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GREEK TRIBUNE

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Schools close in SA due to asbestos scare

South Australia's education chief has left open the option of removing all coloured sand products from public schools regardless of their brand, as the number of sites that have reported stocking items linked to an asbestos scare climbs above 350.

At about 140 of those schools and pre-schools — a full list of which has been posted on the Education Department's website — the sand has been reported as "loose", but the department said it had already been removed from several sites.

According to the department, the sand has either been secured at a majority of the locations or has been confined to isolated areas.

"The other sites are sites where perhaps the sand is out, maybe even kind of stuck up on the wall, on artwork or out on a table somewhere, and the advice from SafeWork has been to get asbestos removal contractors to get in and remove that and that's exactly what we're doing."

Catholic Education last week said it had temporarily closed two



schools in Adelaide to allow for deep cleaning, but Mr Westwell said there was currently no reason for public schools to follow suit.

Last week, the ACCC issued a national recall notice for various coloured sand products after testing detected traces of asbestos.

"The products are being recalled because the sand may include asbestos, which is a prohibited substance in Australia," the ACCC said.

Education Minister Blair Boyer said the situation at the two Catholic schools necessitated closure.

Mr Boyer told ABC News Breakfast he was not surprised by the "high number" of schools that had reported finding the recalled coloured sand products, given their popularity.

Indonesian volcano prompts aviation warning in Australia

A volcanic eruption in Indonesia has prompted an aviation warning in Australia, after ash spewed some 2 kilometres into the sky.

Indonesia's Semeru volcano, Java Island's tallest mountain, erupted on Wednesday morning, local time, prompting authorities there to raise the threat level to its highest.

The country's volcanology agency said ash clouds reached some 5.6 km into the sky, roughly 2 km higher than the mountain peak, adding residents should keep to a 2.5 km distance away for safety.

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology's Volcanic Ash

Advisory Centre (VAAC) issued a red aviation alert following the eruption.

The VAAC said the ash was "partially identifiable on satellite imagery".

No flights have been cancelled between Australia and Denpasar airport because of the eruption.

At more than 3,600 metres high, Semeru is one of Indonesia's nearly 130 active volcanoes.

Indonesia straddles the "Pacific Ring of Fire", a highly seismically active zone, where different plates on the earth's crust meet and create a large number of earthquakes and volcanoes.

Deadlock in talks over Parthenon sculptures

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said Greece is no closer to getting back the stolen Parthenon Marbles from the British Museum despite talks that only resulted in offering a loan of the valuable treasures created in Greece.

He said that the negotiations are not close to a "positive outcome," although he said growing numbers of the British want the museum to send back the marbles ripped off the Parthenon 200 years ago by Scottish diplomat Lord Elgin.

Speaking at a conference, during a panel on cultural heritage, Mitsotakis said the discussions with the British Museum are "a complicated

issue. It's no secret that we've had discussions to find an arrangement that would work for both sides. I don't think we have made as much progress as I would like," he said.

He added that the British Museum's planned renovation could "present new opportunities," and reiterated that the sculptures belong in the Acropolis Museum, but the British Museum isn't budging.

"This is not a typical restitution argument. This is a reunification argument," he said, noting that Greece could offer the museum a partnership that includes exhibiting Greek artifacts that



Greek ancient sculptures held at the London museum

have never left the country, but the British want Greece to give up ownership.

British author Victoria Hislop, a co-panelist, said there is "a growing opinion among the British public that the sculptures should come

home."

She added that Egypt's recent call for the return of the Rosetta Stone increased pressure on the British Museum, and more public pressure could accelerate the marbles' return.

Singapore's world-first flights tax will see higher travel costs

Passenger and commercial flights operating out of Singapore are set to become more expensive after the announcement of a world-first sustainable fuel tax added onto ticket prices.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) recently revealed it would introduce a "Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) Levy" for flights booked from April 1, 2026 and due for departure from the South-East Asian country from October 1.

Two of Australia's three major commercial airlines — Qantas and Jetstar — offer flights to Singapore.

There are various other international carriers that also fly from Singapore to Australia, including Singapore Airlines, Scoot, Emirates and British Airways.

Singapore says the SAF Levy will be implemented in a bid to align with the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) goal of net zero carbon emissions in global aviation by 2050.

In 2024, the country

launched a sustainable aviation plan to reduce domestic airport emissions from 2019 levels by 20 per cent by 2030.

As part of that plan, the CAAS said the new levy "is set based on the volume of SAF needed to meet the 1 per cent SAF target for 2026 and the projected price premium of SAF over conventional jet fuel".

