

# Greeks

The early history of Greeks in Queensland goes back to about 1870 when a priest from the island of Corfu became an Australian citizen. Greeks started arriving in Queensland about 1860, and their numbers grew steadily, spreading into the Outback. After 1900 several Greek families established themselves in Queensland where they worked as cane-cutters, in mines or became shop owners. Through the years, these migrants showed an ability to adapt to new conditions, to have a progressive attitude as members of a different society, to be independent, have community spirit and adhere to their traditional values. All these are virtues that helped them to become useful citizens in Australia and to care for their children, who were encouraged to receive a good education.

The history of Greeks in Queensland is long and full of courage and achievement. It has been created by each individual migrant, man or woman, who fought a heroic battle for acceptance in Australia.

## Early Years of Establishment

The first organised community group of Greeks in Queensland was formed in Brisbane in 1913 under the name of the 'Greek Association'. In 1918 the Office of the Consul General for Greece was established with Christos (Christy) Freeleagus the first Honorary Consul. During that period, the Greek community's centre was in Charlotte Street, Brisbane. A few years later, the first Orthodox Church of St George was established on the same property.

About the same period, other Greek communities started forming in other parts of Queensland. In 1925 Innisfail established its own Hellenic Association, which in 1935 became the Orthodox Community of Innisfail. This community covered a large area in northern Queensland.

During that early period of settlement several progressive Greeks successfully established themselves at various places in Queensland and became integral members of society. In 1906 George Cominos from the island of Kythera lived in Cairns, and he expressed his sensitivity and love

for nature when he wrote the book *The Northern Wonderland*, in which he described the Great Barrier Reef as a vast natural marine garden. Cairns became home for many early Greek migrants who, for a period, dominated the catering industry there.

Peter Coronis became Mayor of Gladstone and has been an excellent ambassador of the Greek ideal. He first followed in the footsteps of his father, Mick, who had developed an impressive catering business where he employed more than 30 staff.

One of the most moving stories comes from the city of Townsville, where a World War II hero, Corporal Angelo Barboutis, was born and educated. Angelo served in Papua New Guinea with the Australian army. When the Japanese started attacking, his platoon engaged two enemy barges full of Japanese troops, who tried to establish themselves on Papuan soil. Angelo, manning a Vickers machine-gun, kept firing until his magazine was shot away. Then he threw hand grenades at the Japanese, until he was killed by a sniper's bullet. Angelo died a hero in the prime of his youth. To commemorate his heroic act, the City Council of Townsville in 1995 gave the name 'Barboutis' to one of the city's streets and erected a plaque. Angelo Barboutis became a hero for the Greek-Australians, and his heroism epitomised Greek courage, strength and pride.

In Brisbane the Greek Orthodox Community of St George was formed in March 1944 as an umbrella-type community, covering all Greeks in Queensland. In May 1958, the foundation stone of the Church was laid in West End. Father Gregory Sakellariou has been the community priest since then. Due to increased responsibilities and a heavy work load, the Archdiocese in 1999 made available to the Parish of St George Father Dimitrios Tsakas, a young Brisbane-born priest. The Greek community of Brisbane continues to show an undivided respect for the clergy and Orthodoxy and has always committed itself to the preservation of the core elements of Greek identity, which are the language, tradition and Orthodox religion. With the church in place, the Greek School

complex in operation and with a very impressive Entertainment and Convention Centre completed, the Brisbane community was on the road to fulfilling its commitments. An additional building that represented Greek tradition was acquired and became the 'Hellenic House'.

In view of the increasing Greek population in Brisbane, another two Orthodox churches were built, one in the suburb of Mt Gravatt and the other at Zillmere.

All three parishes have their own Greek schools, which enrol about 320 children a year. The schools of St George employ 10 teachers who teach language, history, geography and tradition to about 220 pupils. In the entire State, there are approximately 450 children of Greek parentage who attend community schools or are privately taught the Greek language.

