



SCALING NEW HEIGHTS: Andri, Dario, Salina and Sabine Schwoerer celebrate atop Mount Kosciuszko and, right, the adventures continue.

PHOTO: 182377

Seven years, 40,000km and 2.5 children later, Swiss couple drops by

By GRAINGER LAFFAN

THESE are many things people can do to raise awareness of climate change but few are as challenging as Dario and Sabine Schwoerer's epic adventure.

The couple set off from Switzerland in 2002 to travel the seven seas and scale the seven highest summits using only natural energy sources.

On the way they have had two children - Salina, 4, and Andri, 2 - and Sabine is now pregnant with a third child.

"I used my Swiss army knife to cut the umbilical

cord for both my children," Dario says.

And after sailing 30,000 nautical miles, climbing three mountains and cycling 11,000km, the couple will glide 15-metre yacht Pachamama - Incan for Mother Earth - into Mooloolaba tomorrow.

The boat uses 11 solar panels and two turbines to give it an almost imperceptible energy footprint.

Dario and Sabine's mission is to promote environmental awareness and spread the message that climate change will affect everyone.

They have visited hun-

dreds of schools and universities to share their knowledge and inspire more than 35,000 students with tales of their amazing adventure without using fossil fuels.

"But we are not extreme environmentalists," Dario says.

"We are just a sportsman and sportswoman who enjoy nature.

"Our message is to enjoy nature and give something back."

They have climbed Europe's Mont Blanc, South America's Aconcagua and Australia's Mount Kosciuszko

but an attempt on Antarctica's Mount Vinson was foiled by pack ice and a close encounter with a shipping container that left their boat in dry dock for a year.

But the pair is undeterred and has rescheduled Mount Vinson's icy summit to the final leg of the journey.

Everest, Mount McKinley and Kilimanjaro also await and Dario expects another seven years will be needed to finish the expedition.

Another mishap threatened to slow the Schwoerer's progress when the boat's rudder was damaged while taking part in the Sydney to

Hobart race. But while forced to dock for repairs at the Gold Coast, the family made good use of the downtime to head north-west and visit schools in the Barcardine area.

"Australia is an amazing country," Dario said.

"We were a bit afraid before we came here because of all the dangerous snakes and spiders but now we know that is not a problem.

"And Australians are very hospitable, too.

"When cycling around we have had many invitations to stay with people and have never had to use our tent."

Drug ring may have links to Bali nine

AUSTRALIAN Federal Police have reportedly teamed up with international and US authorities to investigate an alleged drug trafficking network operating in Indonesia that may have links to the Bali nine case.

The AFP will work alongside Interpol and the US Drug Enforcement Administration to investigate the drug trade in Surabaya, in East Java, The Jakarta Post reports.

The investigation follows recent foiled attempts to smuggle heroin and ecstasy from Thailand and China into the city, the paper reports.

Sudirman, chief of East Java's Narcotics Directorate, said Interpol, the AFP and DEA believed Surabaya had become a hub for drugs from elsewhere in Asia, Europe and South America.

Police were still questioning people arrested over the recent busts.

"We are currently linking the cases to the international drug syndicate from Brazil and the Bali nine case," Sudirman said.

The report did not elaborate on the possible links.

The so-called Bali nine were arrested in Denpasar on April 17, 2005, over an attempt to smuggle more than 8kg of heroin into Australia.

Three of the nine - Andrew Chan, Myuran Sukumaran and Scott Rush - are on death row, while the other six were handed sentences of 20 years in jail or life imprisonment. - AAP

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