

16 September 2019

## **Milkshakes and memories — State Library explores the history of Greek cafes**

Banana splits and fish ‘n’ chips are on the menu at State Library of Queensland from 27 September with a new exhibition that explores the delicious history of Greek cafes.

*Meet me at the Paragon* uncovers the stories of Greek migrants who established cafes and milk bars in the early 20th century, carving out a new life for their families in Queensland.

Establishments like Dalby’s famous Paragon Café became the social hubs of their communities; the McDonald’s of their day. They were open all day, food was cheap, and they traded in most towns across the state.

But the exhibition is not all froth and strawberry bubbles. Like many migrants of the time, they faced language challenges and xenophobia, with early newspaper articles warning locals not to eat at their cafes on “health and safety” grounds.

Despite such adversity Greek cafes flourished all over Queensland using the latest design trends and technology from America to win over customers.

### **Exhibition highlights:**

- a replica booth where visitors can browse menus displaying historic images of Greek cafes
- heritage items such as anodised milkshake cups, monogrammed crockery and old menus (yes, steak and chips really were \$2.50 once upon a time)
- a soundscape of a busy Greek café played throughout the exhibition space
- a 2-metre neon sign from the Eldorado café (1956)
- rare photos and digital stories
- stories of Queensland’s most prominent Greek families

### **Quotes from State Librarian and CEO Vicki McDonald:**

“I have fond memories of visiting the local Greek café in Dalby as child.”

“It was always such a special treat to have milkshake on a hot day after a morning of grocery shopping.”

“State Library’s role as custodian of Queensland documentary heritage allows us to tell the story of Greek entrepreneurship and the enduring impact the community has had on the history of our state.”

### ***Meet me at the Paragon: the Greek Café phenomenon***

27 Sep — 15 Mar

Open daily | Free entry

Philip Bacon Heritage Gallery, level 4 | State Library of Queensland, Cultural Centre, South Bank  
[slq.qld.gov.au/whats-on](http://slq.qld.gov.au/whats-on) | #slqGreekCafes

