολικού της 6ης Μεραρχίας. Δεν είμαι σίγουρος πότε μεταφέρθηκε στην Κρήτη, αλλά πιστεύω ότι ήταν στις αρχές του 1941. Συνελήφθη τον Μάιο του 1941 και δραπέτευσε τον Ιούνιο του ίδιου έτους. Διέφυγε από το νησί το Νοέμβριο ή Δεκέμβριο του 1941 με ψαροκάϊκο (SS Hedgehog) προς την Παλαιστίνη. Μετά την επαναπατρισμό του στην Αυστραλία, κατατάχθηκε στη Βασιλική Αεροπορία της Αυστραλίας (RAAF) και στάλθηκε στην Αγγλία ως πιλότος. Αποστρατεύθηκε το 1946 ή 1947 και επέστρεψε στην Αυστραλία».

Όλα τα στοιχεία που έχει συλλέξει ο κ. Σάιμον δείχνουν ότι ο πατέρας του αρχικά φυλακίσθηκε στα Χανιά, ενώ με βάση το ημερολόγιο του στρατιώτη David Frey Spark που βρέθηκε μαζί του όταν δραπέτευσαν αφού περιπλανήθηκαν σε ορεινά χωριά του Ρεθύμνου βοηθούμενοι από ντόπιους



κατέληξαν σε παραλία στα νότια από όπου παρελήφθησαν από σκάφος που τους μετέφερε στην Παλαιστίνη.

Ο Λόρενς Λέοναρντ Πεκ, σύμφωνα με το γιο του, «επέστρεψε στην Κρήτη κάποια στιγμή στα τέλη της δεκαετίας του 1950 ή στις αρχές της δεκαετίας του 1960 μαζί με τη μητέρα μου και, όπως φαίνεται, κατάφερε να έρθει σε επαφή με ορισμένα από τα άτομα που τον είχαν βοηθήσει στα βουνά, ώστε να μπορέσει να τους ευχαριστήσει για τη γενναιοδωρία και το θάρρος που επέδειξαν. Δυστυχώς, δεν έχω κάποιο αρχείο αυτής της επίσκεψης.»

Για τον κ. Σάιμον είναι πολύ σημαντικό να εντοπίσει τους απογόνους των ανθρώπων που βοήθησαν τον πατέρα του. « Έχω επισυνάψει μια φωτογραφία του πατέρα μου (δεύτερος από αριστερά) μαζί με δύο



από τους αντάρτες που πιστεύω ότι ενδέχεται να τον βοήθησαν να δραπετεύσει» υπογραμμίζει χαρακτηριστικά.

Η επιθυμία να αναζητήσει περισσότερα στοιχεία γεννήθηκαν όπως λέει αφού παρακολούθησε την εκδήλωση για την Επέτειο της Μάχης της Κρήτης και γνώρισε μέλη της κρητικής κοινότητας. «Δεν έχω καμία αμφιβολία ότι υπάρχουν ισχυροί δεσμοί ανάμεσα στους Αυστραλούς και τον Κρητικό λαό. Κατά τη διάρκεια της συνάντησης με τα μέλη της Κρητικής κοινότητας, με ενημέρωσαν ότι ο πατέρας μου είναι επιλέξιμος να λάβει ένα μετάλλιο που απονέμει η Ελληνική Κυβέρνηση σε στρατιώτες που έλαβαν μέρος στην εκστρατεία, και ότι η Επιτροπή θα προχωρούσε σε ενέργειες προς την Ελληνική Κυβέρνηση για να του απονεμηθεί αυτή η τιμή».

Η αναζήτηση των απογόνων των σωτήρων του πατέρα του έχει δημιουργήσει την επιθυμία να βρεθεί στην Κρήτη. Όπως εξομολογείται «δεν έχω επισκεφθεί ακόμη την Κρήτη, καθώς κάθε φορά που ταξίδευα στην Ελλάδα αναγκαζόμουν να αλλάξω τα σχέδιά μου λόγω επαγγελματικών υποχρεώσεων. Ωστόσο, η σύζυγός μου είναι Ελληνίδα και γεννήθηκε στο νησί της Σάμου. Ο γαμπρός μου, Κον Λιμπέρης, και η σύζυγός του Βασιλική ζουν ακόμα εκεί. Η Βασιλική γεννήθηκε στην Κρήτη και το πατρικό της όνομα είναι Τριανταφυλάκη – η οικογένειά της ζει ακόμα στο νησί. Τώρα που έχω πλέον συνταξιοδοτηθεί, σκοπεύω να επιστρέψω στη Σάμο και από εκεί να οργανώσω ταξίδι στην Κρήτη.»

Πηγή: Χανιώτικα Νέα

FLOWERS OF RETHYMNON: A STORY THAT STILL MOVES US

There are some stories that belong to history, and others that become part of a community's collective memory.

Flowers of Rethymnon is one of them.

Forty years after the historical dramatised documentary was first screened, its story returned to Melbourne on Sunday, 30 August 2026, in a special anniversary screening at the Shrine of Remembrance.

