



President Annual General Meeting report on FICQ AGM 2018, Sun 4 March 2018

Palanichamy O. Thevar, President, The Federation of Indian Communities of Queensland Inc.

(FICQ) term of 2015 – 2016, 2016-2017

Greetings and acknowledgements

Greetings from India Vanakkam, Namaste, Namaskar, Namaskaram, Nomoskar, Sat sri Akal, As-salamu alaykum and many more greetings to all gathered here.

On behalf of FICQ I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land where we meet upon today and pay respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders elders past, present and emerging. We thank them for looking after this land and welcoming us to their country.

The Federation of Indian Communities of Queensland Inc. (FICQ) is the peak umbrella body for all Indian Associations in the state of Queensland since 1997. FICQ is committed to strengthen the voice of all Indian communities in Queensland, Australia. Once again, I am proud say that FICQ has celebrated over 20 years of service to the Indian Communities of Queensland.

Personal and acknowledgment:

It is very important for me, at this point to acknowledge the support of my wife, Devi, my children, my brothers and my mother who have all been encouraging and active in the background during the last two years with FICQ.

Similarly, I would like to acknowledge and thank all fellow Executive Committee Members: Secretary Mr Nikhil Reddy, Treasurer Mr Anjaneya Reddy Basupalli, Vice Presidents Dr Ram Mohan & Mrs Prakruthi Mysore Gururaj, Dr Indrani Ganguly, Mr Parminder Singh and Non-elected committee members Mr Navin Kumar, Dr Preethi Suraj and Mr Anoop Kumar, and their family for their extensive support for FICQ and its activities. We must always be thankful Mr Rajarajan Thennavan, Mrs Lila Pratap as past committee members, past leaders and members whose hard work ensured the success of FICQ that we enjoy today. I thank our past presidents, past patrons and the member associations of Queensland.



The FICQ team has worked tirelessly for the last two years and they have actively assisted with promoting the mission and vision of FICQ. I proudly congratulate each and every one and respect their generosity and full support to FICQ.

This President's Report covers the period of 2015 – 2016 and 2016 - 2017 however in addition to these it also highlights entire calendar year 2017 and 2018 to date. since we have been elected. The FICQ committee and members feel that it is important to change the FICQ's financial to calendar year from 1 Jan to 31 Dec – rather than by the financial year. This will help FICQ and the members to increase membership and manage with planning for events, celebrations and engagements.

Highlights of success story of the FICQ Team

These are some key highlights but unable to highlight everything what FICQ has done and achieved over 2 years.

From the beginning of 2016 we successfully hosted several Governing Council meetings that organised and helped make some key decisions for the Federation and approve new/ re-joining of membership.

FICQ always helped with networking by sharing and forwarding emails with valuable information to all member associations and community leaders. Last year, FICQ hosted a practical Workshop prepare grant applications for culturally diverse groups who are seeking funding for a community project or celebration on Sunday 18 June 2017

Diwali – the Indian Festival of Lights was hosted on 21 Oct 2016 and 6 Oct 2017 which, once again successfully attracted over 25,000 people from all walks of life. Attendances of packed crowds even stayed till 10.30pm. Both years we were able to attract more stalls and we had special performers from overseas. With great assistance from MDA, we published quality souvenirs for Diwali in 2016 and 2017 with elegant folders that enhanced the presentations at the festival. It showed the benefits and opportunities joining as a member of FICQ.

In 2017, for the first time in the history of Indian Community FICQ hosted Citizenship ceremony for 40 people with Department of Immigration and Border Protection. New name for Dept of Immigration is Department of Home Affairs is very keen and agreed to assist us to host ceremony at Diwali Festival in 2018. In addition, Mr Steve Biddle has also agreed to offer information and panel of experts to



Indian communities. FICQ will be happy to host within next two to three months and assistance can be offered since its is essential service for the all immigrants.

The Premier of Queensland, Opposition Leader and several high-profile officials and public attended. ABC Brisbane organised radio presenter and journalist Ms Katherine Feeney who was MC for the Diwali Festival added immense value to the festival in 2017 in addition to our most talented MC Mr Jim Varghese in 2016. FICQ also supported and participated in the successful Mosaic festival in 2017.

Along with local Indian and multicultural media coverage, we were able to promote ourselves, for the first time through ABC Brisbane for two weeks prior to Diwali festival; and had dedicated live broadcasts with several interviews from the festival reaching across Australia and the world in both 2016 and 2017. At the end of these Festivals and ceremonies, we held a review and arranged a volunteers' dinner to thank them all.

Future funding for Diwali – The Indian Festival of Lights also assured from the Multicultural Affairs Queensland, Queensland Government and Brisbane City Council is committed to assist our future activities.