It means travellers on flights departing Singapore will be charged more, depending on how far away their destination is and how much fuel is expected to be used during the journey.

"For flights with multiple stops, the SAF Levy applicable is based on the immediate next destination after departing Singapore," a CAAS statement said.

To determine how much to charge, the CAAS said all destinations were grouped into four geographic categories based on distance. The amount also varies based on whether the passenger flies economy or premium.

Travellers to Australia will face a \$3.30 fee for



economy and \$13.21 for premium cabin seats, while passengers who fly in business or first class to North, Central or South America will be charged the most — an additional \$49.08.

Australian airlines and their customers are currently not subject to mandatory flight sustainability costs.

Qantas, Jetstar and Virgin Australia do, however, offer travellers the option to voluntarily pay extra to offset their individual carbon emissions made during a flight.

Neil Hansford, an aviation expert and the CEO

of Strategic Aviation Solutions, told the ABC he expected Australia to watch Singapore's SAF Levy implementation closely in determining whether to create a similar tax in the future.

"If it's going to be based on the fuel, they'll have to apply an excise ... They'll either increase the excise or do a per tonne, per litre rate."

Australia's major airlines have previously voiced opposition to government-enforced measures that could increase costs for passengers.

Polytechnic heroes honoured

The 52nd anniversary of the historic uprising of the students of the Athens Polytechnic, under the slogan "Bread, Education, Freedom," was commemorated in the city of Adelaide at the monument located within the grounds of the Cathedral of the Archangels.

Greek-Australians attended, many of whom experienced the events of that era firsthand in Athens, as well as many who, as migrants in Australia, carry memories of those events and have not forgotten them. Local students were also present, responding to the invitation of the Greek

Community Life



The Greek Community honoured the students at a solemn, yet meaningful ceremony at the Taxiarchis memorial on 16 November

Orthodox Community of South Australia, giving their presence to the solemn yet meaningful ceremony.

The Greek community expressed that, although they live far from Greece and most are now children or grandchildren of Greek

migrants, they are still aware of and inspired by the 1973 uprising against the military junta, and they fully honor the struggle and sacrifices of the students of that time.

On Sunday, 16 November, a significant number of Greek-Australians gathered around the cenotaph of the Cathedral of the Archangels to pay tribute to the heroic students of November 1973 in Athens, laying red carnations in their memory.

The President of the Greek Community, Peter Ppiros, laid a wreath and delivered a speech praising the sacred struggle of the Polytechnic students. A poem was recited by teacher Athanasia Togias.

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Cultural, social and political events in South Australia

Contact: Harri on 0484 387 818 - or email your community's news or a photo: info@greektribune.com.au



LEFT: The Cyprus Community of South Australia celebrated Cyprus Independence Day on 19 October at its premises at 8 Barrpowell avenue Welland. The event was attended by many local Cypriot community members and invited guests, including Minister Andrea Michaels, Mayor of the City of Charles Sturt Angela Evans, Cyprus Consul Nick Varellas, President of Greek Orthodox Community of SA Peter Ppiros and the President of the Cyprus Community Chris Ioannou

Australian Government age-restricts social media platforms

The Albanese Government's world-leading social media minimum age laws now include platforms Reddit and Kick.

eSafety has assessed Face-book, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, X, Threads, Reddit and Kick as age-restricted social media platforms.

This means, from 10 December, these platforms must take reasonable steps to prevent under-16s from holding accounts on their services.

Failure to do so will expose these platforms to fines of up to \$49.5 million.

These services currently meet the criteria for under 16 restriction as specified in the Social Media Minimum Age legislation, in particular the key requirement that their - "sole or significant purpose is to enable online social interaction".

eSafety's platform assessments will be ongoing and respond to technological change but families need certainty now regarding the major platforms captured under the

social media minimum age law.

A suite of resources to help young Australians, parents and carers, is available at eSafety.gov.au.

These resources include a variety of videos, webinars, checklists, conversation starters, how-to guides and referral pathways.

The Minister for Communications, Anika Wells said there's a time and place for social media in Australia, but there's not a place for predatory algorithms, harmful content and toxic popularity meters manipulating Australian children.

"Online platforms can target children with chilling control. We are mandating they use that sophisticated technology to protect them.

"I have met with major social media platforms in the past month so they understand there is no excuse for failure in implementing this law.

"eSafety has assessed these platforms as requiring age-restriction but their assessments will be ongoing



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese

and this list is dynamic.

"We aren't chasing perfection, we are chasing a meaningful difference.

"We encourage all Australians to engage with the range of resources now available on esafety.gov.au to help them understand the laws and, importantly, why they're necessary for the good of young Australians."

