

# Greek man poured petrol over girl, 14, court told

A Melbourne man poured petrol on an unconscious 14-year-old schoolgirl and turned on a gas stove in an attempt to kill her after raping her, a court has heard.

A hospital bedside court session on Tuesday heard Greek Michael Tuano Hermogenes told police he couldn't remember what happened before he tried to kill the girl and destroy evidence.

The court heard Hermogenes took alcohol and food to the home of the girl, who had left school at about 8.30am (AEST) on Monday after receiving a text message to meet a friend she called "Yuka Mike".

According to a summary of the hearing provided by police, Hermogenes, 24, told investigators that the pair watched a movie together and took photos of each other.

But he said he had a gap in his memory until he found himself naked and on top of the girl on her bed. After seeing she was unconscious and bleeding from her mouth and vaginal area, Hermogenes dragged her from her bed to the bathroom and left her lying on the floor.

He left the Caroline Springs house in Melbourne's west to buy petrol and returned to the property, poured petrol over her and around the home and

then turned on the gas.

Hermogenes, from Tarneit, has been charged with attempted murder, rape, sexual penetration of a child under 16, aggravated burglary, criminal damage by fire, reckless conduct endangering life and intentionally and recklessly causing serious injury.

The teenager is in a critical condition in an induced coma with burns to 70 to 80 per cent of her body.

Firefighters dragged the girl from the burning bathroom after police noted smoke coming from the home at around 2.05pm on Monday.

Hermogenes is in The Alfred hospital in Melbourne after suffering burns

to his legs in the incident, while \$90,000 in damage was done to the house.

Neighbours noticed a dark green sedan speeding away from the house at the time of the fire.

After speaking to the victim's family and looking at her Facebook account, police identified Hermogenes as a suspect.

They found him in a car matching the description near Hoppers Crossing train station. Police have extreme concerns that he is an unacceptable risk and a danger to the public.

Hermogenes was remanded to appear at Melbourne Magistrates Court for a committal hearing on August 27.



## Come to the cabaret to see a diva

ONE of Sutherland Shire's best-known performers, Helen Zerefos, will be performing at the Slide Cabaret at Darlinghurst next week.

The multi-award-winning diva will be presenting songs from Hollywood to Broadway, along with operatic favourites and golden classics from the past to the present.

Zerefos has performed in Europe and Asia and has hosted her own TV show.

Details: Helen Zerefos in Cabaret, Wednesday, June 9, Slide Bar Restaurant and Club, 41 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst. Bookings: 8915189. Dinner and show from 7pm: \$60 (show only, \$20).

*Article from The Leader*

# Disasters are his forte

THE wild storms which hit the south coast last Sunday meant just another day at the office for Sam Zorbas, the State Emergency Service controller for the Rockdale council area.

Along with other volunteers from Rockdale, Kogarah and Hurstville SES units, Mr Zorbas dropped everything and headed to the area to help secure homes, cut up fallen trees and clear roads.

Mr Zorbas was appointed the task force commander of six SES strike teams from the southern Sydney region, which extends from Camden and Wollondilly to Sydney Harbour.

Units from other areas were also involved in the massive clean-up effort.

Mr Zorbas said his team left for the south coast on Sunday night and began work early next morning in an area stretching from



**Outstanding service: Sam Zorbas is given a state government cheque of \$4500 by Frank Sartor to purchase new equipment.**

Moruya to Tilba Tilba.

"There were a lot of big trees down and roads blocked, just the normal sort of SES work," he said.

Mr Zorbas said with the clean-up well advanced, they expected to head home late on Tuesday.

A former electrical worker who is now retired, Mr Zorbas has been a volunteer with the Rockdale unit for 31 years, controller for 29 years and was Rockdale

Citizen of the Year in 2006.

He has helped in the aftermath of major disasters including the Newcastle earthquake, Thredbo disaster, Sydney hailstorm and the 2001-02 Sydney bushfires.

Coincidentally, Mr Zorbas was singled out for praise in State Parliament this month, during debate on legislation to set up a new consultative body which will give SES volun-

teers a formal role in helping guide the service into the future.

Upper house MP and Rockdale councillor Shaoquett Moselmane said Mr Zorbas was "an outstanding individual who has worked hard and continues to work tirelessly for the people of NSW".

"He manages more than 35 volunteers and is on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year," Mr Moselmane said.

"Sam staffs the duty office phone outside working hours and does not rest until his volunteers have notified him the task is complete."

Mr Zorbas was also recently presented with a cheque for \$4500 from Rockdale MP Frank Sartor to enable his unit to buy some new equipment.

*BY MURRAY TREMBATH*

*Article from The Leader*

# Cancer research reignites calls to ban tanning beds

THE health department must urgently ban tanning beds after startling new research confirms they dramatically increase the risk of skin cancer, regardless of the type of bed and length of time they are used, experts say.

The study is the first of its kind to examine all types of tanning beds and comes only months after an audit of salons across Sydney showed most operators were flouting regulations by exposing customers to excessive doses of UV radiation, and treating children and fair-skinned adults.

But the state government has refused to ban the beds, despite calls from the NSW Greens.

The research, published in the journal *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention*, found that those using beds emitting UVA rays were almost four times more likely to develop melanomas, while those using beds with mostly UVB rays were

almost three times more at risk than people not using tanning beds.

A professor in public health at the University of Sydney, Simon Chapman, this week launched a petition to have tanning beds banned, saying they exposed people to "turbocharged UV doses that have no place in any community that takes cancer prevention seriously".

"Twice now this industry has been shown to have completely unacceptable levels of non-compliance. Really, if a caucasian person wants a dark complexion there are other ways to go about it without endangering themselves."

After the death of melanoma patient and tanning salon client Clare Oliver, 26, in 2007, mandatory state regulations were introduced but an audit last year found most were not compliant.

The audit of 89 salons in Sydney, carried out by

the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water, found 21 were not adjusting tanning levels to skin types, 20 were allowing people under 18 to use the beds, 24 were not obtaining written consent and 41 were not limiting exposure time.

More than a third were also allowing people to use the tanning beds without eye protection and two-thirds had no warning signs in place.

Jay Allen, 35, from Ambarvale in Sydney's southwest, was diagnosed with melanoma two years ago after he saw his doctor about an itchy mole on his left ankle. The former truck driver and father of three had used a tanning salon about 30 times in three years, unaware of any danger.

"I was really frying myself. Sometimes I'd have double sessions because I had no idea of the damage it could do," he said.

*Article from the SMH*