

Federation of Indian Associations of ACT (FINACT) Inc

ABN: 53 196 059 175

First Annual General Meeting 30 June 2012

Presidents Report: 20 February 2011 ending 30 June 2012

Jacob Vadakkedathu

Introduction

It is my pleasure, as the President, to present the 2011-12 Annual report to the General Council members of Federation of Indian Associations of ACT (FINACT) at the First Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 30 June 2012.

I wish to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land we are meeting on, the Ngunnawal people. We respect their continuing culture and the unique contribution they make to the life of this area. We also acknowledge all the people who have come to settle in Australia as their home, the rich cultures these people have brought to this country and for the contributions, they make to this country. We are proud to be Australians as we celebrate the success of Australia as a multicultural society.

A year in review

FINACT's role is to represent the needs and aspirations of Canberra's Indian community; and in this role, FINACT has been busy, ensuring that there is a united voice for the ACT Indian community. Since its inception, FINACT has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to foster a spirit of cooperation and harmony amongst various Indian communities in the ACT. We have provided strong leadership, cohesion and accountability for Canberra's many Indian community groups.

During 2011-2012, FINACT hosted a number of successful community events to embrace cultural diversity, connecting with the new and emerging communities and helping them to participate as part of ACT community life.

Throughout the year, FINACT continued to affirm its representation and presence at various conferences and community consultation forums as well as expanding its effective consultative arrangements and collaborative partnerships with Government and other non-government agencies at local and national levels. FINACT has provided submissions to Federal and Territory Government inquiries on behalf of the Canberra Indian community. FINACT also developed and nurtured productive working relationship with other key ethnic community service organisations that form part of the ACT community by being part of the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum as a member organisation and being elected in the Executive of CMCF.

Furthermore, FINACT continues to keep the Indian communities informed of issues affecting them with the regular issuing of FINACT news and events to promote community events through its website.

I now take the opportunity to present to you the Report that lists our achievements and performances throughout the year:

Governance, leadership and management

FINACT's Executive Committee meets often to address issues and strived to operate transparently and always in the best interests of its members. Throughout the year, FINACT has been invited to speak at various conferences and forums on issues affecting Multiculturalism and the ethnic communities that it represents. Individuals who volunteer their time run the committee and expertise to ensure FINACT truly represents the voice of Indians in ACT. The first term of the committee is expires today at this Annual General meeting and the new committee for next year's operations will be formed later today.

Funding & resources

FINACT, like any other community non-for profit organisation, relies on Government funding and membership fees, which are crucial to build our capacity and to ensure that FINACT goals, missions and values are upheld, and our planned outcomes are met.

From July 2011 – June 2012

2011--2012 - ACT Multicultural Grant Program – \$3850 (Incl GST)

FINACT appreciates and wishes to acknowledge the unpaid volunteer time contributed by our committee members.

Getting things done - FINACT achievements since inception

FINACT Constitution & Incorporation.

I am proud to state that, in resolution with the First General Council meeting held on February 20 2011, the Executive Committee have finalised the draft constitution and have incorporated the organisation with Office based on that. The Executive Committee would like to thank all the General council members for their inputs and advice.

FINACT website & Face book Page

The electronic FINACT website and news and Face book page was created soon after the incorporation. The website is updated regularly and circulated widely to promote Indian community events and keep the community informed of the latest developments that affect them and are in their interests. I take this opportunity to thank Mr. Sanjay Pandey for having made that happen and with all the regular updates.

FINACT Launch

The Hon Multicultural Affairs Minister Ms. Joy Burch officially launched the FINACT on 31 July 2011 at the Theo Notaras Culture Centre; Indian High Commissioner HE.Mrs attended the launch. Sujatha Singh. ACT Opposition Leader Mr. Zed Seselja, Hon. Senator Ms. Kate Lundy, Hon. ACT Education Minister Mr. Chris Bourke MLA, Shadow Multicultural Affairs Minister Mr. Steve Doszpot, Deputy Indian High Commissioner Mr. V.K. Sharma, various Indian Community leaders and general public.

