

# More pets go missing in Inner West

*INNER West pet-owners have been warned to be vigilant after a second family had their pet rabbit and guinea pig stolen from their garden.*



Taylah, 14, Marcus, 11, and Yanni Plataniotis, 6

**T**aylah, 14, Marcus, 11, and Yanni Plataniotis, 6, were left heartbroken after their pets went missing from their Drummoyne home on Monday, July 6.

As the Inner West Courier reported last week, another pet rabbit and guinea pig belonging to a profoundly disabled teenager were stolen from a garden in Haberfield on July 3.

The latest victims, the Plataniotis family, said the thieves struck between 9am and noon and stole Thumper the grey rabbit and Rufas, a chocolate-coloured guinea pig.

The thieves also swiped the animals' hutch, worth about \$150.

"We have a big brick wall that no one can see over unless the gate is open," Taylah said.

"It would have taken two people to carry the hutch.

"Nothing else was stolen from the house or garden."

Taylah said the family had reported the theft to police.

"We love them," she said. "We have

had them for over a year since they were little babies.

"I get tears in my eyes when I look at the poster."

Burwood police crime co-ordinator **Charlie Boustani** said he was not aware of any other pets being stolen in the area but urged people to report any stolen property.

Flemington and Ashfield police said

they had no reports of any pet thefts.

On a brighter note, there was a happy ending for 16-year-old Ken Adderley, the disabled teenager whose pets were stolen in Haberfield a fortnight ago.

His father, Paul Adderley, said he had been inundated with offers of replacement animals since the Courier's story.

And on Sunday, while the family was celebrating Christmas in July, good Samaritan neighbours they had never met arrived with a white rabbit for Ken.

Mr Adderley said he had been touched by the community's response.

"I would like to say 'thank you' to everyone who contacted us. It is amazing to think that there are so many kind and generous people in our community," he said.

"We haven't given the rabbit a name yet, but we're going to have a family lottery to decide it.

"Ken had a big smile on his face when he was patting his new pet."

Mr Adderley encouraged pet owners to keep their animals out of sight of thieves.

# Ethnic schools attacked

A discussion paper commissioned by the Australian Education Union that was presented last week at a NSW public school teachers' conference casts doubt about the cohesive role of ethno-religious schools within Australia's multicultural context.

The paper was prepared by Professor Andrew Jakubowicz from the University of Technology, Sydney.

The issue of ethno-religious schools is only one of the many elements discussed in the paper with the core argument being that the important role of government schools has been compromised by a proliferation of public funding towards private schools.

"[...]there is little doubt that the Howard government strategy (continued by the Rudd government) of directing federal funds to private schools suits the idea of the market and the ideology of choice.

However it may significantly undermine three key struts in the whole edifice of social cohesion and modern citizenship - namely intercultural com-



The government needs to invest more money into students being able to interact with people who are different from themselves.

petence, secularism as a core social value, and interactive life-long learning," writes Professor Jakubowicz.

He explained to Neos Kosmos that the ethno-religious schooling question is only one aspect of a broader issue about the decline of multiculturalism in general education policy over the last ten years.

"The argument that I'm making is that with the increasing proportion of kids going to ethno-religious schools, there hasn't been a parallel investment by government in ensuring what I call bridging capital, that is the experience of students interacting more generally with people who are different from them-

selves," Professor Jakubowicz clarified.

In his report he did concede that there are many ethno-religious schools that recognise and try to address this question but are limited by a lack of public funding towards this end.

The view by Professor Jakubowicz echoes similar concerns voiced in a past interview by Australian Education Union Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos.

"I fear for the future of this multicultural Australia if we continue down the path of what I call state sponsored segregation where we continue to educate, in increasing numbers, students on ethno-

religious and class lines; it is not in the national interest," Mr Gavrielatos had said.

Two principals of Greek schools Alphington Grammar and Oakleigh Greek Orthodox College Sts Anargiri, Michael Smith and Steve Charisis respectively insist that their schools dispute arguments made by Professor Jakubowicz and Angelo Gavrielatos alike.

"The philosophy and foundation of our school is to ensure that children of a Greek background have an understanding of their heritage but only within the context of our multicultural society," Mr Charisis said.

The principal of Alphington Grammar in comments made to Neos Kosmos late last month had also highlighted his school's commitment to multiculturalism. "In our school there are students from 25 different ethnic backgrounds who coexist harmoniously.

As a school we build bridges daily amongst the different cultures that are represented in our student population," Mr Smith stressed.

# Alleged Theophanous victim lied to Centrelink, court told

The woman who alleges she was raped by Victorian MP Theo Theophanous was placed on a good behaviour bond for lying to Centrelink, a court has heard.

The Melbourne Magistrates Court was told the woman was found guilty of making a false statement regarding welfare payments in 1994.

The woman claims she was raped by Theophanous on a couch in his parliamentary office in September 1998.

The court heard any money the woman owed was repaid by the time the matter went to court.

Lead police investigator detective sergeant Doug Smith confirmed today the woman was placed on a good behaviour bond on May 26, 1994.

He said records showed the bond was without conviction for 12 months.

Courtroom tension continued today with prosecutor Michele Williams, SC, asking for Theophanous' wife Rita to be removed from court because she was laughing during evidence.

Magistrate Peter Reardon urged Ms Theophanous to behave in court.

On Friday, Ms Williams said she would apply for Theophanous to be remanded in custody if his behaviour did not improve.

The hearing is continuing.