

Christmas party like no other

Vanda Carson

IT WAS no ordinary Christmas party, and one that Kings Cross nightclub owner Lili Chel now regrets hosting at her club, The Rouge.

The risqué celebration involving strippers, dildos, whips and on-stage sex was in breach of her liquor licence and the council's development consent, Ms Chel has admitted.

Ms Chel was giving evidence in the Land and Environment Court this month, where she is fighting the council's attempts to close her club at 3am.

The Rouge, the cavernous basement club on The Strip of Darlinghurst Road, is one of 29 Kings Cross nightclubs targeted by police as part of the crackdown on bikie gangs.

The window from 3am to 6am is one of the most lucrative for the club, as tipsy patrons order more pricey drinks.

The council has alleged The Rouge should not be allowed to trade beyond 3am because of a "freeze" on trading hours of all clubs and bars in Kings Cross.

The court was told there were



Fighting 3am closure ... owner of The Rouge Lili Chel (left), who admitted there was on-stage sex at a party at the club; and an image from the club's website.

68 examples of "problems" with the club, including drink spiking.

The club has had 13 violent altercations detailed over a two-year period, police have alleged.

Ms Chel, 52, who is married to Scott Orrock, the former national president of the Nomads Motorcycle Club, argues problems with patrons have been isolated and the club has been well run since she bought it in 2003. She says the council does not have the legal power to cut its hours.



As part of the case, the court heard that Ms Chel, from Eastwood in Sydney's north-west, was in breach of her liquor licence and the council's development consent when she hosted a daytime private party on November 20 last year for a group of construction workers as "a favour for a friend" who owned the construction company.

Ms Chel initially insisted there was "no sex on stage" at her club that day, but under further cross-

examination she conceded there had been.

Counsel for Sydney City Council, Ian Hemmings, read from a police report that stated closed-circuit television footage of the party showed "a male patron's trousers were lowered and his buttocks were exposed ... the stripper whipped him numerous times with a black-coloured whip ... a male patron penetrated the female with a dildo".

"Would you call that audience

participation if the male was to remove that [dildo] with his teeth, would that be audience participation?" Mr Hemmings asked. "Yes," Ms Chel replied.

The private party was only discovered after police were called to break up a fight outside the club.

The commissioners hearing the case visited the nightclub this month for a site tour as part of the case. They have adjourned the case to consider their decision.

Holsworthy pair 'still of interest'

Natalie O'Brien

TERRORISM experts believe two men acquitted of planning an attack on the Holsworthy Army Barracks in Sydney are likely to be kept under covert surveillance.

Abdirahman Ahmed and Yacqub Khayre were found not guilty on Thursday of conspiring to plan a terrorist attack, while their co-accused Wissam Mahmoud Fattal, Saney Edow Aways and Nayef El Sayed were convicted.

Melbourne's Supreme Court was told the accused men's target was the military and their plan was to enter the barracks armed with military weapons and kill as many soldiers as possible before they themselves



Abdirahman Ahmed.



Yacqub Khayre.

were killed. But despite Mr Ahmed and Mr Khayre, both of Melbourne, being cleared of involvement in the plot, which included unsuccessful attempts to get a fatwa permitting an attack on the Australian military, the pair are likely to be closely watched.

Terrorism expert Clive Williams, from the Strategic and Defence

Studies Centre at the Australian National University, said they would still be people of interest and that would attract a certain level of attention from authorities.

"I know the police are unhappy with the outcome," Professor Williams said.

Carl Ungerer, National Security Program director at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, said authorities were likely to keep the men under surveillance.

"The difficulty is what to do with them," Dr Ungerer said. "If the police felt they had evidence to prosecute they would still be persons of interest."

"That is a difficult thing in a democracy - it is a real ethical and moral question."

Councils fired up by levy

Hamish Boland-Rudder

COUNCILS in NSW say they have had significant unexpected increases in their fire services levy, and at least one council says it will not pay it.

Dubbo City Council's rural fire services bill of about \$388,000 was more than 50 per cent higher than what was budgeted for.

Mayor Allan Smith said there had been no consultation and the council did not intend to pay the additional \$130,000. The deadline is next Saturday.

Parkes had expected to pay \$220,000 but faces a bill of \$280,000, and the shire council said it did not believe it could pay the extra amount.

Councils are expected to pay 11.7 per cent of the cost of fire services in NSW; two years ago the proportion was 13.3 per cent.

A spokesman for Emergency Services Minister Steve Whan said the rise in councils' contributions reflected their increased share in the budget, meaning more services.

But Local Government Association president Keith Rhoades said he believed this was another instance of cost shifting from federal and state government to local councils.

Rural Fire NSW acting commissioner Rob Rogers said: "We've done our best to minimise the effect on local governments. But they do have a responsibility to support the crews."



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