The Greek community at the Gold Coast has established its own Orthodox Church of St Anna. Outside the Brisbane area, there are the Greek communities of Innisfail, Home Hill, Rockhampton, Cairns, Townsville, Mackay and Toowoomba. Each one separately represents a relatively small number of members, but they all maintain their true traditional principles.

## Greece and the Greeks

Greece, with Athens its capital city, is a country of about 10 million people and has one of the most ancient and glorious histories in the world. It is located at the most eastern part of Europe and forms the bridge between East and West. It has been vulnerable to any disputes that occurred between the two worlds and, as a consequence, has suffered numerous invasions and much destruction through the centuries.

In 1453 Constantinople, the capital of Byzantium, was invaded and, for four centuries, the whole of the Greek nation suffered humiliation and slavery under the Ottoman Empire.

Greece and the Greek people, with a history and tradition of about 4000 years, survived the long years of occupation and in 1821 re-emerged as a nation but in a state of disarray. In its struggle for liberation, the decisive role played by the then influential Greeks of the Diaspora who offered financial and political assistance, made possible the reorganisation of the liberated nation. Since then, World War I and World War II, together with a number of internal disputes, have kept the country

in a state of uncertainty and disorganisation. It is only during the last 50 years that there has been an uninterrupted period of peace during which Greece has developed into a leading nation in the Balkans and has become a member of the European Union and economic community. With political stability, productive agricultural development, a booming tourist industry and the moral and financial support it receives from the estimated seven million Greeks abroad, Greece has entered a period of prosperity and respectability in the world.

## A Historical Review of Migration

Australia has historically been a nation of migrants and today, one in every four people has come from non-English-speaking countries. As a result of the huge migration program since World War II, an estimated 350 000 Greek migrants have come to Australia.

Until recently, the Greeks represented the third-largest ethnic group in Australia. For many of them, migration created economic and social problems during the period of their adaptation, while for others it was a story of successful settlement.

Today third- and fourth-generation Australia-born Greeks occupy prominent positions in society. As a consequence we can now talk about Australian-Greeks and not about Greeks in Australia. This successful socioeconomic development occurred after the early period of migration when a large number of Greeks were faced with problems of a different language, religion, culture and the inhospitable attitude of the Australian people. Due to this unpleasant environment, many of those who migrated after World War II returned permanently to Greece.

While migration takes people away from the place to which they were accustomed, success and happiness in their adopted country demand that they put down new roots and reorganise their lives. The adaptation of migrants to their new environment ultimately helps them to feel they belong. Fortunately, adaptation in Australia does not preclude a person from maintaining a bi-cultural status, a condition that has been encouraged and supported by the Australian multicultural policy.

The Greeks did not object to becoming naturalised Australians, and by 1991, 90 per cent of them had done so. This is the highest proportion among all

migrant groups. Despite this, cultural inheritance is the notion of 'Knowing yourself', something that, to a great extent, is being maintained through the retention and promotion of language, religion and culture.

After more than 70 years since Greek migration to Australia began, many of the old pioneer migrants have died, but their stories still remain in the minds of their friends and families. Greeks have a strong sense of identity because they follow their historical philosophy in life, and migrants are the carriers of the deeply rooted elements of their culture. Generally speaking, the Greek community in Australia is regarded as being a law-abiding, close-knit community, which places a lot of emphasis on language, Christian values and the fostering of family unity.

## **Greek Migrants in Queensland**

The structure of the Greek community in Brisbane, and by extension in Queensland, is based on intimate and enduring human relationships and a clear understanding of the place and role of each person in the community. In addition to these, the family and Church play an important part as moral custodians. The migrants' ethnic inheritance and cultural wealth were the elements of strength that helped them overcome problems of discrimination.

The first Greek settler in Queensland was Rev. Christophoros Arsenios from the island of Corfu, who lived in Clermont and was granted British citizenship in 1869. The first woman who came to Queensland was Lady Diamantina Roma, wife of Sir George Bowen, the first Governor of the State. Lady Roma was born on the island of Zakynthos, to the noble family of Romas, but she lived for many years on the island of Ithaca.

