



## Young Greeks of Bessarabia will have rest on historic motherland

8-12-year-old children from Izmail (Odesa region, South Ukraine), at least one of whose parents has Greek roots, will have rest on their historic motherland during summer holidays.

Tetiana Mitaki, head of Izmail's Hellas Greek community, says every year children from Greek diasporas of different countries are invited to Greece under the hospitality program carried out by that country's general secretariat for ties with compatriots abroad.

The Greek holidays program includes not only rest and recreation, but also visits to historical places and museums, familiarizing with traditions, culture, theater and mythology of that country, as well as folk art of Greece, and lessons of the national language. The children will be able to take part in music shows and sport contests, learn to dance and sing in the Greek, and naturally to swim in the sea.

Greece will repay all the costs.

## Exhibition on Athenian Democracy in Melbourne

Melbourne - The archaeological exhibition "Athenian Democracy speaking through its inscriptions" will be formally inaugurated on March 19 at the Hellenic Foundation for Culture (HFC) Centre in Melbourne, housed in the Hellenic Museum facilities.

The exhibition, organized by the Epigraphic Museum and the University of Athens, is being organized on the occasion of the formal opening of the HFC Centre in Melbourne and will offer the opportunity to the general public to understand the opera-

tion of the world's first Democracy.

The inauguration will be held in the presence of General Secretary of the Greek Ministry of Culture, Thodoris Dravillas, HFC president Professor George Babiniotis, and local authorities.

## Mykonos bouncer's TV plea

**THE bouncer accused of murdering Australian Doujon Zammit has appeared on Greek television in an apparent pitch for sympathy.**

Mr Zammit, 20, was declared brain dead in August after an attack by four bouncers on the Greek island of Mykonos. His parents, Oliver and Rosemarie Zammit, agonised before taking him off life support.

His cousin, Cameron Tabone, also 20, had his nose and wrist broken in the attack.

The accused, Marios Antonopoulos, appeared in a segment on Axizi Na To Dis (Worth Watching), a reality-current affairs program broadcast in Greece by the popular Antenna channel and in Australia by Antenna Pacific.

"I wanted ... to contact the victim's family," he said in an interview at the high-security Korydallos Prison, from



Accused.... Marios Antonopoulos, and, right, Doujon Zammit.

which two dangerous inmates escaped by helicopter last month.

"I wanted to talk to them directly, to inform them better, so they can judge

for themselves what sort of person I am ... but I was afraid they already had a bad impression of me, based on public opinion."

Antonopoulos, 25, is facing charges of murder, impersonating a police officer and possession of an illegal weapon. An 18-year-old and two other men are facing assault charges.

"I never wanted to take a life," he said. "I don't want to be found innocent. I don't believe that I am innocent. I want to be judged and punished objectively, by the family and the courts."

His tearful parents were shown in the studio. Their son said both had cancer and the family was in financial trouble.

A trial date is still to be set. The Herald understands the delay is partly due to witness statements from Australians, who cannot attend the trial, not yet being sent to Greece.

Oliver Zammit, declining to comment on the interview, said the recipient of his son's heart, Athens journalist Kostas Gribilas, 32, had told him heart transplants in Greece had more than trebled and general organ transplants nearly doubled. "If that's the legacy my son's left behind then I'm very proud," he said.

## Xenophon, Greens to block alcopops tax

The Senate crossbench is engaged in a game of bluff with the Rudd government, declaring it will kill Labor's alcopops tax hike unless its demands are met.

As a smirking former health minister Tony Abbott strolled past, three fuming crossbench senators convened a hasty press conference on Monday night, and signalled they were prepared to vote down the alcopops legislation.

Greens senators Bob Brown, Rachel Siewert and independent Nick Xenophon made it clear they were not to be trifled with on the alcopops bill or other key government legislation. "They (Labor) need to see that we are quite strong, quite determined and not going to be treated in this way by the (health) minister or the government," Senator Brown told reporters in Canberra.

"We are serious about this and it's up to the government to act like a government that understands the functioning of the Senate instead of expecting that the Senate is simply going to give it what it wants every time."

The alcopops tax will raise \$1.6 billion over the next four years. The government has agreed to \$10 million for substituting alcohol sponsorship in sporting clubs and community sport but the Greens want double that amount.

It has refused to fund an alcohol helpline and Senator Xenophon's request for \$50 million over four years for alcohol education programs. The government has agreed to health warnings being included in all alcohol TV ads.

But it won't budge on a demand from the other key crossbench senator - Family First's Steve Fielding - for TV alco-

hol advertising to be banned until late at night.

Senator Brown said the government's alcopops tax increase was more about salvaging its budget bottom line than tackling binge drinking.

"They don't have a decent argument to defend the fact they are raising \$1.6 billion in taxes and they really want to put that into fixing their budgetary problems rather than fixing the alcohol abuse problems, which a very tiny amount of that would do," he said.

Senator Xenophon said it was woeful the government had spruiked the excise rise as a health initiative.

"Treasury was behind this bill and the paltry amounts the government was planning to spend on health programs that would have made a real difference made a mockery of claims it wanted to reduce the rates of binge drinking by young people," he said.

"If the government wakes up tomorrow morning with a fiscal hangover it will only have itself to blame."

Health Minister Nicola Roxon tried to deflect the spotlight onto the coalition.

"In just a few weeks, thanks to the Liberal party, teenage girls will be back paying pocket money prices for lolly water drinks," she said. "This measure was working. We didn't just see a slowing in alcohol sales, we saw an actual decline."

Opposition minor amendments to the bill were approved by the Senate late on Monday night.

The Senate is expected to vote on the legislation early on Tuesday afternoon.