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## **Greek Australians mark 74th anniversary of the Dodecanesian islands' union with Greece**



The Dodecanesian Federation of Australia held a special church service and wreath laying ceremony on Sunday to mark the 74th anniversary of the Ensomatosi (union) of the Dodecanesian islands to mainland Greece.

While the reunification of the Dodecanesian islands to the mainland officially occurred on October 28, 1947, the anniversary is held on March 7 every year as that was the day the reunification was properly celebrated in Greece in 1948, with a special paniyiri attended by royals.



This year's celebrations in Victoria began with a church service at the Holy Monastery of Axion Estin in Northcote, Victoria. The service was attended by a number of officials and Greek community members.

This included Consul General of Greece in Melbourne, Mr Emmanuel Kakavelakis, President of the Hellenic RSL Sub-Branch in Melbourne, Steve Kyritsis, Maria Vamvakinou MP, Katerina Theophanous MP, Chairperson of Parks Victoria, John Pandazopoulos, and representatives from the Dodecanesian islands of Kalymnos, Kos, Kastellorizo, Leros and Rhodes.

Following the service, people were invited to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on the grounds of the church. The Consul General laid a wreath, as well as President of the Dodecanesian Federation of Australia, Monique Angelides, the politicians and young children dressed in traditional Kalymnian costumes.



“The event was extremely successful. The children laid a wreath for the first time and it was a beautiful symbol of the importance of recognising the day and it means that the next generation won’t forget it either,” Ms Angelides tells The Greek Herald.

A traditional lunch is typically held after the event but in lieu of that this year, the Federation is holding a celebratory dinner to mark both the Ensomatosi and the 200th anniversary of the Greek War of Independence on March 13 at the ‘Rhodes Club of Melbourne – Diagoras.’



## Historical Overview of events leading up to Ensomatosi:

- During the Italian-Turkish war of 1912, the Italians occupied the Dodecanese and they systematically tried to convert the Dodecanese to Italian education and religion.
- With the end of the war and on June 27, 1946, it was decided by the four great powers United States, Russia, England and France in Paris, that the Dodecanese would be returned to Greece.
- A peace treaty is signed in Paris between the Allies, as well as Greece and Italy, according to which Italy cedes to Greece with full sovereignty over the Dodecanese and the adjacent islands.
- On March 31, 1947, the British commander of the allied forces, Parker, handed over the command to Rear Admiral Pericles Ioannidis, and a transitional period of the military command of the Dodecanese begins.
- On January 9, 1948, the first article of law number 518 on the annexation of the Dodecanese to Greece stipulates that: The islands, Astypalea, Rhodes, Symi, Nisyros, Kos, Halki, Kastellorizo, Kasos, Karpathos, Tilos, Kalymnos, Leros, Patmos, Lipsi, as well as the adjacent islands are annexed to the Greek state from October 28, 1947.
- This law is the Registrar Act of the integration of the Dodecanese with motherland Greece.
- March 7, 1948 is defined as the day of the solemn formal integration, where the ceremony took place. In 1955, the Dodecanese became law with Rhodes as its capital.

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