

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY HANSARD – 06 AUGUST 2025

*This would have to be a one-off. Sutherland Shire Folk Dance Group's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary was mentioned in the New South Wales Parliament by the local Member and recorded in Hansard (the official written record of debates and proceedings in a parliament). It is reproduced below:*

### SUTHERLAND SHIRE FOLK DANCE GROUP

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (19:34):** For five decades the Sutherland Shire Folk Dance Group have been a heartbeat of culture and connection in our community. Founded in 1975 by a small group of passionate dancers, the group have grown into a vibrant organisation that continues to share the joy of folk dance with people of all ages and backgrounds. Through weekly classes, workshops, weekend camps and social events, they have built a strong, inclusive community grounded in tradition and movement. Their impact reaches beyond the dance floor. From performing at the opening of the Sutherland entertainment centre to contributing to medical research through Western Sydney University's falls prevention study, they have helped to promote both culture and wellbeing. This milestone would not have been possible without the tireless work of the long-serving volunteers. I acknowledge Corralynn Organ, Kaye Laurendet, Janene Randall, Debbie Hotchkis, Paul and Fiona Clark, Robyn Bruce, Marj Pickering and Melvie Rattenbury for their efforts. Congratulations to the Sutherland Shire Folk Dance Group on 50 years of community, resilience and cultural pride. May their legacy continue to grow one step at a time.

### WORKSHOP ON SIFNOS

This year the small island of Sifnos was my destination for a Greek dance workshop, and very nice it was too. We stayed in the small port area of Kamares which has a lovely pristine beach and sea (Blue Flag).

The six days went all too quickly and energy levels needed to be high! The first lesson was the evening we arrived, with Dimos Gikas teaching Drama and Sarakatsani dances. Thereafter, teachers equally as skilled and inspiring as Dimos, took us through many steps from their different regions. Vassilis Terzis covered the Peloponnese and Serres; Kostas Pipinis-Lesvos; Apsis Christos-Almoria; Dimitri Mitsis; and last but by no means least the organiser and teacher, Giorgos Pantziridis taught a plethora of dances from Thrace.

The workshop was to have been held in conjunction with a weekend festival celebrating St. Simeon, with performances, dancing, feasting. However, owing to a tragic incident with the loss of a young child, which shocked the small local community, understandably

the glendi was cancelled and no live music was played. However, on Sunday night we drove to the small chapel of St. Simeon on top of a mountain, and whilst there were none of the usual celebrations taking place, we were given dinner offered by the church on such occasions. Many Greeks were also there and during the meal, they started banging their dishes with a knife/spoon. We joined in and the loud noise was for thanks to the chef and waitresses providing the meal.

Other evenings we danced to taped music beside the taverna in which we dined and one night after dinner some of us drove to the small town of Apollonia where we had fun with young Greeks in a disco bar. Another evening before dinner, a very interesting presentation of Sifnos dances and costumes was given in the village square, and we joined in the dancing.

We were a convivial group of about twenty-five dancers, some of whom I'd met before, from Greece (Greeks who now live abroad), Spain, Holland, Israel, France, Cyprus, Belgium and a Bulgarian couple who dance in the club I frequent, in Sofia. Local Greeks sometimes joined in too.



*Costume from Sifnos*

All in all another great workshop which unfortunately is starting to feel like a dream now that the short summer is over and colder days are with us. Time to start daydreaming about next year! Meantime, I have the pleasure of dancing with Bulgarian and Greek groups here in Sofia. This was the year of the five-yearly Koprivshtitsa

festival in Bulgaria and it was really nice to catch up with several dance friends from other countries, including Olivia Sumich from New Zealand.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and healthy, happy, dancing days in 2026.

*Anna Travali*