Held as part of the commemorations marking the 85th anniversary of the Battle of Crete, the event brought together members of the Cretan, Greek, Australian and New Zealand communities, veterans, historians, descendants and, importantly, several of the people involved in making the film four decades ago.

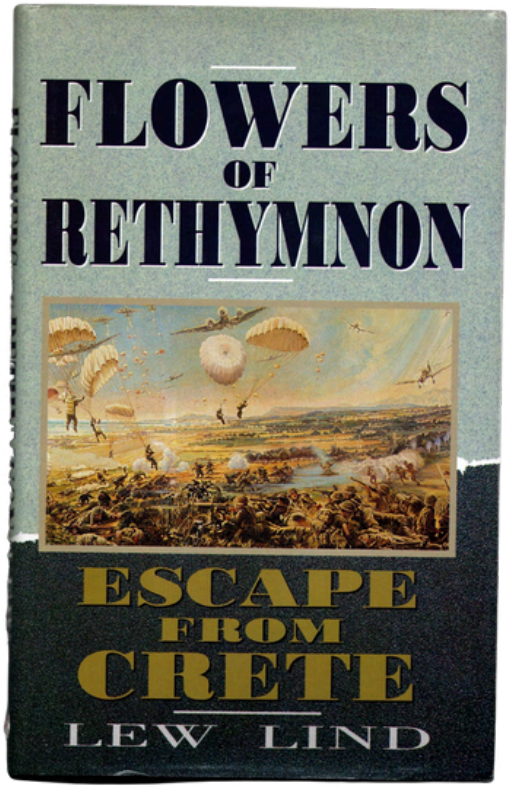
It was an occasion of remembrance, personal connection and deep emotion a reminder that some chapters of history remain very much alive in the memories of those who experienced them and the generations who followed.

The event was initiated and coordinated by Ms Anna Psarakis by the Pancretan Association of Melbourne and the Cretan Brotherhood of Melbourne, with the support of the Battle of Crete and Greece Commemorative Council and the Shrine of Remembrance.

A Story of Courage and Humanity

Based on the memoirs of Australian soldier Lewis "Lew" Lind, a member of the 2/11th Battalion, Flowers of Rethymnon tells the true story of his experiences during the Battle of Crete in 1941.

Lind was involved in the defence of Rethymnon during the German invasion.



Following his capture, he escaped with three fellow soldiers and survived with the assistance of the people of Crete.

The Cretans who offered food, shelter and protection to Australian soldiers did so knowing that helping them could put their own lives and those of their families at risk.

It is this courage and humanity that give Flowers of Rethymnon its enduring power. Through authentic interviews, dramatised re-enactments and rare archival war material, the film goes beyond the battlefield to tell a deeply human story of freedom, sacrifice, solidarity and compassion.

For many in the audience, watching the film was also a deeply personal experience. Descendants of Australian veterans saw



stories of service, survival, villages and families reflected on screen stories that had been passed down by parents and grandparents.

For some, the faces and villages represented fragments of their own family history; for others, the film offered a new understanding of stories from the Battle of Crete they had heard throughout their lives.

It was a powerful reminder that, even 85 years later, the Battle of Crete continues to touch people deeply.

A Reunion Forty Years Later

Adding a special dimension to the evening was the presence of several people involved in the original production of Flowers of Rethymnon.

Among those in attendance were actors Kostas Tsourdalakis, who recently celebrated his 99th birthday, Rena Fragkioudaki, John Pavlidis, Richard Aspel and Antonios Baxevanidis, together with Yvonne Collins, Production Manager, and Georgia Kardaras, Production Accounts. The film's directors, Colin South and John Tatoulis, were also present.

Their return to the film 40 years after its original production created a remarkable connection between past and present. For the audience, it was a rare opportunity to meet the people behind a film that preserved an important chapter of shared history. For those involved in its creation, seeing the film again with a new generation of viewers was equally meaningful.

The program commenced with a welcome from Ms Kerryn Ellis, Chief Executive Officer of the Shrine of Remembrance, who welcomed guests to an event dedicated to remembrance and the enduring connections between Crete, Greece, Australia and New Zealand.

The evening was honoured by the presence of Mr Dimitris Tsilikis, Deputy Consul of Greece in Melbourne, together with representatives of the Greek, Australian and New Zealand communities.

Among those attending were Mr Bruce Mildenhall, Trustee of the Shrine of Remembrance; Mr Tony Tsourdalakis, President of the Intercommunity Council of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia; Mr John Nikolakakis, President of the Pancretan Association of Melbourne; Mr Kyriakos Herekakis, President of the Cretan Brotherhood of Melbourne; Ms Natasha Spanos, Chair of the Battle of Crete and Greece Commemorative Council;

Mr Malcolm Fallon, President of the 2/2 Field Regiment Association; Mr David Thompson, President of the Oakleigh Carnegie RSL Sub-Branch; Mr Manolis Karvelas, President of the Hellenic RSL Sub-Branch; Mr Steve Kyritsis, President of the Australian Hellenic Memorial; Mr Peter Ford, representing New Zealand veterans; and historians Mr Terry Cole and Mr Jim Claven.

