

## Grants to support a diverse Australia

Sixty four local organisations around Australia will be working to promote a sense of belonging with the help of grants announced today by the Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services, Laurie Ferguson. "Diverse Australia Program grants help local communities tackle issues of intolerance or exclusion. It is important that everyone is included in the community, regardless of their cultural or religious background," Mr Ferguson said. "We have awarded more than \$300 000 to small community organisations such as sporting clubs or craft groups. Community organisations play an important role in linking longer-term residents with newcomers. This work is vital for strong, cohesive communities where everyone has a sense of belonging." The grants for amounts up to \$5000 are offered under the government's Diverse Australia Program (DAP), and the National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security.

## Karate Kid Chris Pikis taking aim at perverts

AUSTRALIA'S own Karate Kid is not content fighting off a pervert. Chris Pikis is planning on being a stranger danger teacher for fellow teens.

The 13-year-old from Prestons, in Sydney's southwest, received nation-wide attention after he used martial arts skills to fight off a would-be kidnapper while on a bus travelling home from school on September 3.

The attempted abduction prompted the All Saints Catholic Boys College student to develop a program with his school to teach other children basic defence moves and the need to be more aware of stranger danger.

"[It] has completely changed me and the way I



think. It makes me want to help other people avoid what happened to me," Chris said.

While Chris said he understood not everyone wanted to learn karate, he hoped he would be able to give others the confidence to say no to a stranger.

"If they do not know karate, they should be confident and scream for help and do anything they can to get away."

Chris was on his way home from All Saints Catholic Boys College in Liverpool when a man in his 50s or 60s aggressively tried to get him off the bus. Instead of shying away, Chris let fly with some of the skill he learned over eight years of karate training.

"He grabbed my right shoulder so I've gone into a stance and used [an] open hand block to push him away."

Police were still investigating the incident.

Article from the Courier Mail

## Kidnapped child found after anti-money laundering agency follows global money trail

A KIDNAPPED child was reunited with her mother after Australian authorities tracked her down by tracing an international money trail.

The money trail, tracked by Australia's anti-money laundering body, passed through Australia, the United Kingdom, Greece, Indonesia before ending in Thailand.

Police had asked the agency, the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC), to trace information linked to the accounts of the girl's father and to members of his family in Australia and the United Kingdom.

The AUSTRAC supplied police with a number of "suspect transaction reports" that it had received about the man.

"One (report) described how the suspect had entered the bank with a bag of \$100 notes and asked for assistance to count them," AUSTRAC's annual report says.

"The cash totalled \$30,000 and the suspect deposited \$10,000, keeping the rest.

"He re-entered the same branch shortly after to deposit a further \$5000."

AUSTRAC, which does not provide any identifying details about the case, uncovered additional addresses and bank accounts linked to the suspect.

"The information revealed a series of international funds transfers sent from the United Kingdom and Indonesia to the suspect's accounts in Australia," the annual report said. "The information also indicated that the suspect had been sending international transfers to Greece."

The information was used to find the father in Thailand where he was arrested and charged with detaining a person with intent to hold for ransom, demanding money with menaces, and kidnapping.

## One dead, one missing after storms hit Greece

**ATHENS** - by the heavy rains.

One man died and another was missing on Sunday, after storms washed away roads and flooded homes and farms across Greece, officials said.

The body of a 41-year-old man was recovered by the coast guard near the central Greek city of Volos. He drowned after strong winds overturned his vessel, the coast guard said.

Another man was missing after his car was swept away by a river in the hardest-hit region of Pieria, about 400 km (240 miles) north of the capital Athens.

Fire fighters rescued 10 people trapped in their homes in northern and central Greece. Dozens of animals drowned, as farms and crops were damaged

"We've received more than 250 calls about floods over the weekend," said a fire brigade official who declined to be named.

The national road between Athens and the Peloponnese was blocked due to mudslides, police said.

The National Weather Service (EMY) said storms were expected to continue through the night and on Monday.

In August, wildfires tore through Athens suburbs, destroying thousands of hectares of forest and forcing thousands to flee their homes. The fires hurt support for the conservative government, which lost to the Socialists in elections earlier this month.

## George Kapiniaris at the Freo Italian Club



Greek-Australian star George Kapiniaris, best known for his role as Memo in the late 80's Acropolis Now sitcom, will be performing at the Fremantle Italian Club alongside Italian stand-up comic Gabriel Rossi.

Kapiniaris has recently starred in the mini series Underbelly, as a real life lawyer George Defteros. He has also been casted in drama series The Flying Doctors, comedy series Kick and the television soap opera Neighbours & on the show TheatreGames Live. He starred in commercials for the automotive repairer and insurance broker RAA and he successfully created a Today Tonight segment entitled the Dummies, satyrizing politicians with the usage of puppets.

The stand-up comedy show is targeted to people from all walks of life as the jokes are mainstream, with lots of ethnic gags from both the Italian and Greek Australian perspectives.

"While we tackle issues like race and boat people, we do so in such a way as to allow many to see the lighter side of what is otherwise a serious issue," Rossi says.

Gab Rossi and George Kapiniaris will perform Friday, October 30 and Saturday, October 31 from 8pm at the Fremantle Italian Club, Marine Terrace, Fremantle.