FICQ has worked closely with Queensland Premier Honourable Annastacia Palaszczuk to host Indian Community Reception for our Indian communities. We have made the effort to prepare a list of invitees across our communities within a day. There was a challenge to change the focus of the reception that was successfully negotiated to continue the tradition and we have got this assurance from the Premier. This event continues only because of FICQ's successful negotiation strategies along with our patrons' support. The Premier's reception was assured to continue as host for Indian communities. 2017 Premier reception was hosted prior to the state election announcement to keep the tradition, despite a very busy schedule for the Premier.

Confluence - Festival of India in Australia was organised with community briefings to support Indian government initiatives across Australia. The Federation worked closely with Indian Government diplomats here in Queensland and Canberra.

GC2018 Commonwealth Games: we were one of the few multicultural associations that were invited in 2016 to support and promote Commonwealth Games. Due to our ongoing support and promotion, Indian communities have been one of the largest Multicultural Ambassadors who are being part of promoting the game. FICQ will continue to support the success of GC2018 and will welcome Indian athletes and dignitaries in collaboration with Indian High Commission and community organisations.



FICQ also promoted and supported 2017 Total Badminton World Federation Sudirman Cup World Mixed Team Championships in Gold Coast.

We hosted felicitation and dinner to the Members of Indian Parliament and Chairman (Public Accounts Committee) Prof (Dr.) K.V. Thomas, Member of Parliament Mr. Anurag Thakur and Additional Secretary (LS Sectt) Mr. A.K.Singh on 19 Apr 2017.

FICQ had a planning day in 2017 where we discussed various factors that are important for growth and development of FICQ. The FICQ has summary of recommendations for its future to take them to FICQ Governing Council and to get their input. Combining both recommendations would result in great future projects and strategies for FICQ to flourish in 2018.

Regularly updated FICQ website, we will continue to provide service to the community to improve the website to cater for all Indian communities in Queensland, social medias platforms, increased traffic in FICQ Facebook, FICQ twitter and YouTube channel to provide good opportunities for the community. There is also an Instagram account that may provide additional promotion for the work and engagement of FICQ. FICQ was committed to professionalism at all times when writing media release, attending meetings, festivals and meetings business card with EC photos, name badge that increase the presence of Indian communities.

FICQ has grown from strength to strength and was able to achieve bargaining and negotiating for the betterment of community.

FICQ is committed to reduce Domestic violence and other relationship issues in response to a series of articles published by the ABC. FICQ has had a number of talks with Indian High Commission Office, Queensland Police and communities to promote government support programs to help victims and to prevent further risk. FICQ can work collaboratively to support our community to address these issues.

We introduced email addresses with FICQ domain for each position so that we do not miss an opportunity for others to communicate with us. Since being elected as the 2016 FICQ committee, we would have roughly corresponded over 50,000 emails to all government and non-government sectors. Most of these contacts were developed from scratch.

FICQ continues to communicate electronically and with hard copies that will be stored as resource for a future team.



FICQ has been able to produce professional promotional videos and photos that has increased the quality of documentation of our events and celebrations.

India Australia Day was very well supported in both years by the Brisbane City Council. This year Forest Lake Councillor Charles Strunk has offered more support to ensure a successful festival. The Multicultural Minister attended both years. This year Minister for Multicultural Affairs Minister Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe was the chief guest. India Australia Day was the first public Indian and multicultural event he attended and spoke at in the community. It was a great celebration with good food and entertainment with wider representation from all levels of governments and non-governmental organisations. This was well attended by the member organisations. This event was also more successful for the first-time as we had the popular TV and Radio presenter Mr David Curnow as a MC for the celebration in 2017 that added value and this year 2018 we had a young and talented UQ Music student Ms Prathana Thevar-Brink.

The High Commission of India celebrated Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) and Vishwa Hindi Diwas on January 9, 2018 at their Offices in Yarralumla, ACT-2600. This resulted in a great opportunity to strengthen the FICQ relationship with High Commissioner's office in Canberra and also several community leaders and association representatives in Canberra.

In 2017 FICQ hosted a reception for the High Commissioner His Excellence Dr Ajay Gondane. In both 2016 and 2017, the Indian High Commission office had a high number of visits and interactive attending events, festivals and FICQ-facilitated special events for Indian community. Our interaction with the Consul was to get help with all queries from the community. FICQ also organised a special event for University students.

FICQ collaborated and supported the International Day of Yoga in 2016 and 2017. This has been a successful partnership with India's Isha Foundation.

