

# PALLACONIANS AT THE 2012 ANTIPODES GLENDI MELBOURNE GREEK FESTIVAL

Visitors to the 2012 Hellenic Antipodes festival this year would have been pleasantly surprised to find that the organisers had gone to considerable lengths to embed the Hellenic culture amongst the leafy and overhanging eucalyptus trees that lined Lonsdale street in the heart of Melbourne. The festival was guarded by the silent concrete and glass sentinels that surrounded it in a protective manner. Beneath the sentinels were many coloured canopies that even Joseph of the many coloured cloak (of biblical fame) would have been proud of. A bright blue sky with nary a wind and for the odd cloud that was stung by the sunrays of the sun quickly scampered to unveil a glorious day; while down below crowds mingled freely between the marquees, entertainment and food stalls.

This was the long awaited Glendi, the Hellenic Antipodes of Australia. A time when all competitive differences of a Hellenic nature are put aside to demonstrate to the wider Australia community the contribution made to Australia by those of a Hellenic heritage. It is a time of gaiety, joys and laughter, where people from all walks of life, nationalities, cultural differences could be seen to pass through the loom of the Australian society and to view the strengths and diversity of the diverse fabrics that make up the Australian society. Saturday was the official opening of the antipodes Glendi Festival and Lonsdale Street was packed to the rafters so to speak. There were the usual speeches by the organisers and political leaders alike, followed by the various entertainment including Hellenic dance groups.

Of the most notable Hellenic dancing groups active on the day was the Pallaconian Brotherhood. The youthful and energetic dancers put on a fine display of Lakonian style of dance that enthralled by visitors, admirers and onlookers alike. group practice at the Pallaconian Brotherhood community centre located in Albert street Brunswick. The group is one of Victoria's major leading Hellenic dance groups attracting a wide following within the local Hellenic and wider community. Interested members, no matter what their age are most welcome to attend the dance group dance lessons in order to learn the fine and intricate dance step movements of the Lakonians. Their costumes richly adorned with the local region identifies them as Lakonians in memory of a bygone era rich in the history of the Lakonians.

The wider public will begin to hear more about the Pallaconians, their achievements, cultural objectives, dance group and their contribution to the Australian nation in the near future. They are fast becoming well known within th greater Melbourne and Victorian region with links now been cemented with other Lakonian institutions throughout Australia and on a global scale. as they arise like the phoenix from the hearth and take their rightful place amongst the Hellenic institutions within Melbourne Victoria and the wider Australian community.

On the Sunday, Antipodes organisers, entertainment groups and stall representatives arrived early to ensure that the marquees containing the paraphernalia, products, recruiting materials and other objects of interest were in order and ready for the remainder of the day. The media in the form of 3XY, ERT, Neos Kosmos and others had lined the street and were busily preparing for the Sundays festivities while their neighbours representing the Hellenic regions, communities, educational, professional and elderly care such as Fronditha were ensuring that they would be in unison.

The Pallaconians led by Chris Paikopoulos prepared the Pallaconian brotherhood marquee early on Saturday and in typical Laconic fashion displayed the various photographic images around the Australian and Greek flags with the Leonidas logo in the centre below the Australian flag. Chris Paikopoulos, (President), Jim Kanellakos, (Treasurer), Cathy Petroulis, (Secretary), Jim Bakis, John Panos, Peter Roumpos along with others, were but some of the volunteers that manned the Laconian marquee throughout the 2012 Antipodes Glendi of Melbourne, Victoria.

Whether it was for the children, the youth, parents, friends, relatives and/or the elderly, there was food, drink, rest rooms and entertainment available to suit everyone's tastes and no one was left out. What was of interest was that at no stage was there the usual bargaining or haggling over the prices being charged for the food and drinks being provided as it was plain to see that to put on a festival of this size cost money. The 2012 Australian Hellenic Antipodes Glendi Festival was a huge success and organisers responsible should be congratulated. **Peter Adamis – Watsonia**