Lady Roma became a well-known and popular personality in Queensland because of her charitable community work. In recognition for her contribution, the State of Queensland honoured her by giving her name to the town of Roma, the Diamantina River, Roma Street and Roma Street Railway Station in Brisbane and the suburb of Ithaca. One of the distinguished elders in the Greek community, Angelo Efstathis, honoured Lady Roma by erecting a life-size statue of her in the courtyard of the Greek Community Centre in Brisbane.

The Greek migrants came to Australia from various parts of Greece, mainly from the islands of

Chios, Kythera, Ithaki, Kastellorizo, Kos and Asia Minor. Most of them were involved in agriculture and went to live in country areas, such as Gladstone, Childers, Rockhampton, Innisfail, Cairns and Toowoomba. A large number of the early Greek settlers worked in the canefields of Queensland or owned coffee shops. An important aspect of the life of Greek migrants is that, despite the fact that they had no capital, no training or knowledge of English, they started working as labourers and managed to move up by becoming shop owners and employers.

## **Demographics of the Greek Community**

According to the Bureau of Immigration and Population Statistics, in 1994 there were 4395 Greece-born residents in Queensland and 8189 second-generation Australia-born Greeks. The same report mentions that in Brisbane itself, there were only 3207 first-generation Greeks (migrants), as compared to 64 511 in Melbourne.

The estimated number of first-, second- and third-generation Greeks in Brisbane may be as high as 15 000 to 17 000. Queensland has one of the highest proportions (22.1 per cent) of migrant Greeks over the age of 65 years as compared to the southern States. The fact that Queensland has more elderly, Greece-born leaders means they may continue to exert some conservative influence on the overall traditional behaviour within the community, as compared to mainstream Greek communities. This view is also held by some Greeks in Brisbane, who believe that the community represents a more traditional and less permissive group when compared with other States. These behavioural attitudes may have also been reinforced by the distant geographical position of Brisbane from the more progressive centres of Hellenism in Melbourne and Sydney as well as the widely and thinly dispersed Greek population.

## **Church, Ethnicity and Culture**

Although in the traditional Greek family there was a tendency to encourage marriages within the community, today second- and third-generation Greeks appear to be more liberal in their selection of partners. This trend also applies among Greeks in Queensland but at a more conservative rate.

Religion plays an important part in the identity of Greeks because Orthodoxy is a national religion

of historical significance. While religion is an integral part of Greek society, it is not indoctrinating or proselytising.

Language is considered to be a core element of Greek identity because it is a direct continuation of the ancient Greek and is linked to Greek culture. A very large number of traditional families, where the parents or grandparents are first-generation Greeks, speak mainly their language at home. This situation is changing in non-extended families, where the Australia-born parents find it more convenient to converse with their children in English. The difference between Brisbane on one hand, and Sydney and Melbourne on the other, is that because of the greater density of Greek population in the southern States, the language is used more intensely and is surviving better. In an effort to preserve the culture, history and language, the Greek community in Brisbane operates a well-organised education system at primary and senior levels. In the whole of Queensland, there are about 450 children learning the Greek language.

## **The Hierarchical Church of Australia**

For almost 70 years there was ongoing conflict between the church hierarchy in Sydney and several communities in Australia. This conflict appears to centre around two competing power structures, both of which claim to represent a particular community in Australia. This conflict has also involved the Greek community of St George in Brisbane, which has the support of its members and has always been independent of any financial control from the Archdiocese. Since 1999 it appears that the relationship between the Brisbane community and the Archdiocese has again entered into a period of peaceful coexistence.

## **Community and Care for its Members**

As part of the overall responsibility of the Greek community to care for the needs of its members, it operates a welfare section that provides assistance to its members and to any other people who may require assistance.

