

Australian Hellenic Council

Australian Hellenic Council meets with Government officials regarding the pensions

The Australian Hellenic Council (AHC) met in Melbourne with officials from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Centrelink on 27 May 2010. The meeting discussed progress and issues that have arisen with the implementation of the Social Security Agreement between Australia and Greece.

Ms. Michalina Stawyskyj PSM, International Branch Manager represented Minister Macklin, Centrelink International was represented by Mr. Pat Phillips and Mr. Peter Hutchinson. From the AHC were George Vellis (NSW Coordinator), Patricia Drivas (National Coordinator), Dean Tsoubakos (National Secretary) and Bill

Papastergiadis (President, Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne & Victoria). Harry Danalis (President, Greek Community of NSW) and Costas Vertzayias participated by phone link.

Mr. Phillips stated that since the start of the Agreement in October 2008, over 16,000 claims for a Greek pension had been lodged from Australia. Greece has advised Centrelink that, to date, 850 Greek pensions have been granted and 250 claims rejected. It is not known how many out of the 850 have in fact received their payment. The large backlog on claims is mainly due to the manual processing in Greece.

Also, over 5500 claims have been received for an Australian Age Pension. Of these, 60 per cent have been

processed with 2400 new Australian pensions now being paid in Greece. The remainder are expected to be finalised within the next three months.

The AHC delegation expressed the community's concerns that Centrelink has moved to reduce Australian payments based on a Greek claim being granted. With no payments forthcoming from Greece, considerable hardship has been caused to some individuals. A request was made for the Department's assistance in facilitating this process.

Centrelink advised the meeting that when advice has been received that an overseas pension is granted, the Department is obliged to reassess a person's Australian pension. Under the in-

come test, only 20 per cent of recipients had their Australian pension rate reduced.

It was agreed that Centrelink would, upon request, liaise with Greek pension funds on behalf of individuals in the event that payments are interrupted or granted and not received within the normal timeframe.

Centrelink's International Services informed of a specifically dedicated Greek agreement team available for assistance in the Greek language. The number to call from Australia is - 131673.

Finally, the Australian Hellenic Council discussed raising delays in the processing of the Greek Pension applications with the Greek Embassy.

AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLKIDS RAISE \$11 MILLION DOLLARS EACH YEAR FOR COMMUNITIES AND KIDS IN NEED

For the very first time, the massive financial impact of philanthropic contributions made by Australian schools and kids throughout Australia has been revealed, with close to \$11,000,000* raised for charities each year through outstanding achievements in school-based philanthropy.

SchoolAid's inaugural Kids Helping Kids Awards will recognise and reward the outstanding fundraising achievements of Australian schoolkids, as well as the tireless work of the teachers and principals helping to develop the next generation of philanthropists. Kids Helping Kids Awards partners, Microsoft and Cartoon Network, are providing an incredible range of technology and entertainment prizes to recognise and reward these achievements, whilst the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation is a primary supporter of the Awards.

SchoolAid Founder Sean Gordon congratulated Australian teachers and students on this incredible fundraising achievement, saying, "Australian principals, teachers and schoolchildren have been giving back to their communities through fundraising and philanthropic activities for many years. It's truly wonderful to see these selfless and ongoing activities finally being acknowledged. The Kids Helping Kids Awards will celebrate these achievements and recognise these activities at a national level. The importance of supporting school-based philanthropy is clear, as children who learn about the value of giving at an early age tend to become life-long donors and volunteers."

Entries for the Kids Helping Kids Awards are now open, with great prizes and national recognition for the top achievers. Schools across the nation are encouraged to register for the Awards and to share their stories of support for kids in their local communities, around Australia, and throughout the world.

In addition to strong government and community support, the Kids Helping Kids Awards has the endorsement of the Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA), Principals Australia (PA) and state Education Departments across Australia. SchoolAid encourages philanthropy in Australian kids, tapping into their innate concern for their peers and kids in need everywhere, whilst fostering leadership, resilience and independence. The 'Kids Helping Kids Awards' provides a much-needed avenue for these critical life skills and values to be rewarded through a national Awards program.



Sydney's stepping stone to host the World Cup

Sydney comes alive with the Sydney Festival of Football

A brand new festival is coming to Sydney- the Sydney Festival of Football!

The Festival of Football International Club Tournament, is a new event and will take place exclusively in Sydney. It is a round robin format with three football super powers from Europe taking on our very own A-League champions- Sydney FC.

This exciting Football concept will feature 6 round robin matches with competition points accumulated for winning matches and scoring goals. 3 points will be awarded for a win, 1 point for a draw and 1 point for every goal scored! The result is open and dynamic football with the competition alive until the last game and the winner determined only at the very final whistle!

The four teams competing in

the Sydney Festival of Football are Sydney FC (A League Champions), Blackburn Rovers (English Premier League), Glasgow Rangers (Scottish Premier League Champions) and Greek team AEK Athens FC (11 times Greek Champions).

The Sydney Football Stadium will host all matches and tickets start at just \$29. Each ticket is valid for both games, giving you Double the Fun, Double the Value and Double the Goals!

"This inaugural tournament is the first of what will be an annual tournament in Sydney to attract global football brands each and every year.

"There is no secret Sydney wants to hold the World Cup final and this event will make a strong statement about Sydney as Australia's home of Football", said Kristina Keneally, NSW Premier.

The schedule of matches are:

Sunday 25 July

12.45pm: Sydney FC v AEK Athens FC

3pm: Blackburn Rovers v Glasgow Rangers

Wednesday 28 July

6pm: AEK Athens FC v Blackburn Rovers

8.15pm: Sydney FC v Glasgow Rangers

Saturday 31st July

5pm: AEK Athens FC v Glasgow Rangers

7.15pm: Sydney FC v Blackburn Rovers

"I would like to extend an invitation to the Scottish, English and Greek communities located across Australia. Book a ticket to Sydney and cheer on your teams!", Keneally concluded.

Sydney hosted the Olympics in 2000 and now the next step is the World Cup! Come and score your own goal by watching International Club Football at its best!