



This is it: Australian Hellenic Memorial Foundation patrons George Veis and Bruce Ruxton point to the model.

## Marquette depicts union

BY NICHOLAS TZAFERIS

A model of the marquette that will commemorate the alliance between Greece and Australia in World War II was unveiled at Station Pier on Sunday.

Figureheads of the Greek community attended the launch of the model aboard the Australian navy ship HMAS Terrens.

The memorial is hoped to be erected in the surrounding areas of the Shrine of Remembrance.

The model's designer, 37-year-old Evangelos Sakaris, said the marquette is a re-configuration of various historical elements from the past to the present and incorporates the practices of religion, classical architecture and Athenian democracy.

Mr Sakaris, who submitted a design after responding to an advertisement in *The Age*, said the process of coming up with the final model took four months.

"I felt pretty strong that I had a good chance because it was deeply felt," Mr Sakaris said.

"My thinking about it and research struck a chord with those who were selecting.

"The significance of it is added because I deeply relate to and have an affinity with the whole project. I believe in the idea."

"Because I have that historical, personal and family connection, it was something which my imagination could use to my benefit."

Mr Sakaris, a contemporary artist, said he hasn't always been involved in public art.

"Of late I've involved myself a bit more in public art and it's been a challenge."

Pandelis Kalimnakis, president of the Australian Hellenic

Memorial Foundation which took the initiative of erecting a memorial, said unveiling the model was a result of five years of hard work.

"This was a vision and a dream that became a reality," Mr Kalimnakis said.

"I hope that this marquette becomes a reality and that we can reveal the real thing six months down the track."

The foundation has four patrons who all expressed their delight at seeing the model.

One of the four patrons, Victorian RSL president Bruce Ruxton, has been involved in the memorial from the outset.

"When Pandelis (Kalimnakis) first spoke to me at the Cretan Village in Wantirna they had ideas of putting the statue in a roundabout in Wantirna," Mr Ruxton said.

"I couldn't believe this and said to him it's got to go somewhere else."

Mr Ruxton spoke of the trouble faced by the foundation's committee in the early stages.

"The Chief Commissioner of Melbourne sent down a lady to have a look at the marquette and she was in charge of the arts department that covers paintings and statues for the Melbourne City Council," Mr Ruxton said.

"She made a statement that it would offend other ethnic groups but I want to make it quite clear that the Australian soldier only served with two foreign nations in World War II - Greece and the United States.

"I said to her, 'Who cares? The statue has to go there'."

Sir John Holland served Australia in Greece and had little hesitation in becoming a foundation patron.

"The reasons for me accepting the offer was my profound respect for the Greeks, my very

high regard for the way in which they co-operated with the Australian forces and the way they resisted the enemy forces before we actually arrived in the country to halt them."

State MP Murray Thompson, also a foundation patron, called on the community to draw inspiration from the past to build a memorial for the future.

"I'm sure that if \$150,000 is able to be raised in a swift period of time, we can take contentment in our contribution," Mr Thompson said.

"This is to mark the efforts of those who some 55 years ago stood in the breezes in Greece and on the island of Crete united in one common cause - to defeat the enemy."

Opposition member John Pandazopoulos said Australia and Greece share a proud history as fighters for peace.

"This memorial is hugely important for the Australian and Greek-Australian community in that we should not forget our past," Mr Pandazopoulos said.

Greek Consul General, George Veis, said the establishment of the foundation was one of his first challenges after accepting the Victorian post in 1994.

"This will commemorate forever, here in the fifth continent, the common historic struggles for defending the loftiest human ideals - the ideals of freedom, dignity and democracy," Mr Veis said.

"Every nation which respects its past and its present has, indeed, a future. Nations without memory have to disappear and they do disappear."

The foundation has raised almost \$20,000 of the \$150,000 that is needed to erect the memorial.