



2009 ANNUAL HELLENIC LANGUAGE AWARDS: *“Athena”, “Phevos”, “Alexander the Great”, “Socrates”, “Kosmas o Aitolos”, “Kostis Palamas”, “Special Hellenic Award”*

GREEK LANGUAGE: Everyone needs to support its maintenance in NSW and Australia!

Another well organised event took place recently in Sydney recognizing the achievements made by students studying the Hellenic language and culture and the contributions made by distinguished educators of the Hellenic language.

On Friday night, April 3rd, the Australian Hellenic Educators' Association of NSW (AHEA) {former 'NSW Modern Greek Teachers' Association'} organised the “2009 Hellenic Language Awards Ceremony” in the Central Learning Block Amphitheatre right in the heart of the University of NSW at Kensington, in the eastern suburbs of Sydney. It was an event well attended by more than 250 people present and by many distinguished guests, parents and students. Amongst the special guests were: Professor Knobbs and Professor McKechnie from Macquarie University's History Faculty; Dr Elisavet Kefallinou, lecturer at the Modern Greek Department of Macquarie University; Dr Kyriaki Frantzi, lecturer at the Modern Greek Department of NSW University; Dr Panayiota Nazou and Dr Andonis Dracopoulos, lecturers at the Modern Greek Faculty of Sydney University; Mr Alexandros Geladaris, Greek language consultant at the NSW Department of Education & Training, Ryde State Office; Ms Lily Carahaliou, Coordinator of the Greek Afternoon Schools of the Greek Orthodox Community of NSW; Mr Yiannakis Papatheodotou from the Bank of Cyprus; Mr Vasilios Minas, President of the Panthessalian Benevolent Association; Ms Katina Nicholas, President of the Federation of Aegean Islands of Sydney & NSW; Mr Pavlos Theodorakopoulos, member of the Pan-Peloponnesian Federation; Ms Katerina Kouvas, President of the Greek Australian Professional Association (GAPA); Ms Eleni Katsaros, AHEPA representative and others. The am-

phitheatre which was adorned with flags of Greece, Cyprus, Australia, the 12 pointed Macedonian star of Vergina, the European Union flag brought a colourful decorative atmosphere to the venue and the ensuing ceremony.

The ceremony commenced with the National Anthems of Australia and Greece. AHEA Vice President, Dimitrios Kametopoulos, who was Masters of Ceremonies, welcomed everyone in Greek and English to the event and gave a very brief outline of the awards history. He then introduced the AHEA President Dr Panayiotis Diamadis for his opening address. Dr Diamadis focussed on the achievements made by students in the 2008 Higher School Certificate (HSC) Modern and Classical Greek studies at secondary and tertiary as well as in Ancient History (Greek option) at HSC level. He did though place a great deal of emphasis on the primary school children who were being awarded with a “Phevos” award for their recognition for excelling in Greek language classes as they themselves hold the key to continuing their studies at a higher level but he reiterated the fact that everyone, that is parents, children, politicians, educators, the media and the community at large, need to be supporting Hellenic studies. This could be not more stressed as particularly now,

Greek students in the secondary level are slowly declining and the Greek language studies program will be at risk of its continuation at the University of NSW from next year. This is indeed a dire prediction as numbers are declining and Dr Diamadis urged that without concerted action, the Greek language may shrink at a faster rate in the Antipodes. In concluding, he congratulated the 2009 Hellenic Award recipients and wished further success for everyone in their studies. Additionally, Dr Diamadis thanked every member of the AHEA Committee for their tireless efforts and work in the lead up to the ceremony and in particular, Ms Anna Skribias, Clemton Park Primary School and Saturday School of Community Language Greek Teacher as the 2009 Hellenic Awards Coordinator.

The AHEA has established the Hellenic Awards over 15 years now and they include the following categories:

the “Athena” awards for the top HSC Modern Greek (Beginners, Continuers and Extension students), the top HSC Classical Greek (Continuers and Extension students) and the top HSC Ancient History (Greek option) students. {Athena was the ancient Greek goddess of wisdom and knowledge-protector of the city of Athens and was the chosen name for one of the mascots of the Athens 2004 Sum-

mer Olympic Games}

the “Phevos” awards to Year 6 primary school students excelling in their Greek language classes from all Greek-language providers {Phevos or Apollo was the Greek god of music, light and literature and was the chosen name for one of the mascots of the Athens 2004 Summer Olympic Games} the “Alexander the Great” awards to the top HSC Ancient History students who excelled in the Greek option questions {Alexander the Great or Alexander the Macedonian was one of the greatest leaders in history and the instigator for the spread of Hellenic language and culture during his expedition from Macedonia and the rest of Greece to the East reaching the frontiers of India, after uniting all the Greek city-states} the “Socrates” awards to University students of Modern and Classical Greek Departments excelling in their Hellenic studies and to Evening/College adult students recognized for their efforts learning Greek at that level {Socrates was one of the greatest thinkers of all times, contributing to Greek and therefore western philosophy} the “Kosmas o Aitolos” awards to educators of Greek who have contributed to the teaching and learning of Greek at their Greek-language providers and schools {Kosmas o Aitolos was from the prefecture of Aetolia in Western Greece and was one of the most important teachers prior to the Greek Revolution of 1821, helping to spread and maintain the Greek language under Ottoman rule}

“Kostis Palamas” awards to University students of Modern and Classical Greek Departments excelling in their Hellenic literature studies {Kostis Palamas was one of the well-known poets in Modern Greece, acclaimed by many as Greece's greatest}

During the Awards ceremony, a cultural Hellenic intermission took place with the screening of a highly interesting bilingual-Greek and English-15 minute Power-point documentary on the contribution of the Greek culture

