

The forum highlighted some of the challenges that I alluded to a moment ago. Local providers raised with me the following: the opportunity to better coordinate the provision of community care programs so that the programs are more easily understood and accessible; the challenges of meeting the capital needs of the aged care sector, especially in relation to high care facilities, as the sector seeks to meet the 2008 certification requirements; the pressures being faced by the aged care providers as they seek to offer adequate places and care for dementia sufferers; and the need to ensure that government requirements and processes do not burden aged care providers with unreasonable red tape.

I know that the Minister for Ageing, the member for Menzies, has been consulting widely since his appointment, and I am sure that these issues have been raised by others as well as the Eastern Suburbs Aged Care Forum through the representations I have made on their behalf. I know that the minister looks forward to meeting with the eastern suburbs forum in the not too distant future so that he can discuss these issues and the particular needs of the community in my area.

I want to use this occasion to congratulate Edina on their leadership in the eastern suburbs. They are one of the many organisations that provide high quality services to older Australians in my electorate. I have been pleased to work with many others, ranging from the dedicated ACAT teams through to wonderful organisations like Jewishcare. Edina is perhaps the largest of these organisations and has provided assistance to almost 500 people in the area during the last 12 months. Since its establishment almost 40 years ago, I know it has established an excellent reputation for its work in providing community, hostel, high-care and self-care accommodation. I particularly acknowledge the work of the chairman, Michael Waterhouse, and the CEO, Robyn Cahoun.

The Uniting Church provides aged care services across my state, and I believe that part of its success has been in ensuring that the provision of those services is delivered in very much a locally focused way. That approach is to be commended, as it allows each organisation that makes up the Uniting

Church's overall contribution to respond to local needs and provide the type of leadership that Edina has been able to provide in the eastern suburbs.

I look forward to working with the Eastern Suburbs Aged Care Forum to make sure that the expanding needs of older Australians in my area are met. There can be no more important goal than making sure that those who have given so much to our society throughout their lives are provided with readily accessible choices that meet their individual needs during their golden years.

Immigration: Border Protection

Mrs IRWIN (Fowler) (10.40 p.m.)—This week marks the sad anniversary of an event which, in spite of the number of people killed, has passed almost without mention. On 19 October last year, an unnamed 19-metre leaky Indonesian vessel sank on its way to Christmas Island, with the loss of 356 lives, including 71 children.

As Australia mourns the loss of over 100 of our citizens who were killed in Bali, we struggle to comprehend the loss of human life on such a large scale. But our outpouring of grief and our determination to bring those responsible to justice is in stark contrast to our response to the tragedy last October. In Bali, relief and forensic services swung into action immediately after news of the bombing was received. But for the victims of Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel 8, or X—depending on which version of events you go by—there was no Australian assistance, and there has been a total denial of responsibility since then. A Defence Force briefing to the Prime Minister's People Smuggling Task Force advised on 18 October that two boats were expected at Christmas Island with what is described as 'some risk of vessels in poor condition and rescue at sea.' On 20 October a further report stated that a vessel was grossly overloaded. What concern did we show for the 421 people in peril? What steps did we take to avert a disaster? We did nothing.

On 23 October, a Federal Police intelligence report stated that the vessel was likely to be in international waters south of Java. Despite those reports, when news of the sinking was released, our Prime Minister was

insisting, 'It sank, I repeat, sunk in Indonesian waters, not in Australian waters. It sunk in Indonesian waters.' We simply washed our hands of any responsibility.

Despite the presence of Australian patrols in the area and the knowledge that the leaky, overloaded vessel was headed for Christmas Island, we are told that nothing was done to locate the stricken vessel or to search for survivors. Of the 120 people who did not go down with the vessel, only 44 survived the 21 hours in the rough water before help arrived. Their tales of survival are harrowing. Children died in the arms of their parents. Exhaustion claimed all but the strongest. But in Australia few people seemed to care. Only the families of the victims and their close friends mourned the loss. And what did Australia do to help recover the bodies of those who died? Nothing. We simply denied all responsibility.

I think of the family of Mr Ahmed Al-Zalimi, an Iraqi teacher who fled the regime of Saddam Hussein. Mr Al-Zalimi, who holds a temporary protection visa, lost his three beloved daughters in the tragedy—three beautiful little girls: Eman, aged nine; Zahra, aged seven; and Fatimah, aged five. They drowned while trying to reach their father in Australia. At the time we did not even have the compassion to allow Mr Al-Zalimi to visit his distraught wife in Indonesia. Who now mourns the victims of SIEVX, besides the immediate families? They were refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran and Palestine. There will be no national days of mourning for them. They belonged to no nation.

When it comes to care and compassion, we reserve that for our own. For the fate of others, we care very little; we are indifferent to their suffering and death. I do not want to equate the tragedy of SIEVX with the terrorist attack in Bali. One was a deliberate and cold-blooded act of murder; the other was an accident that might have been prevented but was not. Both, however, show a level of indifference to human life and a failure to accept responsibility for the actions that result in death. The saga of SIEVX and the resulting inquiry into the actions of Australian authorities reveal a series of contra-

dictions and inconsistencies. In the haste to pass the buck rather than accept responsibility, the first thing that is forgotten is that 356 lives were lost. It is understandable that we mourn for the lost lives in Bali more than the lost lives from SIEVX, but we cannot be indifferent—(*Time expired*)

Eden-Monaro Electorate: Nursing Training

Mr NAIRN (Eden-Monaro) (10.45 p.m.)—We regularly hear of shortages of health workers in rural and regional Australia. It was for this reason that last year I worked very closely with Dr Robert Hartemink and Sue Bryson of Bega to find a way to address nurse training on the far South Coast in my electorate. Dr Hartemink and Sue Bryson came to Canberra and had a meeting with Dr David Kemp, the then minister for education and training, about the possibility of seeing university places allocated to their region so that the Bachelor of Nursing course could be run. In Bega, we have an access centre which is run by three organisations—the University of Wollongong, New South Wales TAFE and Bega High School. It has been extremely successful since it was set up a couple of years ago. Wollongong University Vice-Chancellor, Gerard Sutton, said to me not that long ago how pleased he was at how that access centre is working in Bega and Batemans Bay. There are something like 55 or 60 full-time students doing degrees based in Bega and in Batemans Bay. It is really addressing the issue of education.

We were trying to get nursing places allocated there so that this course could be run, and we had an excellent meeting with David Kemp. He certainly was interested in exploring ways in which we could get these places allocated. Normally it is up to the universities to do that allocation. We also talked with Charles Sturt University and the University of Wollongong. To cut a long story short, Wollongong University, having been able to get additional places provided by the federal government, specifically allocated 25 places to Bega access centre so the Bachelor of Nursing could be run there. It was absolutely wonderful and a credit to the people who were involved—Robert Hartemink and