



Greek Community feels pain

AMID the olives, fetta and smallgoods in a Marrickville deli, it's hard to imagine the violent protests of half a world away.

For Christina Calligas, 52, one of 375,000 Australians of Greek background, the riots in her family's homeland are deeply worrying.

Her family lives in the Southern city of Argos, and the austerity measures imposed by the Greek Government are hitting them hard.

"My family are struggling a lot," the Bexley North resident said.

Like many of their compa-

triotis, her family - her terminally ill father, pensioner mother and widowed sister - worry where their next meal will come from.

"Every cent they spend they have to watch it", she said. "You can't go out, there is only [enough] money for food".

And things are about to get worse. The government is planning to freeze pay for public - sector workers, with pay cuts also scheduled. Many public sector contract workers will lose their jobs.

New tax laws have hiked VAT from 21 per cent to 23

per cent and the government has raised the retirement age from 60 to 65 with plans to link pension payments to average a salary over a worker's life instead of their final salary.

It's all part of the austerity measures put in place in return for a 110 billion euro (\$158 billion) bailout from the European Union.

Mrs Calligas said the financial crisis was as bad as the situation immediately after World War II.

"It's never been like this and it's hard but they have to fight for the survival of Greece", she said.

familiesinbusiness

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