



Members of the Tangasseri Australian Association of Melbourne in traditional costume celebrating 20 years of their association

ONE of Greater Dandenong’s most unique Indian communities marked its contribution to Australian society with a special 20 year anniversary celebration last month. The Tangasseri-Australian Association of Melbourne represents migrants from a tiny town, Tangasseri (Thangassery) situated in Kerala State, South India by the Arabian Sea.

Their ethnic background reflects the confluence of Portuguese, Dutch, French and British settlers who colonised the area.

President Herwin Allen welcomed members and dignitaries to the celebration, held in Oakleigh.

Guests of honour were Indian Consul-General in Melbourne Manika Jain and Victorian Multicultural Commissioner Abeselom Nega.

“Twenty years ago, 11 Tangasseri residents living in Melbourne decided to form an association to celebrate their culture and reunite their community, many of whom had migrated to Australia. Today the association has more than 200 members spread out across Melbourne, including long-time residents, new migrants and second-generation Australians,” Mr Allen said.

“Our inherent qualities are the result of the confluence and influence of diverse cultures in India over hundreds of years. We are characterised by our ability to assimilate, integrate, participate, tolerate and importantly respect other cultures.”

The anniversary celebrations reflected the eclectic culture of Tangasseri, combining a Catholic thanksgiving service with a public function and a cultural program consisting of a Bollywood dance performance, country music, a violin solo and a pageant depicting the history of Tangasseri before and after Indian Independence. Springvale resident Grenville D’Crus is the association’s secretary.

“While we maintain the traditions and family and cultural values we inherited, we seek to promote integration with the wider community in multicultural Australia,” he explained.

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