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Movie lovers converge on the Saraton Theatre for its re-opening as seen above while Angelo and Spiro Notaras were all smiles on opening day.

## Saraton Theatre re-opens in style

Graham Orams

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SITTING in the historic Saraton Theatre last night with the classical sounds of the Arcadian Ensemble playing the William Tell Overture, you could easily have thought you were back in 1926 when the theatre first opened. Instead, it was 2010 and every seat in the Saraton's giant main theatre was filled with people keen to be a part of the its official re-opening following its multimillion dollar renovations.

To get everyone feeling patriotic, South Grafton High School student Caitlin Leek sang the national anthem with a voice and confidence that should be congratulated.

The speeches began with Professor Sharon Sullivan from the Heritage Council of NSW.

Prof Sullivan spoke about the historical importance of the building and described the Saraton as "one of the most decorative and architecturally handsome (theatres) in NSW".

Three members of the **Notaras** family spoke to the hundreds of people present.

**Dr Mitchell Notaras** praised his brothers and cousins, describing them as "capable people" whose skills came together to complete the renovations.

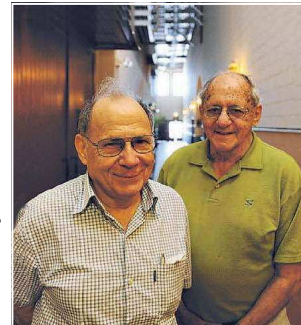
His brother **Angelo** said it would be impossible to name everyone involved in the renovations.

He said despite the magnitude of the project, the **Notaras** family "wanted the Clarence Valley to have the best".

**Angelo** said an unbelievable 50 kilograms of paperwork was involved in the Saraton's refurbishment.

**Mitchell** and **Angelo's** cousin **Spiro** said at times the renovations caused "frustrations" but they were determined to bring Grafton "the best we could".

Judging by the reaction of the audience, the best part of the night was the screening of the 1926 silent movie *Grafton at Work and Play*. The movie showed historic moving scenes of famous Grafton shops, people and places.



**Editor's note: 'Saraton' is 'Notaras' spelt backwards.**