



## Attorney-General plants a piece of history at the new Orange Health Service site

The Hon. John Hatzistergos MLC Attorney General for NSW and Minister for Citizenship was the guest of honour at a special tree-planting ceremony at the Orange Health Service site, marking a hugely significant contribution to the landscape.

A rare cutting from the original Hippocrates Plane Tree, located on the island of Kos in Greece, was presented to the Western NSW Local Health Network by the Greek Community of Orange and District.

"The Hippocrates Plane Tree was planted some 500 years ago by Hippocrates, a famous Greek Physician,

and it's still standing in Kos today," said Mr Hatzistergos.

"Hippocrates is widely remembered as the Father of Medicine, and he is said to have taught the art of medicine under the shade of this now famous tree. My family is from the island of Kos, so it's a significant honour to plant a piece of the tree here in Orange."

President of the Greek Community of Orange and District, Michael Gryllis, nursed the precious cutting all the way from Kos to Australia in 2007. His brother, Orange City Councillor Chris Gryllis, recalled the eventful journey.

"Three years ago we had an idea to

request a cutting from the tree in Kos and donate it to the new Orange Health Service, as a show of support from the Greek community," said Councillor Gryllis.

"When Michael arrived with the cutting at Sydney airport, it was presented to customs, then fumigated and couriered to the Quarantine Station at Eastern Creek, where it lived for three months under the care of staff."

"After completing trails of paperwork and paying more than \$1500 in quarantine fees, we finally took the cutting home to Orange, where it's been thriving in preparation for it's

new home at the Orange Health Service site," said Mr Gryllis.

"It was indeed a long journey, but this tree is truly priceless."

Orange Health Service General Manager Narelle Davis, said hospital staff are thrilled to receive the special donation.

"This tree is a real piece of history, and embodies all the values of education, resilience and growth we're striving for in the new Orange Health Service," said Ms Davis.

"I would like to personally thank the Greek Community and the Hon. John Hatzistergos for offering this tree the reception it truly deserves."

### Dawn of a new phase of growth for Laiki Bank Australia Ltd:

## A new shareholder joins Marfin Popular Bank

Laiki Bank (Australia) Limited has announced today that it has embarked on a new expansion phase following the signing of a share purchase agreement between its shareholder, Marfin Popular Bank Public Co Ltd (MPB), and Bank of Beirut s.a.l. Under this Agreement, Bank of Beirut s.a.l. will acquire a majority shareholding in Laiki Bank.

The acquisition of a majority control in Laiki Bank (Australia) Limited by Bank of Beirut s.a.l. is a significant step forward for Laiki Bank (Australia) Limited. Post the transaction, the equity capital of the bank will double therefore propelling the Bank into a stronger position in the Australian banking sector. The Bank aims to achieve significant growth by focusing on its existing predominantly Greek-Australian customer base and by generating new customers both within and beyond its existing target communities.

The transaction has been approved by the Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority and the Central Bank of Cyprus and is subject to the approval of the Central Bank of Lebanon.

Continuing Chairman of Laiki Bank, Nicholas Pappas, described the move as an "exciting" event in the history of Laiki Bank in Australia that would enable the Bank to reach out to new customers, while at the same time providing the Bank with the resources to build upon its existing customer relationships within the Greek-Australian community.

"This is the beginning of a new era for Laiki Bank. With the additional capital to be injected by our new shareholder, Laiki Bank will now be well-positioned to target and attract an extensive range of customers, while at the same time continuing to



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provide the excellent service it is reputed for among its loyal customer base."

Reflecting on the achievements of Laiki Bank, Chief Executive Officer, Michalis Athanasiou, commented:

"The Bank's strong governance, the exceptional service it provides, our competitive products and the strength of our local Board of Directors have all contributed to ensure sustained growth. This has attracted the support of a new shareholder, Bank of Beirut, which has committed to ensure further consolidation and expansion in Australia."

James Wakim, formerly CEO of Arab Bank Australia, has been appointed to lead Laiki Bank through this new phase. A professional career banker with over 30 years' high-level experience in banking in Australia, Mr Wakim is confident that the change will trigger a new era of even stronger interaction with the Greek-Australian community.

"Laiki Bank has established an excellent reputation in the banking sector and has catered extremely well to the Greek and Cypriot communities in Australia for many years. We plan to build on these foundations in the years ahead and to reinforce the already existing indelible links between us."

The strategic partnership with Bank of Beirut is expected to create significant economies of scale for Laiki Bank, while at the same time improving the efficiency and profitability of the Bank's oper-

ations in Australia.

Marfin Popular Bank will continue to maintain its remaining stake in Laiki Bank, working together with Bank of Beirut to cover new grounds in Australia with the mutual understanding that this strategic partnership will also be explored in the areas of common interest in Cyprus, Lebanon and Greece.

Bank of Beirut s.a.l. is one of the largest banks in Lebanon operating in the following 8 countries: Lebanon, Cyprus, the United Kingdom, Germany, the United Arab Emirates, the Sultanate of Oman, Iraq and Nigeria. It is one of the leading banks in Lebanon in terms of Housing Loans and is undisputedly the leader in Trade Finance and Asset Management, with a strong foothold in corporate banking. The Bank focuses on the social development of the communities it serves, quality of service and the creation of shareholders' value. For more information, visit: [www.bankofbeirut.com](http://www.bankofbeirut.com)

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### **Laiki Bank Australia**

Since its inception in Australia, Laiki Bank Australia has earned a reputation of working closely with its customers to understand and meet their individual needs. Offering customers highly competitive banking with personal service continues to be the Bank's competitive edge. Laiki Bank's vision is to stand out as a dynamic, effective and reliable financial institution for all Australians.