Faces Beyond the Greek Café:
The Traditional Diversity of Greek-Australian Occupational Pursuits, 1820s–2010*

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From the late nineteen century until the closing decades of the twentieth century, Greeks played a large part in Australia’s food catering industry. They continued, nevertheless, to enter a wide variety of occupations. These included: agricultural and pastoral activities, mining, sea-related industries, itinerant work, secondary industries, public life, professional fields, and artistic and sporting avenues. Moreover, their contribution in some activities proved significant. This paper firmly challenges the entrenched, popular stereotype of Greek-Australians as being historically defined as essentially a collection of fish’n’chip shop owners and café and milk bar proprietors. Rather, their complex and broad involvement in Australia’s mainstream development over the last two hundred years is clearly revealed, acknowledged and celebrated.

This presentation builds on material from three earlier research articles published by the authors (Janiszewski and Alexakis, 1990a:48–59; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 1996:11–15; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 2004).

Whilst the historical prominence of Greek-Australians in the nation’s small, food retailing and catering businesses — such as oyster saloons, soda/sundae parlours, cafés, milk bars, restaurants and fish’n’chip shops — has been very generously acknowledged, their persistent presence in other occupations has generally failed to attract eager attention. The entrenched popular stereotype of Australia’s Greeks as historically being a collection of fish’n’chip shop owners or café and milk bar proprietors has unfortunately overwhelmed and hidden the faces of those Greek-Australians involved in a wider range of occupational pursuits. Rescuing this cloaked section of the Greek diaspora

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in Australia from relative indifference reveals the complex and broad entanglement of Greek-Australians within the Australian historical mosaic, virtually from the genesis of European settlement.

Starting with the arrival at Sydney Cove of seven Greek convicts aboard the *Norfolk* in August 1829 (Gilchrist, 1992:31–32), Greeks entered a diversity of occupations, though at times, and in particular regions, they have shown distinct work preferences, such as food catering. Greeks have involved themselves in agricultural and pastoral pursuits, in mining, sea-related industries, itinerant work, secondary industries, public life, professional fields, and artistic and sporting avenues.

Official respect in Britain for Greek agrarian expertise was such that in 1849 Britain’s Secretary for War and the Colonies, Earl Grey, flirted with the notion that natives of the Ionian Islands in western Greece should migrate to Western Australia and instruct British settlers in Mediterranean agricultural methods (Janiszewski and Alexakis, 1995:18). The earliest evidence of Greek agricultural activity on Australian soil is recorded in New South Wales by viticulturalist James Busby and Surveyor-General Sir Thomas Mitchell during the early 1830s. Busby refers to a Greek islander maintaining the vineyard on John Macarthur’s Camden property — it was managed by Macarthur’s fifth son, William — while Mitchell notes “Greek pirates at work, training vines to trellises” on Macarthur’s Parramatta estate (Busby, 1830:21; Mitchell Papers VIII:273). John and William appear to have arranged using of the Greeks jointly for their assumed general horticultural and vigneron skills; William later acquired renown as a fine viticulturalist and medal-winning wine-maker. At least four of the seven Greek convicts who disembarked in Sydney in 1829 were officially assigned to the Macarthur family. They were: Andonis Manolis, Georgios Laritsos, Nikolaos Papandreou and Georgios Vasilakis (Gilchrist, 1992:32; Teale, 1974).

