



# Community Languages Schools

## Ambassador Program Alumni Profile



### Maria Kakali

My name is Maria Kakali. I attended The Greek Orthodox Community of New South Wales from 2015 to 2021 and studied Modern Greek at the NSW School of Languages from 2019 to 2021. In 2022, I completed the Modern Greek Extension course for my HSC at the Secondary College of Languages.

*“I have always cherished every opportunity to speak Greek with my family and friends.”*

Having been born in Greece and moving to Australia at the age of six, I have always cherished every opportunity to speak Greek with my family and friends. Growing up in a bilingual home, I spoke



Greek with my dad and grandma, and our household was immersed in Greek culture – whether through food, TV, or the radio. But to truly

connect with my heritage, I knew I had to improve my reading and writing skills in Greek, which is why I attended community language schools. These schools not only helped me refine my language skills but also gave me lifelong friendships and unforgettable cultural experiences.

One of the highlights of my journey was being in the top five students for HSC Modern Greek Extension. This achievement led me to be selected for the Multicultural NSW HSC High Achievers in Language Scholarship Program: Interpreting and Translating, a proud moment that underscored the impact of community language schools on my life. I have had the privilege of taking part in many cultural events, including national holiday celebrations where I sang national anthems, performed Greek dances, recited poems, and acted in plays.

Beyond these experiences, learning languages has been a key part of shaping my identity. In addition to Greek, I studied French in high school and am now learning Korean at university. These languages have broadened my cultural understanding and provided me with effective communication, leadership, and professional skills.

Currently, I am studying for a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Advanced Studies (International and Global Studies), majoring in Global Studies and Modern Greek at the University of Sydney. I also serve as the secretary of the Sydney University Greek Society (SUGS), where we promote Greek culture and language through social events. In the future, I hope to take part in an exchange program in Greece, further strengthening my connection to my roots. Who knows where the future will take me with the language skills I have gathered throughout the years, perhaps as a Greek ambassador or newsreader?