

In Brief

 **Aegean impasse
 Turkish PM rebuffs reports
 of a breakthrough in talks**

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan denied reports that progress has been made between Greek and Turkish diplomats on the thorny issue of the delineation of the continental shelf. "There has been no agreement on the issue of the 12 miles," Erdogan said, referring to Ankara's longstanding objections to Greece extending its territorial waters in the Aegean to 12 nautical miles. "The talks are continuing," Erdogan said. "When an agreement is reached, both sides will make a joint statement, but there is nothing yet," the Turkish PM added. Meanwhile Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said that "notable progress" had been made in exploratory talks between Greek and Turkish officials.

 Western Balkans **FM sees EU accession in 2018**

Foreign Minister Dimitris Droutsas said that the European Union could consider setting 2018 as a goal for countries in the Western Balkans to become members but that only countries that are fully ready should be allowed to join, Reuters reported. Greece would aim to seek consensus among EU member states for such a date when it assumes the EU's rotating presidency in 2014, Droutsas told a seminar in Brussels on the sidelines of a meeting of EU foreign ministers.

 Off guard

A female police officer who had been part of Prime Minister George Papandreou's security detail has been dismissed from her post after she allegedly left a bag containing her service weapon and a pass for the Maximos Mansion on her motorcycle, it emerged yesterday. According to sources, the bag was turned in to police by two youths who saw it unattended and looked inside. Police have launched an internal investigation to determine the circumstances surrounding the incident, which occurred on November 5.

 New tollgates

Motorists using the Egnatia Highway will face additional charges at six new tollgates set to open over the next three months. The new toll stations are to open at the junctions of Igoumenitsa, Ioannina, Grevena, Nymfopetra, Paggai and Komotini. A toll station at the junction of Polymylo, outside Kozani, opened on September 14. A spokesman for the company operating the tollgates on the Egnatia Highway said the charges would be about 25 percent lower than those on the Athens-Patra-Thessaloniki highway.

 Air gun attack

Police in Thessaloniki were investigating an attack reported shortly after midnight on Sunday by a 34-year-old man who claimed to have been shot with an air gun. The man claims to have been shot at by one of a group of three assailants on the grounds of a former military facility in the suburb of Kalamaria.

 Corinth Canal

The Corinth Canal is to close today to allow the removal of fallen rocks that are hindering the passage of vessels. Motorists will be able to cross the bridge over the canal as usual.

 Documentary maker wins IF award

Jason Raftopoulos was named this year's winner of the Best Short Documentary award at the annual IF awards for his short documentary

Greek Australian filmmaker Jason Raftopoulos has been named this year's winner of the Best Short Documentary award at the annual IF awards, held on Sunday night in Sydney.

Raftopoulos, who directed and produced his film, *From Dope to Dalai Lama*, said he was very excited by the win.

"I couldn't believe it. I was just happy to be there; I never expected to win but it's a really nice feeling when you hear your name read out," Raftopoulos said.

The documentary, filmed in Melbourne, follows the remarkable journey of a man whose life dramatically changes directions as a result of four near death experiences, Raftopoulos says.

"It basically tracks the life of a guy from being a 17 year-old school drop out working on a fish trawler in Perth, to living on a beach in Thailand, running amuck, doing lots of partying, taking lots of drugs, and then ultimately becoming subject to an assassination, before becoming a monk in Burma for ten years" Raftopoulos says.

"The film charts his personal journey and everything in between". Based on a true story, Raftopoulos says the documentary was inspired by a guy he knew from high school.

"I hadn't seen him for years and had only heard rumours about him until we ran into each other in a chance reconnection. When he told me his story I said 'we have to make a film about this'".

From Dope to Dalai Lama was screened at the St Kilda film festival. Raftopoulos has also just completed his next short film, entitled *Father's Day*, which is yet to be released.

 BATTERY RECYCLING PLANT OPENS IN WAGGA WAGGA

The NSW Government helped to "kick-start" the development of a \$55 million used lead acid battery recycling plant opened at the Bomen Business Park today by the NSW Attorney General, John Hatzistergos.

Mr Hatzistergos said the NSW Government had worked closely with Renewed Metal Technologies (RMT) on the project to establish this state-of-the-art facility.

"This is a great outcome for the whole community with the company creating 55 much-needed new jobs in Wagga Wagga at the processing site," Mr Hatzistergos said.

"The company's investment in establishing the new facility was supported through the NSW Government's Regional Business Development Scheme.

"RMT's investment was also one of the projects linked with Wagga Wagga Council's project to construct an access road to Bomen Business Park which was assisted through NSW's Local Infrastructure Support Fund.

"This fund is designed to assist local infrastructure projects when they are linked to investment that is expected to create jobs in regional communities."

Mr Hatzistergos said the facility will benefit the local community through its capacity to turn waste

products into new resources with an average of 8,500 batteries a day to be processed at the plant.

"RMT expects the new plant will produce 25,000 tonnes of lead each year from used lead acid batteries such as those used in cars and trucks.

"The recycling process will also produce 3,000 tonnes of broken plastic per year which can be reused in manufacturing new batteries, and 7,000 tonnes per year of sodium sulphate which is used in products such as washing powders, glass and paper.

"RMT's partner company Orbitas Resource Recovery will collect used batteries from across the country, including from many areas that are considered remote. This will help to reduce the potential for batteries to end up in landfill.

Through its Regional Business Employment Fund, the NSW Government is also supporting Orbitas' investment in establishing a logistics centre in Wagga Wagga to collect the recyclable materials. Orbitas expects to create 15 jobs at the centre.

Mr Hatzistergos said supporting manufacturers such as RMT is important to the Riverina's economic development.

"The Riverina Business Growth Plan lists development of the Bomen Business Park as an opportuni-

ty for supporting business growth in the region," he said.

"Manufacturing is one of the industry sectors in the Riverina that is expected to grow over the next decade. Improving access to Bomen Business Park will support the development of the manufacturing industry in Wagga Wagga for many years to come."

RMT is also a founding member of the Australian

Battery Recycling Initiative (ABRI) which is an industry association promoting sustainability and value over impact as a business model.

RMT was assisted by Industry & Investment NSW. For more information on Industry & Investment NSW's programs visit www.business.nsw.gov.au/region

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 Christmas Cheer

Christmas cheer will be floating through Parramatta City Council's five wards when the Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Cr John Chedid, hosts the popular Seniors' Christmas Celebrations in December.

Parramatta's residents aged 60 years and over are invited to the celebrations along with their friends and carers.

"Tickets are free and available on a first-come first-served basis. I encourage residents to get their tickets early, as the event is always popular and places are limited," said Cr Chedid.

The two-hour fun filled luncheon will also include live entertainment and lucky door prizes.

"This will be a great occasion to acknowledge and say thank you to the senior citizens of Parramatta who make a remarkable contribution to our city," said Cr Chedid.

To secure tickets to the ward celebrations, seniors are required to fill out a nomination form, which will be available at Parramatta Town Hall and Council's administration building Council's libraries.