From the late 1860s to the 1890s, Greek gold miners at Hill End, Tambaroora and Gulgong in New South Wales and at Mosquito Flat, near Maryborough in Victoria, cultivated small fruit and vegetable gardens for both private and retail consumption. Some later took up farming as their principal occupation. One, Natale D’Angri, became a nurseryman in Ballarat, Victoria, as well as a pioneer member of the Ballarat Horticultural Society, and even had a pumpkin weighing 136 pounds selected for display at the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London (Janiszewski and Alexakis, 1996:12–13; Harvey, 1990:5–7; D’Angri, private papers). From the late nineteenth century, Greeks such as George Paxinos, Ioannis Zervoudakis and Emmanouil Apostolos in Melbourne and George Boziques in Adelaide, could also be found making a living as green grocers (Glichrist, 1992:380, 382, 384). Another particularly enterprising Greek, Elias Agapitakis, arrived in Fremantle during the 1910s, travelled to Sydney, changed his name to Leo Lynch, and pioneered the flower industry — growing flowers and then selling them at the Sydney markets. Leo’s two sons, Bill and John, also entered the business with Bill becoming President of the New South Wales Flower Growers’ Association by the late 1980s (Appleyard and Yiannakis, 2002:253; Biographical cuttings; Lynch, notes; Powell, 1989:26).
In the early 1920s Nikolaos Kolios, together with Peter and Alexander Zymaris and Aristotle George, introduced the “cold dipping” process to the developing dried fruit industry of Mildura in Victoria’s north-west. The technique assisted in procuring export quality dried sultanas (Janiszewski, 2005:222; Tsounis, 1971:123; Voullaire, 1985:91). Post World War II Greek migrant-settlers joined those who had arrived in the region prior to the war, and even today, a number of blocks are still owned and run by Greek-Australian families. During the late 1930s, a number of Greeks including George Kangelis, Antonios Metaxas, Manolis Kalivitis, John Macris, Peter and Tony Spanos and Steve Stamoulis, worked as land clearers and fruit pickers in South Australia’s Riverland district around the towns of Berri and Renmark. Many eventually became the growers of the area’s citrus and stone fruits (Janiszewski and Alexakis, 1996:13; Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:14, 67; Kiapekos, 1986; Spanos, 1986; Stamoulis, 1986; Tunis, 1986). Steve Stamoulis recalls:

Went to Broken Hill in 1927 — no jobs. [Then] Adelaide — no jobs. Four Greek men [including myself] looked for jobs together... Came to Berri in 1930. Worked on this farm for 20 years — clearing the land, looking after grapes, oranges, apricots and drying sultans — then bought it from the Aussie boss. (Stamoulis, 1986)

Like Mildura, the growth of the Riverland’s Greek population was strengthened by the mass migration of the 1950s and 1960s. Post-war Greek migrants also settled on market gardens at Napperby and Nelshaby, near Port Pirie, on the north-eastern

Jim Mavromatis, smelter
(Broken Hill Associated Smelter, Port Pirie, SA, 1986)

Born at Port Pirie in 1945, Jim Mavromatis is the third generation of his family to have worked in the lead and zinc smelting plant. Jim was employed as an Operating Superintendent in the Lead Refinery Department. His grandfather, George Haralampou Kokoti (alias “Jacky Hook”) from Cyprus, was the first family member employed at the plant. George had arrived in Australia in 1924 and also succeeded in establishing a vegetable farm near Port Pirie.

Photo by Effy Alexakis, from the “In Their Own Image: Greek-Australians” National Project Archives, Macquarie University.
coastline of South Australia’s Spencer Gulf. Earlier Greek arrivals, such as George Haralampou Kokoti (“Jacki Hook”) and George Polites, had established vegetable farms in the region during the 1920s. Polites is purported to have introduced the use of glass houses to ensure commercial out-of-season vegetables crops. Menelaos Parianos remembers that between the 1920s and 1940s, some Greeks — including himself — would work on the grape “blocks” around Mildura and then during the off-season, go to work on Greek-run vegetable farms around Port Pirie (Janiszewski and Alexakis, 1996:13; Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:14, 94, 105; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 1990b:53; Karamanos, 1986; Alikaris, 1986; Mavromatis, 1986; Verouhis, 1986; Parianos, 1986).

In Queensland, both pre- and post-war Greek migrant-settlers worked as sugar cane cutters (some eventually becoming cane farmers) on cane plantations surrounding the towns of Babinda, Edmonton, Innisfail, Home Hill, Silkwood, Ingham, Gordonvale and Tully, as well as in the cotton growing industry of the state’s Callide Valley around the towns of Biloela and Thangool. During the 1950s and 1960s tobacco farming around Mareeba in Queensland’s north drew a significant number of Greeks to the region. The south-west of Western Australia also witnessed Greek involvement in the cultivation of tobacco. Centred around Manjimup, the first commercial crops were grown by Peter Michelides during the 1930s (Janiszewski and Alexakis, 2004; Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:15, 65, 68–69, 90–91; Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1995:103; Catsoulis, 1987; O’Brien, 1968:20–34; Appleyard and Yiannakis, 2002:48, 157; Michelides, 1987).

