

BINGARA

Sister City Relationship established between Gwydir Shire and Kythera Council

Anglo-Australians, through all 3 tiers of Government, have over the past 6 years, spent in excess of \$3 million restoring what is ostensibly a Kytherian Cinema, and a Kytherian Cafe in the North West NSW Country town of Bingara. They have also created a Greek-Australian Cafe Museum - which is primarily a Kytherian Museum. The history of the establishment of these very significant buildings has been laid out clearly by Peter Prineas in his book, *Katsehamos and the Great Idea*.

What this does is ensure that Greek / Kytherian - Australian cultural "shrines" are extant for at least half a century, and probably beyond. The scope, power and quality of this Project is incontrovertible. The Roxy is a beautiful, living, working memorial to the Hellenic and Kytherian "shop-keeping phenomenon", as Hugh Gilchrist called it in *Australians and Greeks*. As knowledge about the Roxy grows amongst Greeks and Kytherians in Australia and around the world, the Roxy will become a place of pilgrimage.

This is an extraordinary success, and has made the town of Bingara the premier cultural hub of the North West of NSW. (It is a hub for much larger towns such as Tamworth and Armidale, which do not have the cinema's multi-purpose facilities). Much of the success can be sheeted home to the faith, diligence and courage of the manager of the Roxy, Sandy McNaughton.

The establishment of the Roxy Complex has also given the residents of the town of Bingara and of the Gwydir Shire a deep empathy with the residents of Kythera, and with the Kytherian diaspora worldwide.

As a result, the Mayor of Gwydir Shire, Councillor John Coulton, was moved to write a letter to the Mayor of Kythera, proposing the establishment of a sister-city relationship between the two Municipalities.

This proposal was debated by the Council of Kythera in September 2010. The motion was embraced by all factions of the Kythera Council, Nea Demokratia, PASOK and the Independents and was passed unanimously.

George C Poulos was present at 12:30 am when this occurred, and thanked the Council of Kythera for displaying such foresight and courage. He also indicated to the Council members that, as they learnt more about the Roxy Complex and its history and future prospects, as Kytherians, they would become increasingly proud of what had been accomplished in Bingara by the Gwydir Shire.

He also pointed out that this established a link between Kythera and an agrarian council in Australia, and he hoped that a further link would soon be established with a city council in Sydney, namely the Kogarah Shire Council, whose chambers adjoin the Church of *Myrtidiotissa*. *They all indicated that if a similar proposal as that of Gwydir Shire came before the chamber, they would look upon it very favourably.*

All were certain that as the relationship between Gwydir and Kythera developed and deepened, immense benefits would accrue to both participants. We all await this very exciting eventuality.



1) Peters and Co's (Roxy) Cafe, Bingara: Peter Prineas and Emanuel Aroney, grandsons of two of the founders (Feros and Aroney respectively) with local MP Richard Torbay and George Poulos of the Kytherian Association. 2) Long time cafe proprietors from Inverell join in giving Peters and Co's Cafe the thumbs up: the Fardoulys at left and Peter Gianneas at right. 3) Peters, 'The Roxy' Café. 4) Restored terrazzo floor in foreground. 5) Mixers and shakers behind the bar. 6) Peter Gianneas of Inverell tries out a booth at Bingara's restored 'Roxy Café'. Photos are courtesy of Peter Prineas.