"Delaying children's access to social media accounts gives them valuable time to learn

and grow, free of the powerful, unseen forces of opaque algorithms and endless scroll", eSafety Commissioner, Julie Inman Grant added.

"I strongly encourage parents, educators and young people to visit eSafety.gov.au, download our resources and register for a live webinar where we will explain the social media age restrictions and answer questions in sessions tailored for parents, carers and educators", she said.

Australia - EU trade negotiations breakthrough

A breakthrough in long-stalled negotiations over a free trade deal between Australia and the European Union could come as soon as this weekend when Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and EU President Ursula von der Leyen are due to meet on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Johannesburg.

The EU also seems set to use the Australian social media ban as a model for a similar ban across the bloc.

Sources have revealed that virtually all issues have been smoothed out by trade negotiators in recent months, with beef being the only major issue still requiring political horse-trading between leaders.

That leaves open

the possibility of a deal being agreed this weekend and formalised over the Australian summer.

EU Trade Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič seemed to confirm the optimistic outlook in an exclusive interview with the ABC in Melbourne where he held talks with Australian Trade Minister Don Farrell.

"I believe that we still need a couple of months to conclude the negotiations and to focus on the most difficult chapters, which are always at the end," he said.

Australian officials said Thursday's talks with the EU had been "positive" and "demonstrated a genuine desire to achieve a deal which is in both Australia and the EU's interests".

Cyprus President Christodoulides meets new Turkish Cypriot Leader

The first meeting between the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Nikos Christodoulides, and the recently elected Turkish Cypriot leader, Tufan Erhurman, has concluded in Nicosia, lasting significantly longer than the anticipated 45 to 60 minutes.

The extended duration of over an hour and fifteen minutes is being interpreted as a positive indication of progress. President Christodoulides, visibly smiling upon exiting the meeting, spoke of positive developments and a concrete timetable for contacts between the two leaders next month.

Agreed-upon timetable and next steps



The United Nations (UN) announced that the meeting, which included the UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Cyprus, Maria Ángela Olguín, took place in a constructive atmosphere and focused on an agreement for further collaboration in December.

Preserving Greek language across generations

Steve Georganas MP, Federal Member for Adelaide, has commissioned a landmark report on the preservation of the Greek language across generations in Australia and was tabled in the Federal Parliament on the Tuesday, 4 November.

The report was undertaken by Ms. Dimity Vlahos who is completing her internship with the Member for Adelaide, Mr. Steve Georganas.

Ms. Vlahos is part of the Australian National Internship Program from the Australian National University (ANU).

"Cultivating the Greek language within the Australian diaspora looked at the landscape, the barriers that exist and the frameworks of the Greek language in Australia," said Steve Georganas.

The report not only looked at the Greek language in Australia but also how it fared compared to other Greek diasporas, such as the USA and Canada. The report showed evidence that the maintenance of the Greek language

in Australia fared much better than our counterparts.

"This is promising news and very positive for the Greek language in Australia, it shows that the hard work and effort from Greek communities, churches Community Schools and educators is working," said Mr Steve Georganas.

This release coincides with UNESCO's recent ratification of February 9 as Word Greek Language Day, a global recognition of the Greek language's enduring legacy and its foundational role in shaping human civilisation.

Greek migration has played a foundational role in forming modern Australia, with the Greek language serving as a key threat connecting generations of Greek Australians.

However, recent studies show a concerning shift from Greek to English, particularly among young generations. This shift manifests in hybrid forms such as "GrEnglish" or "Greeklish", where English words are interwoven into

Greek speech.

"Community languages like Greek are more than just words. They're about belonging, identity, and intergenerational connection," said Mr Georganas, a second generation Greek Australian. "Preserving multilingualism strengthens social cohesion and deepens Australia's understanding and approach to multiculturalism."

The report examines generational differences in language use, noting that while first generation migrants often maintain fluency, second and third generations may lack emotional attachment to the language. This phenomenon, known as the "3-G Problem" refers to the decline of minority languages within three generations. Remarkably, Greek defies this trend, with a 21% retention rate among third-generation Greek Australians.

Community centres, including Greek Orthodox churches, play a vital role in sustaining language and culture. These institutions foster belong-



Federal Member for Adelaide, Steve Georganas MP and Ms. Dimity Vlahos who is part of the Australian National Internship Program from the Australian National University

ing and support language schools, many of which are non profit and community led. In South Australia alone, over 40,000 people claim Greek ancestry, and the state offers a wide range of language learning options.

"Protecting the Greek language is essential to maintaining cultural identity and ensuring that future generations remain connected to their heritage," said Ms Dimity Vlahos A download of the report can found here.