

Refugees ignored – again

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Editor,

Rural Australian for Refugees (RAR) groups in the Eden-Monaro electorate have tried repeatedly to engage the by-election candidates in matters that affect refugees. Monaro Community Growth Group (MCGG) based in Cooma is an affiliate of RAR. The Liberal, Labor and National Party candidates have refrained from responding to questions sent to them by several RAR groups. This silence on the cruel treatment of refugees is a sad comment on the position of these parties towards vulnerable people.

There are hundreds of people locked up in immigration

detention in Australia, and offshore, many of them for years. They have committed no crime, and yet are locked up without any end in sight. It is disappointing that the three candidates from our major parties could not take the time to respond to community groups asking them some simple questions. Aren't Federal by-elections about national matters as well as local matters?

By contrast, Cathy Griff from The Greens, Karen Porter, Independent, James Jansson, the Science Party, Joy Angel from Sustainable Australia Party and Narelle Storey, Christian Democrats gave a response. All, except the Christian Democrats candidate, supported a more

humane approach to supporting refugees. The Greens' candidate was the most explicit in their position on refugees. In relation to the Prohibited Items Bill (giving guards in Immigration Detention facilities the power to take mobile phones from refugees without a reason), Cathy Griff said "This Bill is a deliberate attempt to cut people in immigration detention off from their support networks and the outside world."

Karen Porter stated "I will be loud and clear that I don't support inhumane or cruel treatment of refugees."

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