



KCA CONFERENCE BRISBANE 2016

Dr George Stabelos. KAV committee member
and KCA delegate Victoria.

The Kastellorizian Association of Queensland and the KCA have delivered an amazing first KCA conference in Brisbane and left a great legacy to many. They have achieved on many fronts having far exceeded all expectations and put the KCA on the map, **demonstrating the benefits of bringing Kazzies together across the generations, young to senior, from all around Australia.**

Their efforts and approach in organising this conference have been touching and remind us of the heroism of our forebears as traders crossing the Mediterranean and facing the various challenges and difficulties that Kazzies have faced in their history. Lots of guts, hard work, determination and that “nothing to lose” mindset that has seen them “punch far above their weight” as someone at the conference put it. The event organisation was undertaken with the mathematical accuracy and professionalism of the best event managers. The convention speakers and presentations were inspiring, interesting, professional, thought provoking and at times stirred deep emotions and brought a tear to the eye. The social aspect was also well designed. The cuisine was delicious and ranged from the traditional Greek at Brisbane’s The Greek Club (cooked to an authentic quality that I have not experienced commercially for some time) to the exquisite at the high class Brisbane riverside restaurant IL Centro.

What stood out to me was the vast array of ideas and thoughts that were presented and again showed us the benefits of people working together in synergy. **Kazzies, Greeks and Australians have demonstrated that we can be very industrious and successful as individuals, however have we benefited sufficiently as a community from the “power of many” and groups working harmoniously together?** There are other examples in society where groups of people working together in solidarity, such as with the Jewish and Asian communities, lead to a level of growth and success that could not be achieved by any individual alone. **Being collaborative has benefits both at an individual and community level. We need to realise this and advance our cause through availing of the opportunities presented in working together harmoniously.**

The conference featured a smorgasbord of prominent presenters and speakers including world experts in their fields such as a Kazzie geneologist, a range of professionals such as lawyers, accountants, finance experts, doctors, successful small business people, historians, and experienced committee people. Keynote speakers included researcher and neurologist Emeritus Professor Byron Kakulas (WA), CEO and managing director of the international corporate giant Dow Chemical, Andrew Liveris (USA), who gave an incredible speech via satellite link from Michigan USA, and that most inspiring Q & A youth panel composed of talented and intelligent young Kazzies from Brisbane and Sydney discussing issues related to younger generations and the future. It was truly flabbergasted by the amount of time and effort many have put into their various vocations and interests and the high level of achievement. Amongst numerous others, noteworthy were the geneology efforts of Allan Cresswell, who has over 47,000 Kazzies on his geneology database.

Congratulations to KCA President Yvonne Panagacos, the KCA Board, the KCA Convention Convenor Stathis Estathis and his convention steering committee, the Kastellorizian Association of Queensland, the volunteers and all state committees and attendees for a wonderful and memorable convention. We were touched by their efforts, warmth and hospitality. This could be the tip of the iceberg for Kazzies in Australia. We hope to see you all again in 2018 for the next convention in Sydney, if not before.