

## 21 February - Multicultural Family Festival



Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia actively supported the Wesley Mission Family Centre, Quakers Hill and the various associated community groups in organising the Multicultural Family Festival in Quakers Hill on 21 February 2004. The New South Wales Government sponsored the event. The festival was declared open

by the Hon Laurie Ferguson, Shadow Minister for Population, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs.

The theme of the Multicultural Family Festival “celebrating the treasures of your land” was expressed through activities like dance, music, singing and cuisine from the many cultures to promote multiculturalism which forms the mosaic that is New South Wales. The very essence of Bhavan; the reintegration of Indian Culture, was observed in the Multicultural Family Festival.

In his opening speech the Hon Laurie Ferguson MP (Federal), Shadow Minister for Population and Multicultural Affairs congratulated Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Wesley Mission and the Department of Community Services and said that he had many prior dealings with the Bhavan which has a proud history of work regarding Indian cultural and spiritual promotion, having been established in 1938 under the auspices of Gandhi. Hon Ferguson further said that it had been his daily experience in an electorate where 48% of residents were born overseas that people gain by knowledge and interaction. Those who were hostile and ignorant towards people from other cultures often change when they become connected to their neighbours, fellow members of sports clubs or where family members form relationships with those of other ethnicities.

The message from Hon Gary Hardgrave – Minister for citizenship and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister - was read by Mr Joseph Finianos- Multicultural Affairs & Settlement Officer, DIMIA. In his message the Hon. Gary Hargrave said that “It is encouraging to see that an organisation such as the Bhavan, who enjoy international recognition, is working in partnership with Wesley Mission and other partners to promote community harmony and multiculturalism.

Simone – Wesley Mission Dalmar Family Centre – read the message from the Hon. Bob Carr MP, Premier of NSW. In his message the Hon. Bob Carr said “In celebrating the cultural diversity of the area and providing different communities with an opportunity to share their heritage, festivals such as these foster community harmony. The New South Wales Government is proud to be a sponsor for the Multicultural Family Festival. On behalf of the New South Wales Government I congratulate Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Wesley Mission Quakers Hill Family Centre and the other community groups on their initiative in organising today’s festival.”

the festival was highlighted by the various cultural dances, performances and music accompanied by exhibitions & traditional displays of different cultures; delicious traditional food stalls; free henna tattoos; free face painting & a jumping castle for children alongside many other variety items. Cultural diversity was displayed by performances from India, the Philippines, China, Columbia, Peru and other ethnicities.