

## Pontian ceremony in the Eleusina region of West Attica in Athens on 29 May

A ceremony was conducted in the Eleusina region of West Attica in Athens to unveil a monument dedicated to the Pontian people on 29 May.

The “New Trapezounta” Pontian Society of Eleusina and its President, Mrs. Sophia Kosmidou, hosted the ceremony, which was attended by several hundred people. It featured traditional Pontian music by the musical schools of Ilias Ifantidis and Dimitri Karasavvidis and dancing performed by members of the local community.

Among the official guests were Mr. George Varithimiadis, the President of the Association of Pontian Societies of Southern Greece and the Islands of the Panpontian Federation of Greece, it’s General Secretary Mrs. Christina Hafousidou and Australian Army Officer Lieutenant Luke Haitas, who is himself Pontian Greek.

Lieutenant Haitas said he was warmly welcomed by all who attended and felt very emotional during the ceremony.

“It was an honour to be invited to the event and being a proud Pontian I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to attend the ceremony,” Lieu-

tenant Haitas said.

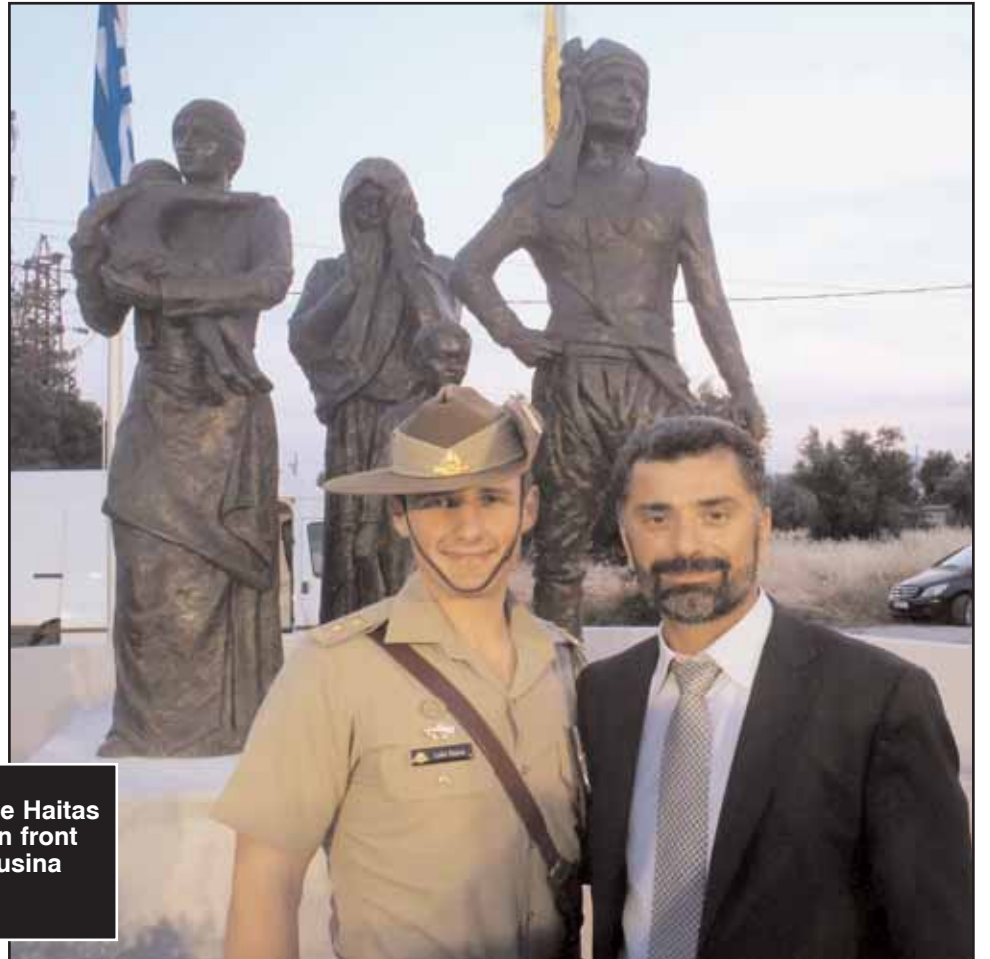
“The new monument is breathtaking and being there to see it unveiled was very emotional for me.

“I immediately thought of all of my family who died in the conflict in Pontus and two of my great grandfathers who fought there for many years.”

Mr. George Varithimiadis said that it was an honour to have Lieutenant Haitas attend the ceremony and that it was encouraging to see that Pontians all over the world are remembering their history.

“Seeing an Australian Army Officer who lives on the other side of the world give so much importance to this ceremony shows how vital it is to remember our Pontian people and their struggles,” Mr. Varithimiadis said.

“The Pontian people are very proud of Luke and his mission to discover more about his family history.”



Australian Army Officer Lieutenant Luke Haitas and Mr. George Varithimiadis stand in front of the Pontian monument in the Eleusina region of West Attica, Athens.



## Diplomats embrace multiculturalism

The world wide appeal of Australia’s multicultural society was evident at a function held in Parliament House, last week.

More than 50 diplomats and 40 members of parliament attended the Federal Parliamentary Friends of Multiculturalism about “The Role of Diplomats in Multicultural Australia”.

Co-Chairs Labor Member for Calwell Maria Vamvakinou and Liberal Member for McMillan Russell Broadbent said they were pleased to provide a bipartisan platform for the diplomatic corps and MPS to exchange ideas.

The co-chairs added they were honoured to have the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Canberra and the Ambassador of Argentina Pedro Villagra Delgado as the guest speaker.

“We’ve been overwhelmed by the support the Friends group has received since its launch on March 24,” Ms Vamvakinou said.

“Today is a testament to that support, in just over an hour we’ve had a global exchange of ideas without leaving the room.”

Mr Broadbent said the benefits of multiculturalism added to the vibrancy and productivity of Australian Society.

“One cannot ignore the enormous influence multiculturalism has had on our nation.”

The group’s next function will focus on multiculturalism in Victoria at an event to be held at Alphington Grammar School on June 24th.

