

Investigation raises call for sacking of council

Melbourne.- A Stonnington councillor under investigation by state authorities for conflict of interest says the Government should sack the entire council.

Tas Athanasopoulos is being investigated for failing to declare conflicts after receiving campaign donations worth several thousand dollars from property connections then dealing with matters they were involved in as a councillor. He denies having any conflict of interest and says he dealt with the applications on their merits. Local Government Victoria is investigating. Failing to declare a conflict can attract an \$11,000 fine under new laws.

Cr Athanasopoulos received a donation worth \$3000 from Greek Broadcasting, of which property developer Harry Stamoulis was a director at the time. He then failed to declare the donation in two council meetings and argued in favour of a 27-storey Stamoulis development at 670 Chapel Street, while the majority of councillors argued against it proceeding.

He later declared a conflict and excluded himself from

discussion. He told The Age he declared the conflict once he realised Mr Stamoulis' dual roles. "When I found out, I did the right thing," he said.

A representative for Mr Stamoulis, Andrew Harris, said the donation was the value of air time on the radio station. Mr Stamoulis had a policy of helping Greek candidates and in Cr Athanasopoulos' case it was one of the smallest allocations he had ever made to a Greek politician.

"No cash changed hands," Mr Harris said. "And there was no connection in Harry's mind between that and the development in South Yarra."

Planning Minister Justin Madden took control of the development in February.

Cr Athanasopoulos also received campaign donations from consultant Peter Aldred and is accused of not declaring conflicts when dealing with Mr Aldred's clients in matters before council.

Mr Aldred did not wish to comment.

Cr Athanasopoulos said the fact he was referred for investigation was an attack by rivals and that relationships at Stonnington were so toxic the council was unable to make proper decisions. "We should be sacked and we should start over again," he said.

Stonnington Mayor Claude Ullin said Cr Athanasopoulos' claim was "fanciful". "He obviously has a particular beef because he doesn't get his own way on council. I totally reject it," Cr Ullin said.

"We're an extremely successful council and we have an impeccable financial record, all of our decisions are fairly debated and voted on at council and the majority obviously rules."

Meanwhile, Cr Ullin has excluded himself from all matters relating to the 670 Chapel Street development because Mr Stamoulis' company is suing him for defamation. The investigation of Cr Athanasopoulos is one of the first under the State Government's new conflict of interest laws, which came in last year.

Club boss denied bail after threat

SHORTLY after hitting Anthony Zervas three times with a metal bollard, Comanchero boss Mahmoud Hawi turned to the dead man's brother, Hells Angel Peter Zervas, and said: "You've got it coming, I'll get you tomorrow."

A week later Peter Zervas was shot eight times as he parked his car in Lakemba.

The threat, heard by a witness to the March 22 airport brawl between members of the two outlaw motorcycle clubs, in part led to Hawi being refused bail at Central Local Court yesterday. The magistrate, David Armati, said the Comanchero national president might commit further offences.

"Whatever motivated [Hawi] to act in the way that he did, the court is of the opinion he is likely to commit further offences if bail is granted."

The court also heard Hawi has lost 11 kilograms since being remanded in custody. Hawi plans to appeal against the decision in the Supreme Court. The case will next be heard in that court on May 28.

Ada's back on stage, but this time there are no dance shoes



(Sydney) 30 April, 2009 - Ada Nicodemou, star of Channel Seven's drama Home and Away, and winner of Dancing with the Stars performs on stage in Take Away Theatre's The Show must go on at Sidetrack Theatre, for six performances only commencing Wednesday 13 May until 17 May.

Wanting to work in live theatre again, Ada grabbed the opportunity to work with Marrickville-based theatre company, Take Away Theatre.

"The company turns 20 this year and they were working on a new show to celebrate and mark its achievements" Ada said.

"I saw Take Away Theatre's last show, and I was captivated. I just loved what this company was doing - creating new plays, plays with characters who have been a part of my life, in some way or another."

The Show must go on is a retrospective piece, performed as a play within a play. It looks at a struggling theatre company and the hardships and angst that it endures.

Ada takes on numerous roles in the 90-minute show, one being the dramatic role of Tessa from Night Journeys (Take Away

Theatre's last production). The excerpt performed in the show is the confrontational scene between her and her character's grandmother, Georgina.

"It is such an intense encounter, where years of pent up frustrations and hurt are unleashed. Doing this kind of scene in front of room full of people is certainly exciting and is very new to me," she said. "Fortunately, I have Barbara Gouskos playing my grandmother. I couldn't have asked for a better sparring partner".

As well as high drama, her characters in this show also come from the company's comic productions - the ancient comedy Women at the Assembly, and the more contemporary comedy Parthenon Air.

Ada is more than happy to take on such a diverse range of female characters in a 90-minute show. "While it's emotionally exhausting, it is an honour to play such complex yet inspiring women".

There are only six performances of The Show must go on, which will be staged at Sidetrack Theatre, at the Addison Road Community Centre in Marrickville, commencing Wednesday 13 May until 17 May.

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