

Peter Dupas fails in bid to halt retrial for murder of Mersina Halvagis

PETER Dupas will face a retrial over the murder of Mersina Halvagis after the High Court today threw out his attempt to have the case permanently stayed.

Seven High Court judges unanimously agreed on the decision without even hearing the arguments of the Victorian Director of Public Prosecutions. Dupas's barrister told the court that pre-trial media publicity robbed his client of the chance of ever getting a fair trial.

The case was over in less than two hours. Ms Halvagis, 25, was stabbed to death while visiting her grandmother's grave at Fawkner Cemetery in November 1997.

The High Court said it will publish the reasons for its decision at a later date.

Ms Halvagis's parents George and Christina wept as they walked from court today.

"We are relieved. My whole family is relieved," Mr Halvagis said.

Chris Boyce, for Dupas, told the High Court that his client was named the prime suspect for the murder of Ms Halvagis and indicted in the media in the years leading up to his 2007 trial. He said Dupas was named as the suspected killer by senior detectives at an inquest into Ms Halvagis's death.

Mr Boyce rejected the argument put against them that if Dupas was



George and Christina Halvagis with a photo of their daughter Mersina. Picture: Jon Hargest Source: Herald Sun

not tried for the murder because of pre-trial publicity Osama Bin Laden could never be brought to justice if he was caught.

He said the Dupas case was the "extreme and singular" example where a court should stop a trial taking place because of pre-trial publicity.

It was the combination of media exposure, his client's notoriety, and a finding of guilt in the media of Ms Halvagis's murder that tipped it over the line.

Justice Virginia Bell questioned if Dupas had suffered any real prejudice since the jury at his Supreme Court trial was told about his criminal history and other background

material published in the media.

Justice Bell said accused persons were often placed in an invidious position of having potentially prejudicial material revealed to a jury in their trial. Justice Ken Hayne asked "where exactly was the prejudice in this case?"

Justice Hayne said the jury that decided he was guilty heard witnesses repeat much of the information published before the trial that was complained about by Dupas.

"It is the fact that the three most important limbs of the case adduced at trial harked back to the pervasive public indictment," Mr Boyce replied.



Andrew Demetriou's life dandy with \$1.8 million salary

FOOTY'S biggest earner is not Chris Judd, Gary Ablett or even Nick Riewoldt - it's a man who hasn't pulled on the boots for 22 years.

Andrew Demetriou's bulging salary package jumped another \$200,000 to \$1.8 million last year - a cool \$1.2 million more than he was earning as league chief executive just five years ago - and well clear of any AFL player.

Figures revealed yesterday show another 10 AFL executives shared in salaries and bonuses of \$5.2 million in 2009.

AFL chairman Mike Fitzpatrick defended the soaring pay packets yesterday, saying they were based on achieved growth figures.

"The executive team, under Andrew Demetriou, has taken the game through a difficult period," Fitzpatrick said.

"Their work has ensured the AFL is not only the leading sport in the country, but one that is committed to growing our game at every level."

Key aspects of the AFL's 2009 annual report to be released today include:

- RECORD revenue of \$303.5 million.
- RECORD profits of \$213.5 million.
- RECORD club memberships of 586,748 - the ninth year in a row membership has increased.

THE third greatest home-and-away attendance of 7,341,310.

RECORD AFL finals series attendance of 615,283.

RECORD distributions of \$135.8 million to the 16 clubs.

The league also revealed it had a whopping \$30 million left after grants and distributions last year, adding to its cash reserves of \$50 million.

Fitzpatrick said the results were outstanding given the challenges of the global financial crisis.

"The AFL game is in very good health across our clubs, our players and our grassroots organisations across the country, which is a great credit to everyone involved at every level," Fitzpatrick said.

The members of the AFL executive are: Demetriou, his assistant Tony Peek, operations manager Adrian Anderson, chief financial officer Ian Anderson, commercial operations manager Gillon McLachlan, marketing and communications manager Paul Waldren, development manager David Matthews, Andrew Catterall, Andrew Dillon, Dale Holmes and Christina Ogg.

Andrew Demetriou Source: Herald Sun

Australian politicians speak up for the Greek language



Unanimously the city council of Moreland, in Melbourne voted for the inclusion of the Greek language in the national school curriculum.

"I will be surprised if the Greek language is excluded" said the Mayor of Moreland, Stella Kariofilidis (foto), who is of Greek origin.

Meanwhile, top politicians from all over Australia, with letters addressed

to the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia and Minister of Education, Julia Gillard, support the inclusion of the Greek language and prompt the government to include it in the national school curriculum, which is currently under review. Among these politicians are: Anna Burke, Deputy Speaker of the Federal Parliament, Paul Henderson, Chief Minister of the North District, Paul

Henderson. The support of the Greek language is also being requested from the Minister of Education, by the MP of the National Party of New South Wales, George Souris, who is also of Hellenic roots. Moreover, the Minister of Education in her letter addressed to the Greek MP of the Labour Party, Mr. Steve Georganas, acknowledges that "the Greek language is one of the most dominant community languages, evidence to the important contribution of the Greeks towards the financial, cultural and political development of Australia, especially after 1945".

Ms. Gillard is not making any commitments but she encourages Greeks in Australia to submit their recommendations to the Committee of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

Event for Greek language in New South Wales

An open event is being organized next Monday, April 26th by the Greek Orthodox Community of New South Wales at its premises in Lakemba, aimed at informing and discussing the topic of instructing the Greek language in Australian public schools and the changes being promoted by the Australian government. The event takes place within the framework of the broader parochial efforts for the Greek language to be included in the new foreign language program that will be implemented in the Australian National Schools Curriculum.