

## An introduction to NUGAS

NUGAS (the National Union of Greek Australian Students) Victoria is a non-for-profit organisation founded in 1970. Celebrating its 48th year of operation, NUGAS has solidified its place as “one of the oldest, if not the oldest, community based organisation”. Supported by its 8 affiliate university clubs, NUGAS Victoria has been an active leader for Greek Australian university students across the State, providing a forum for students to celebrate their heritage in a multitude of ways. Some of the most popular events that NUGAS has to offer include the infamous NUGAS ball, which regularly attracts crowds of circa 1000, and the Delfi NUGAS cup, an inter-uni futsal tournament which allows Greek Australians to connect through the common love of soccer. In recent times, NUGAS has also been a strong advocate for Greek educational issues in Melbourne as well, constantly promoting the importance of learning Greek at a tertiary level as well as fostering the love of the Greek language from young- highlighted by the recent NUGAS visits to local Greek Schools. Ultimately, the objective of NUGAS is to bring Greek Australians together in multiple ways to help preserve the presence of Greek culture in Australia, as well as creating lifelong bonds between these people that will last long into the future.

*George Nikolakopoulos*

## Message from the President

NUGAS Victoria's magazine in 2016 'Neolea' was the last time we had published and connected with all of our members. Then, we had over 1500 members across our eight university clubs. Now, we have almost doubled that. Our community is growing and we hope to keep it that way as we aim to bring more people together through numerous events by promoting the Greek culture, language and education.

Through the form of a newsletter, as we hope to release more issues as we go on throughout the semester, we aim to keep our members updated on current issues that may be affecting us all as well as what is going happening next for NUGAS.

Whilst we continue to bring you our social and party orientated events, over the course of 2017, the NUGAS committee has been reconnecting with our past, in seeking guidance and mentorship in our alumni to better understand where we came from to take us forward as a community through the years. Not only have we reconnected with the past, but we are looking to connect with our future as we have refocused on visiting current primary and secondary school Greek students and educating them on what Nugas is, as well as the importance in continuing their studies in modern Greek at the tertiary level.

Exciting things are coming in 2018 and I would like to welcome new members to the wonderful world of Nugas Victoria and thank existing members for continuing to be apart of it. Without such a strong membership core, we couldn't continue to provide the events for all of you that we do. We hope you all enjoy our bulletin and more importantly enjoy your time amongst the NUGAS community.

*Nick Tzoutzidis*

## “Mum, why did I stop Greek School?”

Greek school was always a place of joy and tears. With προσευχή at assembly to learning about our descendants, it was a cultural hub. It established social cohesion in our community and brought a sense of overt prestige as we were learning to speak the language of our ancestors as 2nd, 3rd and sometimes 4th generation migrants.

Most of us attended Saturday Greek school which meant we missed out on watching 'Saturday Disney.' Most of us viewed it as an additional day to our already long week of obligatory day school. As we grew older, we were given more responsibilities and some of these included joining sports teams or even working. Examining our tight schedule, people try to find tasks they can eliminate and Greek school was usually a chore by the grandparents. Even when it comes to VCE, people prefer to not choose Greek as they could learn an additional subject as oppose to completing a LOTE VCE subject which they have been studying for 11 years.

What some of us fail to understand is that Greek has benefits as a VCE subject and a language itself. Greek is a 'subject' that we have been studying since Prep singing Αχ Κουνελάκι with our γιαγιά. In addition, it has the benefits of a +5 scaling in VCE with half the exam in English. Most important aspect of VCE Greek, is the topics of discussion. I still distinctly remember the discussions held at Greek school, from appropriate etiquette in social situations such as meeting the in-laws to comparing Greek Australians and Greeks from Greece. People would always become passionate about the topic of discussion and some making jokes. It was if we had not evolved from our wise ancestors whom would intensely debate about the current affairs in the Assembly of Athens (ἐκκλησία) or the Agora. Greek school was a place of morals and ethics, where teachers would give us life lessons and stories that still remain embedded in our memory to this day.

