

Boat delay claim 'false'

IMMIGRATION Minister Scott Morrison has defended Australia's response to an asylum seeker boat that sank off Indonesia as survivors claim the tragedy could have been prevented.

With Prime Minister Tony Abbott flying to Indonesia today for his first overseas visit as prime minister, his government is under fire for its handling of the disaster, which left up to 50 people dead or missing.

Indonesian authorities say there is little hope of finding more survivors from the boat that sank off Java on Friday, with searchers being hampered by rough seas yesterday.

Twenty-one people, including seven children, have so far been confirmed dead while more than 30 remain missing.

One survivor told ABC TV that a GPS location was sent to Australian authorities

when multiple distress calls were made on Thursday.

"We called the Australian government for 24 hours. They were telling us 'we're coming, we're coming, we're coming', and they didn't come," he said.

"This is because of the Australian government. I want them to know that," he said of the tragedy.

But a spokesman for Mr Morrison said suggestions Australian

authorities were slow to act were "absolutely and totally wrong".

"The government completely rejects allegations of a 26-hour delay in response to this tragic incident by Australian agencies," Mr Morrison's office said in a statement issued yesterday.

"Australian agencies acted on the information provided on this tragic incident."

Mr Morrison said initial searches failed to find the boat.



TRIBUTE: Thousands of people turn out to walk along Sydney Road, Melbourne, to honour the memory of murdered Brunswick woman Jill Meagher.

Thousands honour Meagher

SOME carried flowers, others carried signs, but the thousands of people who marched through Melbourne in memory of Jill Meagher had one thing in common - they were there to say 'no' to violence.

The first rally organised by Facebook last September to remember the murdered Brunswick woman and others like her attracted 30,000 people.

A year on, the community showed it was still deeply affected by the attack, turning out in force to walk the street where Miss Meagher was last seen.

Organiser Philip Werner

was not surprised thousands marched yesterday to honour victims of violence.

"I've called it a peace march and I believe people are here because they want to express the opposite sentiment to the things that led to the murder," he said.

He said the march gave the many people touched by violence an opportunity to express themselves.

Before the march he read of a quote from Martin Luther King he said summarised its purpose, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that".

Lizzie Marks and 15 friends carried white flowers to show their opposition to all forms of violence.

They bought their sons and daughters to "make them aware".

Ms Marks, who lives in the nearby suburb of Northcote, said the threat of violence to woman - or anybody - walking the streets late at night was similar to drink driving.

"Years ago, everybody used to drink and drive," she said.

She believes raising awareness about that issue was what cut the toll, and the same will be true for violence.

Milne 'very safe' as leader

AUSTRALIAN Greens leader Christine Milne rejects suggestions of party instability and says the current leadership team will remain in place for the next election.

Reeling from a plunge in the primary vote count at the recent federal poll, in addition

to an exodus of staff, Ms Milne has been forced to again play down rumblings of internal disharmony.

A routine post-election spill of party positions on Monday saw Senator Milne returned unopposed as leader and Melbourne MP Adam Bandt con-

tinue his role unopposed as deputy, confirming a team the former described as "very safe".

She dismissed the idea of a reshuffle that would see South Australian Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young replace Mr Bandt, who would in

turn become leader, or that her relationship with Bob Brown was on shaky ground.

Mr Brown has used social media to dismiss reports that derogate his "long term high regard" for Senator Milne, adding that any such suggestion "is fabricated and false".

Advertising feature

Wagga Wagga Country Club



ABOVE: The new dining area of the club's fully renovated members lounge overlooking Lake Albert.



RIGHT: Graze @ the Lake hosts husband and wife team Corinne and David Ferguson will create the perfect dining experience for any occasion.

Graze at the greens

THE Wagga Wagga Country Club has opened its new Members Lounge and restaurant as part of the ongoing major upgrade of its club house.

The refurbishment and renovation was officially opened last week for the club's annual corporate sponsors thank you day.

Arguably in one of Wagga's most scenic spots on the shores of Lake Albert on Plumpton Rd, the club has managed to lure accomplished husband and wife restaurateurs David and Corinne Ferguson to its stylish new venue.

The couple are expanding on their successful and acclaimed Graze @ the

Factory venture at the Junee Licorice and Chocolate Factory with their new restaurant Graze @ the Lake.

David - son of the club's golf professional of 36 years Ian - is the head chef and Corinne is the manager.

The couple have been working in the hospitality industry for more than 10 years and fine dining is their combined passion.

"Graze @ the Lake is open for dinner from Wednesday to Saturday and for brunch on Sundays and we have an attractive range of dining packages for all events," Corinne said.

"David seeks out the best quality local produce for all his dishes and great food should always be

complemented by outstanding service."

Club Secretary-Manager Derek O'Brien said the new Members Lounge and Restaurant were only the beginning of an exciting new era for the venue.

"With our scenic outlook and a bush setting so close to town the club has long been a popular venue for weddings and corporate functions in particular," he said.

"We are thrilled to have attracted such well known and successful caterers to be part of the ongoing club upgrade."

■ **Graze @ the Lake's fully updated menus and feature packages are available at www.wgcc.com.au.**

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Welcome!

To the new look Wagga Country Club!
Our Lounge is now more comfortable than ever
AND



Introducing our new catering team
Graze @ The Lake
And there's more...
Come along... Enjoy the experience!



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