This welfare service is supported by a government grant, and since its inception in 1978, the number of applicants for assistance has been growing steadily. During recent years and apparently due to changes in social conditions, the service is

increasingly used by younger people. The needs of older people for entertainment and the occasional provision of meals are met through the activities of the Community Respite Centre.

Under the aegis of the community, but operating as an independent activity, is the establishment of St Nicholas Home for the Aged. This well-organised institution provides residential care for old and infirm citizens. The residents are attended by well-trained professional staff, are served traditional meals and have the privilege of listening to church services through direct connection with the Greek Community Orthodox Church of St George. The Philoptochos Association, its membership consisting of female volunteers, was established in 1959 as a philanthropic organisation. It offers financial support to the Home for the Aged, the church and other community activities.

Greek youth are an integral part of community activities, and they represent everybody's hope for the survival and continuation of the Greek ideal into the future. There are Greek youth organisations throughout the State of Queensland to foster and promote fellowship, traditional values and the continuation of good relationship between the Greek and Australian communities.

The first Hellenic Youth Association in Brisbane was founded in 1945, and it was later renamed the Greek Orthodox Youth of Australia (GOYA), which continues to function under the auspices and full support of the Greek Community Council. One important part of Greek youth activities is the Olympic United Soccer Club, which attracts and trains an appreciable number of young people who participate in soccer competitions in Queensland.

The Greek Community Centre with good, modern facilities is extensively used for various functions of national or general entertainment nature, which are attended by members of the Greek community and people from the wider Australian society.

A very well-organised and well-known annual event is The Paniyiri, which represents an activity supported by the whole Greek community. This remarkable event, which takes place at the end of May every year, celebrated its 21st birthday in 2000. Paniyiri is one of the largest and most popular one-day cultural events in Brisbane. It attracts a large number of people from the multicultural community and in 2000 about 65 000 people enjoyed the taste of traditional Greek food,



music, dancing, singing, public talks and the viewing of the church and traditional exhibits.

## Traditional Greek Cuisine

Greek dishes are, to a great extent, related to various social events and ethnic customs, and their variety covers every occasion. The Greek cuisine is rather a mixture of old and new, and its roots go back to ancient Greece.

While Greeks have been in Australia for many decades, and there are now second- and third-generation Australian-Greeks, traditional food has remained unchanged, due to the close links of migrants with Greece. Although there are in Greece regional differences in the preparation of certain dishes, in Australia such differences have slowly disappeared, and there is now a uniform Greek cuisine that has also become popular among the Australians. To the Greeks, food is part of their tradition and identity.

## Other Greek Organisations

In addition to the central body of the Greek community in Brisbane, there are also several regional associations in Queensland that represent groups of people from various parts of Greece. Each of these associations has its own independent management committee.

The Australian Hellenic Educational Progress Association (AHEPA), which was established in Brisbane in 1936, aims at promoting fellowship among its members and the larger community, and supporting cultural and educational activities.

The Greek community is represented on Radio 4EB in Brisbane, by an elected committee that is responsible for the Greek segment of broadcasting, occupying about 16 hours of broadcasting a week, which is the largest among all ethnic groups in Queensland. The Greek voice and ethnic music are also heard through Townsville 4TTT radio, Gold Coast 4AVA and Cairns 4CCC.

The Hellenic Sub-Branch of the Returned Servicemen's League is well established in Brisbane with about 30 members.

## Contributions of Greeks to Queensland

The contribution made by Greek migrants and their families to the development of Queensland through the years has been substantial. Greek migrants worked very hard and under harsh

conditions in their endeavour to establish their families in the new country and to give their children the education of which they themselves had been deprived. As a result, many Greek names appear on the lists of business and professional people in Australia. They include people who became prominent in the fields of medicine, economics, law, diplomacy, science, politics, property development, mass media and others.