I look back on Greek school and feel indebted. Indebted to whom you may ask. Both my teachers for having given me life lessons that I still carry with me today and my parents as I sometimes I would not make Saturday mornings easy for them. I only learned to appreciate Greek school as I grew older. Over time, I learned that Greek as a language, is our most important asset we have as an ethnic community. Learning Greek is not about learning a language; it is learning about a new way of thinking.



*Pericles' Funeral Oration as recorded by Thucydides' History of Peloponnesian War*

*Alex Vounisios*

# Greek Identity and the Accursed Child

The first Greek word I remember learning was όρνιο. I never asked its exact definition but given the context of its use I narrowed its Queens English translation to 'you sir changed lanes without signaling correctly and I wish to voice my displeasure'. The words I learned after this proved the Greek language to be the most enjoyable in which to call other people names. Αλήτη seemed to refer to anyone under the age of 25 outside their home without a parent. Νοικοκύρης was for the man who maintained a weed free garden and impeccable lawn. His partner was a νοικοκυρά as demonstrated by a clothesline full of washing. Προκομμένη was a term set aside for the visitor who came specifically to share a freshly baked dish. Κουφόβραση was never used to describe someone but is a fine word that also deserves its time in the sun. One word however sat lower than all others in this name calling. A word so terrible it was only spoken in hushed tones and deserving of its very own sentence. Καταραμένος. This was reserved for the worst of the worst, the accursed child; the one who turned their back on their family and heritage.

You may now audibly gasp. And return oxygen to your lungs. Can it be so you ask? Could a person willingly turn their back on being Greek? Surely you are born a Greek and you stay a Greek. The Greek nation may wrong its people continuously. It may cause poverty, mass emigration and millions of πονοκέφαλους, but τι να κανούμε, we remain Greek. This is proven by the well known thought inkblot test. Consider these moments. Charistea's header against Portugal in the 2004 Euro final. Pyrros Dimas at any Olympics. Eleni Papanizou at Eurovision. Jennifer Aniston on the front page of Woman's Day reading about Brangelina's split. All are thoughts that make us smile. So there you have it. You're Greek. We can't help this. When we visit lands drenched in history like Θερμοπύλες, Πλάκα, and Αρσόπολη our mind wanders to those who have previously walked the same steps. Λεωνίδας. Σωκράτης. Κολοκοτρώνης. They were of us and we are of them. We feel a connection to other Greeks as well as to a central Greek spirit. It crosses oceans and it crosses centuries. Our connection is hardwired into us by our upbringing. Thus we can never turn our backs on our heritage even if we wanted to. This is true of us and of the generations that have come before.

In the antipodes however we now march forward with the 3rd, 4th and 5th generations since migration. These generations are being raised in English speaking households. Households where there is no μελομακάρονο in sight, where the radio dial is not permanently fixed on 3XY or Rhythmos, and where you do not get a reminder to call your cousin because today is Agia Sophia's, Konstantinou kai Eleni's, Agias Alexandra's, or Agiou Nicolaou. I therefore ask the question, if the concrete driveway is not washed weekly, how can these children's Greek identity be hardwired? The answer is that it will not be hardwired. Their Greek identity will be a choice, simply an app available to download. They can choose non-greek friends, enjoy non-greek food and select non-greek activities (based on what they enjoy rather than Τι θα πει η γειτονιά). They are free to eat κολοκυθάκια τηγανιτά today and 面条 tomorrow. They may choose the Greek identity but they may not. Each and every one will decide for themselves. This is a scary thought and begs the question 'Is the Greek Identity and heritage is worth choosing?'

With the non development of hard wired Greeks our task to promote our culture is far more complex. We must now actually consider the youth of the 3rd generation and why they would choose to be Greek. 'Because you are' seems the simple answer to tell them but



this could be interpreted as meaning 'because you have hit the DNA jackpot and should be eternally grateful'. Unless Saki Rouva is the one saying this it may possibly be considered with some skepticism by the youth. Further to this we would like to make it very clear that under no circumstances should the follow up comment be 'and by the way you really must marry that προκομμένο Greek boy down the road. He maintains a wonderful lawn'. There are many things wrong with that sentence and most likely the youth will give up all things Greek including λούκουμαδες and visits to Rye in January. So, they cannot be hardwired and 'because you are' is not an acceptable answer. What hope for Greek identity?

