

SPEECH BY THE MAYOR OF KOGARAH NICK VARVARIS ON AUSTRALIA DAY 26-01-09 AT CARRS BUSH PARK

Emanuel John Komino OAM J.P.

Winner Kogarah Citizen of the year 2009

I am delighted to announce this year's recipient of the Kogarah Citizen of the Year Emanuel Comino OAM JP.

Emanuel was born in Rockhampton Nth QLD in 1933. He travelled to Greece with his father and brother at the age of 5 following the death of his mother. The emergence of WWII made it impossible to return to Australia within the planned 3 months and consequently he remained in Greece for 9 years returning to Australia at 14 years of age.

Emanuel served in the Australian Air Force during the Korean War and went on to become a successful business man.

With a business to run and a family to look after Emanuel still made time to get involved with an extensive list of community works over the years, I will cover some of these today.

- He was a foundation member of the committee which established the St George Migrant Resource Centre.

- A foundation member of the Chair of Modern Greek in the '70's which was responsible for introducing the Greek language into the education system.

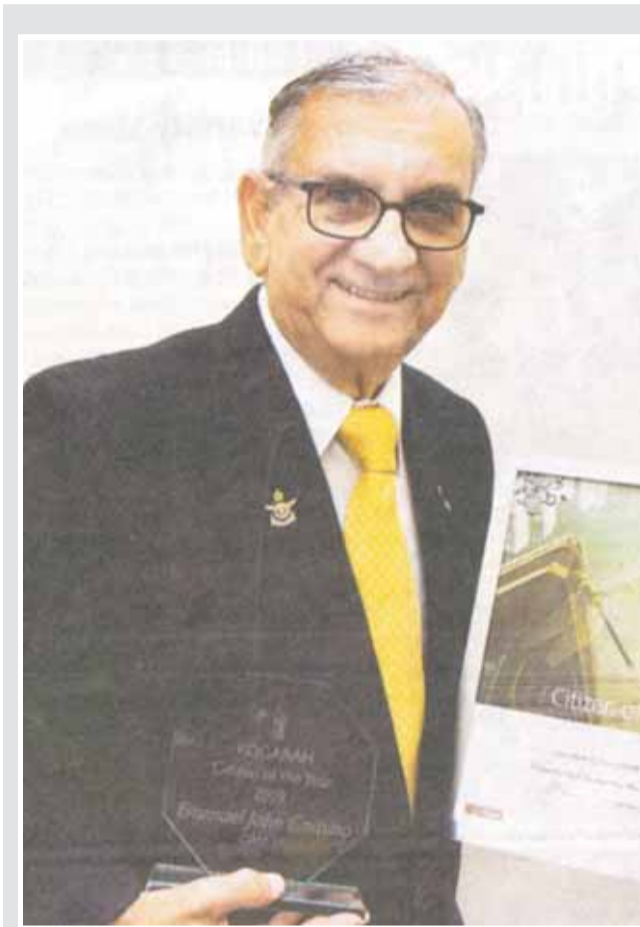
- A tireless fundraiser and organiser in the St. George area for Red Cross Australia.

- He held a position on the board of NSW Southern Area Health Service during the years of redevelopment of the St George Hospital 1988-1995.

- President and Secretary of the Greek Orthodox Parish of Kogarah for a period of 15 years, raising funds and overseeing the redevelopment of the Church & Church Hall.

- A lay visitor at Kogarah Police Station assisting detained offenders by observing that their needs are being met whilst they are under arrest.

And if that wasn't enough, Emanuel has been giving up his time over the



THE rich and varied fabric of the Kogarah community has been highlighted by Kogarah Council in its 2009 Australia Day awards, presented at Carss Bush Park.

The contributions of an elder statesman of the St George Greek Community and those of a former mayor, a dedicated young emergency services worker and a champion javelin thrower were recognised.

The Kogarah Citizen of the Year for 2009 is Emanuel Comino. He was a foundation member of St George Migrant Resource Centre and has been a fund-raiser for the Red Cross, and a NSW Southern Area Health Service board member.

Mr Comino was president and secretary of the Greek Orthodox Parish of Kogarah for 15 years and was a foundation member of the Chair of Modern Greek at the University of Sydney. This led to the introduction of modern Greek language into Australian education.

past 37 years to be a guest speaker and Master of Ceremonies at Citizenship Ceremonies in Kogarah, Hurstville and Rockdale councils.

The great respect that Emanuel commands in the general community comes as the cumulative result of these activities as well as from the high degree of assistance he renders to individuals.

His work with the order of AHEPA has been invaluable to the Greek community and indeed the general community at large. One particular pursuit close to his heart was the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles to Greece. The sculpters also known as the Elgin

Marbles were removed from the Acropolis by Britain's ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Lord Elgin, more than 200 years ago.

The 2,500 year old sculptures depicting of religious and mythological scenes have been held by the British Museum since 1816 after they were sold by Elgin.

It is said that, Lord Elgin's taking of the world's finest single collection of classical Greek marble sculptures was cheating at marbles. Emanuel has spent many years' putting this wrong to right.

He has debated and lectured both nationally and internationally with world experts regarding the restitution

of the sculptures.

Finally a breakthrough came on 6 November 2008 when Pope Benedict ordered the return of fragments from the Vatican to Greece; this act would increase pressure on the British Museum to return the Marbles.

That's Emanuel, he does not give up when there is a wrong to put right, he's a "yes we can man". His extensive community work has earned him the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in 1985, and the centenary Medal in 2003.

His integrity, professionalism and care for the community is second to none, Ladies and Gentlemen I give you Emanuel Comino OAM, this year's Kogarah Citizen of the year.

The Parthenon Marbles must be returned to Greece

A message from the founder and Chairman

On my first trip to Europe in 1976 I noticed so many wonderful Greek antiquities in the various national museums. I thought "so why are they here? They should be in Greece". Later, I saw the Parthenon Temple in Athens and learned of the exquisite statues which once adomed it. The Parthenon Marbles sitting forlorn in foreign lands must be returned home to Greece. It became an obsession with me.

At the 1981 National Convention of AHEPA the first committee in the world dedicated to the return of the Parthenon Marbles was established with the support of AHEPA. In subsequent years I lectured on the Parthenon Marbles and the case for restitution throughout Australia, the USA, Greece and New Zealand. In 1984 Melina Mercouri then Minister for Culture in the Greek Government put me in touch with the newly formed British restitution committee and we have supported them and worked together with them since that time. I went to New Zealand in 2000 and formed a new committee to represent that country in our combined worldwide effort to press for the just return of the ancient treasures to Greece.

Why all this effort? You must understand what the Parthenon Marbles mean to us. They are our pride, our sacrifices, a noble symbol of excellence. They are the essence of Greekness.

Emanuel John Comino OAM

INTERVIEW IN DARWIN N.T. MAY 2008 BY A LOCAL NEWSPAPER

If there is one symbol that is an enduring and easily identifiable representation of Greek culture and civilisation, it is the Parthenon. This classical architectural wonder is constantly used in media marketing advertising, logos and news reports to signify Greece.

Built almost 2,500 years ago on the Acropolis, the Parthenon was originally a temple to the goddess Athena but since then has had many masters serving as a church, mosque, munitions depot and has even been a battleground in military conflict.

The Parthenon's turbulent history continues today as it is now at the centre of arguable the world's most celebrated cul-