

Ordinary Kytherians / Extraordinary Achievements

Angelo L. Notaras

One of our very own receives OAM



It was announced at the **Australia Day Honours 2014**, that the Medal of the Order of Australia in the General Division was conferred upon **Angelo Lambrinos Notaras**, by the Governor General, in her capacity as Chancellor of the Order of Australia.

It was an award richly deserved for diverse achievements at a high level over a long period of time. Angelo has made significant contributions to the Australian and Greek community in the following fields:

Services to (the)

- Australian commercial innovations and inventions, and Australian business
- Preservation of heritage buildings and culture in Australia
- Town and region of Grafton, NSW, the hub of the Clarence River Valley
- Greek community & Greek Orthodox Church in Australia
- The island of Kythera
- Kytherian Association of Australia (established 1922)
- Angelo's life in Australian business, including commercial innovations and inventions.

In 1908 Anthony (Tony) Lambrinos Notaras, Angelo's father arrived in Australia. Originally from Frilingianika, Kythera, he later returned to the island, and in 1932 brought his wife, Ianthe (nee Megaloconomou), from the village of Potamos, to Australia, to settle. Tony owned the Marble Bar cafe in Grafton, and was a partner with his brother Jack in the Saraton Theatre.



The brothers were very 'community minded', a quality instilled in their children. Mitchell would later recall that,

as pupils at the Grafton Primary School, how proud they all were "when a school house was named after our Dad and Uncle Jack for their contributions to the school". Tony and Ianthe had five children; Angelo, Mitchell, (who were twins – Mitchell noted, "he was born a half hour before me so I have always had to regard him as my senior"), Irene, John and Betty.

Angelo Lambrinos Notaras was born on the 26th March 1933, in Grafton, NSW. From an early age he became a "cafe kid". Aged 14, he left Grafton to board at Newington College for 2 years. Angelo left school age 16, and was running his own business at 17. He was in charge of a small cinema at Woolgoolga, south of Grafton, which he ran for 10 years.



He took on second jobs, such as working in a garage, and eventually, at age 21, gravitated to the banana growing industry. Always innovative, he realised the potential of irrigation, which he installed, increasing production dramatically. On the farm, Angelo and John recognised the need for a motorised misting machine to spray the bananas which was being done by hand sprayers. The misting machine was so effective that they started selling them.

In 1958 he ventured overseas seeking pest control and other aids to the banana growing industry.

Younger brother John joined him as a partner in 1957. He travelled the world widely, including South America, encountering numerous ideas, which he brought back to Australia. During his travels he was introduced to a German manufacturer, who was at that stage increasing the range of machinery he was selling, including chain saws, of high quality, and the latest design. In 1960, Angelo and John, moved to Sydney, and opened an office to import Solo products from Germany. They became the distributor for Solo in Australia. This was a successful venture and the brothers were soon employing 100 staff, with branches in all states.

They then established a manufacturing company Atom Industries in 1963, where they designed and manufactured a chainsaw drill attachment to replace the old time consuming method of using a hand brace and bit. Drilling holes in timber now took seconds. Often called the

“borer”, the device revolutionised the speed of erecting fences and stockyards around Australia.

In 1970, the Australian Government encouraged local production, and the brothers consolidated their business. In 1974, however, there was a dramatic change to the import tariff rules, making it no longer cost effective to manufacture more complex products locally.

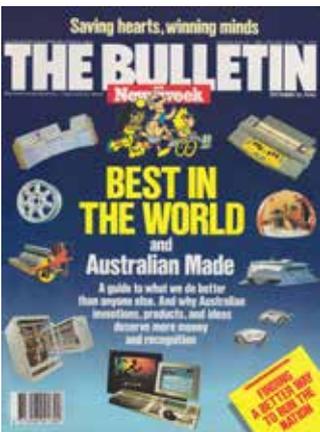


Atom Industries introduced Husqvarna into Australia in 1975. Husqvarna is one of the leading brands of chainsaw in the world. With the brothers vast experience with chainsaws, many of the early features and improvements on the Husqvarna chainsaws were a direct result of Angelo and John’s advice to Husqvarna in Sweden.



In 1973, the brothers invented an electronic ignition system to replace points and condensers on small engines. In 1976 they won the ABC Inventor of the Year. Many millions of modules have been sold worldwide, including to OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturers) engine manufacturers. More innovative inventions followed. Their policy then became to only manufacture niche products in Australia, with a minimum of skilled staff to carry out the production.