My first visit was to a friend who is a recently arrived migrant. She washes the concrete weekly so her son is having Greek identity hardwired by a Greek electrician using Greek tools. The kid is Greek. Her views would be interesting though in that she is in the same position as the first migrants (aside from the advantage she had of growing up in a country not ravaged by Germany...) She explained to me that her greatest desire is for her child to be happy with his life. That she hoped for a good education as this would grant him freedom; freedom through greater opportunities and freedom beyond advertising and peer pressure. 'Very good' said I, 'and to be Greek.' 'Not at all' said she. 'I want him to have a good life.'

My second visit was to a friend who is the son of migrants. He outlined that for his child he wants education, health, happiness and a moral understanding. He wants his child to achieve these so as to fit into the family; be part of a family consciousness and be able to work together to support other members of the family. 'Very good' said I, 'but surely that just means you want your child to be Greek?' His response was that Greek had nothing to do with what he hoped his child would become.

My third visit was to a friend who is a grandson of migrants. He outlined that his vision for his children is that they grow up to be the best they can be; to have opportunities to try things, to be educated so that they can make good personal choices, and educated so they can have a secure financial future'. 'And to listen to Anna Vissi' said I. His blank face told me that Anna was no longer in her prime.

So the answer dear reader is to highlight the glorious aspects of Greek identity and give a reason to the youth of subsequent generations to select it. Greek organisations must identify the aspects of Hellenism that deserve to be appreciated and which help to develop mind and spirit and they must organize events to promote these. These will shine to the youth of the next generations. Each youth may select a different aspect. It could be Greek poetry, Greek music, Greek art or photography. Maybe it will be a play on Greek mythology. And just maybe it will be a τυρόπιτα. But importantly, elements of Greek identity will be selected because they are too valuable to be left behind. The works of Socrates are not read only by Greeks. The deeds of Leonidas are not studied only by Greeks. They are valuable to anyone in teaching thinking and virtue. Every child should know the beauty of Cavafy. There is so much Greek identity has to offer and we should not think to keep it only for ourselves. We should teach it openly and invite all to learn and improve. Thus the Greek identity will be selected.

Greece has a long history of accursed children. One of the first was Alcibiades who was progressively exiled from Athens, Sparta, Persia, and Athens again. Another was the rascal Socrates. He was sentenced to death for corrupting youth by inciting ασέβεια. Kolokotronis helped Greece win the War of Independence but this made him popular. The dastard was consequently charged with treason and sentenced to death (reduced to jail and then pardoned). 2500 years of accursing. Each of the above was a tragic loss for the Greek community. As a people we must stop accursing our own. We must not focus on accursing those Greek descendents who do not remain 100% 'Greek' in a foreign land. We must not make them feel that this is a failure. We must become inclusive and invite Hellenes and philhellenes alike to learn Greek culture and identity. We must select the elements of Hellenism we love and infuse them to all. At its height the Ancient Greek Empire taught the known world, not to make them Greek, but to make them άνθρωποι. Let us once again throw open the doors to our culture for the benefit of all. And in this we shall invite our own children to continue as Greeks.

John Vithoulkas

# THE CASE OF GREEK AS A NATIONAL LANGUAGE

For any non-dominant language to be maintained in a bilingual environment without diglossia at inter-generational level requires the following:

1. The existence of a populous base of speakers;
2. Adequate function of language use;
3. Acceptability within the broader society;
4. Stability of the given language.

## The Vitality of Greek as a world heritage language

Greek does not simply derive its significance only as a community language or as the norm of the Greek-speaking sector of the Australia community, which is vigorously organized, politically robust and strongly committed to maintenance of its Hellenic Australian identity.

The significance of Greek for Australia derives principally from **heritage, moral, intellectual, academic, linguistic and utilitarian** reasons.