Before the 1920s, concentrations of Greek canecutters could be found at Babinda, Edmonton, Innisfail and Gordonvale in far north Queensland. A number eventually became plantation owners. Today, well-established Greek plantation families, together with more recent arrivals, particularly those of the 1950s and 1960s, maintain a strong tradition of Greek involvement in Australia’s sugarcane industry.

Photo by Effy Alexakis, from the “In Their Own Image: Greek-Australians” National Project Archives, Macquarie University.

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More recently, Greek-Australians have maintained their involvement with both sugar cane and cotton farming. During the final decades of the twentieth century, Stavros Loizou at Home Hill in northern Queensland, was still operating the cane farm that his father, Andreas, initially purchased in the late 1930s. Nicholas “Pepper” Taifalos at Silkwood in northern Queensland, was also proudly working the cane farm that his father and uncles had acquired in the 1920s: “Cane farming, it’s a noble profession — gotta think with your head and work with your hands”. Nicholas’ intention was that his sons would continue to work the plantation after his retirement (Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1995:68, 103; Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:68; Loizou, 1987; Taifalos, 1987). At his one thousand acre property “Kythera”, located near the north-western New South Wales town of Wee Waa, John Conomos (Megalokonomos) has been farming cotton for over 40 years: “I’m a cotton farmer... a couple of Greeks [in the region] farm cotton... We’ve — me and my brother [Jim] — have been in business since about 1963” (J. Conomos, 2002).
Greek-Australians have also emerged as producers of premium quality wines. The Kominos Winery, near Stanthorpe in south-eastern Queensland, was established in 1974 by Stephen Comino, and Marion's Vineyard at Devil's, in Tasmania's Tamar Valley just north of Launceston, was founded in 1980 by Marion Semmens (nee Papastavrou) in partnership with her husband Mark. While Paulmara Estates, in the heart of South Australia's Barossa Valley, commenced operations in 1999 under the guidance of Paul and Mara Georgiadis, between 1994 and 2000, Mark Kailis (a member of the highly entrepreneurial Kailis family of Western Australia) was General Manager of Baldivis Estate Wines located at Serpentine, just over 50km south of Perth (O Kosmos, 22 October 1996:15; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 1990a:57; Semmens, 1988; Paulmara Estates, 2008; Kailis Organic Olive Groves, 2011a).

Similarly, olive farming has attracted increased Greek interest over recent decades. Post-war Greek migrant-settlers initially started planting small olive groves in Adelaide's outer northern suburbs and in South Australia's Riverland district. Over the last 20 years, a number of significant commercial olive growers of Greek background have emerged in Australia. Until their collapse in late 2011 — due to fierce competition from cheaper imported olive oil — perhaps the most notable was the Kailis family in Western Australia, who operated a series of olive farms across the state's south-west under the company name, Kailis Organic Olive Groves. The company was founded in 2001 by Mark Kailis following the acquisition of Baldivis Estate Wines by Palandri Wines in 2000 (Kontopoulos, 1986; Olives South Australia, 2010; Prendergast, 2011; Kailis Organic Olive Groves, 2011a; Kailis Organic Olive Groves, 2011b).

Greek participation in pastoral economic activities, and other forms of animal husbandry, commenced with two convict-setters, Andonis Manolis and Gikas Boulgaris. Manolis undertook sheep shearing during the mid-1830s, while Boulgaris, after being pardoned, worked as an itinerant shepherd in southern New South Wales, and later settled on “Nimmitabel” sheep station (Gilchrist, 1992:33, 40–41). Arriving in Sydney in 1853 flushed with gold fever, Michael Manusu became a wealthy grazier near Mudgee in the central-west of New South Wales. George North (Georgios Tramountanas), who arrived in Port Adelaide in 1842, also succeeded in acquiring grazing runs, as did Sir Nicholas Laurantus, who disembarked in Sydney in 1908. North’s property, “Newland Grange”, was located on South Australia’s Eyre Peninsula, and Laurantus’ properties, near Hay and Narrandera in south-western New South Wales. When combined in area, Laurantus’ sheep runs were larger than the island of his birth — Kythera (Watt, private papers; Marshall, private papers; Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:11, 27, 33; Purcell, 1989; Michaelides, 1987:2, 64, 58–62, 66–67). From 1929 right through to the 1960s the Cominos family operated a sheep station at Aramac in central western Queensland. While they titled the property “Byron Park”, locals dubbed it “Macaroni Downs” (reflecting clearly confusion as to the precise ethnicity of the owners) (Cominos, 1987; Conomos, 2002:482–483). Greek involvement in traditional pastoral avenues was still being maintained during the 1980s and 1990s by individuals such as: firstly, Louis Elias on his cattle station, “Yanina”, near
Rockhampton, Queensland; and secondly, by the Casimaty family on their sheep run, “Acton Views”, at Seven Mile Beach, east of Hobart (Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:96; Casimaty, 1988; “In Our Own Image”).

