



Annual Report 2023



Toowoomba
International
Multicultural
Society

Cover: Harmony Day Celebrations

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Special Acknowledgements

Same Sky – Different Clouds

The *Same Sky – Different Clouds* program is a unique collaboration of TIMS with Concinnity, Samaa Links and Cobb&Co Musuem. Sponsored by the Skilling Queenslanders for Work grant from the Queensland State Government, the program offers recent arrivals with the opportunity to learn basic conversational English and digital skills. The program has two intakes and has been very successful in helping the students gain confidence in communicating with people around them in their daily interactions.



Above: Sharing their aspirations and skills are Term 2 students with their trainers at the Toowoomba Welcoming Cities function at the Cobb&Co.

Below: Term 1 students Graduation ceremony held at Cobb&Co.



Below: Term 1 students practising their skills, foods and culture at the market stalls run by Cobb&Co musuem.



Below: A day of feasting and sharing with Cobb&Co staff.



Harmony Day Picnic

The second Harmony Day Picnic organised by TIMS was held on 25 March. Chaired by Vice-President Maud Bagnall, committee members Ms Anna Nicholls, Mr Eakraj Adhikari, Mrs Sam Adhikari, Mr Nick Day and Mr Prince Lo worked in collaboration with the wider community to organise this popular function.



Traditional owner Mr Shannon Bauwens performed the Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony. The event was opened by the Deputy Mayor Cr Geoff McDonald and enjoyed by more than 500 families coming from all walks of life. Members of the D-Dance Academy enjoying the day (pic below).



Above: Thanking all the volunteers are the organising committee with Mayor Paul Antonio.

World Peace Day

Hundreds of people came together to the UN World Peace Day held on 30 September. The event was organised by Dr Uma Kumar of the Heartfulness Foundation in partnership with the Pureland Learning College, TIMS and many other organisations. Youth leaders shared their aspirations for Peace, and many children participated in the art competition.



Above left: Cr Melissa Taylor, Mayor Geoff Macdonald with organiser Dr Uma Kumar.
Above right: Youth Leader Ms Alisa Ahikari and Pfficer Tony Rehn were emcees for the day.

International Street Fiesta

The Second International Street Fiesta was held on 28 October. This is the seventeenth annual multicultural festival of the region continuing the tradition of the Toowoomba Languages and Cultures Festival in its new and refreshed format. The new format was very well received by more than 12,000 people who attended the event.



Above: Ms Cassandra Hunter (Festival Director) , Cr James O'Shea, Mrs Gitie House, Mayor Geoff McDonald , Ms Lisa McDonald, Cr Kerry Shine, Ms Christine Castley, Cr Carol Taylor at the official Mayor's Greeting.

Over 70 cultures participated with many community food stalls and 35 acts from around the world. Many groups participated for the first time. More than 80 volunteers helped with the set-up/set-down, stage management, photography and many other tasks needed to make the day a wonderful occasion for everyone. Pic below: Thanking the volunteers for their enormous efforts in making the Fiesta so successful.



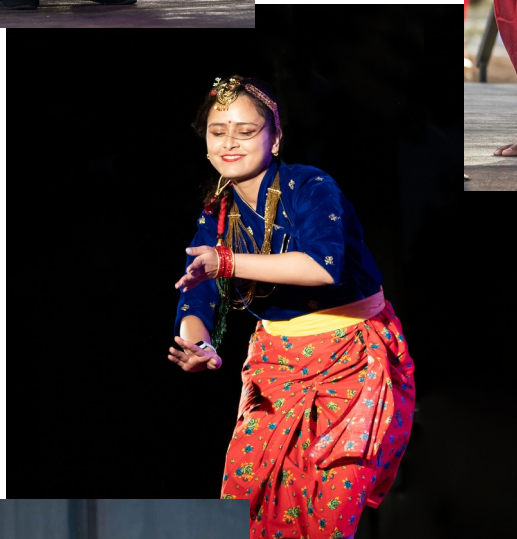


The classical Kathak dance (above left) was performed for the first time. The traditional Fiji Dance was showcased by the Fiji community (above right). Below: The Chinese Dragon workshop attracted many takers as they danced the dragon through the Fiesta grounds.