The FINACT website was also launched by the Hon. Indian High Commissioner Mrs. Sujatha Singh. The meeting was colourful with inclusion of cultural performances including traditional Indian Dances and music. The Launch had attracted several media attention and the launch news had come in the Canberra Times and local radios including 2cc and ABC. I had the Privilege to be interviewed by ABC radio to talk about FINACT launches its mission and objectives. The launch had helped getting achieving widespread popularity amongst the Canberra community.

Our Patron

We are delighted to say that Hon. ACT Multicultural Affairs Minister Ms. Joy Burch has taken up the position to be the Patron of FINACT. This is indeed a great Honour for FINACT and to the Indian community in ACT.

FINACT Submissions Influencing the Policy and Decision-Making Process

FINACT has provided independent submissions to various Federal and Territory Government inquiries on behalf of the Canberra multicultural community. Submissions included our response to the Joint Standing Committee's- Inquiry into Multiculturalism and the ACT Government's Languages Policy - Discussion paper. FINACT will continue lobby for including Hindi in the ACT curriculum.

Independence Day Celebration

The 65th Indian Independence Day celebration was held at Glebe Park in Civic, Canberra on 20 August 2011. The Hon. High Commissioner of India, ACT Multicultural Affairs Minister & FINACT Patron Ms. Joy Burch, Senators, MLA's, High Commission Officials, Community leaders and Indian community members have attend the ceremony. The program was noticeable with a procession from the Gandhi statue to the venue at the main stage along with Band music. The pipe band then played the Indian national anthem. It was first in its kind in the history of Canberra. The performance of the Pipe band was phenomenal and was accolade by the entire crowd. The Hon. Indian High Commissioner have particularly praised the pie band team and have mentioned that she it was the first time she is seeing the pipe band playing the Indian national anthem and have praised FINACT for organising that. The function featured many colourful performances comprising, skits, music, dances & songs. The event was a provided the opportunity for the Indian community in ACT to join together in celebrating this happy occasion and share the spirit of friendship, integrity and harmony.

Sub Committee- India Bhawan

FINACT have realises the need for a Indian Community centre in Canberra for the usage of hosting community functions and have decided to work earnestly towards accomplishing this. A sub committee was formed to look into this matter. FINACT wish to thank the sub- committee and Mr. Ajit Banerjee- Chair of the sub-committee for his ongoing time and contributions towards the fulfilment of this project.

Diwali Mela

FINACT Played a major role in organising the Diwali mela in October 2011 in association with the Diwali Mela Inc (one of the member organisation of FINACT) and have actively participated in the Diwali mela function by organising one segment of the event and also gauging support from the various Indian communities and ensuring active participation and attendance for the festival.

Kathak Dance

FINACT was approached by the Indian High Commission have successfully organised dance performance of renowned dancer madhumita Roy at the very prestigious National Gallery venue. This was indeed another great successful event organised by FINACT.

ACT Multicultural Ball- Organised by FINACT- Bollywood

FINACT was approached by the ACT Government to take a lead role in organising the ACT Multicultural Ball in the lead up to the 2012 Multicultural festival and have chosen 'Bollywood' as the theme for the ball. This was a big credit and recognition to FINACT. FINACT have successfully conducted the function and was great success. This was appreciated by all the other ethnic

community groups in ACT, the Minister for Multicultural Affairs Department and the Department officials.

Hansard

FINACT is proud to state that FINACT was made mention at the ACT Legislative assembly acknowledging the various community active participation in the community work during the adjournment debate speech by the Hon. Opposition leader Mr. Zed Seselja. This is the first time an Indian organisation is being made mention at the Assembly discussion appreciating our great work and community involvement.

Indian Community Associations meeting held at Hyatt Organised by Indian High Commission

FINACT have actively participated in the Indian community Associations forum Organised by the High Commission of India. On behalf of the Indian community in Canberra, representatives from FINACT have attended the meeting and raised various issues and consular issues and concerns faced by the Indian community.

