



Modern Greek Cinema in Melbourne

Two significant movies will open the 17th Greek Film Festival from 13 to 31 October in the Palace Cinema Como in Melbourne, as well as in Sydney, in Adelaide and in Brisbane. The movies that will be screened are "The dust of time" by Theodoros Aggelopoulos and "Deep Soul" by Pantelis Voulgaris.

Voulgaris' movie that is about the Greek civil war is really expected in Australia, because there are many survivors from this war coming from the places where the movie is filmed.

The leading actress of this film, Victoria Haralampidou, lives in Australia for many years now and will be present in the screening. Another actor of this movie, Vaggelis Mourikis, has also lived for many years in Melbourne and worked on the theater. In the Greek Film Festival of Australia, Xristos Dimas, director of the successful movie "The island" will be also present. Mr. Dimas things about making a film in Melbourne.

17 movies will be screened as well as many documentaries and movies made by Greek students of Melbourne.

Cultural projects on Nisyros island

A new archaeological museum as well as the ancient citadel of Paleokastro and the famed Panaghia Faneromeni cathedral, both recently restored, were inaugurated on the small volcanic isle of Nisyros, situated between the Dodecanese islands of Kos and Tilos.

The island's course in history, from the prehistoric to the Byzantine era, is being presented in the new museum through the archaeological findings on display. Most of the findings were recovered during excavations that took place before 1947, when the Dodecanese islands were under Italian rule.

Tourists will also have the opportunity to visit the recently restored fortified citadel of the island located over the community of Mandraki. The project was financed by the 3rd Community Support Framework (CSF). Black volcanic stones were used to build the citadel walls which are regarded as the best preserved in the Aegean Sea region. The citadel of Paleokastro was first visited and described in 1841.

Regarded as one of the most elegant churches on the Dodecanese Islands, the restored Panagia Faneromeni Church is dated back to the early 12th century AD. The restoration works were completed in 2009.

NEW LAWS PROVIDE EQUALITY FOR SURROGATE CHILDREN

The Keneally Government is set to introduce the state's first stand-alone surrogacy laws making it easier for heterosexual and same-sex couples with surrogate children to gain full legal recognition as parents and clarify the existing prohibition on commercial surrogacy.

NSW Attorney General, John Hatzistergos today said that under the proposed laws couples will be allowed to enter into overseas surrogacy arrangements and apply for court orders that confirm they are the permanent legal parents of the surrogate child.

The laws are largely based on new national model provisions developed by the Standing Committee of Attorneys General. They will be introduced later this year with a planned conscience vote on the issue.

"Until now, the only way people with surrogate children have been able to gain full parenting rights has been through adoption processes," Mr Hatzistergos said.

"With a parentage order, couples will find it easier to enrol their surrogate child in school, make decisions about their health care and apply for a passport for them," Mr Hatzistergos said.

"Furthermore, there will also be



no eligibility requirement that a child be born in Australia, so that parentage orders may be available for overseas surrogacies, provided it is not a commercial agreement and other requirements for an order are met."

The orders will also ensure children born of surrogacy arrangements have access to a range of rights that would otherwise be denied, such as inheritance and eligibility for compensation arising from their parents' death or injury.

Mr Hatzistergos said the child's best interests will be the court's primary concern when determining a parentage order.

"As the surrogate child is too young to have a say in the arrange-

ments, certain safeguards will be in place to help ensure they have a stable family life," Mr Hatzistergos said. "The court must be satisfied that the birth mother as well as the intended parents have received legal advice and counselling and have given their informed consent. The birth mother must also be at least 25 years of age at the time of entering into an agreement."

"It is proposed that the laws be applied retrospectively to parents who are now lawfully raising children under the age of 18 if the court is satisfied that the arrangement was entered into prior to conception, is not a commercial arrangement and all parties consent to granting the order."

Mr Hatzistergos said that while commercial surrogacy will remain illegal, the proposed laws will also clarify altruistic surrogacy arrangements.

"While it will still be illegal to profit from surrogacy, the birth mother in an altruistic surrogacy will have a legal entitlement to be reimbursed for expenses such as medical care and counselling."

The prohibition on soliciting commercial surrogacy will also be extended so that it will be an offence to advertise a person's willingness to enter into any surrogacy arrangement, including altruistic surrogacy.

*Hon. John Hatzistergos MLC
Attorney General
Minister for Citizenship
Minister for Regulatory Reform*

Keneally defends Judge relationship

NSW Premier Kristina Keneally has denied a local playwright was given favourable treatment by Arts Minister Virginia Judge.

Fairfax newspapers have run a series of articles about Ms Judge's dealings with Kosta Nikas, with whom she is said to have a "close relationship".

The articles have claimed Mr Nikas, 44, had benefited from a succession of "career breaks" since the pair became close.

Mr Nikas, also a part-time journalist and film maker, is reported to have been invited into a number of ministerial meetings, and introduced to leading figures in the arts industry.

Ms Judge also attended his first produced play, Proxy, promoted as part of the 2010 Greek Festival of Sydney. The festival received \$50,000 in government funding.

Questioned about the relationship between the pair at a budget estimates hearing on Tuesday, Ms Keneally said: "Minister Judge has never funded any organisation that Mr Nikas has been involved in, in either the Arts or Fair Trading portfolio".

"Mr Nikas has not received any funding or grants from Minister Judge or Arts NSW," she said.

"I'm advised that Minister Judge had no involvement with the programming or funding of the 2010 Greek Festival.

"I'm advised that no funding that was given to the Greek Festival was directed to a play that Mr Nikas was involved in.

"Mr Nikas has not been recommended for any funding

or grants under the 2011 funding program for Arts NSW."

Ms Keneally said the Arts and Fair Trading minister had not declared to her personally any conflict of interest over the relationship.

Brendan O'Reilly, the director general of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, told the hearing that he did not know if a conflict of interest had been declared with his department.

State opposition MPs used Tuesday's budget estimates hearing at Parliament House to also quiz the premier about a series of redundancies in her department.

Ms Keneally revealed \$363,770 was paid out to the former director general of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, John Lee, whose five-year contract was terminated after just 14 months when Ms Keneally became premier.

Asked by the opposition's Mike Gallacher if she thought that was a good financial decision for NSW taxpayers, Ms Keneally replied: "Yes".

"I made a decision as to who I wanted to head the Department of Premier and Cabinet," she said.

"I have, as the premier, the prerogative to put in place the person I want to run the department ... and that's what I did."

Mr O'Reilly also told the estimates hearing that \$373,965 was paid out to Mr Lee's predecessor Robyn Kruk, who resigned just a month into Nathan Rees' premiership.

Article from the SMH