The public stayed till late enjoying the performances and the fireworks display at the end.

Emcees Ms Alisa Adhikari, Mr Prince Lo and Mr Daniel Nwakwo kept the audience on their toes dancing and enjoying the festivities. The event ran from 3.00 – 8.00 pm. A program of 35+ non-stop performances was closed with a fireworks display. Performances kept the audience enthralled till the very end.



Spotlight on our Emcees:

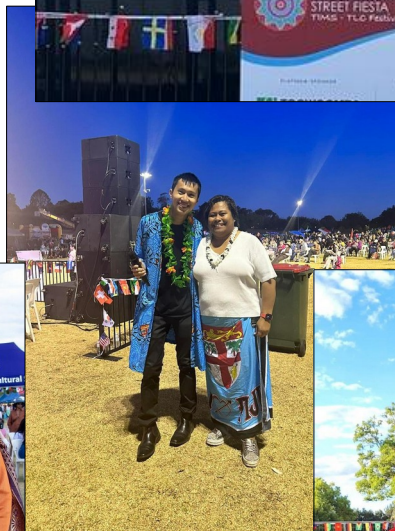
Below: Miss Alisa Adhikari stepped in with an impromptu Nepalese Dance when one of the acts was unable



to come.



Right: Mr Daniel Nwankwo launched his band D & Friends Reggae at the start of the program.



Above Mr Prince Lo in some of his many avatars for the day reflecting the many cultures taking part.

A big thank you to our sponsors: Toowoomba Regional Council (Platinum sponsor), Multicultural Australia (Gold Sponsor), the University of Southern Queensland (Silver sponsor) and Heritage Bank (Bronze sponsor). The event is supported by the Queensland Government Multicultural Affairs Grant. We also appreciate the support given to us in the form of volunteers by Catholic Care Social Services, Workforce Australia Local Jobs, Lions Club West DD, You Belong, Heritage Bank and Concinnity Inc.

Media Launch

The Media Launch was held on 14 August with the Mayor Geoff McDonald launching the Fiesta. Performances were showcased by dancers from the Fiji Community, Drumdance Bellydance (pic below) and the Hridayam School of Dance.



Vale Lea Rapoport



11 July 1928 – 10 January 2023

Mrs Lea Rapoport was a long standing stalwart of the Toowoomba Community from the 1960s. Lea and her husband David made many notable contributions to the Region including organising the first Children's Festival, starting the 4DDB FM community radio, launching the Flexischool and hosting the first International dinner for the University of Southern Queensland. Lea was made a Fellow of the University in 2020 and also given the University Medal for Outstanding Community Service. She was a founding member of TIMS and championed its events across the Toowoomba Region. In 2012 TIMS made her their Lifetime Member. Her most notable project the Sunflower Tribute still stands in the Lions Park at Picnic Point. Her memorial service organised by TIMS was attended by her family members from Hobart and Melbourne along with many Mayors and Councillors past and present. Many members of the community from diverse backgrounds shared their memories and gratitude for Lea.



Peace Education Programs



TIMS members Mrs Helen Brearley (above left) and Mr Ray Brearley and ran a series of the Peace Education Program (PEP) and also a series of Facilitator training sessions. PEP is developed by The Prem Rawat Foundation (TPRF). The classes are very popular and have received tremendous feedback.

Welcome Baby Nina Day

A big welcome to our youngest volunteer Baby Nina Madeline Day and heartfelt congratulations to her parents Ms Maud Bagnall and Mr Nick Day.



Group Members' Activities

Darling Downs Fiji Community



Members of the Fiji Community showcased their traditional dances at the Harmony Day picnic and the International Street Fiesta. Their performance announcing the Fiesta media launch was also featured on Channel 7 and WinTV. The whole community participated in the Carnival of Flowers Parade and the Fiji Independence Day functions.