The Greek tradition of family support, peaceful and friendly co-existence, productive work, loyalty to democratically elected authorities and respect for one's fellow man, are the moral principles that can create and sustain strong nations. These high principles are not determined by profession or place in society, but by the long Greek tradition that gave the virtues of democracy to the Western world. The good attitude of the Greeks as members of the Australian community and the appreciable contributions they have made to the building of a stable multicultural society have commanded respect from civic authorities. A recent example of this has been the donation by the Lord Mayor of Brisbane to the Greek community of the cauldron that was lit in June 2000, during the celebration of the arrival of the Olympic flame in the city of Brisbane. The flame will remain lit at the Greek Community Centre until 2004 when the Olympic Games commence in Greece.

All the migrants, both men and women, have been heroic in their personal battles to establish themselves and their families in their adopted country. The following individual histories in alphabetical order represent only a small sample of those who should be mentioned.

George Amarandos, Secretary, Council of the Greek Orthodox Community of St George is a well-established lawyer and Chairman of the St Nicholas Nursing Home.

Chris Andalis is a person dedicated to the promotion of the Greek ideal, a poet and a multi-champion athlete.

Bico Athanassas, a versatile man, has 19 years of experience in the Greek Consul General's Office in Brisbane and several years in private business, and is the Chairperson of the well-known group of Hellenic Dancers.

John Carras (Karathanasis) migrated to Australia in 1948 at the age of eighteen. John has spent

most of his time in Brisbane where he was involved in various occupations, including being the owner of an exclusive restaurant, 25 years as the owner/director of a nursing home and the Administrator of St Nicholas Nursing Home for ten years. John has played a key role in the development of that institution. Throughout his life John has been motivated by his strong patriotic sentiments for Greece and everything Greek. For the last 10 years, he has been the Brisbane correspondent for the newspaper *Neos Kosmos*. He was recently invited to assist with the renovation and development of the Atlas Chambers building, which is to support financially the Home for the Aged in Kythera.

Vassilios Cassimatis is an experienced economist with the Department of Mines and Energy.

Michael Christoforou is an experienced teacher who migrated from Cyprus, served in the Australian public school system and is presently the principal teacher in the Greek Community Schools in Brisbane.

Jack Conias is a successful businessman, a person with traditional principles and a promoter of the Greek name through his past services to the Greek community as member of the Council and as the past President of the Greek Committee of Radio 4EB in Brisbane.

Spero Conias migrated to Australia with his parents Andonis and Marcella and his siblings, at a very young age. The parents worked hard to rear their seven children, and today the whole Conias family is well established in Brisbane. In 1972 with his wife, Joan, his brother, Arthur and wife, Carol, Spero started Apollo Real Estate in Toowong, which is now Conias Apollo. Today Spero is one of the leading real estate business directors in Queensland. His continuing interest in the Greek community was demonstrated during his successful six-year service on the Council, four years of which he served as President.

Tom Drakopoulos is a well-respected lawyer. He is a participant in various community activities and is a past President of the Migration Institute of Australia.

Emmanuel Drivas is an example of a young Greek-Australian who, at an early age, became a successful business director, as a result of his personal business acumen. Emmanuel, with his partners J. Lazarus and E. Cocoris, established the Coffee Club franchise business, which today owns a large number of shops in Queensland

and other States. For his excellence in business management, in 1994 he won the Ethnic Business Award of the year. Emmanuel is also a member of the Greek Community Council.

Angelo Efstathis is one of the pioneer Greek migrants who came to Australia in 1926 and has spent his life in Queensland. For several years he operated a successful export business that allowed him to become one of the most benevolent Greeks in Brisbane. Many people have rightly named him 'The Philanthropist'. During the years, Angelo has promoted the Greek name by making substantial donations to Australian institutions and the Greek community. In addition to his financial support of the Theological School of St Andrews in Sydney, the Ambulance Service in Brisbane, the St Nicholas Home for the Aged and to various other projects and individuals, he has also erected three impressive Greek bronze statues in Brisbane. One of them is the statue of the well-known Lady Diamantina Roma, which stands in the courtyard of the Greek Community Centre. Angelo has been decorated by the Orthodox Church and the government.

