

Greeks in Melbourne Impressed by Aboriginal Academic's Lecture

By **Ioanna Zikakou** -

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Dr. Gary Foley

Distinguished Aboriginal academic and activist Dr. Gary Foley called for the Parthenon Marbles' and Australian indigenous artifacts' return from the British Museum to their rightful place, in his lecture during a series of seminars on Greek History and Culture, organized for the fifth consecutive year by the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria.

The successful event took place on Thursday night at the Greek Centre for Contemporary Culture and was attended by more than 200 people. Foley spoke about his first encounter with Greek-Australians and the support he received from

the community in his campaign for the indigenous artifacts' return from the British Museum.

Greek Community President Vasilis Papastergiadis made his speech in Greek, as part of the "Speak Greek in March" campaign. He stressed that the Community appreciated the significance of Foley's participation in the seminar and the topic of his lecture. Furthermore, he noted that copies of the Parthenon Marbles will soon be placed in front of the community building.

Introducing Foley, Professor Nikos Papastergiadis from the University of Melbourne, spoke about his activities and struggles for the rights of Aboriginals.

On his part, Foley spoke about the British Museum's refusal to return the artifacts to the natives of Victoria and noted that several of the items have been stored in a British Museum closet for more than 150 years.

He then stressed that Greeks have a right to request the Parthenon Marbles' return. He also commented on the fact that the marbles are often called "Elgin Marbles," noting that it is outrageous for the statues to be called after the man who stole them from Greece.