Less prominent areas of animal husbandry that have attracted Greek commercial enterprise, centre primarily on goats, pigs and poultry. John Doscas, a Spartan who arrived in Melbourne in 1889, was responsible for introducing the breeding of Saarnen goats to Western Australia (Whitaker, 1987; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 1990a:53; Appleyard and Yiannakis, 2002:25). While since the 1960s the Antypas family have pursued goat breeding on their property “Cefalonia”, near Legana in Tasmania, pig farming emerged as a serious competitor to fishing as a popular occupation amongst Greeks during the 1980s and 1990s in Port Lincoln, South Australia; the Tunis family were operating a pig farm at Port Lincoln as early as the late 1930s. At Howard Springs east of Darwin, the Syrimi family, originally from Cyprus, constructed a large poultry farm during the 1980s, as did the Kacavelis family in Mossman, north Queensland. Both commercial enterprises were a far cry from the urban backyard chicken pens constructed by many pre- and post-war migrant-settlers (Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1995:92; Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:66, 133; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 1990a:53; Tunis, 1986; Syrimi, 1987; Kacavelis, 1987).

Since the Australian gold rushes, many Greek-Australians have been involved in mining. While most Greek gold miners of the 1850s to the 1890s were concentrated on the Victorian and New South Wales fields, during the early part of the twentieth century, Greek miners laboured down shafts in Broken Hill, New South Wales, and at Kalgoorlie and Marble Bar in Western Australia (Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:12, 15, 33–51, Peter Couroupis, miner (Broken Hill, NSW, 1987)

Born in 1899, Peter Couroupis (holding his parents’ passport) came out to Australia in 1924. Most of his working life was spent at Broken Hill’s North Mine. Because of his capacity for hard work, Peter became known as a “gun trucker”.

Peter: “The mines wanted the foreigners... they worked hard. In the 1920s about one hundred Greek men [were working at Broken Hill]”.

Photo by Effy Alexakis, from the “In Their Own Image: Greek-Australians” National Project Archives, Macquarie University.
Peter Couroupis arrived in Australia in 1924 and soon commenced work at Broken Hill’s North Mine: “The mines wanted the foreigners... they worked hard. In the 1920s, about one hundred Greek men [were working at Broken Hill]” (Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:72–72; Couroupis, 1987). Later, others obtained jobs at Queensland’s Mount Isa mines, or in Tasmania’s north-west mining centres, as well as Groote Eylandt, off the eastern coast of Arnhem Land. Some, such as Louis Harmanis, became prospectors wandering Australia’s rugged interior. From at least the 1950s, Greek miners worked the opal fields of Coober Pedy in South Australia, the strength of their presence suggested by the names given to the surrounding fields: “Zorba”, “New Zorba”, “Greek Gully” and “Olympic” (Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:186; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 1990a:53–56; Argyros, 1987; Kagelaris, 1987; “In Our Own Image”; Harmanis, 1987; Papadopoulos, 1987; Eleftheriadis, 1987). Mining’s ever-present risk to life was tragically evidenced by Archie Kalokerinos while digging for opals at Coober Pedy during the mid-1960s: “One young Greek was blown eight feet into the air [by a gelignite explosion] and died a few minutes later in his father’s arms. One does not forget this sort of thing easily” (Kalokerinos, 1967:72).