Jim Fouras is an industrial chemist who has successfully followed a political career. For a number of years, Jim was the Speaker of the Queensland Parliament.

Alex Freeleagus is the Honorary Consul General of Greece, who followed in his father's footsteps to this high office. Christy Freeleagus migrated to Australia in 1901 from the island of Kythera, and together with his brothers, they established an impressive food industry in Brisbane. Christy was the first Consul General for Greece from 1917 until his death in 1957 when his son Alex replaced him. Alex Freeleagus is a prominent corporate lawyer with close ties to the Greek community in Brisbane. He has always promoted the Greek ideal and in 1988 he was an organiser of Expo 88 and later the Exhibition of Macedonian Antiquities. The Greek Government in 1973, in recognition of his services to the Greek community, awarded him the Silver Cross of the Royal Order of St George, and in April 1999 the Senate of Griffith University gave him the award of Doctor of the University. One of his main commitments is the promotion of a continuing Greek-Australian friendly relationship and the elevation of the Greek name.

Con Galtos is a successful entrepreneur and businessman currently serving as President of the Liberal Party of Australia (Queensland Division).

Jim Georgiu is treasurer of the Council of the Greek Orthodox Community of St George. He is an experienced businessman and financier in the car industry.

Nick Girdis is the son of Steve Girdis, who migrated to Australia from Asia Minor in 1905. Steve Girdis was a graduate from the Theological School of Constantinople and, as a member of the Greek community, he organised and ran the Sunday school for seven years. Nick was a champion athlete, a training officer in the Australian Army and holds a doctorate in Dentistry. One of Nick's successful business ventures is property development in Brisbane.

Steve Karas was born to Greek parents and worked as a solicitor before becoming Deputy Director of the former Department of Ethnic Affairs (Queensland). He is a high-profile community worker and has served for many years on Canberra-based legal instrumentalities. He is currently a director of the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters.

Chris Kazonis is the President of the Greek Orthodox Community Council of St George. Christos is a licensed real estate agent and valuer with extensive experience in business. He has been heavily involved in community activities since the age of 16 years when he joined the Greek youth movement, where he became the president. Chris has served on almost all the community's committees as an office bearer and has been a successful president of the Community Council, where he has been re-elected four times. His main aims as a Greek community leader have been the promotion of the Greek language, tradition, religion, care for the aged and the fostering of harmonious relationships between the Greek and Australian societies.

Nick Mandikos is a well-known architect in Queensland, with world-wide recognition. Nick came with his family to Australia at the age of six and was educated in Queensland. Part of his special architectural interest is the design of clubs and hotels. The Greek community has on several occasions requested his professional advice. For his exceptional work, Nick was the winner of a design competition for the redevelopment of the air space over the St Bento railyard in Portugal.

Nikos Panayiotakis was born in Asia Minor in 1910, and his family fled to the island of Chios, fearing the invading Turkish army. In the 1940 war, Nikos joined the Greek Army and served

in Macedonia and Albania. Nikos migrated to Australia in 1948 and, soon after, he brought out his wife and their four children. For four years (1951-54), he served as manager of the Greek Club. One of Nikos's valuable skills was his ability to chant at church. For about half a century, his good voice echoed in the Community Church of Saint George, where he was assisted by his son, Perry.

Constantine Philippides was born in Cyprus and received his university education in England, after which he came to Australia as a junior diplomat at the age of 27 years. In Australia, Constantine graduated from the University of Queensland with degrees in commercial law and accountancy. Besides Greek and English, he also speaks Italian and Spanish and is the Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Cyprus. He has been honoured by the Queen with an OBE, has served as President and Editor-in-Chief of the *Abegan Magazine*, and in 1976 he established and operated the largest travel business in Australia. His love for Cyprus and Greece is immense.

