

1ST PELOPONNESIAN FESTIVAL OF SYDNEY AND NSW

DR GEORGE KANARAKIS:

“Greek literature in Australia-major contribution to the new country!”

“Retain your Greekness in the Antipodes!”

*Dr George Kanarakis is a well known academic-linguist and sociologist-,in the Greek circles of Australia as well as in the wider academic community. It was no surprise then, that his lecture on Thursday night, 22 January 2009, was well attended by a great number of people and mainly by many first and second generation Greeks as his topic was most interesting and his ability to communicate with a variety of audiences and the passing on of knowledge are superb traits of his.*

This one hour event took place at the Pan-Corinthian Hall “The Apostle Paul” at Campsie, southwest Sydney, under the auspices of the Peloponnesian Confederation of NSW which is organizing for the first time a Peloponnesian Festival promoting Peloponnesian culture, music and food to the Greek and wider community. After the local Macedonian, Epirotan, Cretan and Aegean islands’ annual festivities organized in Sydney interspersed during the year by their respective federations, the 30 Peloponnesian associations and brotherhoods of Sydney and NSW have united for the first time to organize this important cultural fortnight in January, putting into effect the adage: “Power within Unity” («Η ισχύς εν τη ενώσει»).

Pan-Corinthian President, Mr Yiannis Petropoulos, welcomed on behalf of his Association and the Peloponnesian Confederation of NSW Dr George Kanarakis as well as all attendees at the event and said that this event is of particular importance, as it would showcase Greek cultural and literary presence in Oceania.

Dr Kanarakis in his prologue stressed the significance of maintenance of “Greekness” in the Diaspora and the flourishing of Greek letters and of course the Greek language amongst the Australian-born generations following the initial migrants from Greece and Cyprus who chose to come to Australia.

Continuing on, he mentioned that Greek literature has a strong presence of 91 years in the Antipodes, according to his own research in all types of writing: prose, theatre, poetry. The first

writing by a Greek in Australia was a play written in Greek in 1917, titled “The inconsistent guest” and then next one was published in 1932 by the local Greek newspaper “The National Tribune” («Το Εθνικόν Βήμα»), titled “Stories of a foreign land”. At present, Dr Kanarakis said that an amount of 650 books are known to have been written and published in Australia all by local Greeks throughout the country.

Dr Kanarakis explained that the majority of themes explored social, religious, patriotic and historic issues with ‘an eye of reverence’ for Greece proper and Greek civilization. In addition, the themes of self identity and ethnicity, shared language, shared culture, traditions and Christian Orthodox religion as well as the theme of departing the motherland Greece or Cyprus and the difficulties settling in the “new country” were evident in the Greeks’ writings. However, the Greek literature emanating from Australian-born first and second generation Greeks, explored the themes of being torn between two cultures as well as the pressures received upon these personally from their Greek background and the dominant Australian environment.

Concluding, Dr Kanarakis praised the Greek literature presence in Australia and in particular extolled the rich contribution of Greeks in the “new country” helping further the multicultural nature of Australia. He said that

all Greeks can be proud of these achievements and the dynamism and “fruits of labour” yielded from this contribution will develop even further. “It is of paramount importance that the younger generations retain their Greek language at home and in the community as well as their ‘Greekness’ therefore retaining a rich culture alive”, he emphasized.

The academic and his wife, a non-Greek whose Greek language skills are excellent and History teacher in the Blue Mountains, were honoured with symbolic gifts by the Peloponnesian Confederation of NSW President, Mr Andreas Kalavritinos for their contribution to the Festival.

At the end of this event, the Corinthians played host with traditional greek hospitality to the audience and offered Greek sweets, coffee, tea and soft drinks.

*A few words about Dr George Kanarakis:*

*Dr George Kanarakis is an Adjunct Professor at Chales Sturt University at Bathurst, NSW. Previously, he taught at the Universities of Athens and La Verne, Bridgewater College, USA and elsewhere. With a Greek and English philology undergraduate background, he gained his Ph.D (Honours) in Linguistics, from Athens University.*

*His main focus areas are the fields of literature, historiography and the press of*



*Greeks in the Diaspora, especially in New Zealand as well as on the Greek and English languages and linguistics. He has been an active member on many Australian and Greek and other internationally scholarly societies, has participated in many international conferences and has been advising issues in education and research through a variety of committees. Having being bestowed upon with many medals abroad, in 2002, he was awarded the ‘Medal of the Order of Australia’ for service to the community and to education particularly through the study of Greek arts and literature. In 2007, he was also honoured for his contribution to Greek language and linguistics by the ‘Australian Hellenic Educators’ Association of NSW’ (former NSW Modern Greek Teachers’ Association) as well as by other Greek bodies of Sydney.*

*Dimitrios Kametopoulos*

HOTELS AND COUNSELLORS REACH OUT TO ASSIST ETHNIC PROBLEM GAMBLERS



New South Wales Minister for Gaming and Racing, Kevin Greene MP has officially launched a joint initiative aimed at curbing problem gambling amongst communities from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The Australian Hotels Association (NSW) has partnered with the State’s leading Multicultural Problem Gambling Service (MPGS), to provide culturally sensitive counselling services to better cater for culturally and linguistically diverse communities living in NSW.

For more than nine years, the AHA (NSW)’s GameCare program has assisted thousands of people across the State, who have devel-

oped destructive gambling behaviour, by providing tools such as self-exclusion.

“Whilst we have a great track record assisting the less than one percent of Australians whose gambling does get out of hand, it has been more of a challenge to promote our services to newer Australians and those on temporary Visas,” says AHA (NSW) CEO Sally Fielke.

“As part of this new partnership, we have produced a large multilingual poster to be displayed in the gaming rooms of all hotels across NSW – promoting our cost-free treatment services in 20 different languages.”

The multilingual poster has information in Arabic, Bosnian, Croatian, Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Korean, Macedonian, Maltese, Persian, Tagalog, Polish, Portuguese, Serbian, simplified Chinese, Spanish, Thai, Turkish, Vietnamese and English.

MPGS Manager, Echo Morgan, says such efforts are vital in reaching out to people who may be reluctant to seek help due to communication difficulties and/or cultural reasons.

“Many of the people we’re trying to help experience isolation, depression, loneliness and the frustration that sometimes comes with starting a new life in a different culture,” Ms Morgan said.

“These circumstances can lead to some people into using gambling as a dangerous way of escaping their pain, which only makes their situation worse.”

Problem gamblers will be able to self-exclude from multiple hotels in their area as well as choose face-to-face counselling from more than 40 different languages.