

Pit bull owner fined \$20K for kill-and-eat

BY MARIANNA PAPADAKIS

A BEVERLEY Park man has been fined a record \$20,000-plus after his dog attacked and killed a dog being walked by its owner.

Kogarah Local Court Magistrate Ross Clugston fined Nick Raptis \$20,223 and disqualified him from owning a dog for three years over his American pit bull terrier Hannibal mauling and killing a dog at Carss Park on April 13 last year.

Mr Raptis, 34, who was unavailable for comment this week, pleaded guilty to four charges over the attack including failing to desex the restricted breed or keep it under effective control in a public place.

Under the Companion Animals Act 1998, dog attacks can attract up to \$55,000 in fines.

According to documents and witness statements tendered to the court, Jennifer Aldridge, 22, was taking a morning walk with her female pet Maltese

cross silky terrier Honey along Carwar Avenue, Carss Park, when she saw a brown American pit bull, in a red studded collar, charging towards her.

She said Honey made no sound as she was pulled out of its collar in a frantic mauling and taken to the middle of the road where the pit bull began to eat it.

Her husband Murray attempted to drive Hannibal away by striking it on the head with a shovel, but had to back off after it bared its teeth at him.

Pictures right: Victoria Aldridge at Cronulla Beach with Honey six weeks before the Maltese cross silky terrier was killed.

Hannibal: The pit bull that killed Honey



Nia Vardalos Speaks on Becoming an Adoptive Mom

'My Big Fat Greek Wedding' actress Nia Vardalos opens up this Mother's Day about her experiences after adopting a 3-year-old girl. "After years of wanting to be parents, my husband and I were given 14 hours notice ... then a little girl walked into our house," Nia tells People.com. Nia announced last November that after becoming frustrated with adoptive attempts, she and her husband, Ian Gomez, had finally been able to adopt a child.

"One night, the phone rang – the social worker told me we'd been "matched" with a 3-year-old girl," the actress reveals. She says their daughter was scheduled to arrive the very next day. "There wasn't a baby shower, there wasn't time to discuss with family and friends, there was no way to really prepare for her arrival."

"There isn't a word for the elation I felt. I grinned like a maniac and jumped into parenthood," says Nia, who jokes that the girl "arrived without an instruction manual." "I was delighted by her: Every facial expression, every tantrum, every small thing she did was fascinating and fantastic."

Nia also tells People.com how thrilled she was when she took her daughter to church and the priest offered a special adoption prayer. "The priest said the words, 'Today you have given birth to your daughter,' and I began to cry. It all poured out. All the grief, all the anger, all the angst at the difficult and long journey to parenthood. And that outpouring of tears was quickly followed by a peaceful gratefulness."

Hundreds farewell stabbing victim 'Philly'

Black-shirted men wore yellow ties bearing photos of nightclub stabbing victim Phillip Halipilias at his funeral.

More than 200 friends and family members filled Mount Gravatt's Greek Orthodox Church to capacity for a sombre farewell to the 20-year-old aspiring rap singer.

Mr Halipilias, described by friends as a peacemaker, was allegedly stabbed to death following an argument between two groups of men on the dance floor at the Alexandra Hills Hotel early last Saturday morning.

The hour-long Greek Orthodox service included traditional prayers and chants, with few parts spoken in English.

A bouquet of flowers and a picture of Mr Halipilias sat atop the white coffin which was draped in an AEK Athens Greek football scarf.

Parents Steve and Sophie Halipilias kissed the coffin and photo, and hugged fellow mourners.

The coffin was brought out of the church building while a bell tolled and mourners gathered around the



hearse, some wearing yellow ties bearing Mr Halipilias's nickname "Philly" and a photo of the promising young hip hop artist.

The crowd travelled to Redland Bay cemetery for the burial, where yellow balloons were released and some of Mr Halipilias's rap music was played.

Although family members did not read out a eulogy during the church service, sister Anna Halipilias released a written tribute to her brother last Monday.

Ms Halipilias said her brother was "courageous, loyal, sweet and funny".

"He's the type of person who cheers on the contestants from The Biggest Loser whilst scarfing down a large pizza," she wrote.

"He was incredibly loyal and would do anything for the people he loved.

"He proves time and time again that angels to have dirty faces."

Phillip's mother Sophie Halipilias this week described her son as a talented musician who "had the gift of the gab" and always sided with the underdog.

"My son was dyslexic and yet ... he wrote lyrics that could make anyone cry," she told reporters on last week.

"He was one of those kids that was so cool he didn't know he was cool."

The Alexandra Hills Hotel's upstairs nightclub, the Squeeze Club, will remain closed this weekend.

The 18-year-old Banyo man charged with murder over the dance floor incident, Callum Keys, was on Thursday remanded in custody pending his next court hearing on July 21.

Foreign workers refuse to sail ship

Crew on board a bulk carrier in the West Australian town of Geraldton are refusing to sail the vessel, saying they're owed more than \$140,000 US dollars in wages. The International Transport Workers Union says the 24 Filipinos on the Grand Esmeralda are asking for help to force Greek company Newfront Shipping to pay up. The ship's transporting 60,000 tonnes of Australian iron ore to China. The union's Matt Purcell says the crew hasn't been paid since March, and they're worried that when they arrive in China they'll be thrown in prison or abandoned.