Navrarti – Jay Jay Girva Gujarat

The Gujarati Community from India celebrated one of their most auspicious festivals Navratri with aplomb and style. Over 300 families and guests danced the traditional *Garba* and *Dandiya* in their traditional outfits.



Toowoomba Chinese TaiChi & Dancing Group

Welcome to new members the Toowoomba TaiChi & Dancing Group.

Directed by Ms Lucy White The Toowoomba Tai Chi and Dancing Group have been supporting all TIMS events from the very beginning with performances and volunteers. They have recently decided to give their group a stronger branding and joined TIMS as group members. This year they performed at numerous events. At the Harmony Day Celebrations (pics below), the World Peace Day, International Street Fiesta and also Toowoomba Carnival of Parade (pics below 2nd row). The August Moon Festival was celebrated at the Laural Bank Park (pic bottom). We look forward to seeing them at many more events.



Toowoomba Nepalese Community

The Toowoomba Nepalese Community celebrated Teej (pic below), the Nepalese Independence Day and Holi (the Festival of Colours) and participated in the Carnival of Flowers parade (pic below).



Sri Lankan Community

The Sri Lankan Community celebrated their New Year with their beautiful Puja Dance (pic below).



The dancers regaled the crowds at the Carival of Flowers Parade – pic below.



Honours for TIMS Members

Congratulations to TIMS Vice-President Ms Maud Bagnall for being a finalist in the prestigious Volunteering Queensland Awards. (Pic below: At their 40th anniversary of the awards.)



The University of Southern Queensland conferred the honour of Fellow of the University on TIMS President Mrs Gitie House OAM in May this year. (Pic below with Chancellor Mr John Dornbusch and Vice-Chancellor Professor Geraldine Mackenzie).



High School Language Awards

TIMS continues to sponsor the Language Awards in the participating schools: Harristown State High School, and Centenary Heights State High School. This year's winners will be announced at the School Awards nights later in the year.

TIMS Strategic Directions

TIMS is now a registered charity with the ACNC in the following categories:

- Advancing social or public welfare
- Advancing culture
- Advancing education
- Promoting reconciliation, mutual respect and tolerance between groups of individuals that are in Australia.

TIMS is currently working on a range of projects across the spectrum. These include: the SQW project (advancing education), the Women's Health project (advancing social/public welfare), many cultural festivals (Harmony Day, IS Fiesta) and supporting many culture groups as well as supporting partner organisations in organising other events (UN Peace Day, Yuminbah conference). TIMS will carry on with its activities as opportunities arise in all of these areas.

Multicultural Sports Committee

TIMS has formed a Multicultural Sports Committee with the aim to organise friendly games between community teams. Chaired by Mr Eakraj Adhikari the committee has representatives from communities and partner organisations including Multicultural Australia, Mercy Community Services, Nepalese Community, Bangladesh Community, Fiji Community, Ezidi Community, DD African Communities Council and the Phillipines. Many others are interested in joining. People are keen to have activities across a range of sports including cricket, soccer, volleyball, rugby and swimming.



Around the Ridges



Above left: Mrs Gitie House OAM as Australia Day Ambassador at Texas.

Above right: Ms Pascale Egan, Mr Ron House, Mr Nick Day and Ms Maud Bagnall at the Iftar dinner.



Above left: Ms Maud Bagnall at Cultural Diversity Network meeting. Above right: Minister Leanne Linard, Ms Dipika Aggarwal, Mrs Gitie House, Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk, Ms Bhavna Gupta & Mr Ron House at the Premier's reception.

Below left: Miss Alisa Adhikari & Mr Ron House laid the Anzac Day Wreath; below right: QPASTT community consultation forum.