The sea has offered Greek-Australians employment opportunities in a variety of spheres. Many, like Samuel Donnes (Antonatos) and John Peters, both of whom arrived in Sydney during the 1830s, became mariners on coastal or river vessels, while others remained in port as wharf labourers (Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:11, 13, 26–29, 31; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 1995:17, 20; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 2002:10). Later in the nineteenth century, at least one Greek, Nicholas Minister, adopted “blackbirding” (“recruiting” natives from south-west Pacific islands as cheap labour for the Australian sugar and cotton industries) as a lucrative means of income (Docker, 1981:191–192, 198–199, 218; Gilchrist, 1992:114–117; Kanarakis, 2010:240–245; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 2002:11). By 1916, there were 34 Greeks reported to be working on New South Wales coastal shipping alone. As early as the 1910s, Greek fishermen at Bunbury, Cossack and Port Hedland on the Western Australian coast, were harvesting the sea for a living, an occupation which, since the Great Depression, has also been undertaken by Greeks at Thevenard, near Ceduna, on the west coast of South Australia’s Eyre Peninsula — the Depression years witnessed the development of a small, though thriving, shark liver oil industry by Thevanard’s Greeks. Connie D’Ercole (nee Kriticos) recalls that they would catch up to two hundred small sharks on a good day and that “the shark catching was from a long line with ten to ninety hooks” and “a couple of buoys in between” (Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:14–15, 104; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 2002:10; D’Ercole, 1987).

During the 1930s and early 1940s in Tasmania, a Kytherian Greek, Gregory Casimaty, both acquired and built trawling vessels, employed Greek fishermen to run them, and ventured into the crayfishing (saltwater spiny lobster) industry. In the process, Danish seine fishing techniques were introduced into Australian waters. By 1956, the Haritos brothers, Michael, Jack, Ningle (Nicholas) and George, had pioneered commercial
barramundi fishing in the Northern Territory to the extent that interstate markets were beginning to purchase the fish. Whilst hunting both saltwater and freshwater crocodiles for their skin was also undertaken by the brothers, it was George who devoted himself vigorously to the enterprise. Based in Fremantle, Western Australia, by the early 1980s, a Kastellorizian Greek, Michael G. Kailis, operated prawn trawlers from Exmouth Gulf to the Gulf of Carpentaria. While other major players in Australia's fishing industry include Angelakis Brothers in South Australia, and Raptis & Sons in both South Australia and Queensland, Perth's fish retail and wholesale operations are dominated by close relatives of Michael G. Kailis. Greek seafood businesses also dominate the Sydney Fish Markets: Poulos Brothers, Claudios and De Costi Seafoods (Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:15, 78, 97, 100; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 2002:10–11).

Early Greek settlers opened oyster farms at the Hawkesbury River (just north of Sydney), Great Keppel Island (off Queensland's mid-east coast), and Bicton (near
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All supplied a rapidly growing number of Greek-run fish shops, oyster saloons and soda bars during the opening decades of the twentieth century. During the same period, along Australia’s northern coastline at Port Hedland, Broome, Darwin and Thursday Island, Greeks engaged work as crewmembers aboard pearl lugers, or as stevedores on shore. While Kalymnian sponge divers were brought out during the 1950s to dive for pearl shell in seas off the continent’s north-west coast, one enterprising and single-minded Greek, Con Denis George, experimented with the production of cultured pearls, an avenue later pursued by other Greeks such as Nicholas Paspaley (Paspaedalis) of Darwin, and Western Australia’s prawn fishing magnate, Michael G. Kailis. Mary Dakas, Nicholas Paspaley’s sister, established herself as Broome’s only Greek female pearler/lugger operator in 1949, and successfully operated lugers out of Broome and Port Hedland for most of the 1950s (Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:15, 74–75, 92; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 2002:10–11; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 2009; George, 1987; Davies and Dal Bosco, 2001:19–36).

Secondary industry has been another prominent source of employment for Greek-Australians, particularly post-war settlers, as industrial unions had previously resisted the employment of foreign labour. During the 1910s, however, the largest single employer of Port Pirie’s Greeks was overwhelmingly the town’s smelting plant. Of the 109 Greeks residing within the town and its immediate environs in 1916, just over 87% were classified as a “smelter”. Furthermore, the plant was the largest employer of Greeks in South Australia at the time. From the late 1950s and early 1960s, Greeks could be found working in Australia’s thriving steel mills at Newcastle and Port Kembla (near Wollongong) in New South Wales and at Whyalla in South Australia (Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:14, 94, 206–207; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 1990b:51–54; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 2000:11; D’Ercole, 1987).