George Pipos, the son of Spyros and Angela Pipos from the island of Ithaca, was born in Australia, educated in Brisbane and with his brother, Lakis, and his parents, developed entrepreneurial skills in the hotel and liquor industry. Today they manage a large number of hotels, liquor outlets and restaurants. George has been involved in the Greek community in a very active and productive manner. He served as member and President of the Community Council for 12 years, and during his presidency the Greek community became an active and prosperous organisation. In 1994, in recognition of his services, the Community Council honoured George by making him a Life Member.

Jim Raptis is a well-known and highly successful real estate developer at the Gold Coast and a Greek community leader. He migrated to Australia with his parents in 1954 and started his building/development business with his brother John in Sydney. In 1973 they moved to the Gold Coast, where the Raptis business is the longest-established development company. His group has won several awards for special designs and in 1987 the company was named the Australian Developer of the year. Jim was intimately involved in EXPO 88, is the President of the Greek community at the Gold Coast, a member of the Archdiocese Clergy Laity Committee and in 1989 was awarded the OBE.

Father Gregory Sakellariou has been the spiritual leader of the Greek community for the past 44 years. Through the years he has carried out an enormous task as a servant of the Greek Orthodox Church, not only in Brisbane but also the whole of Queensland. Because of his dedication to his special work, and the compassionate and thoughtful way he deals with the problems of his people, he enjoys the respect and affection of the Greeks in Queensland.

Savas Stefanaras migrated to Australia from the island of Rhodes in 1934 and joined his father, Kostas, who had been in Australia since 1928. Savas spent most of his life in Queensland, trying different occupations, first working hard on the land, and then in sugarcane fields, restaurants and in a bootmaking business. In 1946 he moved permanently to Brisbane, where he became a member of the Greek Community Council, which at that time had as its first priority the building of a church. The Church of St George was completed in 1960. In 1965 Savas became the President of the School Committee, and a few years later he accepted the Presidency of the Colossus Association. Savas had been one of many unsung heroes of Greek migration. He fought a hard and honest battle for survival in his adopted country as every other migrant has done.

Esta Thiris is a lady who capably occupies an important position in the education system of Australia.

Nick Xynias migrated to Australia from Egypt in 1956, and since that time, has excelled himself in every activity in which he has participated. Being an engineer, he established and worked in his own business for many years. His first community activity in Australia was to organise a Greek group of Scouts in Brisbane, which he continued to lead for about 15 years. Nick has been involved with the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ) since 1975, serving over 20 years as its Chairman, and in 2000 he was elected Chairman of the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia. Nick has served as an office bearer on the Greek School Committee, been President of the Association of Greeks from Egypt, a member

of the Premier's Judging Committee for excellence in management in the Public Sector and a member of the Selection Committee for the Premier's awards. For his many years' contributions to multiculturalism in Queensland, Nick was awarded the Millennium Distinction. For his services to society and the Greek community, Nick has also received a BEM from the Queen and an OAM from the Australian Government.

In view of the ageing generation of Greek migrants, there is a need for the administration of the Greek communities in Australia to be taken over by young Australian-Greeks. The Brisbane community is fortunate in that 12 out of the 15 members of the elected Council are Australian-born people of professional status.

## Conclusion

The Greek communities in Queensland, with Brisbane their central reference point, have been well established since the early years of the twentieth century. These communities still exist and maintain their traditions despite the vast demographic changes that have taken place in Queensland during the years. The Greek community of Brisbane is now experiencing certain changes due to the transition from the old traditional and conservative management and attitudes to more liberal thinking by new generation Australian-Greeks. The most encouraging aspect among the new Australian-Greeks is the revitalisation of cultural sentiments, the increasing interest in learning the Greek language and willingness to participate in traditional functions. Greeks in Queensland are fully aware and proud of their cultural past and ancestry, and they are now involved in a struggle to maintain their identity against the powerful integrating, yet culturally defining, interactive forces that exist in the Australian multicultural environment. Many Australian-Greeks have become prominent and useful members in almost every sector of Australian society.

**Alexandros Kondos**