On October 23, 1990, *The Bulletin* magazine included Angelo and John Notaras in a feature article on manufacturing and innovation called, *The Best in The World, And Australian Made*.



Atom began to specialise in manufacturing hand held implements for agriculture and gardening. From 1992 to 2012 their leading product became the Atom lawn edger

and garden tiller, which has been awarded 6 gold medals at the International Inventions Convention in Geneva, Switzerland. In 2013 they won two further Gold medals in Geneva for a highly



efficient portable powered wood drilling machine with automatic reverse gear combined with automatic de-accelerator rotating safety handle, to prevent the wood auger suddenly jamming in the wood. The second machine was a very efficient portable blower for use in the garden, with new fan design technology resulting in very high air thrust performance, lower noise levels and decreased fuel requirements.

Currently, they have developed a new machine to reach the market shortly, which was commissioned by a large overseas manufacturer to be designed and developed in Australia as they felt that Atom Industries had the skills to do this. The result is a product that is lighter, more powerful, less fuel consumptive, and ergonomically less tiring to use than other brands.

Angelo and John have been in partnership for 55 years, and always considered the “advancement” of their business, and maintaining good relationship with each other, as the two most important preconditions of their success. Angelo believes that a great measure of his success in various activities is due to his brothers’ ongoing support, both financial and psychological. He would like to publicly thank John for his sound advice and encouragement over many years.

Angelo’s contribution to the preservation of heritage buildings and culture in Australia, and to the town and region of Grafton, NSW, the hub of the Clarence River Valley



In 1925, the brothers, and business partners, Ioannis (Jack) and Anthony (Tony) Notaras made the decision to commission and build a picture theatre, in the north NSW coastal town of Grafton. The theatre was designed by Lismore architect F J Board, in the Art Deco style. It was opened by Mayor Ald WT Robinson, on July 17, 1926, and very quickly became a social hub for the region.

A competition was held to find a name for the theatre. The winner devised the name “Saraton” – “Notaras” spelt backwards. She was awarded free entry into features at the cinema for a year. The Saraton is a “grand” theatre. It has seating capacity for 700



patrons on the ground floor, and 300 in the upstairs “dress circle”.

The Notaras family has always retained ownership of the Saraton Theatre.

The Saraton has had a chequered history. It survived three fires, the Great Depression, the introduction of television and home video, floods and even a close brush with demolition. It was dormant, and under-utilised for many years.

In 2012, three sons of Tony Notaras, Angelo, (the late Mitchell and John, and their cousin, a son of Jack; Spiros, decided to purchase the Saraton, and to spend a considerable sum of money to restore it. The final expenditure on the restoration exceeded \$4 million. The sum would have been much greater, but for personal managerial involvement in the restoration by the partners, and the ability to source many of the cinema accessories and equipment items at reduced rates.

The grand reopening of the restored theatre occurred on November 23, 2010. More than 1000 people attended the launch. A special screening of a 12-minute silent movie, created by Notaras brothers in the 1930's, entitled, Grafton at Work and Play was screened, much to the delight of the audience. Profits from the evening were donated to charity, including “vital signs” monitors to be installed in all Grafton district ambulances. Many Greeks and Kytherians, from various parts of Australia, attended the launch.

The Saraton is now enjoying a “new lease of life”. The latest movies are screened regularly. Seven sessions are screened daily, and the cinema is open seven days a week. It is also providing unique forms of entertainment to the residents of Grafton and the surrounding districts. Quality entertainment that previously could not be provided, for lack of a venue. One example, from May 2011, was the performance of the McClymonts, who played to a packed theatre. Country music super-group, the McClymonts looked stunning on stage, and “wowed” a deeply appreciative audience.

On Monday the 4th of April, 2011, at a ceremony

held at the Westin Hotel in Sydney, the Saraton “took out” the top prize at the National Trust Heritage Awards.

This was in the Corporate / Government category - “Conservation Built Heritage for Projects over \$1 million”. The Saraton “trumped” projects which had cost \$20 million + to restore. The award was presented by Ian Carroll OAM, President of the National Trust of Australia (NSW).



On the same evening, the book, *Life in Australia*, published in 1916 in the Greek language, and translated into English in 2010, and published by the Kytherian World Heritage Fund, of which Angelo Notaras is Executive Chairman, was also highly commended in the category of books with a heritage theme.

The Saraton has become a living and working memorial to Kytherian and Hellenic involvement in the Cinema industry, of national and international significance. It lives up to the epithet that Kevin Cork applied to such buildings, in his Ph.D thesis – “a Parthenon down under”. It stands as a fitting tribute and memorial to these early Greek and Kytherian migrant cinema pioneers. The Saraton has also had a profound impact on rejuvenating the town of Grafton, both culturally and economically.

