

Twenty Cretan youth from all over Australia take part in a hosting programme in Greece



The Cretan Youth of Australia will have the opportunity this Greek summer to travel to Greece and participate in a particular and special hosting program for young men and women of Cretan origin.

The Cretan Federation of Australia and New Zealand is organising a trip for young men and women of Cretan origin, thus giving them the opportunity to visit Greece and especially their place of origin, to admire the sights of our homeland, but also to experience Cretan hospitality.

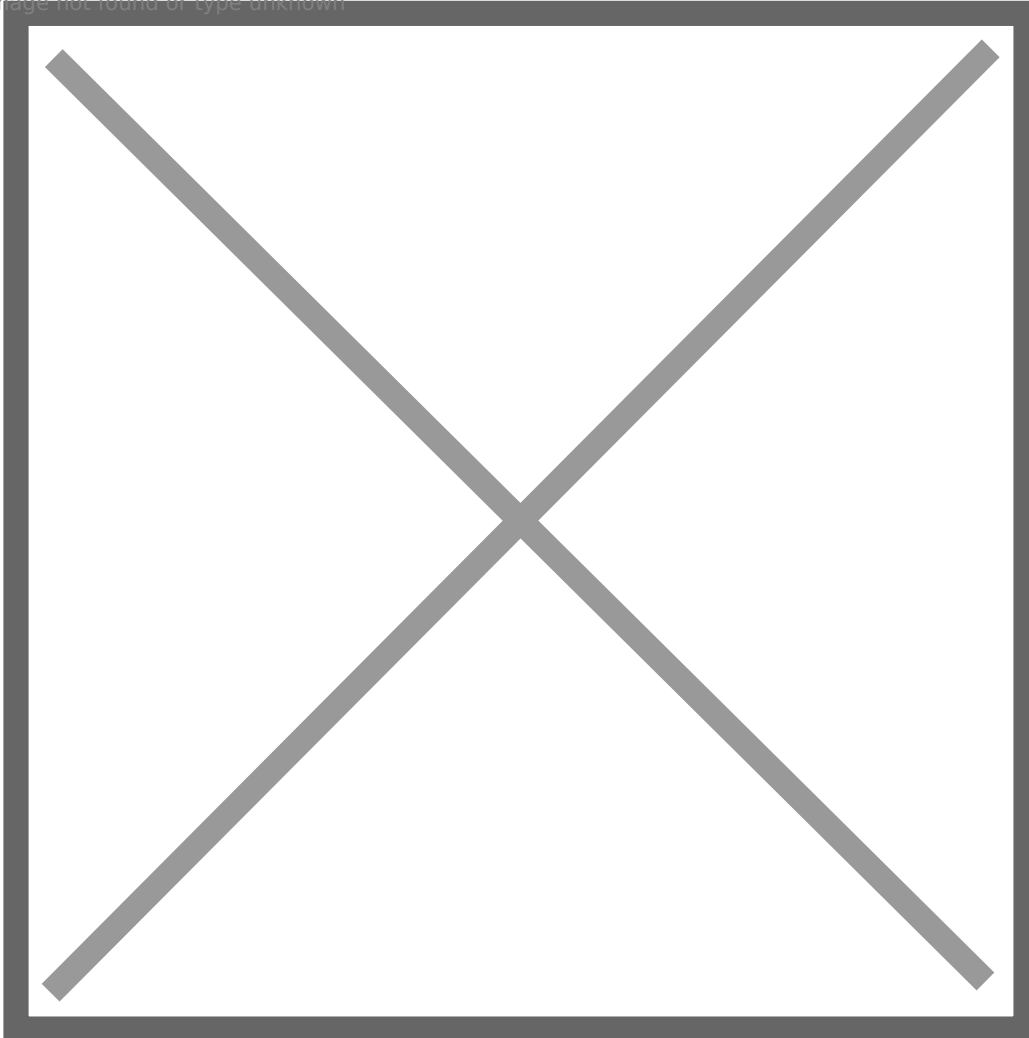
The visit of the Cretan youth to Greece will take place in July. The first stop of the trip will be Athens, where the young people will be hosted by the General Staff of National Defence. The program includes visits to the Tanagra Air Base, the Salamina Naval Station, the Artillery School, as well as the George Tzavelas Camp where the Presidential Guard Battalion is attached. The youth of Australia will be welcomed by the Chief of the General Staff of the National Defence, General Konstantinos Floros, at the Armed Forces Officers' Lodge. At the same time, there will be a series of other official meetings with the political leadership of Greece.

