

The Birth of the Mangalorean Catholic Association of Sydney Inc. (MCAS)

In the year 2006 Sydney established possibly the third Mangalorean Catholic Association in the world. The other two are Nottingham in the UK, and Melbourne in Australia. These are in addition to the numerous Mangalorean Associations located in almost all parts of the world. With the creation of the Sydney association, a much needed platform for the Mangalorean community was established. It is estimated that there are over 300 Mangalorean families in Sydney with quite a number of second-generation families. Many of these are multi-cultural in the sense they are married into Anglo Saxon, Italian, Greek, Sri Lankan and other ethnicities. During the last five years there has been a big influx of Mangaloreans making Sydney as their home. These Mangaloreans have come from Mumbai, Bangalore, Persian Gulf, New Zealand and other places.

Why have an ethnic community association? It is commonly established that the birds of a feather flock together. In any part of the world, it is a common practice to belong to an ethnic association. Australia is probably one of the most multi-cultural nations in the world, their origins coming from over 150 countries. In Sydney itself there are about 30 Indian associations. There are various Anglo Indian associations which have existed for decades; the Goan Association is celebrating its pearl anniversary this year. With the formation of the Mangalorean Catholic Association, I am sure it will help in the spreading and the enrichment of the culture, tradition, values and other aspects of our community.

Prior to this, a group consisting of Joyce & Malcolm Lobo, Julie & George Pinto, Julie & Francis Paul, Gail & Ivan Mendens & Precilla & Nelson Dennis provided an excellent service to the community by organizing the Nativity feast in September every year since 1988. What started as a backyard function in the earlier years became a large function during the last decade. A salient and popular feature of this festivity was the catering of home cooked food to the community. The Mangalorean community is grateful to this self-formed group for their initiative and hard work in providing this valuable service to the community for the last eighteen years.

With the arrival of more Mangaloreans in Sydney especially during the last ten years, a strong need was felt for the creation of an official platform like an association, as people wanted more and diverse activities in the community. Stanley D'Cruz with adequate support led a sustained campaign and awareness during the last few years. This culminated in an historic event. A community picnic was organized on 19 November 2006. About 75 people attended this picnic. With a mix of short speeches, out-pouring of emotions and short & crisp discussions on the pros and cons of forming an association, a vote was taken. It was gratifying to record that all except one elected to form the Mangalorean association. Stanley D'Cruz and Rudy Sequeira played crucial roles in the formation of the interim working committee to oversee the formation of the association.

The members of the interim committee were;

Joyce Lobo, Stanley D'Cruz, George Pinto, Precilla Nelson, Rohan Saldanha, Ryan Sequeira, Ivan Mendonca, Hubert Castelino, Eric D'Silva, Raymond D'Souza, Martin Lobo and Jamila Torpy.

Ivan Mendonca was nominated as the general secretary for this interim committee.

This committee conducted several meetings, and they drafted a constitution for the association in consultation with several local byelaws, and state regulations.

After all the hard work put into the drafting of the constitution, Ivan organized the first general body meeting of the association on March 11, 2007 at the Penshurst RSL Club. Martin Lobo, being the electoral officer organized the elections during the general body meeting of the association. This culminated in the election of the first officer bearers of the Mangalorean Catholic Association of Sydney. For the election of the president George Pinto prevailed over Stanley D'Cruz by two votes. Others elected were Raymond D'Souza, general secretary; Eric D'Silva, treasurer; Stanley D'Cruz, social secretary; and executive committee members Caryl Dickinson, Hubert Castelino and Leon Rego. A total of sixty six members attended this election meeting.

We earnestly hope that the association works towards fulfilling the aspirations of its community and the goals and objectives of the association.

Stanley G. D'Cruz

MCAS Inc