Petula Samios Director of Heritage, at the Office of Environment and Heritage, sums up Angelo's contribution well, when she attests that “Mr Notaras has been tireless in the restoration of the Saraton Theatre; his contributions in terms of time and financial resources have been instrumental in leading to the re-opening of this highly significant site. This project reflects Mr Notaras' commitment to the town which he grew up in, its history, heritage and future. The revitalisation of the Saraton Theatre has been supported by the Grafton community and the desire to give back to that community has been the driving force for Mr Notaras in this 9 year restoration process..... The above projects could not have proceeded without the drive and support of Mr Notaras and for this, his commitment to our heritage, he should be commended”.

Angelo's Contributions Greek community & Greek Orthodox Church in Australia

The Greek Orthodox Church

In 2000 Angelo Notaras was a member of the Millennium Heritage Committee of the Greek Orthodox Church and of the Greek Australian Sports Hall of Fame. The Greek Australian Sports Hall of Fame ensured recognition for Australian athletes of Greek heritage who had represented Australia and had attained prominent positions in Australian sport. The Millennium Heritage Committee formed the Provicare Foundation, a charity established under the auspices of the Greek Orthodox Church to aid disadvantaged persons suffering from alcohol and drug addiction.

Funding for the Provicare Foundation was undertaken on an Australia-wide basis under the direction of Angelo Notaras and Father Steven Scoutas of St Spyridon Church, Kingsford. Angelo Notaras and Father Steven developed a proposal under which Angelo and John manufactured (all at their own cost) moulds to create thousands of hollow plastic batons, fashioned to resemble Greek columns, that were distributed to communities and parishes throughout Australia, to be filled with coin donations. They also coordinated the packaging, transport and delivery of the

plastic batons to every single Greek Orthodox parish and community across Australia, as well as monitoring and accounting for the returns after nine months. The initial efforts raised \$500,000 and, with subsequent distribution and collection of batons, the final fundraising amount totalled some \$700,000. This amount has been used to further the aims of the Provicare Foundation, focusing particularly on the Sydney metropolitan area. The success of these achievements is principally due to the inspiration, financial support and commitment of Angelo Notaras.

Angelo Notaras also participated in further fundraising for the purposes of refurbishing premises provided by the NSW Government at Marine Parade, Brighton-le-Sands; a sum in excess of \$100,000 was raised for the Provicare Foundation and the Greek Welfare Centre to provide social services to disadvantaged persons.



Photograph: of Angelo with wife Mary, taken on the day of presentation.

As a result of these acts of beneficence, Angelo was awarded the “Cross of St. Andrew”, the Greek Orthodox Church’s highest award. The medal was presented on 28 November 2003 for “valuable services to the Church and the community”.

Father Steven Scoutas of St Spyridon’s Church, Kingsford and Chairman of the Millennium Heritage Council, believes that Angelo Notaras displays true greatness, the hallmarks of which are “one’s inviolable integrity as a human person, one’s humility through actions which are never intended to accumulate accolades, and a deep sense of compassion for one’s fellow human being. No aloofness, no airs and graces, no pretence. Such a person is Mr Notaras. Always embarrassed at being acknowledged publicly,



Angelo has first and foremost been an exemplary citizen of our nation, “as Aussie as the next bloke”, and a proud descendant of parents who hailed from Kythera, a small but noble island in Greece”.

Angelo has first and foremost been an exemplary citizen of our nation, “as Aussie as the next bloke”, and a proud descendant of parents who hailed from Kythera, a small but noble island in Greece”.

Angelo’s encouragement of Greek-Australian, Kytherian Australian, and Kytherian history

Despite the demands of a large business Angelo Notaras has found time to involve himself with the enhancement and preservation of Greek-Australian history. When the former Ambassador to Greece, Hugh Gilchrist could find no publisher to print his monumental work on the relationship between Australians and Greeks, Angelo and his brothers Mitchell and John, stepped into the breach to

personally fund the work. In 1992, the brothers paid for the cost of printing 5,000 books, and undertook a lengthy and comprehensive marketing campaign for Gilchrist’s *Australians and Greeks, Volume 1*.