- **Moral and intellectual**, because Greek is the only extant Heritage Language of the Western World known and used in Australia;
- **Academic** because Greek language (in its Ancient, medieval and modern variants) is being taught together with Classical studies and the Greek history and culture at over 2,000 universities around the globe attracting more than 300,000 students.
- **Linguistic** because by learning Greek language students and indeed world citizens have the opportunity to learn about and understand better their own language as a very significant percentage of their mother tongue, etymologically is derived from Greek words.
- **Utilitarian**, because of an established presence of a vast number of Greek-speaking residents (currently estimated to 400,000) and of many more thousands of Australians with ancestral, sentimental, professional, cultural and intellectual ties with Greece, Cyprus and the millions of Hellenes in the Diaspora.

It is imperative for the Commonwealth Government, in full alignment with its national policy on languages since 1987, to continue to consider Greek as a priority language within its new National Curriculum Policy on languages, given its role and paramount importance:

- As a world heritage language;
- As a source language for other world languages;
- As a morally ideological as well as linguistically practical cornerstone for Australia;
- For its communal and inter-communal role in Australia as a wider spoken,

taught and learned language not only by students of Greek ancestry but also by non-Greek-background students (32%).

- For its international economic role for Australia, since Greek is an official language of the European Union.
- As the Australian language which is heavily and supported in an unparalleled fashion by the home country for the educational welfare of Australian citizens.

## The Vitality of Greek in Australia

There are currently approximately 40,000 students attending Greek language classes in Australia provided by the following sectors:

Ethnic Schools:	21,000
Government Schools:	12,200
Saturday Schools of Languages:	2,000
Greek Daily Schools:	4,000
Independent Schools:	450
Tertiary Institutions:	950

- Greek language and culture is the most popular language within the Ethnic Schools sector in Australia.
- Greek is the fourth most popular taught language within the Saturday School of Languages.
- Greek is the sixth most widely taught language in Government schools.
- In 2016, almost 33% of the students in government and Greek Daily schools are of non-Greek language background.
- Greek language possesses the strongest retention rate amongst students in government schools from Preps to Grade Six (92%) and from Year Seven to Year 10 (72%), compared with any other language.
- Greek is the third most popular home language in Australia at inter-generational level.
- Greek has the strongest language maintenance rate in Australia at an inter-generational level. The language shift from Greek to English among 1st generation speakers in almost zero; the language shift for second generation is 8.6% and for 3rd generation Greek Australians 24%.

Australia's interest in enhanced trade and investment arrangements with the European Union and the sensitive Eastern Mediterranean region and its burgeoning economy, as well as its potential links with Europe could be better implemented via a role of the Greek language in establishing and maintaining Greek speaking experts in European capitals including Athens and Nicosia.

**Professor Anastasios M. Tamis**  
*Australian Institute for Hellenic Research*

## ΕΣΤΙ ΜΕΝ ΟΥΝ ΕΛΛΑΣ ΚΑΙ Η ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑ

*“And Macedonia is a part of Greece”*

The Ancient Greek Historian and Geographer Strabo once said ΕΣΤΙ ΜΕΝ ΟΥΝ ΕΛΛΑΣ ΚΑΙ Η ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑ “And Macedonia is a part of Greece”. Other Writers from antiquity who testified the Macedonians were Greek include Herodotus, Thucydides, Flavius Arrianus, Polybius and Titus Livius. The Macedonians were Greeks just like the Athenians and Spartans. Historically the Ancient Kingdom of Macedon was known as Hellenic and Greek speaking. The names of the Macedonian Kings and nobility were all Greek. The Ancient Macedonian Kings traced their ancestry back to Zeus and claimed to be of Doric origin. Macedonian Kings participated in the Olympic Games and to do so you had to be Greek. Classicist, Robin Lane Fox, from Oxford University, stated in his book ‘Alexander the Great’ that “[Alexander the Great] was still in a world of Greek gods and sacrifices, of Greek plays and Greek language, though the natives might speak Greek with a northern accent which hardened ‘ch’ into ‘g’, ‘th’ into ‘d’ and pronounced King Philip as Bilip”. Alexander the Great was a student of Aristotle and he claimed ancestral links to Achilles, believed in the Greek gods, spoke the Greek language and embraced the Hellenic culture and traditions. He led the first global culture, Hellenism, spreading it across the world and introduced the common Greek (koine) dialect throughout Hellas and beyond. Herodotus wrote on what it means to be Greek using the concept “Ton Ellinikon” (των Ελληνικῶν) referring to the shared traits that define Hellenes such as sharing a common language, customs, and religion. For centuries, these commonalities have generally defined Hellenes across the world, and we still strive to maintain these in the diaspora until this very day.