Being responsible FICQ leaders, we assisted with so many enquiries and provided support to highly convoluted matters around Australian and Indian immigrations.

Increased relationship with Logan City Council and Mayor Luke Smith. As a result of Mayoral invitation for Indian representation, I was appointed as an Advisor to be part of Logan Global Connections Business Advisory Group (LGC BAG). This is opening up more opportunities for Indian Communities and Queensland businesses to benefit from.



There is established contact with Gold Coast Council and there are offers of opportunities to meet and discuss about our community activities and an event could be organised in Gold Coast to help members and potential members association to be part of FICQ in the future.

Ipswich City Council has a prominent place for FICQ and that has continued. FICQ has continue to maintain good relationship with new Mayor.

Brisbane City Council has been contributing a huge support to FICQ and its activities. Last two years Diwali lights has been organised at King George Square in front of the city hall to highlight the importance of Indian Communities. BCC also helped lighting up City Hall in 2016 and 2017 during the Diwali festival.

We have been increasingly working to built in a relationship with various Indian and Multicultural organisations to show our important presence in Queensland and Australia. We increased our working relationship with Islamic Council of Qld and invited their members for several events and encouraged their active participations.

FICQ has played a vital role supporting and maintaining peace and order at the very difficult time of great loss of Late Mr Manmeet Sharma. FICQ collaborated and supported well with Punjabi Community Leaders to maintain a good contact with all levels of governments in Australia (regional - BCC, State and Federal level) and also the Government of India. There are many people including the Premier and Lord Mayor who played an active role addressing this issue. Outcome of the trial is unknown and FICQ maintained a good contact and support to the family during challenging time.

We have had meetings held with various sections of the administrative, political and elected representatives from many political parties and have maintained good working relations with all of them.

Bringing all Indian communities together, all members associations' input and feedback were welcomed for better practice.

Assisted members association with letter of support and lent PA system for members association events. FICQ has a plan to service current PA system and purchase a portable one to use it for the small events under 100 people.

There was MLA Lamb advertisement has used religious god as reference for them to promote their meat advertisement. FICQ led a campaign and organised protest in front of the parliament from



Queensland and worked with all well-wishers and support of the campaign to successfully ban the inappropriate use of Lord Ganesha in their advertisement.

FICQ President Palanichamy O Thevar as a Director of Gandhi Salt March Ltd, FICQ has well supported and promoted the Power of Peace Festival in 2017. There are more future events being planned.

New partnership with various major organisations has lifted us to an elevated position to play a significant role. Support from ABC Brisbane, Multicultural Development Associations, Australia Red Cross Qld and Ethnic Community Council of Queensland who are very much interested to support and strengthen our community has been incredible.

Last two years FICQ engaged and facilitated highest number of interactions with wider Indian and multicultural communities. Certification of appreciation is being organised to send to all sponsors, supporters and volunteers.

Increased financial stability and increased financial boost for the last two years. Team has worked to increased amount of FICQ over \$100,000.00

Incorporated all bank accounts and brought to one place also able to earn money through interest.

FICQ always took part in erection of Gandhi statue in Roma Street Park Lands and there was unfinished work required financially assisted to rectify the work. FICQ helped raising funds and individually provided funding to finalise unfinished job. This work has now completed, and from now on BCC will be responsible of all maintenance for Gandhi Statue.

FICQ helped with Indian Film Festival in Queensland in Springfield to promote peace and harmony.

With help of our Indian diaspora and its associations we are proud to inform everyone is that Queensland Indian and Multicultural community are well aware of us and our leadership.

We are also honoured to declare that all levels of government are well aware of FICQ and its role as leader in Queensland for Indian Communities.

I am grateful to FICQ and its member associations for electing me to play a leadership role within FICQ, we have done our best to uphold the previous tradition and at the same time taken the federation to the next level. I have also created and established many relationships and that will help us to even go to great heights. My support will be always there to uphold the leadership role in the community.



Provided several support letters for organisations funding applications, award recipients, other supporting letters for their activities.

FICQ represented and attended various Indian and non-Indian activities. Given speeches on various community events. Continue to uphold multiculturalism attended Multicultural policy paper launch.

Challenges:

AGM was not conducted within required time frame due to financial year reporting and renewals during FICQ activities focus on biggest festival Diwali.

We intended to host more Governing Council meetings but many of the leaders and EC were away.

There were few interferences with day to day activities of FICQ, however we continued to discuss further and focus on the priority of FICQ.

There is imbalance of membership representation in FICQ at the moment as some regions of India have considerably less or no member associations. More work needs to be done to address these issues. There is ongoing work required to meet the need of our communities and need to increase active participation of member associations.