Angelo Notaras also contributed funds to the second volume, *Australians and Greeks, Volume 2* published in 1997, and to the third volume, *Australians and Greeks, Volume 3*, published in 2004. The three volumes are the definitive history of the Greek presence in Australia. Without the initial capital outlay, none of the books would have been produced. All three books have never been out of print.

kythera-family.net

In 2003 James Prineas, a Kytherian-Australian living in Germany, devised the concept of an electronic cultural archive, based on an open access web-site. He proposed that www.kythera-family.net be established, and that instead of being based on the ‘standard’ principle of a ‘central’ web master, monitoring and ordering web content – the kythera-family site should be accessible to all. Kytherians from all around the world were empowered to upload photographs, stories and audio-files, directly onto the site. The concept sounds passé, 10 years ‘down the track’, but at the time, it was revolutionary.

Angelo Notaras recognised immediately that the idea was brilliant. He and John agreed to provide a substantial sum as seed capital to establish the web-site. With his contribution, and his imprimatur, the site became operational very quickly. In the past 10 years the site content has grown to 19,000+ entries. It is construed as the ‘Encyclopaedia Kytherianika’ in the world, as well as an electronic museum of Kythera. Major encyclopaedias utilise its content. It is used by many universities for educational purposes and has already been the subject of a Master’s and Ph.D thesis. It is the envy of other Greek-Australian, and cultural institutions in Australia, and around the world.

In 2005, Angelo Notaras was instrumental in setting up the Kytherian World Heritage Fund (KWHF). The main aim of the fund was to preserve the Kytherian heritage for the benefit of Kytherians worldwide.

Since 1992, under Angelo Notaras’ stewardship, the KWHF has gradually evolved into a major publishing house, with 31 books on its publication list. Over time the KWHF has either published, or been heavily associated with the best three volumes of the history of the Greeks in Australia, as well as the



best individual volumes on Greek Life in Australia in 1916, Greeks in Queensland, Greeks in Australian Cafes, Greeks in Australian cinemas, and the Greeks relationship with the Australian military. Excellent individual biographies and life stories of Greek and Kytherian Australians also form part of the publication list. As does a very good Greek cookbook.

Kytherian history is also well represented. The KWHF have produced a general history of Kythera, and specific histories of Kythera under British occupation, the history of the town of Potamos, books of vintage photographs taken on Kythera during the early part of the twentieth century, and the best DVD historical and tourist guide for Kythera, ever produced. All are in print, and available.

Publishing the 1916 book *Life in Australia* in a facsimile edition afforded Angelo Notaras great pleasure. It had been referred to at length by Gilchrist in *Australians and Greeks Vol 1*, and indicated how quickly Greeks had adapted to 'life in Australia' after the initial migration influx that began in the 1880's. He was particularly fond of a photo depicting his father Tony, (far right), leaning against a post outside the cafe where he worked at the time in Grafton.

In 2012-2013 KWHF printed three additional books, including *Kytherian Surnames*, which traces the derivation of every Kytherian surname on the island, *Kythera from the Air*, by James Prineas, and *One Year on Kythera*, by Kristina Williamson.

Kytherian Photography & Realia

The plate glass negative collection of Panayotis Fatseas – 1,800 valuable prints – which would have been lost to posterity, without the intervention of Angelo & John Notaras (Sydney) and the Kythera Cultural Association, (Potamos, Kythera), under the Directorship of John Stathatos, and the KWHF. Plate glass negatives photographs taken on Kythera from the 1920's to 1940's were deteriorating in a storeroom on the island. Angelo Notaras provided computers, scanners, printers, archiving material, and secure storage containers for this important preservation project. This led to a major exhibition at the prestigious Benaki Museum, Athens, in 2008, and to the publication of Panayotis Fatseas. *Faces of Kythera, 1920-1938*. (2008).

KWHF Special Projects

Through the work of associates on the KWHF, Angelo Notaras has also been indirectly involved with a number of Special Projects on the island of Kythera, and in Australia. Angelo Notaras' wise counsel during the course of these projects has proved invaluable.

Eye Clinic on Kythera. KWHF provided some input into conceiving the idea. It was actioned by Professor Minas Coroneo, Professor of Ophthalmology, University of NSW. Minas mobilised ophthalmologists and optom-

etrists from Europe and Australia, brought sophisticated equipment to the island, and tested the eye sight of many residents, and treated their eyes, en masse.

Medical Equipment containers to Kythera for distribution to the Hospital (Potamos), and Aged Care Facility, (Potamos). Financial and logistical aid in collecting, packing, and shipping beds, with internal moving parts, and equipment to enhance resident and patient mobility on the island. A 20ft container was sent in 2007, and a 40ft container in 2009. This should provide the residents on the island of Kythera with access to wheel chairs and other aids, for years to come.