**Themistocles Kritikakos**  
*PhD candidate, University of Melbourne*

## Upcoming Dates

### 2 Φεβρουαρίου

Υπαπαντή Ιησού Χριστού  
 2nd of February  
 Presentation of our Lord, and Saviour in the Temple

### 10 Φεβρουαρίου

Ψυχοσάββατο, Χαράλαμπος Ιερομ.  
 Saturday of Souls, Haralambos the Hieromartyr

### 19 Φεβρουαρίου

Καθαρά Δευτέρα  
 (Αρχή νηστείας)  
 Lent Bekins

### 23 Φεβρουαρίου

Α' Χαιρετισμοί  
 1st Salutations- Theotokos

### 24 Φεβρουαρίου

Αγίου Θεοδώρου  
 Αναμνήσεις του δια κολλύβων θαύματος  
 St Theodore Teron (commemoration of his miracle with colliva)

### 25 Φεβρουαρίου

Α' ΝΗΣΤΕΙΩΝ (ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΙΑΣ)  
 1st Sunday of Lent, Sunday of Orthodoxy

## Greek community events spot

### Antipodes

The Lonsdale Street Greek Festival, formerly known as the 'Antipodes Greek Festival', is a two-day annual celebration held in on Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. Started in 1987, the Lonsdale Street Greek Festival is currently celebrating its 31st instalment since its conception. The festival has become very popular and a staple of the greek social calendar, enticing large crowds from all backgrounds and nationalities to come together and celebrate Greek culture.

Every year those lucky enough to participate in the festivities are able to indulge in authentic greek street food, such as souvlaki and loukoumades, as well as other action packed activities, such as this year's 'zorba till you drop' and the 'my baklava is better than yours' baklava cooking competition. Even if not feeling so adventurous, there is always live music and multiple Greek dance groups who perform for the enjoyment of the crowd.

In addition to being a local Melbournian highlight, the Lonsdale Street Greek Festival also has international appeal, boasting special concerts from Greek celebrities and icons such as Glykeria and this year's special star Giannis Haroulis.

Regardless of the reason that people go to the festival, however, the Lonsdale Street Greek Festival remains a pillar of Greek culture and tradition, serving to both expose others to the wonders of the Greek culture and help preserve and foster that already present in the hearts of Greek-Australians living in one of the largest Greek diaspora communities in the world.

*George Nikolakopoulos*

### EmBEERies presented by "O Periklis" at The Greek

Life is made up of **emBEERies** (exBEERiences), so why not create another at the "O Periklis" emBEERies night.

emBEERies is a celebration of the golden ale loved by millions worldwide. This year's events features the flavours of Greece - come down and have a drink as we showcase the best beers Greece has to offer, and of course LIVE music.

Friday 23 February, 7:30pm

The Greek Centre | Delphi Bank Mezzanine

Tickets \$22 Full | \$20 Greek Community Premium Members

### To Dentro

A modern take on everything we live and feel today.

Direct from Greece, critically acclaimed theatrical and prose writer Giorgos Maniotis introduces us to Christoforos, played by the incredibly talented Nikos Magdalinis. Whilst decorating his Christmas tree, Christoforos begins to reflect on his life, slowly sifting through memories and his favourite ornaments. The script illuminates the human soul and reveals much about the current condition.

Between Thursday 8 March 2018 and Sunday 11 March 2018.  
Greek Community Centre.

