

Innocent tell of gun horror

Witnesses describe Keira St shooting

By JENNY DENNIS
Court Reporter

Innocent bystanders caught up in the horror of the Keira St shooting yesterday recalled their frantic attempts to assist a man shot in front of them at point-blank range.

Witnesses called to give evidence on the second day of Zlatan Popovic's murder trial told the court the shot man was "beyond help" by the time they got to him.

Popovic, a 28-year-old shop assistant from Corrimal, has pleaded not guilty to murdering Vedran Ravnjak, a Figtree man who died after being shot in the abdomen on February 22, 1999.

Popovic's counsel has argued he acted in self-defence.

The court heard Mr Ravnjak had been making harassing phone calls to Popovic, whom he suspected of being in a relationship with his (Ravnjak's) former girlfriend.

Popovic has also pleaded not guilty to wounding nine other people in the same incident - one of them an 11-year-old boy.

Danny O'Neill told the court he had been shopping at Cash Converters on the afternoon the shooting occurred. He said when he saw Mr Ravnjak sitting in the gutter in Keira St, clutching his stomach, his first thought was to try to pull him out of the line of fire.

"I naturally assumed someone was in a window shooting down into the street," Mr O'Neill said.

"But when I saw the state he was in I went all fuzzy."

He described blood oozing from between the shot man's fingers.

"His hands were virtually holding him together," he said.

He knew then he would not be able to help him.

Mr O'Neill moved on to assist Martin Anstee, a Wollongong businessman who received 36



MR DAVIES

shotgun pellets in his back, buttocks, arms and legs as he left the Monsoon Restaurant with business colleagues.

It was to be some time before Mr O'Neill realised he too had taken five pellets - in his back, shoulder, knee, thigh and elbow. To this date, only one of the pellets has been removed.

Robert Davies, a registered nurse, told the court he was directly behind Popovic when he fired two shots from the double-barrelled shotgun he was carrying as he walked north along Keira St.

He said that day was still clear in his mind.

"I remember the events. I still dream the events," Mr Davies said.

He said he saw Popovic pull a shotgun from a bag he was carrying then call out to Ravnjak. He did not hear what was said, it was just a couple of words.

"Then I saw the man with the gun move forward towards the man who was walking up the road. He stopped about two feet (0.6m) away and shot him in the stomach. The next thing I knew, he (Ravnjak) was on his knees on the road."

Mr Davies went to see if he could help Mr Ravnjak.

"He was on his knees, holding his stomach," Mr Davies said.

He was conscious, but did not respond when asked his name.

Mr Davies said he was "scared" but got a good look at the gunman as he turned after the second shot.

He said the gunman was "very natural" considering he had just shot two people.

The trial, before NSW Supreme Court judge Barry O'Keefe, continues today.