Other Events Include:

- Yuminbah Conference – Mr Ray Brearley, Mrs Gitie House, Ms Maud Bagnall, Mr Nick Day.
- Cultural Diversity Network Meetings – Ms Maud Bagnall, Mr Ray Brearley, Mr Prince Lo, Mr Wayne Rutledge.
- Welcoming Cities – Ms Anna Nicholls, Mrs Gitie House, Ms Bhavna Gupta.
- Multicultural Advisory Committee Meetings – Mrs Gitie House, Mr David New, Mr Eakraj Adhikari, Ms Maud Bagnall, Mr Prince Lo.
- Nepalese Cricket Tournament: Mr Eakraj Adhikari, Mrs Sam Adhikari, Mr Nick Day, Ms Maud Bagnall, Mr Ron House, Mrs Gitie House.
- UniSQ Refugee Day – Mrs Gitie House (speaker).
- TRC Refugee Day – Ms Anna Nicholls, Mr David New, Mr Eakraj Adhikari, Mr Wayne Rutledge, Ms Maud Bagnall, Mr Prince Lo, Mrs Sam Adhikari.
- TCOF Mayor's Garden Breakfast – Mrs Gitie House, Mr Ron House
- QPASTT Community Consultation: Mrs Gitie House
- ARC Link Project Meetings– Mrs Gitie House, Ms Anna Nicholls

Below: TIMS members at the AGM 2022.



Below: Fireworks at the Fiesta.



Special Acknowledgements

Sponsors and Partners: We gratefully acknowledge the sponsorship and support of our partner organisations and individuals who make these projects possible. For the IS Fiesta: Toowoomba Regional Council, Multicultural Affairs Queensland, Multicultural Australia, University of Southern Queensland, Heritage Bank. Special thanks also to Mr Goodwill, Ms Cassandra Hunter, and her team and to Mr Rouz Fard and Ms Fatima-Zahra Bliila, UniSQ, Workforce Australia Local Jobs, Concinnity, Catholic Care Social Services, and the Lions Club of West Toowoomba.

TIMS Committee and Members: Special thanks all the committee members especially our Treasurer Ms Dipika Aggarwal, Vice-President & Community Development Officer Ms Maud Bagnall, Mrs Bhavna Gupta (minutes Secretary) and Committee members Ms Anna Nicholls, Mr David New and Mr Wayne Rutledge. We also thank members Mr Nick Day, Mr Prince Lo, Mr Ron House, Mr Ray Brearley, Mrs Helen Brearley, Mr Nishit Gupta and Mr Klaus Meretz for their help and support. We also thank our group members and their community leaders. Special thanks to Mr Ekraj Adhikari, Mrs Samjhana Adhikari for their tremendous efforts. Special thanks to Mr and Mrs Brearely and Mr Anand Kesavan and Dr Shaku Shanmugam for their generous donations to help TIMS.

IS Fiesta Committee Members: Big thanks to the Committee members and Festival Coordinators: Festival Manager Ms Cassandra Hunter, Mr Shahab Abdullah (UniSQ), Mr Angus Moffat (Media Relations Office, TRC), Mr Roberto Garcia (Multicultural Development Officer, TRC), Ms Kelly Buckingham(MA) and her team, Ms Anna Nicholls (TIMS), Ms Maud Bagnall (TIMS, Volunteer coordinator), Mrs Bhavna Gupta (TIMS), , Mr Wayne Rutledge, Mr David New, Mr Prince Lo and Mrs Gitie House OAM (Chair & Festival Director) for their massive efforts in organising this year's festival. Special thanks and Festival Director Ms Cassandra Hunter and team.

Toowoomba Regional Council: A special thank you to the Toowoomba Regional Council staff Mr Angus Moffat and Mr Roberto Garcia for their work on the ISF Festival. We are also grateful to Ms Margot Ross, Mr Paul Reynolds, Mr Darryl Bates, for his support. Special thanks to Mayor Geoff McDonald, Cr Carol Taylor, Cr James O'Shea and Cr Kerry Shine for their support with this year's IS Fiesta.

Friends and Volunteers: A very big and special thank you to the hundreds of friends and volunteers who help us each year with our projects. Their friendship and efforts have enabled us to deliver a wide range of successful projects every year.



Above: TIMS Committee members enjoying the Harmony Day picnic in the park. L:R – Ms Maud Bagnall, Ms Dipika Aggarwal, Ms Bhavna Gupta, Mr David New, Mrs Gitie House, Ms Anna Nicholls, Mr Wayne Rutledge.