While the Michelides family founded a tobacco and cigarette factory early in the twentieth century, four other pioneering Greeks, Efstratios George Haritos, John Sfakianakis, Dick Colivas and George Harmanis, established a salt production works in Darwin in 1919. The salt works primarily supplied Vestey’s Meatworks, which itself, employed a considerable number of Greeks. In 1939, the inventiveness of one Tasmanian Greek, George Haros, witnessed the development and manufacturing of a local food-catering icon: the “Haros Boiler”. Originally used for making warm beverages such as tea and coffee in Greek cafés, the boiler continues to be manufactured by one of George’s sons, primarily for fast food outlets, clubs, and event caterers (Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:15, 77, 90–91; Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1995:32–33; Haros, 1994).

Numerous frozen food production businesses have arisen through the commercial acumen of Greek migrant-settlers. One of the most successful has been Red Funnel Fisheries, based in Newcastle, New South Wales. Acquired in 1935 by two Ithacan Greeks, Jerry Comino and Chris Pappas, it has grown from a small four-man operation to one employing well over fifty staff and servicing most of the greater area of the New South Wales central coast. Jerry Comino’s nephew, Arthur Cominos, has overseen its development as Managing Director since the late 1980s. For many post-war
arrivals, car production plants and factory process work (such as the bottling and/or packaging of completed products) became a familiar initial entry point into the Australian workforce. Engineering plants and even shipbuilding are other fields of secondary industry into which Greeks have ventured. Doric Engineering, which designs and constructs shipping containers, was established by Dimitrios Trambas in Devonport, Tasmania, in 1969. Whilst during the 1960s and 1970s Greeks were employed in South Australia’s BHP Whyalla Shipyards, in the late 1960s, Western Australia’s prawn fishing magnate, Michael G. Kailis, opened a shipbuilding yard in Fremantle to construct trawlers. By the late 1990s over one hundred vessels had been built, and over 30 of these had been purchased by overseas fishing fleets (Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:102, 210; Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1995:79, 80, 93; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 2002:10–11; Comino, 1986; Pappas, 1986; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 2000:11; Trambas 1988; Cocks, 1999:14).

Many Greek arrivals often initially accepted itinerant employment. Such work included: scrub clearing; timber cutting; construction gangs on railways, dams and

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**Doula Papas (nee Patounias), onion exporter** (Devonport, Tas., 1988)

Doula Papas arrived in Australia from Rhodes as a small child in 1956. She married Nick Papas (Papanikolaou) in 1969. The couple started off in a fruit shop in the early 1970s before establishing their onion wholesaling business in 1980. By successfully contracting quite a number of north-western Tasmania’s onion growers to use the business as a sole distributor, the Papas “onion factory” eventually became the third largest exporter of onions globally – exporting to Europe, Japan and South-East Asia. Five to six tons of export onions were being distributed annually by the business. Unfortunately, record-high interest rates during the late 1980s and early 1990s undermined Doula and Nick’s success, and the family business eventually collapsed.

Photo by Effy Alexakis, from the “In Their Own Image: Greek-Australians” National Project Archives, Macquarie University.
the laying of water pipelines; crocodile, buffalo and kangaroo shooting; crop harvesting and fruit picking; hawking; and in the 1920s, a Greek from Kastellorizo, Michael Gunellas, even acquired the particularly lonely job of delivering mail on camel and horseback in Western Australia’s desolate Meekatharra district. Like Gunellas, numerous Greeks have found work transporting goods and/or people by road. During the second half of the 1930s, Constantine Karavas was freighting fruit by truck between Whyalla and Adelaide in South Australia and in the late 1980s, John Kritikos’ Steel City Coaches was the largest charter bus company outside of Adelaide. In 1914, Jim Kalafatas operated one of Darwin’s two taxis, by the 1970s, Melbourne’s Greek taxi drivers had become an indelible part of the city’s character (Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:15, 64, 79, 85, 95, 97, 188–189; Michael, 1987; Karavas, 1987; Kritikos, 1987; Harmanis, 1987).