It should be noted that the Cretan Federation of Australia and New Zealand has been closely cooperating with the General Staff of the National Defence of Greece for many decades in the context of the Battle of Crete celebrations, beginning in 1978. The excellent cooperation over the years brought about the implementation of the General Staff of the National Defence of Greece hospitality program to the Cretan Youth of Australia, which will continue in 2024 during the school holidays in the month of September. Later, the specific hosting program of the Cretan Federation of Australia and New Zealand, in cooperation with the Hellenic Armed Forces, may be opened for all Greek youth in Australia.

The special trip of the Cretan youth will continue in Crete. Specifically, the young men and women of Cretan origin in Australia will be on the Great-Island of Crete and will participate in the hospitality program organised by the General Secretariat of Hellenism Abroad and Public Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of

Greece, in collaboration with the World Council of Cretans. In the specific program, which will be held as part of the 6th Conference of Cretans “Wherever on Earth”, in Agios Nikolaos, Lassithi Prefecture, during the same period, a total of fifty young people of Cretan origin from the diaspora of Australia, America, Europe and South Africa will participate.

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The specific program will help to strengthen the bonds of the young expatriates with their place of origin, but will also provide the opportunity for the young people to come into direct contact with Greece, experiencing the Greek and Cretan way of life. Getting to know the history and culture, folk traditions, ethics and customs of Crete will be an integral and special part of this experience.

In a related report, Mr. Yiannis Chrysoulakis, Secretary General of Hellenism Abroad and Public Diplomacy, emphasises: “Hospitality is part of the programs for hosting children and young people of the Greek Diaspora implemented by the General Secretariat of Hellenism Abroad and Public Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the aim of strengthening and consolidating the ties with our new and

young Omogeneia who are the most valuable capital of Ecumenical Hellenism”.

The hospitality program in Crete includes, in addition to attending the Conference, visits and guided tours to archaeological sites, attractions and monuments, an experiential approach to traditions and customs, gastronomy, musical tradition and traditional dances.

In addition to Agios Nikolaos, the Cretan youth of Australia will visit Chania, Rethymno and Heraklion. An ANZAC trail trek is also planned, thus honouring the great contribution of the Australian and New Zealand soldiers during the Second World War, but also the Greek-Australian alliance. Also, the Cretan Federation of Australia and New Zealand will organise a special event in the Apokoronas Province, dedicated to the first three Cretans who arrived in Australia and came from that province, while the top lyricists of Crete will be honoured for the first time by the Expatriate Cretans of Oceania in a special event in Spili, Rethymno, with the Municipality of Agios Vassilios.

The President of the Cretan Federation of Australia and New Zealand, Mr. Tony Tsourdalakis, states that he is particularly moved that the youth are given the opportunity to visit Greece and experience a special experience that they will surely remember for the rest of their lives, but also which will certainly positively affect the relationship with their place of origin, Crete.

Mr. Tony Tsourdalakis expresses warm thanks first of all to the Minister of National Defence of Greece, Mr. Panagiotopoulos, the Deputy Minister Mr. Nikolaos Hardalias and the Chief of the Hellenic Armed Forces Mr. Konstantinos Floros, for the acceptance of the request to host the Cretan expatriate youth in the facilities of Agios Andreas in a special six-day program.

Also, Mr. Tsourdalakis expresses his warm thanks to the former Prime Minister of Greece, Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis, to the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, responsible for Expatriates, Mr. Andreas Katsaniotis, but especially to the General Secretary of Hellenism Abroad and Public Diplomacy, Mr. Yiannis Chrysoulakis, for his grant hosting program for Expatriate Cretan youth in Crete.

Finally, Mr. Tsourdalakis warmly thanks the Holy Metropolis of Kydonia and Apokoronas and the Holy Metropolis of Rethymno and Avlopotamos for all the hospitality and support of the program.

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