



*On the occasion of
the Independence Day of Greece,
the Consul General, Dr Stavros Kyrimis,
in collaboration with the
Department of Modern Greek
and Byzantine Studies
of Sydney University
requests the pleasure of
your company to
at an hour long celebratory evening
to be held at
The Great Hall - Sydney University
on March 25th, 2015
commencing 6:30pm sharp*

INVITATION
GREEK NATIONAL DAY
25th MARCH, 2015



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Perhaps no other western nation has withstood and overcome invasions and occupations as often and as successfully as the Greek people. Despite these existential threats, they have managed to produce some of the greatest contributions towards the advancement of humankind. Contributions that have endowed and underpinned many of the finest ideals and institutions of Western civilization such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

The spirit of Greece which was forged and tempered on the battlefields of Marathon, followed by Thermopylae with the 300 Spartans and then the naval Battle of Salamis, has continued to dwell in the psyche of the Greeks throughout all ages. Throughout an almost 400 year occupation following the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, their birthright of freedom was never snuffed out despite the surrounding darkness. But rather than curse the darkness, the Greek Revolutionaries raised their banner on 25th March 1821 and declared the start of their struggle for "Freedom or Death."

It is for this reason that the nine horizontal stripes on the Greek flag reflect the nine syllables of the catchcry FREEDOM OR DEATH in the Greek language.

In due course their heroic and holy revolution succeeded with the support of the Great Western Powers as well as the contribution of individuals such as Victor Hugo and Lord Byron who stood by their cause. Today the Revolution of 1821 is not only a celebration of the Greeks but also of all freedom loving and democratic nations.

Today's modern Greek state, founded in 1830 is the culmination of many different historical developments starting predominantly Classical Athens, the age of Alexander the Great and his Hellenistic successors, the Roman Empire which consumed Greece territorially but which was itself

consumed to a large degree by Greek education, the Byzantine Empire and the subsequent transplantation of that Empire's knowledge and learning across to the Renaissance period in Europe

We have also witnessed the further transformation of Greece in our days through her membership of the European Union since 1981.

However, despite the many transformations there is also an unmistakable continuity of the Greek spirit not only within its own borders and among its people but also within the Western world which has drawn breath, strength and ideas from its Greek inheritance.

Finally, one cannot ignore the transformative contribution of the Orthodox Church, particularly in the area of spiritual education as exemplified by the Three Hierarchs, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom.

While the Greek people may consider themselves the 'successors in title' to the sum of Greek learning, culture and history, the reality is that their sense of ownership will always be exceeded by their sense of trusteeship of a treasure that belongs to all of humanity.

It is for this reason that the Greek identity encompasses and embraces not only those that were born within its borders and the diaspora but just as importantly all philhellenes, without whom the Greek galaxy would not be as brilliant and temporal.

On this sacred day, which also marks the religious celebration of the Annunciation of the Holy Theotokos (Virgin Mary) we proudly exclaim:

*Long live Greece!
Long live Australia!
Long Live Democracy!*