

NEO AUSTRALIAN SPARTANS ARE COMING



Whenever the words "The Spartans are coming" were uttered in the ancient world, it would bear different meanings to many. It was either greeted with joy by some or it would strike terror into the hearts of others. 50 years ago, a visionary group of Laconians and a conglomeration of their supporters made a group decision that it was important that their heritage and customs lived on in the hearts and minds of future generations. It is with some sadness to report that few records if any were kept of the early years and that not many of the original members are alive today.



Suffice to say, we are fortunate that there are sufficient numbers still live to testify to the joys and sorrows of uniting the Australians of Laconian Hellenic heritage in Melbourne Victoria. The Spartans the first and second generations who embraced the Australian culture without losing their Hellenic identity would go onto contributing to the Australian way of life by being involved and as a result some would become leaders in the wider Australian community, others became embroiled in business, the Greek orthodox Church, political arena, Australian Defences Force and all manner of university educated disciplines.



Nestled in an offshoot of busy Sydney Road, Brunswick, a suburb within the City of Moreland lays the heart of the Laconians. The building like its current owners is laconic in size and construction, and one that denies the passer by the true significance of what resides within. Built in 1903, many would dismiss it as another building that is nothing spectacular or grandeur about it and nor would its presence entice the public to enter and explore its inner sanctum.



Those responsible for the purchase of the building and its accruements had a vision like many others of their time, and after much robust discussion, they put aside their petty differences and created an institution which one hopes will endure throughout the ages. Like Amyclae of old, (an insignificant but important village that was absorbed into Sparta during the rise of Spartan rule in Laconia) so too, did the Spartans of Melbourne and Victoria emulate their ancient ancestors.



Now it's the turn of the third generation that has grown, developed and become fully integrated into Australian society. The future of the Spartans in Melbourne Victoria is now in their hands. Will they take up the mantle of leadership and bring hope and glory worthy of their ancestors. This can only be achieved if the Spartans or Lakones as they prefer to be called endeavour to reach the highest offices in the land, contributing to the productivity, prosperity and defence of Australia.

That is what Australia is all about, contributing to a higher cause is the best that one can do for his or her country without losing their Hellenic heritage and culture. The **Australian Spartans** (Laconians) are emerging from a sleep so deep that only now are they beginning to recognise their value and standing in the Australian society.



The current President, Chris Paikopoulos and his hard working committee are committed to ensuring that Australians of Laconian Hellenic origins are united in the same way as the previous two generations had done in the past. The current committee has many projects in the wind, some which are of major significance to all Australians of Hellenic origins and to others who have a love of Hellenism at heart. Cultural, literary, oral histories and photographic projects are being contemplated to ensure that memories of old are retained for future scholars and consecutive generations wishing to explore their ancestors who made their roots in Australia.



As ambitious the projects may sound, the Laconians are just as committed as their ancestors of old in retaining the memories of a bygone era. Chris Paikopoulos it could be said has high hopes and believes that his community of Spartans (Lakonians) have the mettle, drive and capacity to meet any challenge with confidence, determination and vigour.

In summary, there are many in the Hellenic and wider community who recognise the strengths and abilities of the third generation and believe that, "the Spartans are coming". As they, the *Australian Spartans* emerge from their hibernation, great things are expected of them in the future and one hopes that they too will ready to be counted amongst their brethren and thus strengthen the Australian fabric of society. **Peter Adamis**