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"I recall in my earlier years at school sometimes being embarrassed about my origins. There were taunts in the playground because my name was different; I went to Greek scripture lessons; I observed fast days; I celebrated Easter at a different time; I had different play lunch prepared by my mother; and even because, after school I attended Greek language lessons while other children went to the park and played. Reconciling cultural differences is not easy for children. It has left me with insight and sympathy for the most recently arrived in our community seeking to make a new home and a new life in a new land. For me, as for them, somehow and most times, things managed to work themselves out. After all, boys from Redfern do not cry, especially those of Greek parentage; we just push along."

Whilst both my parents were unskilled, they did not lack drive, ambition or energy. Like most Greek migrants at the time, they appreciated the value of education to their children in their new land. They saw that it meant the opening of new pathways to a better life. [A very good....Life in Australia.....there's the title of that book again...].

John's parents came from the Greek island of Cos. Cos, of course in the island of Hippocrates, the father of Medicine, in the western world. On the 10th Aug 2005, John Hatzistergos, was appointed as the Minister for Health in NSW. The first function that he had to attend was in the town of Dubbo in Central Western New South. At the function he was presented with one of the most extraordinary "gifts" that an Australian could bestow upon a Greek-Australian, particularly one who derives from the island of Cos. What the offi-

cial in Dubbo had done was to import from Cos, a "cutting" from the original Hippocratic tree. They had established it, and they had replanted it in Dubbo. That was the Australians gift to the new Greek-Australian Minister for Health.

That exemplifies for me both the warmth with which the Australians have received Greeks into this country, and the respect that Greeks have elicited from Australians.

John Hatzistergos, you have done Greek-Australians proud, and it is my exquisite pleasure to call upon you to address this meeting, and to officially launch the two books, *Life in Australia in Greek*, and *Life in Australia in English*.....

The Hon. John Hatzistergos' speech in response.

Mr Vasileios Tolios, Consul-General of Greece in Sydney, Local Government Councillors, distinguished academics, other distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is my pleasure to join you this evening in launching the new edition of *Life in Australia*; one of the most influential and significant chronicles of early Greek settlement in Australia.

Allow me to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet: the Gadigal clan of the Eora nation.

I am delighted to convey Premier Kristina Keneally's personal greetings and best wishes to the Kytherian World Heritage Fund and the Greek-Australian community.

As many of you know, *Life in Australia* was first published in the Greek language in 1916. And while the authors had not intended for the book to encourage Greeks to emigrate, it certainly had a profound effect on the growth of the Greek community in Australia.

This was the first book to be published in Australia about Australia in the Greek lan-



John Hatzistergos speaking to a packed audience.

guage.

When I opened the book at random my eye fell on a group of people photographed on a ship [p.74].

A single word beneath sits beneath the photograph: Μεταναστα — Immigrants in the new English edition.

I looked at the faces and the figures.

And as I began to read the chapter entitled *Travel Between Europe & Australia*, I thought what a diverse and wonderful group of people!

And yet, so ordinary at first glance.

The narrative is simple, but emotive — the year is 1913; the vessel is a British steamship — a ship "crammed full of passengers of every class, background, sex, age and nationality, "the majority were British, but there were also French, Austrians, Germans, Italians and the ever-present Greeks".

The writer also describes disembarking at Sydney Harbour and marvels at the lack of crowding, pushing and blaspheming — something he observed in the harbours of Europe — practices which he sees as "uncouth and barbarous".

This is just one of the various entries in the book, entries about the lives of Greeks in Australia, the biographies of successful Greek immigrants, and other interesting facts and photographs; entries which speak a little differently to someone reading the book in the twenty first century.

I read the book and marvel how, on many an occasion, Greeks have migrated to other countries and not lost their faith or their culture; on the contrary! They have understood them all the better and they have lived them all the more intensely.

Back when the book was originally published, written in καθαρευουσα Greek, it had a different effect on the reader, capturing the imagination of the Greeks, offering them a new country and a new beginning.

And while Greece may have preferred to hold on to many of her citizens that immigrated abroad, it can be proud of the achievements of her Diaspora, especially here in the Antipodes where the Hellenic community has made — and continues to make — a profound contribution to the mul-

ticultural mosaic of both our State and our Nation.

The NSW Government is grateful to the Kytherian World Heritage Fund for publishing a new edition of such noteworthy book, and making it available in both the Greek and English languages.

On behalf of the Premier and the Government, I thank the Kytherian World Heritage Fund for its dedication to ensuring that such a historically significant book is available for posterity and I have pleasure in launching *Η Ζωή εν Αυστραλία — Life in Australia*, 1916, & 2009.

This book should be in the library shelves in every Hellenic and Philhellenic home in Australia. The cost of the book is nominal. A single English version is \$50, and a single Greek version is \$50. But if you buy both at the same time — you gain a 20% discount and you pay only \$80. Postage is \$10 extra.

To go to the central information page about the book:

<http://www.kythera-family.net/index.php?nav=6-82&cid=123&did=10476&pageflip=3>

To purchase a copy of the book:

Download a copy of the ORDER FORM - go to - <http://www.kythera-family.net/LIA/orderform.pdf>

Contact transoz@bigpond.net.au, or info@atomindustries.com.au

If you are paying by cheque, make cheque payable to KAA. Kytherian World Heritage Fund, and mail to :

P. O. Box 513, Rozelle, NSW, 2039

Books will be despatched immediately.

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Greek Seniors' Christmas Party held on 15 December 2009 at Brighton Le Sands