

My Life: My Legacy



Project overview

The My Life: My Legacy project helped culturally and linguistically diverse seniors from Fairfield's Greek community to create a digital record of their life story that is stored on a USB drive.

The project also involved the production of a bi-lingual manual, *My Life: My Legacy – a practical manual: generations working together to digitally record their personal stories of post-war Greek migration to Australia*.

The approach emphasises the importance of digitally recording and preserving participants' personal stories, and providing a practical guide to the process.

Project description

The project aimed to capture the family and community history of senior members of Fairfield's Greek community, remembering and sharing life experiences, origins, traditions, and experiences of war and migration.

It also sought to address the new social barriers created by the rapid rise of digital technology, which have affected Greek seniors' interaction with and participation in Australian society.

Participants created digital records of their life stories to leave as legacies for their children and grandchildren. In the process, they learned to use computers, scanners, printers and the internet.

Project model

- Participants were supported to record their life story by scanning photos, documents, biographies and written comments onto a USB drive.
- The project also developed a three-part manual in Greek so that the process could be shared with others.
- Part A of the manual outlines the social importance of recording historical events, and the individual value of creating one's own personal history for the benefit of descendants.
- Part B is a practical how-to guide that shows participants how to organise and archive photographs, documents and other material of historical significance. It also covers how to engage family members who have computer skills to assist with transferring their archives into a digital format. It aims to take a non-threatening approach to the use of technology, and contains practical examples and exercises.
- Part C aims to help bridge the digital divide between Greek-speaking seniors and their children. It contains a brief history of computers and a comprehensive pictorial guide of computer and internet-related terms and concepts. It is also available as a PowerPoint presentation in the Greek version of the manual.

Budget

Total project cost	\$4,378
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Project challenges

The major challenges were finding a suitable project worker and overcoming the prohibitive costs of employing a translator for the project.

These problems were overcome by a member of the management committee with relevant computer and language skills who stepped down from another role to coordinate the project and complete the manual in Greek.

An editor was later employed to review and edit the Greek version of the manual.

Project outcomes

Fifty-five Greek-speaking seniors participated in the project.

The benefits for participants included:

- a sense of purpose
- opportunity to acquire new skills and knowledge
- constructive use of their spare time
- lifelong learning
- using technology and the opportunities it provides
- making better use of their local library's resources, computer facilities and support staff
- engaging with children and grandchildren in a meaningful way as they worked on their project together
- improved confidence through recalling their contribution to Australian society
- contributing to their decedents and to the wider Australian society by leaving a legacy.

Project sustainability

The Coordinator of the Federation of Greek Elderly Citizen's Clubs of Melbourne wishes to distribute the manual to other Greek seniors groups.

There are ongoing discussions with the City of Darebin about making the manual an online library resource.

A grant from the City of Darebin's Community Grants Program used the manual to create a digital history of the Greek community in Northcote.

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