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UTS Hellenic holds a talk for the 100-year anniversary of the Asia Minor Catastrophe



The Greek students of our community have put their stamp in this year's events for the commemoration of the 100 years since the Asia Minor Catastrophe, with a talk organised by the Hellenic Society of the University of Technology Sydney (UTS).

UTS Hellenic's event took place last Monday evening in a university lecture theatre on its campus.

Associate Professor of History at the University of NSW, Nick Doumanis, was the main speaker and he elaborated on the topic "Why the destruction of Smyrna shocked the world".

Associate Professor Doumanis expanded on the history of the city, especially in the 19th century during which it became a major multinational and multicultural commercial centre of the wider region.

He shed light on the incidents that led to the tragic events in September 1922, stressing that, in the end, the plans of the then-Turkish leadership for the disappearance of the country's Christian communities prevailed.

He spoke about the indifference of the foreign powers, who were observing the atrocities from the city's port and offered no response, while also mentioning the integration challenges of the refugees in Greece's society.

UTS Hellenic President, Dimitri Kallos, welcomed the attendees, saying that "we Greek-Australian students are honouring with respect the 100-year commemoration of Hellenism's biggest tragedy in the 20th century, and we honour the memory of the victims."

"Also, we say strongly, the homelands that have been lost are not forgotten," he stressed, explaining that though students may be known chiefly for their social and entertainment activities, "with events like this, we are trying to put our stamp on the cultural calendar of our community".

In his address, the Consul General of Greece in Sydney, Christos Karras, congratulated the students for their initiative. As far as the central theme of the event, he also added that "Smyrna of that era was a most important hub not only for the Ottoman empire but also for Europe."

"It was one of the biggest centres of Greeks and Armenians in the Ottoman empire and the Catastrophe was a great wound in the century history of Hellenism there," said the Greek diplomat.

Among the attendees were students of UTS, members of the board of UTS Hellenic, President of SUGS, Kosta Plegas, President of Hellsoc UNSW, Maxwell Reissis, Modern Greek teacher, Maria Lomis, President of Hellenic Lyceum, Liana Vertzayias, well-known member of our community and honorary coordinator of SAE Oceania, Costa Vertzayias, Nick Andriotakis from the joint committee of the Battle of Crete and the Greek campaign 1941, Secretary of the Greek-Australian Society, George Mpliokas and other guests.

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