Even from an early stage, Greeks succeeded in elevating themselves into public life and professional fields. During the late nineteenth century, Christie Totolos served as an alderman on the Hill End Borough Council in New South Wales, while Con Fisher (Constantine Argyropoulos) and Angelos Pholeros served on the Parkes Municipal Council, also in New South Wales. John Doscas was a long-standing member of the Cottesloe Municipal Council in Perth from its inception in 1907. In Queensland, Nicholas Hellen, originally from Kythera, became a Councillor on the Calliope Shire Council in the early 1920s. Dr Spyridon Candiottis and Dr John Pericles (Ioannis Periklis Rodokanakis), both medical graduates from European universities, practiced respectively in Queensland and New South Wales during the second-half of the nineteenth century. In Victoria, Dr Constantine Krizos (Kyriazopoulos), who had studied medicine at Athens University, had established a practice in Melbourne by 1909. James Nicklos senior, a Greek sailor attached to the British vessel Othello, jumped ship in Melbourne in 1852, tried his luck on the Victorian goldfields, but made his fortune during the 1860s to 1880s as a major hay and corn retailer in the Victorian capital. Anthony J.J. Lucas (Lekatsas) from Ithaca achieved enormous commercial success as a restaurant and property entrepreneur in Melbourne during the early part of the twentieth century. Anthony’s younger brother, Marinos, became a theatrical entrepreneur, theatre designer and builder in Launceston, Tasmania. In Sydney, George Lucas Adamson (Adamopoulos), a chemistry graduate from Athens University, established the “George L. Adamson & Co. Chemical Laboratories” during the late 1920s. He was also technical consultant with the “Australian Absorbent Wool Products Ltd”. Within less than a decade after arriving from a war-torn Greece in 1947, Elly Lukas became an international fashion model of significant renown. She was considered a “supermodel” long before the term came into popular use (Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:13, 15, 50–51, 70–71, 84, 89, 101, 124–125, 129, 157, 158–159, 162–167, 194–195, 208; Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1995:52, 76, 84, 86, 125–126; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 1990a:58; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 1995:25; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 2003:10; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 1988:50; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 2006:170; Victoria and Its Metropolis, 1888:730; Jones, 1999:14).
Over the years, numerous Greeks have followed similar paths into public life and various professional fields. For example: academics Mary Kalantzis and George Kanarakis; immunologist, Professor Vasso Apostolopoulos; John Anictomatis, Northern Territory Administrator (2000–2003); Dr Ken Michael, Governor of Western Australia (2006–2011); Professor of Nanoelectronics Stan (Efstratios) Skafidas; Marilynne Paspaley, pearling and hotel entrepreneur and actor; Senator Nick Xenophon, and former senator, Nick Bolkus, federal politicians; journalists Mary Kostakidis and John Mangos; fashion designers Alex Perry, Christopher Chronis and Tina Kalivas; makeup entrepreneur, Napoleon Perdis; George Calombaris, chef and restaurateur; Mark Bouris, finance entrepreneur and media personality; Andrew N. Liveris, CEO and Chairman of the Dow Chemical Company; architect Nonda Katsalidis; Victorian magistrate, Paresa Antoniadis Spanos and former Victorian Chief Magistrate Nicholas Papas, to name a few.

The Likiard swimming sisters (Geelong, Vic., c. 1937)

Left to right: Chrysanthe June, Aphrodite Calypso, and Stavroula Catherine.

The Likiard sisters were champion swimmers and divers. Their father, Jim Likiard (Demetrius Likiardopolous) was born on the island of Kefalonia and arrived in Australia before World War I. Stavroula Catherine's aquatic achievements were the most outstanding of the three sisters. She held the Victorian and Australian Springboard and Tower Diving Championships for a number of years. At seventeen she was proclaimed as “one of Australia’s outstanding women divers of the last twenty years” and won the Victorian Springboard diving title at her first attempt. At the time she was “the only woman diver in Australia able to handle the... one and a half somersault dive from the three-metre board”.

Photo courtesy A. Lambert, from the “In Their Own Image: Greek-Australians” National Project Archives, Macquarie University.
While many contemporary Greek-Australians have attained high national profiles in either sporting or artistic occupations — such as Mark Philippoussis (tennis player), Braith Anasta (rugby league player), Charlie Yankos (soccer player), Stan Lazaridis (soccer player), Lydia Lassila (née Ierodiaconou) (freestyle skier), Michael Diamond (clay target shooter), Yiannis Kouros (ultra-marathon runner), Anthony Koutoufides (Australian rules footballer), Bill Stellios (weightlifter), Alex Dimitriades (actor), Ana Kokkinos (film director), Lex Marinos (actor/film director), Alex Proyas (film director), Zoe and Gia Carides (actors), Nick Giannopoulos (actor/comedian), Mary Coustas (actor/comedian), Thaao Penghlis (actor), Vicki Varvaressos (artist), Stelios Arkadiou (“Stelarc”) (artist), Vasso Kalamaras (writer), Antigone Kefala (writer), Christos Tsiolkas (writer), and George Miller (film director) for example – their predecessors did also.