FICQ is keen to promote and build better relationship with other Australia state peak Indian federations. That is including host an event in Brisbane for Confederation of Indian Australia Associations. Lack of interest and enthusiasm from current Chair we were unable to host the conference and we were not aware of any AGM conducted and election of new office bearers. FICQ will work with all relevant stakeholders to address this issue.

We were maintaining and increasing memberships despite many did not renew on time to continue their membership with FICQ.

Future Directions

There are associations which were benefitted by using FICQ public liability insurance and were offered special price Insurance to members association. Further review and work is required to address this issue.

Much of the communication and relationship base has been built that can be used for future projects.



Due to BCC council practice it has become difficult to book KGS for the Diwali Festival. I have written to the Lord Mayor to consider helping with venue suitable to FICQ needs and we also intend booking the venue for next three years so as to prevent this happening again.

Mr Surendra Prasad from Fiji Seniors has Association has secured a community building in Annerley and has offered FICQ an office to operate from. I am very confident that FICQ opening an office within next couple of months will provide an opportunity to expand some of the important projects and maintaining interactions with all member associations. Setting up an office will provide addition funding to cater the community.

There is also a plan to publish FICQ 20 years of service with various information and highlights since it was established in 1997. This will take few months of dedicated research and writing work. Once completed FICQ can host a celebration with community leaders at the Queensland Parliament House.

There is significant development in relation to India House Project and thank the team for their hard work. FICQ is committed to the original cause of establishing the India House project. The current Chair Prof Prasad Yarlagadda would brief us regarding India House project with a timeline of implementation of this long-awaited project for the Indian community.

Media India and Australia:

Thanks to Indian media outlets, local and overseas who supported, promoted and published news about FICQ and its activities. Thanks to ABC Brisbane, Brisbane Indian Times, Radio 4EB, SBS, QUT News and much more.

In India, Jaya TV, Raj TV, Puthiyathalaimurai and many Indian Television and local stations have broadcast and published news about our festivals and celebrations.

I am hoping for even better support for FICQ from all ethnic and mainstream media outlets to increase awareness about FICQ and its activities that will cover all Indian communities in Qld.

I acknowledge all my fellow committee members who are committed and have expressed an interest to continue assisting FICQ from outside the committee role. My connection with FICQ has always been a strong almost since it was established. As President now and a leader among Indian and Tamil community I am also committed to be available and support FICQ's growth and development to serve the Indian Communities in Queensland.



I acknowledge all our community leaders and members of Indian Community organisation attending this AGM. Without the support of member organisations and active participation we wouldn't have achieved this height. I would like to take this opportunity to invite all members and volunteers to come forward and be a part of upcoming activities of FICQ regardless of any position in the Federation.

It is important to acknowledge and appreciate everyone that we were good at celebrating festivals, conducting events and cultural performances, however we must continue to do research and provide best support for children, youth, women, individuals, families and seniors from Indian and other wider communities.

The FICQ Executive Committee members, key leaders and several volunteers are dedicated and have showed huge love on what they do for our community. I would like to extend heartfelt thanks to all for their unconditional hard work for now and the future of FICQ.

On behalf of the Federation, I would like to accept responsibility for any limitation, challenges and unexpected situation including any created problem that may have occurred. The Federation has made an effort to learn from the challenges to improve our future activities.

I am sure FICQ will work with the Indian community and work along with government to promote multiculturalism for a better and more prosperous Queensland in Australia.

My heartfelt thanks to everyone and for your participation and support. Looking forward to continuing to serve our community in Queensland, Australia.

2015 – 2017 Elected office bearers for FICQ.

FICQ Executive Committee:

Mr Palanichamy O. Thevar	President
Dr Ram Mohan	Vice President
Mrs Prakruthi Mysore Gururaj	Vice President
Mr Nikhil Reddy	Secretary
Mr Parminder Singh	Assistant Secretary
Mr Anajneya Reddy Basupalli	Treasurer
Dr Indrani Ganguli	Public Relations Officer

FICQ President Palani Thevar Report 10

Web: <http://www.ficq.org.au/>

Mailing: PO Box 157, Spring Hill, QLD - 4004, Australia.

Mobile: +61 421 656 000

v15 final



Non-Elected Team Members

Mr Navin Kumar	Festival Coordinator
Dr Preethi Suraj	Cultural Coordinator
Mr Anoop Nannaru	Assistant Treasurer
Prof Prasad Yarlagadda	Chair for India House Project

Patrons and Past Presidents:

Dr Maha Sinnathambi

Dr Jim Varghese AM

Mr Surendra Parasad OAM

Prof Prasad Yarlagadda OAM

Dr Naidu Purushothama Bodapati