

## **Youth from Australia will travel to Greece participating in the Summer Programme of the Greek Community of Melbourne**



Participants of the 2023 Greek Summer Camp gathered at the Greek Centre for their final briefing

On Wednesday 31st of May the Greek Australians who will be attending the Greek Community of Melbourne's 2023 Greek Summer Camp program gathered at the Greek Centre in Melbourne for a final briefing.

The program will run from 1 July to 11 July 2023, starting in Thessaloniki and including multiple visits to neighbouring towns such as Serres, Kavala and Xanthi.

The Greek Summer Camp, now in its second year, is the result of a long and fruitful partnership between the GCM and the Hellenic Foreign Affairs Ministry. After the success of its inaugural year, the GCM was excited to collaborate with both the Hellenic Foreign Affairs Ministry and Thessaloniki YMCA to once again offer the Greek youth of Australia an opportunity to experience Northern Greece's unique hospitality.

With a large number of applicants from across Australia, the available positions were highly sought after. The successful applicants were selected from a diverse pool and were welcomed to The Greek Centre by Board Member Dean Kotsianis.

Dean spoke to the Campers from the perspective of attending the 2022 Camp, he stated: "The experience was superb not only because I had the opportunity to network with like-minded young adults but also to get to know my homeland, practice the Greek language and see places which I would never normally visit. My advice is to seize this opportunity to explore Greece and connect with the locals. This experience will give you a better understanding of our culture."

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The group was then led through an induction by GCM camp coordinator Meg Smith who provided detailed information about this year’s program itinerary and answered participants’ questions regarding their expectations.

When surveying the crowd, most of the 2023 campers expressed their excitement to “learn the history of Greece and establish a deeper connection with their heritage and culture.” Others noted that this trip was about making “connections” with their Greek Australian peers and finding a foothold in the Greek-Australian community.

Greek Centre Director Jorge Menidis stated: “We are immensely proud of this initiative we started last year, and due to its success, our primary goal was to continue working to sustain this wonderful project. We chose to cooperate again with The Thessaloniki YMCA given their significant experience. They run over 90

camps every year and tailor the experience specifically for this group. We look forward to hearing about their experiences, their stories seeing their photos, and videos upon their return.”

The 2023 Summer Camp program will run for 10 days and is heavily subsidised by the GCM and the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the cost to each participant being AUD500. This one-off fee includes all ground transfers, accommodation, meals, and entry to the attractions to be visited.

The summer program will start in Thessaloniki, with two overnight stays in Kavala. The itinerary will include various activities such as a visit to Ancient Vergina and the Ancient Museum of Pella, a tour of the famous Edessa waterfalls, cooking demonstrations, wine tours, and a visit to The Cave of Alistrati near the town of Serres, considered one of the largest and most beautiful caves not only in Greece but in Europe.”

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