Farewell to the Indian High Commissioner

In early February this year, FINACT have organised farewell function to the High Commissioner of India HE. Mrs. Sujatha Singh. The Hon. High Commissioner was instrumental in the formation of FINACT realising the need for a Peak Indian body representing the wider Indian Community in ACT. The farewell function was attended by our Patron and Hon. ACT Multicultural Affairs Minister Mrs. Joy Burch, Hon, ACT Opposition Leader Mr. Zed Seselja, Deputy Indian High Commissioner Mr. V. K. Sharma, CMCF Chair Mr. Sam Wong other community leaders members from various Indian community groups. .

2012 ACT Multicultural Festival

FINACT is delighted to announce its active participation in the 2012 ACT Multicultural Festival by participating in the Cultural events, Multicultural parade of Indians and also organised a food stall. This has indeed helped us achieving greater publicity amongst the Canberra community and our support and participation was greatly appreciated by the Minister for Multicultural Affairs Department and the department officials.

Community Cricket Tournament

It is with great pleasure and pride to report that FINACT was successful in organising a major community T-20 Cricket Tournament involving various Indian community groups. There were 8 community teams took part in the Tournament and it was first in its kind a tournament of this fashion and at this scale was organised in Canberra. The FINACT T-20 Cricket Tournament was sponsored by Colliers International. The tournament was concluded successfully with the Final match played at the prestigious Manuka International Oval. It has been a fantastic four weeks of cricket where we have seen some exciting matches and have witnessed really talented players. The tournament attracted a large number of viewers from various Indian communities. Being a new born Organisation, The tournament was a big boost to the FINACT's popularity and has gained much appreciation and accolades from large number of people and community organisations for this great initiative and the success of the Tournament.

Apart from the competitive aspect of the tournament, one of the main objectives of this tournament was to bring the community together and build the spirit of Unity and friendship amongst the community. We strongly believe that the Tournament was a great success in that regard.

We extend a big thank you to all the participant teams, various Indian Associations and to the wider Indian community in Canberra for all the support and help in making this tournament a mega success.

I would also like to say a big thank you to Former New Zealand Cricketer Mr. Chris Cairns and Colliers management for sponsoring the tournament and very special to ACT Cricket and to its CEO Mr. Mark Vergano for all the support in providing the Manuka Oval for the finals. FINACT In association with Colliers also organised the Inaugural T-20 Cricket match for Colliers Trophy between arch rivals India & Pakistan teams in ACT. The match was played on April 1st, at the Boomanulla Oval in Narrabundah. This was also first in its kind a match between India and Pakistan being played at this level. The match had attracted much media coverage and gained much fervour enthusiasm amongst the Indian and Pakistani Community. This has indeed further increased the popularity of FINACT as the peak Indian body capable of organising mega events of this stature.

Moving forward - FINACT Strategic Partnership

FINACT has developed and nurtured productive working relationship with key representative groups that form part of the ACT Indian Community. As we know, the Organisation was started with 19 organisations at the beginning and proud to inform that, it has been increased to 21 with the addition of the student Organisation –EKTA and the Telugu Association of Canberra. In addition, the Assamese community have also expressed their interest in joining FINACT.

FINACT continues to strive for new member organisations that have not joined the Federation and works with new community groups to truly become the representative voice of the Indian community in the ACT taking up more issues and interacts more with the community groups by conducting community forums and seminars.

FINACT aims to be regarded as the key leader and representative of the Indian community in the ACT and will extend our wide range of contacts in the area of Sports, Education, Languages, ageing and aged care, women issues, mental health and youth and disability. FINACT is represented as a member of the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum, the peak Ethnic Community body in ACT. We will continue to lobby the government to support the Federation and provide much-needed resources and also to represent the interests of the community.

Acknowledgements

FINACT wish to thank all member organisations and their delegates who had contributed their expertise and time to ensure FINACT can truly represent the interests of the Indian community at the highest level of Government, both ACT and Federal.

In Conclusion

On behalf of the FINACT Executive committee, I would like to say a big thank you to everyone present at this Annual general meeting, showing your support for FINACT and my personal appreciation and thanks to the FINACT Committee and advisors for their time and the many skills they have contributed to FINACT's work over the past year.

Together, we can work towards promoting our common interests and articulate the purpose and direction of the Indian community in the ACT.

President: Jacob Vadakkedathu, Date: 30 June 2012