

Stellar cast for 'The Slap'

Greek Australian actors will star in ABC television series The Slap

A high-profile cast has been announced for the upcoming ABC TV series *The Slap*, based on Christos Tsiolkas' novel, including Golden Globe Award-nominee Melissa George and NCIS star Jonathan LaPaglia.

Oscar-nominated Sophie Okonedo (*Hotel Rwanda*, *Dirty Pretty Things*) will play Aisha, and Tony Award nominee Essie Davis (*Australia*, *Girl With A Pearl Earring*) will play the role of Anouk.

Head of Fiction at ABC TV, Carole Sklan, told Neos Kosmos that the rest of the cast, which will be announced next week, includes several other Greek Australian actors.

She said it was important for the ABC to tell stories about a multicultural Australia.

"ABC policy to reflect multicultural Australia is very important to us because this is simply the reality of contemporary Australia," she said.

"We are a culturally diverse society. As a public broadcaster, it's vital that the ABC is inclusive and realistic in its portrayal of our world and our lives."



Christos Tsiolkas' *The Slap* will soon be an TV mini series

Neos Kosmos reported last month that Mullinars Casting Consultants were looking for Greek-speakers to fill the roles of Manolis and Koula. In a statement released through the ABC, Tsiolkas said he felt "very fortunate"

to be working with the creative team.

"Everyone involved is keen to keep true to the honesty and rawness of the book while at the same time making sure that what is created works as riveting and unexpected drama," he said.

"That passion is exhilarating."

The writing team includes AFI Award winners Kris Mrksa (*Underbelly 2 & 3*) and Cate Shortland (*Somersault*), novelist Emily Ballou, Alice Bell, whose film *Suburban Mayhew* premiered at Cannes in 2006, and *Love My Way* writer Brendan Cowell.

Four AFI Award-winning directors will each direct two episodes.

Tsiolkas' other award winning novel, *Dead Europe* will also be made into a feature film ready for distribution in 2012.

The Slap will be an eight-part series, in which each episode is told from the perspective of a different character, will begin shooting in Melbourne on January 19.

Article from Neos Kosmos

New owners for Souvlaki Hut

Franchisees of the fast-food chain Souvlaki Hut are confident a new sale agreement passed will mean good things for the chain, after it was placed in voluntary administration last week.

Days later, it was bought by a consortium of private buyers, including former Video Ezy chief Daryl McCormack and Tasmanian Development Agent for Souvlaki Hut, Costa and Adoni Astrinakis.

Franchisees and former AFL footballers Ang Christou and Anthony Koutafides, who co-own the Souvlaki Hut in Templestowe, said they were confident the new owners could manage the business.

"They have a great proven history - they know how to run a business," Christou said.

Koutafides said that while they hadn't spoken to the owners yet, they were looking forward to meeting them and added he was keen to discuss change in certain products on the menu.

"We're just going to talk honestly about the business and our thoughts and hopefully they take it on board," he said.

In a statement released this week, McCormack, who is currently the largest Video Ezy franchisee in Australia, said the group is in a position to help the business grow.

"While we are still in the due diligence phase of the acquisition, there is scope for the review of the brand presentation and positioning, the menu offer," he said.

"The focus will be on endeavors to increase sales and provide business guidance to franchisees while the review of the brand takes place over the coming months."

Settlement is scheduled to take place on December 22.

The new owners of Souvlaki Hut, L-R: Costa and Adoni Astrinakis (investors), Daryl McCormack (Director).



The purchase of gold coins have become an important way of storing wealth

Trade in gold coins rising

Pawn shops in downtown Omonia and other parts of Athens have been doing brisk business in the illicit trade of sovereign gold coins, according to a report in *Kathimerini* this week.

The research reveals that hundreds of citizens have been turning to self-proclaimed experts in the trade of gold, bypassing official banking practices in a bid to acquire gold sovereigns - at a fraction of the legal price - without having to produce proof of income or assets.

While gold sovereigns are sold at around 290 euros at the Bank of Greece and Pireaus Bank - the country's only two licensed suppliers - small-scale traders offer prices ranging from 8 to 30 euros.

Unlike the banks, however, customers can purchase in excess of 15,000 euros' worth of gold sovereigns without having to explain the provenance of the money they are investing.

Source: *Kathimerini*