

UIA SENIORS FORUM 2008

United Indian Associations held a *Senior Citizens' Forum on Saturday 28th June 2008 at Parravilla Function Centre, Campbell Street, Parramatta.*

Mrs Sumati Advani, Chairperson of UIA's Women & Seniors Steering Committee said that the main objectives of the Seniors Forum are:

- to bring together the various Seniors Groups currently in operation so that we can work together to resolve the strategic issues affecting Seniors,
- to clearly identify these issues through the feedback provided from the survey undertaken at the Forum and
- to provide information on various facilities currently available.

This year's Forum provided valuable information on issues such as Financial Services provided by Centrelink, Home and Community Care Services provided by Sydney West Area Health Services, Auburn Council's Falls Prevention Programme, Personal Safety Tips by Parramatta Police and advice on Natural Therapies for Good Health and Well Being.

The dignitaries who attended the forum are – Consul General of India H.E. Mr. Sujan Chinoy, Hon. Nathan Rees - NSW Minister for Emergency Services, Cr. Paul Barber - Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Hon. Tanya Gadiel – State MP for Parramatta, Hon. Julie Owens – Federal MP for Parramatta.

Based on previous discussions with various Seniors Groups and written representations received by the Steering Committee, UIA has already identified various areas of concern to our Seniors such as:

- a feeling of isolation associated with having to adjust to a new environment
- lack of transportation to enable access to activities that are organised
- financial issues being faced by those on bridging visas who are not entitled to any financial benefits while they await finalisation of their permanent residence status leading to a sense of helplessness and loss of dignity from becoming totally dependent on their children for even petty expenses such as bus money.

Mr Raj Natarajan, President of United Indian Associations invited the Seniors Groups to join a Steering Committee chaired by the United Indian Associations. This Steering Committee will include two representatives from each of the Seniors Groups, will meet regularly and report back to the community on its achievements on a regular basis. This process will provide a structured format based on identification of key result areas, clear action plans and measurable performance indicators to prove progress.

For more information on future UIA activities, please visit :

UIA web site: www.uia.org.au