



Traffic safety minister resigns

LESS than a day after refusing to quit as South Australia's road safety minister, Labor rising star Tom Koutsantonis has been forced to resign amid public outrage over the 30-plus driving offences under his name.

However, Mr Koutsantonis retains his place in cabinet, to which he was appointed less than two months ago, as Minister for Correctional Services, Youth, Gambling and Volunteers.

South Australian Police said last night its ethical and professional standards branch was investigating how details of some of the offences were obtained by Adelaide's Sunday Mail newspaper.

The newspaper said its "special investigation" had exposed Mr Koutsantonis, 37, as a serial traffic offender. It reported he had been fined at least 27 times for speeding, three times for running a red light and once for using a mobile phone while driving since at least 1994, amounting to more than \$10,000 in fines.

A police spokeswoman said last night the investigation was examining "the circumstances of how an (expiation notice) call centre operator provided some information to a journalist".

Labor Party sources yesterday told The Australian there were three cars registered under Mr Koutsantonis's name, but the listed address for all of them was that of his elderly Greek parents.

It is understood many expiation notices were misread and thrown out. "Tom was not aware of just how many fines had been accumulated in his name," a Labor MP said yesterday. "He was not aware because certain family members had not understood (the fines) or chosen not to disclose them."

A spokeswoman for Mr Koutsantonis said he was taking full responsibility for all the fines and not providing a breakdown of who incurred them.

Article from The Australian

Two Greek blokes show London what "humour" used to be

By John Kaponi

For those of us who have endured the Harry Enfield "Stavros" character in the 1990s with people thinking it funny that some middle class English bloke should mimic a Cypriot kebab shop owner and the continual "hello everybody pips", we now have the antidote. Two Greek-Cypriots Demetri and Laki who are taking the "mick" out of themselves and at the same time making a contribution to the debate over the role of Greeks in the UK.

The Greek community is one of the success stories in London's "immigrant" population, doing well in business, the public sector and making a valuable contribution (if not limited) to the politics of London. But it took a father and son from the north London Greek "ghettos" of Winchmore Hill to reflect the way in which the Greeks of London have just got on with their business.

Indeed it is ironic that on the day of the Greek Orthodox Good Friday so much press attention should be focused on these two characters.

The "Stavros Flatley" act which was an immediate hit with the majority of those who watched it, reflected the sense of humour that exists within the Greek psyche, and also a demonstration of how the so called "mainstream" in the capital is so out of touch with London's grassroots. In comparison in the United States, stand up comics regularly discuss race and religion and have huge followings. Here we



have pseudo-academic middle class graduates doing a stand up routine trying to not "offend" and keep within the unwritten "red-lines" of race and religion. In effect killing off the comedic critique that Jackie Mason has used when debating his Jewishness, Russell Peters act on his Indian heritage, Chris Rock on his experiences as a black man in the US and others. We seem to have a problem having this kind of comedy in the UK.

What the father and son act aka "Stavros Flatley" have managed to do is to reawaken the old tradition of comedy that used to exist in abundance in the UK of mimicking ones heritage but in so doing making it stronger and self-confident. Many Greeks in London will confess to stories about ones superstitions, beliefs and customs, I bet most Londoners walk left foot forward? Well if your a Greek like

me it's been instilled to the point of delirium "you must walk with the right foot first" in case of some evil spirit being invoked! Heard the one about not having a bath on Fridays? Yes we Greeks pong on Fridays!

We are so absorbed today in London about offending minorities and being branded racist; well for one I am happy that Demetri and Laki have done so well. Good on you fellas! And in these times of recession, what a better way to forget than to watch two Greeks blokes dancing on stage!

CHRISTOS ANESTI LONDON

Greeks say Easter important for national identity

As many as 83.2 per cent of the population in Greece believe Easter is extremely important for keeping the country's national identity, a recent survey has revealed.

The poll by Kapa Research, which

questioned 2089 people, found that 29.7 per cent of people attend mass during Holy Week and 38 per cent attend on the Saturday after Good Friday.

Interestingly many more respon-

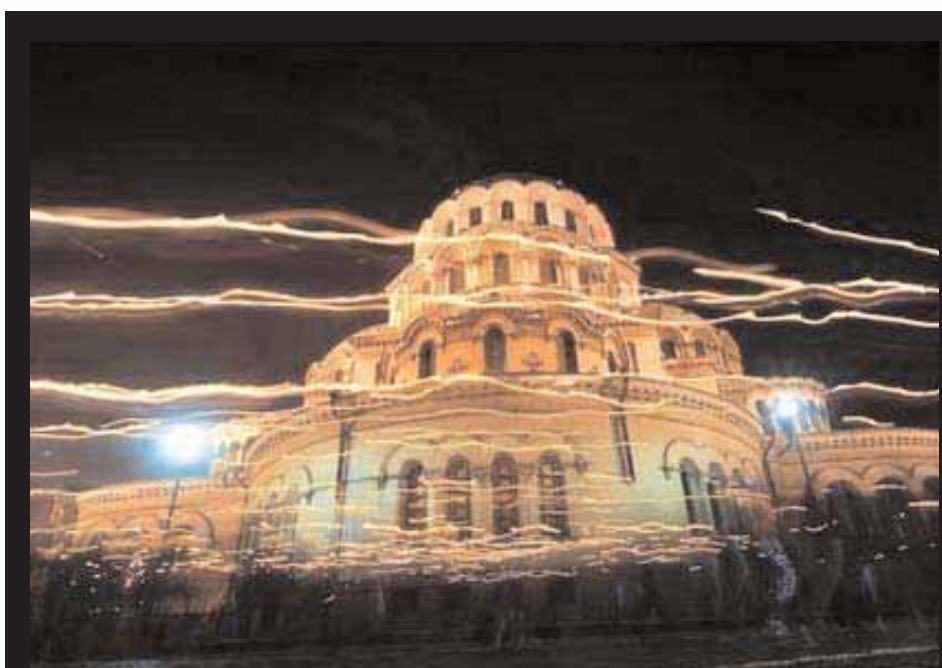
dents said that they took part in traditional Easter fasting. Around 17.6 per cent of people said they fasted between Orthodox Halloween and Easter, whilst just under half said they fasted throughout Holy Week.

Just under a quarter said they did not fast at all while only 8.3 per cent said they fast only on Good Friday.

The research also suggested that the financial crisis was affecting the way Greeks celebrate Easter. Over half of respondents said they would spend less than usual for entertainment and presents this year, whilst 37.9 per cent said they would spend around the same. Just over five per cent said they would be more generous this year.

More than half of the people questioned said they would stay at home for the holiday, 35.6 per cent said they would travel to their home villages or cities, whilst less than 10 per cent said they would travel to other places for their holidays.

Orthodox Christians marked Good Friday, the day when Jesus Christ was crucified almost 2,000 years ago. Orthodox believers mark the time of Easter one week later than Protestants and Catholics as they use a different calendar.



Easter marks the holiest feast in the Christian calendar. The candles in this photo of a procession outside a cathedral in the Bulgarian capital of Sofia look like neon streaks.