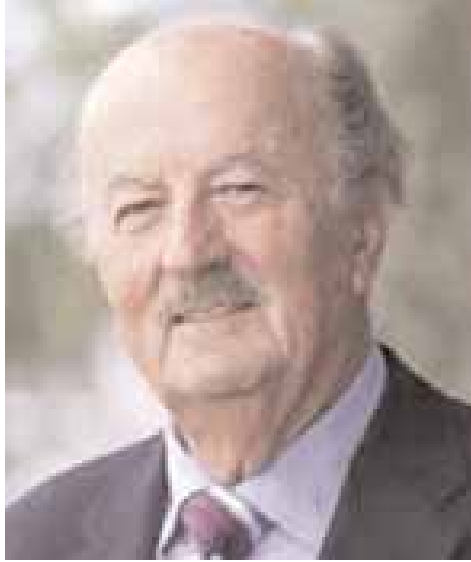


# Greek Australian Awards Nominee Profiles

Profiles continued from last edition

## Constantinos (Dino) Nikias OAM



- Businessman
- Philanthropist
- Volunteer

### *A Quiet Achiever – extending a helping hand when help was needed*

A respected businessman and owner of the Nikias Property Group, Mr Nikias has been voluntarily helping the ACT community since 1957, just three years after he migrated to Australia from Greece.

From 1957 to 1964, he volunteered his services to help newly arrived immigrants in Port Melbourne, Sydney and Bonegilla Camp in Albury-Wodonga. This interest in the wellbeing of others has continued throughout his life and has been highlighted by his sponsorship of 42 families from Greece, the Philippines, Cambodia, Laos and France.

Mr Nikias has been actively involved in and supportive of organisations and causes such as the Salvos, Heart Foundation, Paralympics Games, World Vision Australia and the Australian Cancer Research Foundation. He is also an Ambassador for Diabetes ACT.

For most of his life, Dino has been based in Canberra. He and his wife (Dimitra) have been extremely influential in helping Ambassadors from Greece to Australia “acclimatize” to their new home. His wife in fact until recently, due to her retirement, worked full time at the Greek Embassy.

Since the late 1960’s Dino has been involved in residential and commercial property development. He is the Managing Director of the Nikias Property Group Pty Ltd. Some of his landmark building achievements include a number of Telstra Buildings in the ACT, the John James Hospital (Clinical Services Building) in Deacon and the Canberra Eye Hospital.

His achievements have recently been acknowledged by the Australian Government (when he was awarded the Order of Australia medal in 2010 and by the Greek Government, in being awarded the Order of the Phoenix, Silver Cross in 2008.

The Order of the Phoenix is bestowed by the Greek Government to Greek citizens who have excelled in

the arts and literature, science, public administration, shipping, commerce, and industry. It is also awarded to foreigners who have helped raise Greece’s international prestige.

Dino falls into that select group of hard working Greek Australian’s whose efforts over many years have been recognised at the highest level, by both the Government of Australia and also the Government of Greece. Dino is regarded the quintessential quiet achiever.

Dino was born in Kallithea, a town near Sparta within the Prefecture of Laconia, in the Peloponnese and emigrated to Australia in November 1954.

## The Hon. John Pandazopoulos MP



- Politician
- Promoter of tourism and major events
- Community involvement

### *Politician and Active Supporter of the Greek-Australian Community*

John Pandazopoulos is a current member of the Victorian Parliament and has been active within the Greek-Australian community for over 20 years.

He started university in 1982 and became active in student politics and the Australian Labor Party. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Monash University in 1987, majoring in politics, sociology and geography.

In the same year he was elected as a local Councillor in the City of Berwick, commencing his political life. He was also active in the union movement commencing work as an Organiser in the Australian Insurance Employees Union Vic/Tas and then as a delegate to the Victorian Trades Hall Council for 5 years.

He was Mayor in 1990/91, a delegate to the peak Local Government body in Victoria the Municipal Association of Victoria and on its Executive in 1990 and 1991. In 1992 he was elected as the State Member for Dandenong, and has been re-elected in 1995, 1999, 2002 and 2006.

Prior to 1999, John served as a Shadow Minister for various portfolios including multicultural affairs, racing, tourism, gaming, consumer affairs and

sport and recreation. Between 1999 and 2006 John served as a Minister in the Bracks Labor Government, seven years in Multicultural Affairs, Tourism and Major Events, and Gaming, as well as shorter terms in Major Projects and Employment.

As Minister responsible for Multicultural Affairs, he was responsible for supporting the 560 Hellenic community organisations in Victoria, and expanded funding for the learning of the Greek language, expansion of translating and interpreting services, and financial support to many Greek Cultural events, as well as upgrades of many Hellenic owned community halls and buildings.

He was also responsible for the program that is seeing Melbourne’s Greek precinct upgraded. He oversaw Victorian Government funding for the Australian Hellenic War Memorial of which he is now a Patron and was a key leader in expanding the Sister City relationship with Thessaloniki and Melbourne.

His active involvement in public life has seen him being declared one of 100 legends of Victoria University’s Faculty of Law and Business for his contribution to tourism and major events in Australia.

He represents Greek heritage politicians as President of the World Hellenic Inter-Parliamentary Association (Athens), and represents Australia’s 1200 politicians on the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Executive Committee in London, having served on its Board as Australian Regional Representative between 2007-2009.

His parents migrated to Australia from Greece in 1957 from the Prefectures of Messinia and Ilias. He is the youngest child of 4 siblings and has two primary aged children.

## Vicky Paranomos



- Community worker
- Volunteer

### *Being a VOLUNTEER the most rewarding and selfless deed you could do in life*

Vicky Paranomos was born in Sydney, the daughter of migrant parents who immigrated to Australia from the Peloponnese. Her late father heralds from a Platanos, a town within the Achaian Prefecture and her mother

from Kiato of the Korinthian Prefecture. Both prefectures are within the Peloponnese.

With qualifications in education, Vicky has worked for many years in the public sector across a range of portfolios including administration, management and public education.

Her main involvement is with the Westmead Children’s Hospital where she has been volunteering for the last 19 years. When she was a child she was a patient at Royal Alexander Hospital (now CHW) with epilepsy and later diagnosed with hydrocephalus which was the cause of the epilepsy. This ruined her chances of becoming a nurse so she decided she was going to help kids by volunteering instead.

At the Children’s Hospital work in various departments and does a variety of jobs for example mail outs, bandaged bear day, teddy bears picnic and selling raffle tickets, helping out at clinics.

Another area of Vicky’s focus is with the Road Safety Unit at Kidsafe NSW Unit, providing information to parents and carers on correct choice and usage of child restraints in vehicles.

Vicky is also an avid volunteer at the Greek Festival of Sydney, Swimming Australia, Hockey Australia and Wheel chair spots. Vicky also has volunteered at The Blackmore’s running festival and at the 2009 Peloponnesian Festival, at international events such as the 2009 World Masters games the 2007 and 2009 youth Olympics and the 2004 Athens Olympic and Paralympics.

## Dr George Peponis



- Medical doctor
- Professional footballer

Dr George Peponis (born 1953 in the Greek town of Levidi, near Tripoli within the Prefecture of Arkadia in the Peloponnese) is a former rugby league player for the Canterbury Bulldogs, New South Wales and for the Australian national side.

He was the first player born outside Australia to captain the Australian rugby league team. He played in eight Tests for the Australia between 1978 and 1980, as captain on five consecutive occasions in 1979 and 1980.

The Peponis family immigrated to Australia when George was 18 months old. He attended Canterbury Boys’