

Multicultural award

Jack Passaris, of Maroubra, has been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for three decades of dedicated work promoting multiculturalism.

Having grown up in Alexandria in Egypt, Mr Passaris had a strong understanding of the complexities and difficulties of living in a multicultural city. And after

arriving in Australia, Mr Passaris sought to use this knowledge to help others struggling to find their place by establishing the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW in 1975.

"The main objective was always to promote multiculturalism in the broader community and we were very suc-

cessful: we managed to teach people how to respect each other's culture, religion and language and that was the goal," he said.

Mr Passaris became a Marrickville councillor in 1977 and successfully represented the council's multicultural electorate.

Not just a tireless communi-

ty worker, Mr Passaris, a self-proclaimed "jack-of-all-trades", has also dabbled in property development, and in model-making as a boilermaker by trade. "I've had a good life, I am happy, and my family is happy, and that is the main thing and for the community it is all about harmony and respect," he said.



Greek police break child porn ring and arrest abbot

ATHENS: The abbot of a monastery was among 11 people arrested Tuesday when Greek police broke up a suspected child pornography ring forming part of a European network, officials said.

Police charged a further 13 people with possessing and trafficking pornography on the Internet and were searching for more than 130 other suspects. Those arrested included the abbot of a monastery near the town of Sparta in the Peloponnese, two doctors and an army officer, police said. In Greece, suspects can only be automatically arrested within 24 hours of committing a crime. "The accused purchased access to Internet sites containing illegal pictures and video images using their credit cards," said a police official, who declined to be named. "We're having a problem finding them as some used Internet cafes."

Police raided suspects' houses and confiscated around 30 hard-drives, lap top computers and hundreds of DVD's containing pictures of children as young as 4-months-old, officials said.

Greek authorities tracked down the suspects after being tipped off by British police. Last year, Greece charged 21 people in a separate porn bust. Greece's conservative government passed a law in 2007 which imposed heavy sentences, including life imprisonment, for crimes related to child pornography.

KEEP RECEIPTS FOR EDUCATION TAX REFUND

The Member for Banks Daryl Melham MP and the Member for Blaxland Jason Clare MP today reminded parents who have school children to keep their receipts for education expenses as they prepare for the new school year.

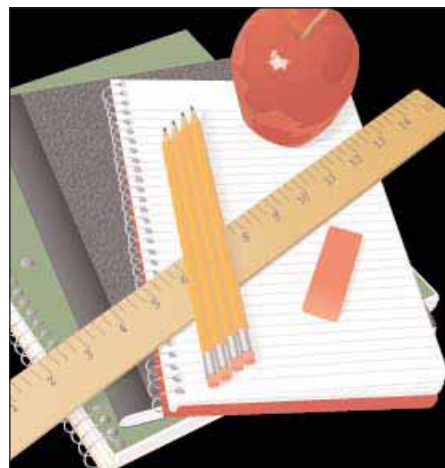
They said the back-to-school period was often a really expensive one coming off the back of Christmas and the holidays, and that parents should make most of the benefits available under the Rudd Government's \$4.4 billion Education Tax Refund.

Mr Clare said, "Parents can claim up to \$375 per primary school student and \$750 per secondary school student for education expenses. This will really help make ends meet."

Mr Melham said, "Every bit counts when you're faced with the prospect of all those expenses associated with getting the kids ready to go for the new school year."

"We understand that, and it's even more the case in the midst of the global financial crisis and the downturn in the world economy," Mr Melham said.

"This is a key part of the Rudd Government's Education Revolution making sure children all over



Australia get the best possible start in life," Mr Clare said.

RUDD GOVERNMENT'S EDUCATION TAX REFUND

How much can you claim?

By keeping their receipts, eligible families will be able to claim a 50 per cent refund every year for key education expenses up to:

- \$750 for each child undertaking primary studies (maximum refund of \$375 per child, per year); and
- \$1,500 for each child undertaking secondary studies (maximum refund of \$750 per child, per year).

For example, Sarah and Michael

have two children, Petra, who is in secondary school and Jack, now in grade three. Through the Education Tax Refund, Sarah and Michael are able to claim 50 per cent of the cost of a \$1,500 laptop computer they bought for Petra, a refund of \$750.

They will also be able to claim Jack's education software and school textbooks up to the value of \$750, receiving a refund of up to \$375.

Where a family has educational costs in excess of the refund limit, these costs can be carried over to the next financial year.

What items are covered?

Eligible expenses for the Education Tax Refund include:

- laptops;
- home computers and associated costs;
- home internet connections;
- printers;
- education software;
- trade tools for use at school;
- school text books; and
- stationery.

Who is eligible?

Parents entitled to Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Part A for children in primary or secondary school for the relevant financial year are eligible for the Education Tax Refund.

Parents are also eligible if they have children in primary or secondary school who would be eligible children for FTB Part A purposes, but for the fact that the child receives certain payments or allowances, for example:

- Youth Allowance;
- Disability Support Pension; and
- ABSTUDY Living Allowance.

How do you claim the Education Tax Refund?

Parents will then be able to claim 50 per cent of these expenses through their tax return at the end of the financial year. For those who are not required to complete an income tax return, a separate form will be available from the Australian Taxation Office.

Office of Jason Clare MP
MEMBER FOR BLAXLAND
Office of Daryl Melham MP
MEMBER FOR BANKS

Greece to help Iraq cultural reconstruction

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Greece pledged to provide financial and technical aid to help Iraq restore and conserve its damaged archaeological sites and museums. Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis said Greece and Iraq have also agreed to build a monument honoring the Greek warrior-king Alexander the Great at an ancient battlefield in southern Iraq.

She was speaking after talks in Athens with Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari. Iraqi museums and sites suffered extensive damage and looting in the wake of the U.S.-led invasion in 2003. The National Museum of Baghdad, a treasure trove of artifacts from the Stone Age through the Babylonian, Assyrians and Islamic periods, fell victim to bands of armed thieves. Up to 7,000 pieces are still missing. Zebari welcomed the Greek offer of cultural assistance, which he said followed an Iraqi request. "We have great need of such assistance," he said, adding that technical committees from both countries would meet to discuss the details.

Zebari said the battlefield monument would underline the interaction of civilizations in the region. It will be built near the city of Mosul, where Alexander won a crushing victory over a Persian army in 331 B.C. At the time, Iraq was part of the Persian Empire, which stretched throughout most of the Middle East.

