

# Peter Karpouzis Sydney's Longest Running Delicatessen?

**B**ankstown Plaza's Olympic Continental Delicatessen and Butchery celebrates its sixtieth year of operation, since its opening way back in 1956.

Olympic Deli's owner, Peter Karpouzis, migrated to Australia from the Greek island of Lesvos in 1948 and it was while working at Aroney's Cafe in Penrith that he met and became lifelong friends with Manuel Lagoutaris. They saved enough money to buy a Cocktail Bar in Guilford in 1952. Having a fridge of smallgoods in the shop motivated Peter and Manuel to look for a better business opportunity and they were able to find a vacant shop on Chapel Rd, Bankstown, where they opened their delicatessen.

Naming the shop, Olympic Delicatessen, was easy as Peter recounts, 'It was an Olympic year and with Melbourne hosting the Games, it was being promoted everywhere. Manuel and I had bought some bricks to build a small wall and, as it turned out, they commemorated the Melbourne Olympics by embossing the Olympic rings and 1956 on them. So, it was inspirational to name our shop, Olympic.'

With so many eastern and central European migrants living in Bankstown and the surrounding area at the time, they yearned for their respective homelands' delicacies. With the help of a Latvian employee, Peter learnt how to make smallgoods such as salami, smoked salami, liverwurst and continental sausages. For his meats, he would buy them from the abattoirs in Homebush. In 1959, he visited Holland where he organised to import Edam cheese and smoked herring; while on the trip, he detoured to his homeland where he met and married Maria Hatzikomninou.

Having a cinema across the road, the partners build a milk bar counter and catered for the cinema's patrons by making milk shakes, fruit juices and light snacks. The milk bar section of the shop lasted many years.

Manuel unexpectedly passed away in 1980 and Peter continued the shop; the shop's original smoke house was rebuilt to Australian standards, and Peter still smokes his smallgoods today, and a butchery, with a much larger cool-room, was built in the rear of the shop.

After sixty years working at the shop, Peter still enjoys coming to work and he has his daughter, Joanna, working at the shop too. For Peter, the longevity of the business has developed a special relationship with Bankstown and his customers, 'After all these years, you become attached to your customers; you know their tastes, the way they like their meat cut, and how to serve them. You become part of their lives, part of the community.'

