

Stories of Greek Migration & Settlement

“I left with a suitcase which was almost empty, a passport, an airplane ticket, the photo of my future husband and my hope in God for a better life.”

Maria Petrohilos

This is an extract from the writing of one participant of the Project, *Ταξιδεύω με ένα μολύβι στο χέρι*, a Project of the Greek Welfare Centre in co-operation with the newspaper *Ο ΚΟΣΜΟΣ*.

Telling one's story of immigration is an integral component of adjustment and resettlement. From the experience of this Project, it became apparent how important it was to also have the stories heard and documented.

The Greek Welfare Centre is the welfare and community arm of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and it has been serving the Greek community and the wider community for over 40 years. Through its casework, seniors' groups and projects, the Centre has been able to document numerous stories of immigration, from the perspective of Greek migrants.

For the last two years, the Centre has been working on this project in collaboration with the Greek newspaper, *Ο ΚΟΣΜΟΣ*. The aims of the project were to collect and record stories of immigration. Each participant told their story and wrote their story in their own words. The writing proved to have a powerful impact on the participants and provided inspiration to others. This project had the added benefit that their stories were published in the newspaper (*Ο ΚΟΣΜΟΣ*). Writing their stories in addition to telling them was a way of sharing their stories not only with their families but with the wider community and even with family and

friends in Greece.

Every story of immigration is personal and individual but collectively they tell the story of Greek immigration in Australia. The shared themes that appear in all the stories involve family, community, enforced separation, nostalgia, loss and grief. The shared experience entails the emotional and psychological stress

