

## Visit to Broken Hill, the Heart of Australia Outback and the Home of Artists and Art Galleries

Continuing his focus on promoting engagement with regional economic and cultural centres in country (rural) New South Wales, the Consul General of India Hon. Sujan Chinoy visited the heart of the Australian Outback and the Home of Artists and Art Galleries - Broken Hill from 30 April to 3 May 2007. The Consul General invited Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and India Tourism Sydney Office to join him in showcasing India to country Australia. I, Gambhir Watts, together with Shanker Dhar, Regional Director Australasia of India Tourism accompanied Mr Sujan Chinoy.



With the courtesy of the Broken Hill City Council (Fiona Ellis, Manager Tourism) and the Office of the Consul General of India (Ann Peterson) our visit was very well organised. The General Manager Broken Hill City Council Frank Zaknich welcomed us with warm hospitality on our arrival. He had arranged a conference with the local leaders, Chamber of Commerce and stakeholders, artists and prominent community members.



Mr Sujan Chinoy in his keynote address made a comprehensive power-point presentation on the various aspects of India and her exemplary democratic system, her people, her rapidly growing economy and prosperity and the expanding economic and cultural relations between India and Australia. Mr Sujan Chinoy spoke about much commonality between India and Australia such as Commonwealth, vibrant democratic systems boasting transparent economies, the use of English and enjoying Cricket, Curries and Culture. Emphasising the importance of cooperation between the



businesspeople and technocrats of the two countries Mr Chinoy gave the example of an Australian software company FNS that had developed an 'excellent' banking system that was unable to find a market in Australia or elsewhere. Partnering with Indian company TCS allowed the software to be sold to both the Indian and Chinese markets 'making an unbridled success of a product that may have languished otherwise'.



The audience was thrilled with the information on India; they said no one before had given them any information on India and that they had never learnt so much about India before, particularly the rise of the Indian economy.

Mr Sujan Chinoy in his speech stated that since his first visit to Orange in rural west New South Wales he had developed a desire to visit Broken Hill which he described as 'a very important place with a strong heritage'. He further mentioned Broken Hill was a powerful economic player which, with its natural resources from the mining sector in great demand internationally, was set to become even more important in the future. He said "I felt it was necessary on my part to move out from Sydney into regional areas and talk to local councils, chambers of commerce and people about the growing economic involvement between India and Australia. ... I hope to inform people that would otherwise remain bystanders in this process". The Consul General gave two press interviews to the local

media and one live radio interview to ABC, which helped raise India's profile in regional Australia.

Mr Frank Zaknich said the visit was a welcome opportunity: 'This has given us a greater understanding of the opportunities that exist, and given an opportunity to showcase current and upcoming economic projects'. Mr Zaknich organised an evening Civic Reception in honour of the delegation led by the Consul General of India with a wide cross-section of important community members present on the occasion.

Mr Zaknich had organised the next two days of our visit with a very courteous, hospitable and knowledgeable Corey Spiteri as our guide. We visited various historic places in Broken Hill, Silverton and neighbouring areas including a current silver / zinc mine, the historic 100 year old first mine in the area which was then operated fully manually, the Living Desert nature reserve and other outback attractions and a number of art galleries and museums. Mr Frank Zaknich and his staff Corey Spiteri, Fiona Ellis and others made us 'feel at home' in the heart of an Australian outback.

I think that everyone must visit Broken Hill at least once in a lifetime to get a feel of the genuine Australian outback.

- Gambhir Watts