

Pharos: Revitalising Modern Greek

A Study of the Vitality and Presence of Modern Greek in Contemporary Australia

Language Policy for Modern Greek Education: Focus on Victoria

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Commissioned by the Modern Greek Teachers' Association of Victoria (MGTAV).

Pharos now shines a light for the MGTAV to further support Greek teaching and learning.

MGTAV Summary

The purpose of this study was to provide a current and factual picture of Modern Greek Education in Victoria, as well as provide directions to focus on in the future to promote, maintain and sustain the Greek language. The research is made up of three main sections, each of them dealing with a different aspect of Modern Greek Education in Victoria.

The first section, '**Ecology of Greek in Australia**', provides an overview of the conditions in which the language exists in Australia. This includes but is not limited to stories and statistics related to migration, the scientific study of language attrition and loss, the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis and the subsequent new wave of migration from Greece. The statistical information found throughout the research, is substantial and captures the changing landscape of Greek across sectors and the stages of learning, across a number of decades. It also touches on some consistently identified issues, including but not limited to declining student enrolment and retention rates, teacher qualifications, and, materials and resources.

In the second section '**The State of Play: An Ecological Account**', an extended account of the provision of Modern Greek in Victoria is provided, including reference to establishing the first Greek Schools in Victoria. Statistical information, tables and figures are then provided regarding Government school enrolments over the years, but also includes facts and figures related to Independent and Private school programs, Regions, the Victorian School of Languages (VSL), the Community Languages sector, Distance Education and Teachers.

The third section, '**The State of Play: Discussion and Analysis**', is an extended discussion of the statistical information that has been presented, including a survey of related literature, a discussion of the impact that political and economical changes have had on the Greek Government, and, a reference to the fortunes or challenges that have been presented in local Greek media.

The subsection '**Bright Lights**' references and reinforces the good will that is present in our community – a community which is committed to the future of the Greek language. Examples of good practice are presented to illuminate the way forward. These include the money allocated towards Greek kindergarten language programs, as initiated by the Victorian Government, the

promotion of Greek Bilingual Programs in 2019, support for teachers of Greek in Victorian government schools and kindergartens, and ongoing support for existing Greek languages programs.

Conclusions and steps forward are outlined in **'The Executive Summary and recommendations'**. Professor Lo Bianco suggests that despite the challenges and difficulties presented in the research, there are still many positive factors and strong foundations which can be built upon. In his **'Proposals for Action'**, Professor Lo Bianco outlines a need for a shared vision amongst all key stakeholders for Modern Greek language. He recommends that a *National Modern Greek Strategic Plan* be produced by the MGTAV, in an effort to: have a common understanding of the state of the language; create a set of national principles focused on strengthening the use of Modern Greek in Australia, and, determine a statement of excellence to guide all providers of Modern Greek. The **'Proposals for Action'** also include other recommendations which respond to the current problems facing the teaching of Modern Greek, which were outlined in the beginning of the report.

References

A common concern has been the lack of properly referenced materials pertaining to the study of Greek. **Pharos** has a substantial section, of academically referenced materials which will also be useful for those wishing to undertake further studies related to Modern Greek.

MGTAV Action Plan

We wish to thank our researcher for the in depth and vital research undertaken which has resulted in **Pharos**. It was an honour for us to have Professor Lo Bianco undertake this research project. We believe **Pharos** represents a watershed and significant period for the direction of Modern Greek in the Antipodes, today and for the future.

The MGTAV has been proactive in its work and some of the recommendations have already been actioned or begun by the current and previous MGTAV committee.

In light of presenting this research, the MGTAV's current goals will be:

- to inform relevant parties of the study's results, conclusions and recommendations;
- to bring a focus to the importance of a cooperative effort from the community for the future health of the language;
- to form a Working Party which will include all key stakeholders of Modern Greek. The Working Party will receive all recommendations made in the research and will pursue for implementation;
- in collaboration with the Working Party, to bring a focus to the importance of a set of national principles for strengthening the use of Modern Greek with other Australian States, leading to the formation of a cohesive National Strategic Plan; and,
- to determine a statement of excellence which will act as a 'lighthouse' to all providers of Modern Greek.