

Rally shots cost soldier

AN Australian soldier has been sent home from East Timor after illegally firing shots during a political rally.

He fired four rounds from a light machine gun at a demonstration in support of ousted prime minister Mari Alkatiri in Dili on Friday. He was sent back to Australia on Sunday for "re-training".

Another five soldiers have been sent home in disgrace from the East Timor deployment for similar firearm offences known as negligent or unauthorised discharges.

Fifteen soldiers and one sailor have been repatriated to Australia for medical reasons.

Drive ban, then prison

BANNED from holding a licence until 2018, Ahmed Elmir thought nothing of driving to a police station to fulfil his weekly bail commitments.

But the action cost the 19-year-old his freedom yesterday. Bankstown Local Court magistrate Paul Falzon sending him to jail for 12 months.

Two years was added to Elmir's ban, ensuring he won't drive until 2020.

"You drove to the police station knowing you were disqualified," Mr Falzon said. "It would've been a great joke if it wasn't so serious," he said.

Elmir will be eligible for parole in six months.

Coldest in 24 years

ELECTRICITY bills are higher and heaters are selling like hotcakes — and it's no wonder as Sydney recorded the coldest June in 24 years.

But the below-average minimum temperature is not expected to continue for long with experts predicting a warmer change.

"It doesn't appear the cold conditions will repeat itself this month," Bureau of Meteorology spokesman Mike De Sales said yesterday.

June was the coldest since 1982 with a daytime minimum temperature of 17 degrees. Despite being the wettest June since 1991, no substantial rain fell in catchment areas.

Mall drug clinics

By KATE SIKORA
Political Reporter

Methadone users sent to pharmacies for their dose

THE State Government wants more chemists to dispense methadone to stop drug users from gathering outside private clinics.

But chemists warned the Government to expect a backlash because they would not tolerate "smacked out" users congregating outside their shops. Under the Government's plan, no more private clinics will open, and responsibility will be passed to chemists and GPs instead.

One Liverpool chemist, who did not want to be identified, said the changes would see more users "harass" chemists to dispense methadone.

"I feel that it does cause trouble," the pharmacist said.

"We have a family clientele with a lot of older people and children — they don't want people smacked off their faces coming in."

More than 16,500 users receive methadone to help them stay off heroin.

Figures show there are 600 pharmacies which issue methadone over the counter and 14 private clinics in NSW.

A spokeswoman for Health Minister John Hatzistergos said users had a better chance of "normalising" by working with chemists and doctors.

"NSW is moving away from large private methadone clinics and encouraging the increased involvement of pharmacies and GPs," she said.

"Research shows there has been a significant drop in the estimated number of heroin users in NSW, while during the same period there has been a substantial increase in participation in methadone treatment."

Some chemists who dispense methadone have made rules for clients wanting the drug. Others do not allow users' friends or children to enter the store.

Manly pharmacist John Malouf said he had refused to issue methadone but operated a needle exchange.

"I would have to give it a good thought before I did it," he said.

"If they said there was a need then I could be convinced."

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia NSW branch spokesman John Bell conceded some chemists experienced problems with clients.

"It won't be appropriate for all pharmacies to do it and some just choose not to," he said.

Lobbyist group Coalition Drug Service 2166 spokeswoman Lindsay Langlands said: "There is no benefit to the community or the user. You can never have too many treatment facilities."

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Bling go the strings of Bec's heart

By Sydney Confidential's
CHRIS BARRETT

BEHIND every good man there is a woman, and Bec Cartwright has emerged as husband Lleyton Hewitt's most boisterous supporter in the stands at Wimbledon.

No longer content to sit calmly, clapping at the appropriate times, the actor has been a vocal and physical presence at the Old England Club as Hewitt strides towards a tilt at a second title.

The Aussie faces Cypriot golden boy Marcos Baghdatis in the quarter-finals tonight.

Baghdatis and his 18-year-old French model girlfriend Camille Nevriere charmed local hearts this year during his charismatic and exciting run to the Australian Open final.

At Wimbledon, Cartwright has been seen leaning out from the players' box, screaming support as her huge earrings swing like hula hoops.

She also has been busting out the bling in the form of the newest addition to her jewellery box — a five stone diamond necklace.

Fan ... Bec Cartwright has been cheering on Lleyton Hewitt at Wimbledon and, inset, Marcos Baghdatis and Camille Nevriere

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