

AUSTRALIAN HELLENIC MEMORIAL 25 SEPTEMBER 2011



An event that will stir the hearts of every Australian was played out in the Domain gardens on Sunday 25 September 2011. Amidst the backdrop of the Melbourne City skyline and the Shrine of Remembrance and alongside open grassy slope where the **memorial** stands, many came to pay tribute to the fallen of the past. The sun was shining, a clear blue sky above, and the odd bird darting to and from amongst the trees and the myriad of insects that buzzed incessantly in the air painted a peaceful picture of an event that was taking place.

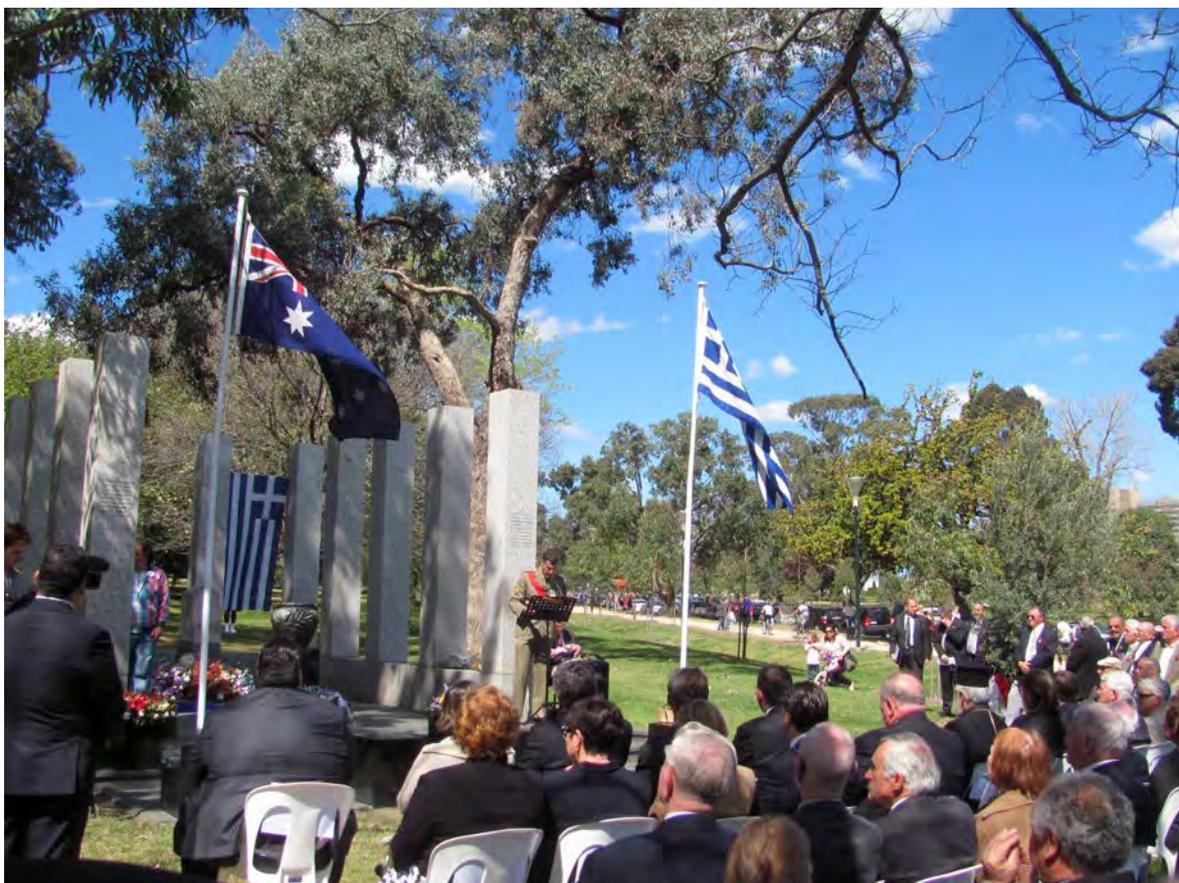
The event involved the reading of Australians who died fighting overseas during both world wars. The reading of all Australians who died during the battle of Greece and Crete in WWII along with those who died on the island of Lemnos in WWI. It was a fine Spring morning that attracted numerous people from all walks of life including veterans and their families from around Victoria as well as the many onlookers who happened to stroll by and see the events take place.



Keith Rossis Master of ceremonies

That grand old master of a bygone war time era, Brigadier (ret) Keith Rossis being the master of ceremonies was ably assisted by the Australian Hellenic *memorial* organisers. Steve Kyritsis representing the memorial spoke about the memorials early beginnings and paid tribute to those board members and patrons who made it possible. Peter Kalimnakis the founder of the memorial who in the 1990 battled against all odds ensure the idea of the memorial survived and that it would become part of the Melbourne landscape was also in attendance.

The event was also attended by federal and state MPs; Kelly O'Dwyer, Liberal's Federal Member for Higgins; Maria Vamvakinou, Labor's federal member for Calwell; Andrea Coote, Victoria's Parliamentary Secretary for Families and Community Services; Anne Barker, Labor's state member for Oakleigh; Murray Thompson, Liberal's state member for Sandringham and John Pandazopoulos, Labor's state member for Dandenong. The Greek orthodox clergy (St Helen and Constantine's church) were also present and gave the event, and those whom fell in battle, their blessing. **Peter Adamis**



Selected members including political figures were offered the opportunity to read out the names of the fallen and/or to lay wreathes on the memorial. The Defence Force (The Royal Australian Regiment) was also represented by a Senior Non Commissioned Officer (Sergeant) who surprisingly turned out to be a member of Hellenic origins from town outside of Sparta in Laconia Greece. The reading of the many names of the fallen during both world wars invoked an image in one's mind of the horrors of war and the sacrifices they made to ensure that the freedoms taken for granted this day were not in vain.





Left to Right is Kelly O'Dwyer, Liberal's Federal Member for Higgins; Peter Adamis, past committee member of the AHM, Brigadier Keith Rossi (Retired) and Andrea Coote, Victoria's Parliamentary Secretary for Families and Community Services.

The memorial is an institution that will stand the test of time and it is a fitting tribute by Australians of Hellenic heritage to the Australians who died in the Greek Peninsula and islands during the two Great Wars. During the ceremony, a lone piper was playing a tribute to the fallen and at the closing of the event the sounds of the last post could be heard down near the bastion of Victoria Barracks. At the cessation of the activities many friends and acquaintances were reunited with old comrades and new friendships formed. The organisers welcomed all members to refreshments held at the Hellenic RSL in South Melbourne. Peter Adamis



GALLERY





