



AMBASSADOR

AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY  
ATHENS

25 June 2015

Prof. Thalia Dragonas  
Program for the Education of the Children  
of the Muslim Minority  
35 Ippokratous street  
Athens

Dear Professor Dragonas,

It was a pleasure to meet you recently.

In preparation for my recent visit to Thrace, I read with interest your article on Thrace for "Europe in Modern Greek History" edited by Kevin Featherstone in 2014.

I was particularly taken by your account of the KESPEM initiative, aimed at improving educational outcomes for Muslim minority children in Thrace, including through outreach to mothers of these children.

This led me to visit the KESPEM centre in Komotini where I was briefed on the work of KESPEM by Dr Maria Konstantinidou, and met some of the children.

Coming from Australia, previously (before World War II) a largely mono-cultural country, now a vibrant and successful multicultural society, I was very impressed both by Dr Konstantinidou's commitment and insights, and by the work of KESPEM. You cite the Australian experience in your article. It includes of course the 600,000 Australians who now claim Greek heritage. Key to the success of the Australian experience has been our national education system, and the programs aimed at ensuring that the children of recent immigrants and other minority groups get equal access and opportunity. Language, of course, is key.

Social inclusion - a "fair go", as we Australians call it - is a cornerstone Australian value.

I congratulate KESPEM for its contribution to this ideal, and wish it every success for the future.

I will send a copy of this letter to Dr Konstantinidou.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Griffin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Griffin