George Samios, born in Kythera in 1917, was selected six times to represent Australia in wrestling between 1948 and 1968. Stavroula Catherine Likiard (Likiardopoulou) held the Victorian and Australian Springboard and Tower Diving Championships for a number of years during the 1940s while Maria Kousou became a state swimming champion in Queensland during the early 1930s. Michael Diamond (not to be confused with the shooter) was selected as a reserve in the 1956 Australian Olympic

**Vicki Varvaressos, visual artist**
(Sydney, NSW, 1997)

Vicki Varvaressos’ work has been critically acclaimed as some of the most provocative paintings of women and women’s experiences in Australian painting. She has been painting and exhibiting since the 1970s. Vicki’s paternal grandfather, George Varvaressos, arrived in Australia in either 1913 or 1914 from Neapolis in the southern Peloponnese. Her father, Theodore, came out in 1926 and her mother, Hariklia (nee Karoni), in 1938.

**Vicki:** “All of my work has been a reflection of what I’m interested in... The early work is very much issues, and there were other issues apart from feminism, but the feminism stuff was there... then the images became much more internal — ‘human existence’”.

Photo by Effy Alexakis, from the “In Their Own Image: Greek-Australians” National Project Archives, Macquarie University.
Christos Tsiolkas, writer
(Melbourne, Vic., 1997)

Christos Tsiolkas was born in Melbourne in 1965. His father George arrived in Australia as an assisted migrant in 1955, and his mother, Georgia (née Litras), in 1963. They married in Melbourne in 1964. Christos’ critically applauded major publications have been Loaded, Jump Cuts (co-authored with Sasha Soldatow), The Jesus Man, The Devil’s Playground, Dead Europe and The Slap. Loaded was made into a feature film (titled Head On) directed by Ana (Anastasia) Kokkinos, and The Slap, into a television drama series by the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation).

Photo by Effy Alexakis, from the “In Their Own Image: Greek-Australians” National Project Archives, Macquarie University.

...fencing team, and in 1962, he became Australian Selection Open Champion in the sport. At the Perth Commonwealth Games of that year, he won the silver medal. Peter Demos represented Australia in basketball during the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games (Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:202–203, 205; Georgakis, 2000:128, 138). In 1935, George Payzis, originally from Ithaca, won the Sydney Esteddford. Nick Leenos (Nicholas Lianos) was a performer on the Tivoli Theatre circuit during the 1920s, as was Jimmy Kolivas, alias “Rudy Rico”, during the early 1930s. Leenos also achieved some popular success as a singer with the record release of his song, “Goodbye My Love”, and appearances on Sydney radio stations 2BL and 2GB. Singer Laurel Lee (Lorraine May Lianos), became a regular on Johnny O’Keefe’s television show, “Six O’Clock Rock” in the late 1950s, and on Brian Henderson’s “Bandstand” in the 1960s. Another singer of Greek background, Dixie Demos (Demopoulos), is also said to have appeared on “Bandstand”. The flautist and composer, John Lemmone (Lamoni), whose Greek father was born on the island of Kefalonia, was accompanist and later manager to Dame Nellie Melba (Janiszewski and Alexakis, 1995:27; Alexakis and Janiszewski, 1998:82–83; Janiszewski and Alexakis, 2006:170; Lynch, notes; Hetherington, 1967:39–42). Each of these Greek-Australians embraced an insistent desire to participate in this nation’s artistic or sporting development.

In recognising some of the many Greek-Australian faces beyond those associated with the popularly celebrated Greek cafés and milk bars, the traditional diversity of this ethnic group’s occupations is revealed. Furthermore, it becomes clearly evident, that from their earliest days of settlement, Greek-Australians have been an integral part of the development of mainstream Australia.
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