Library Shelving for Kythera. Logistical and financial support to despatch library shelving, from Alhambra, Los Angeles, USA, to Kythera. (2009). These shelves will form part of the first lending library to be instigated on the island of Kythera. The projects was instigated and superbly managed by Cynthia Cavalenes-Jarvis, California, USA. Persistent efforts by Kytherians in Australia and America, led eventually to the opening of the first lending Library on Kythera, in its 3,000 year history.

The KWHF has also lent its expertise in creating and establishing the \$6 million Roxy 'complex' in Bingara in northern NSW. The complex now includes a Cinema, a Greek cafe, Information Centre, a TAFE Hospitality training college, and from April, 2014, a Roxy museum – which is ostensibly a "museum of Greek-Australian migration".

The Island of Kythera

On the 10th December, 2012, at a ceremony at the Athenian Restaurant, Barrack Street, Sydney, attended by family, friends, associates, and members of the Committee of the Kytherian Association of Australia, Angelo Notaras was presented with the Kytherian Medal of Honour.



The Medal was presented on behalf of the Hellenic Republic,

Municipality of Kythera, in recognition of his achievements for the Greek Orthodox Church and his social and cultural contribution to Greek-Australian & Kytherian culture both in Australia and in Kythera. These achievements have been clearly outlined above. The Medal was also a reward for his contribution to the Kytherian Association of Australia, to which we now turn.



Angelo's contribution to the Kytherian Association of Australia

Angelo Notaras joined the Board of the Kytherian Association of Australia in 2005 and has had a profound impact on its activities. He has made a significant contribution in both terms of advice to and mentoring of the younger members of the Board.

Since his appointment to the Board his influence has been widespread and includes the following:

Firstly, Angelo has encouraged a sharper focus on cultural issues, particularly through *www.kythera-family.net* and the book publishing arm of the Kytherian World Heritage Fund, with the result that the Association now expends far more funds on important cultural activities than it had done hitherto. As a result, many important works - in both the English and Greek language - have been published and made available for the first time.

Secondly, with his proven business acumen, Angelo has provided wise counsel at the time the Association's Board evaluated and purchased a building for investment purposes and for the creation of a substantial cultural resource centre and library in Rockdale known as Kythera House.

Thirdly, Angelo advised the Board on how to best achieve the refurbishment of Kythera House in order to provide a high quality cultural centre, which would be attractive to both members and friends of the Association, in order to promote greater use of the facility and the resources amongst members of the Kytherian and wider Greek-Australian community.

Fourthly, He has encouraged the setting up of record and account systems to increase the Association's membership base.

Fifthly, he was a strong advocate for incorporating colour into the monthly Newsletter of the Association, and for expanding the content and the number of pages of the magazine. The magazine has now been expanded to between 38-56 pages. *"This is the glue that holds our Association together"*.

Sixthly, Angelo has also determinedly pursued the revised and updating of the Association's Constitution in order to help meet the needs of a 21st century cultural organisation.

In summary, "Angelo Notaras has been a strong and selfless contributor in helping to elevate the Kytherian Association of Australia into one of the leading Greek-Australian community organisations in Australia".

The Nicholas Anthony Aroney Trust has assisted greatly in most of the book publishing, and in many of the other Greek and Kytherian activities and projects in which Angelo has been involved. Angelo would like to thank profusely the Aroney Trustees for all their support over the past two and a half decades. "They have also contrib-

uted to a lot of the success of the Kytherian Association of Australia".

Overview and congratulations

Angelo Notaras is already the recipient of the highest awards proffered by the International Inventions Convention in Switzerland, the Greek Orthodox Church in Australia, and the government of Kythera. *Senator Arthur Sinodinos* surveying Angelo's vast body of achievement argues that it reflects *"Angelo's relentless energy and drive and passion for contributing to the Australian community"*. *George Souris Minister in the NSW government* concurs, and also observes "just how overdue it is". The Medal of the Order of Australia completes recognition of Angelo Notaras' immense contribution to Australian society and culture. To reiterate Father Scoutas' observation - *"Angelo has first and foremost been an exemplary citizen of our nation - "as Aussie as the next bloke"*.

Congratulations Angelo Lambrinos Notaras.

You have done your country, your family, and all your friends and associates, proud.

Membership Renewal Reminder



Thank you to all who have renewed their 2014 membership. Those who have renewed would have received their new membership card.

A reminder to all members who have yet to renew their 2014 membership, this will be your last newsletter until you renewal has been received.