## Greek presence and pride

With the 31st Lonsdale Greek Festival approaching it is a good time to take a moment and ponder the meaning of Greek-Australianness. Walking through the city the other night, I stopped by the once bustling Greek precinct. Most of the Greek shops are now gone but the Greek sounds still linger. It's true that if you focus on the absence of the shops you can become disheartened. On the other hand, if you turn your gaze upwards, towards the Greek Centre, you know that the Greek Community is stronger and prouder than ever. The replica of one of the Parthenon's friezes, recently affixed to the front of the building, is not only an affirmation of that pride, it also tells a story. That of thousands of immigrants who left their remote villages, headed for the unknown; men and women who brought with them not only a dream of a better life, but also their love for Hellenism. One can look at this history as something that lies in the distant past and therefore of little consequence, or something that is alive and can inspire the present.

As impressive as they are, the Cultural Centre and its beautiful frieze are not the only symbols of Greek presence and pride in our city. Head down to William Street and you will see the Hellenic Museum. Visit La Trobe University and you will find Australia's most Greek university. Not only because of its Greeks names - Agora, Peribolos east and Peribolos West and its Greek amphitheatre by the moat - but because thousands of students have studied Greek there since the mid eighties. La Trobe remains the only university in Victoria that offers a comprehensive Greek program - from a Bachelor of Arts to a PhD. Those not particularly interested in completing any of the above, may want to consider taking up Greek as a cross-institutional elective. This means that students can take up a Greek subject, even though they may be studying at another institution.

Very few communities can claim the honour and privilege of such representation in multicultural Australia. With 'Speak Greek in March' also approaching, it is important that the younger generation is shown why Greek is still very relevant. One need only count the words in their daily, English vocabulary. They only need look at the reverence that Greekness has commanded over the centuries; a reverence that made distinguished thinkers like German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche once quip:

'It was a piece of subtle refinement that God learned Greek when he wanted to become a writer'

*Dimitri Gonis*

## NUGAS FAQ's

### How do I join NUGAS Victoria?

You can join NUGAS Victoria by approaching the Greek Club/Society at your respective university which will then help you fill in a membership form.

### Do I have to be of Greek heritage to join Nugas Victoria?

No, anyone from any background or religion is welcome to join in and help us celebrate and promote our unique culture across Victoria.

### Why should I join NUGAS Victoria?

Joining NUGAS Victoria allows you to receive frequent notifications, and a huge range of discounts to all of our events which include the famous annual NUGAS Ball and the Business Breakfast! By joining us, you will also build lifetime friendships with many people from different universities and different backgrounds, as well as building a great network with the Greek community of Melbourne and beyond.

### What extra benefits do I get from joining NUGAS Victoria other than what the Greek Club/Society at my respective university provides?

As Nugas Victoria is the 'top of the umbrella', bringing all the University Clubs together and involving all University students in a single context, this enables growth in both a social as well as educational context and ensures that an interconnected web of Greek heritage, sociality and culture is upheld and maintained.

### What range of events does NUGAS Victoria hold?

NUGAS Victoria holds both social events as well as educational and networking events. Some of the most popular social events include the sold out NUGAS Boat Cruise, the Nugas Easter Sunday event as well as the eagerly anticipated Nugas Ball. In terms of the educational events, these range from the NUGAS Breakfast and other yearly alternative events such as the Greek Community of Melbourne 120 years Anniversary held to celebrate Greek Youth in the community.

### How do I join the NUGAS Victoria Committee?

To join the NUGAS Victoria committee, you need to be a member in the committee of the Greek Club/Society in your respective University. This allows you to nominate yourself to become a representative of your university club on the NUGAS committee. Your nomination is then voted on during the NUGAS Victoria AGM which takes place early in the year.

### How do I contact NUGAS Victoria?

You can contact us through our Facebook page 'Nugas Victoria' or through our website 'nugasvic.org.au'. Alternatively, you can contact us via email 'nugas@nugasvic.org.au'.

*Georgio Giannellis & Larsa Matti*



nugasvic

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