Their presence reflected the continuing importance of the Battle of Crete to the Cretan, Greek, Australian and New Zealand communities.

A Legacy That Endures

Eighty-five years have passed since the Battle of Crete, and 40 years since Flowers of Rethymnon first brought the story of Lew Lind and the people of Rethymnon to the screen. Yet its message remains as powerful as ever.

The Battle of Crete was more than a military campaign. It was a story of ordinary people confronted by extraordinary circumstances—Australian and New Zealand soldiers fighting far from home, and Cretan families who risked everything to protect them.

It was a story of courage, sacrifice, friendship and humanity.

As the generations who experienced the war gradually disappear, preserving their stories becomes increasingly important. Films such as Flowers of Rethymnon, together with family memories, photographs and personal accounts, help ensure that the experiences of those who lived through the Battle of Crete are not forgotten.

The anniversary screening showed that the story continues to resonate across generations.

Forty years after its first screening, Flowers of Rethymnon remains a powerful reminder of the enduring bond between the people of Crete and the Australian and New Zealand servicemen who fought alongside them.

The responsibility now lies with future generations to remember, to honour and, above all, to continue telling their stories.

Because history lives on when we choose to remember it.





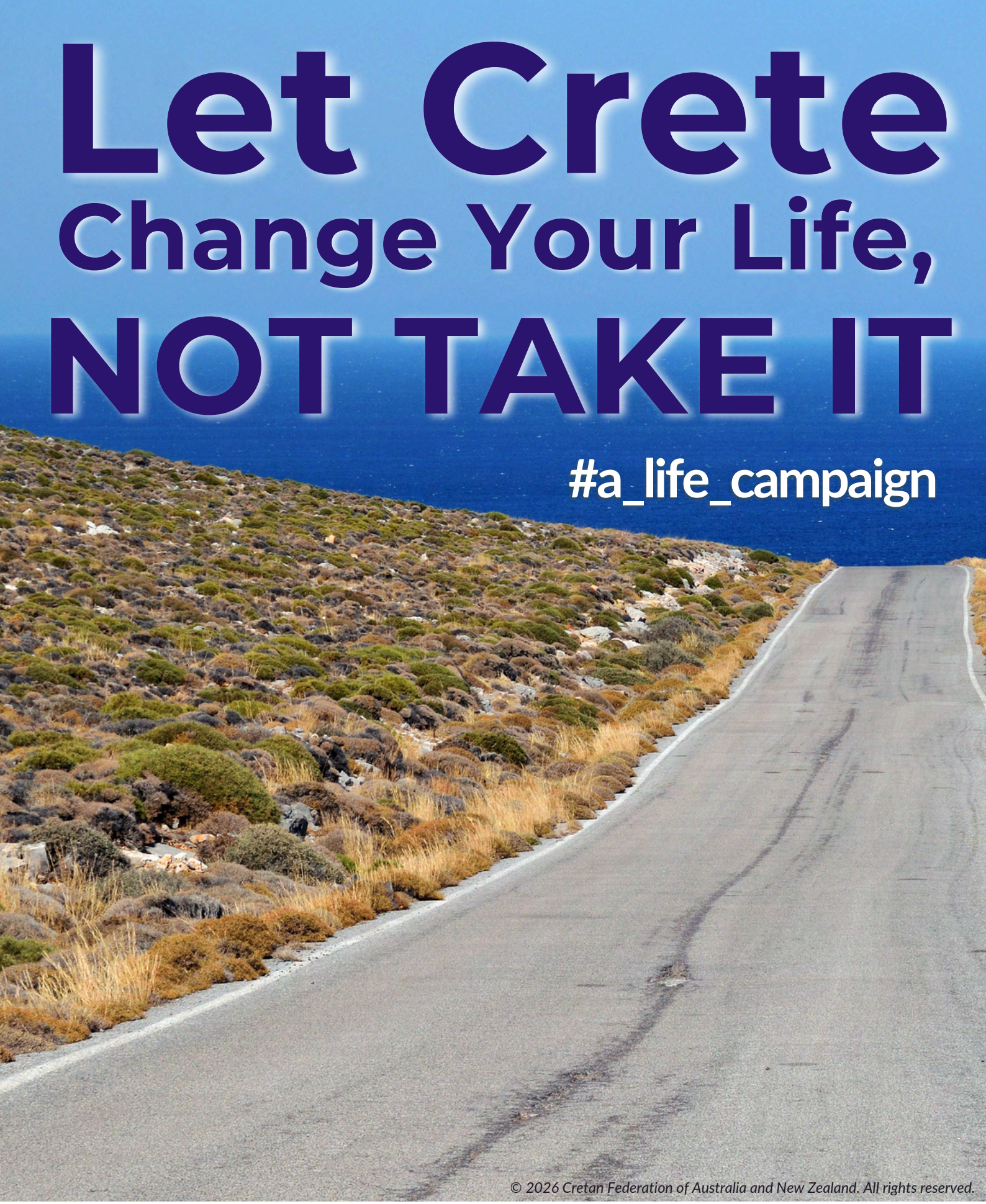






Let Crete Change Your Life, NOT TAKE IT

#a_life_campaign



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