



ISWA

Indian Society Of Western Australia



President's Report

Annual General Meeting 2024

Satish Nair

President, ISWA

Email: president@iswa-perth.org

Office: Indian Community Centre (ICC)

12 Whyalla Street, Willetton, WA, 6155

Mail: PO Box 789, Willetton WA 6955

Website: <https://iswa-perth.org>

Facebook: Indian Society of WA



Good Morning, Namaskar and a very warm welcome to all life members including many volunteers, past Presidents, and MC members.

May I begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, the Wadjuk people of the Noongar nation, and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

on behalf of the management committee (MC) it's my immense pleasure and pride to present the 2023 President's annual report to the ISWA community. As we gather here today for the Annual General Meeting of the Indian Society of Western Australia (ISWA), it is my privilege to reflect on the remarkable journey the ISWA Managing committee undertook as a team. Over the past two years, your committee has achieved significant milestones that have reshaped the landscape of ISWA as the umbrella body of the Indian Community in WA. The out of the box thinking has helped establish us as a force to be reckoned within this beautiful multicultural society.

ISWA has witnessed unprecedented growth and impact in the last year. This year has been nothing short of remarkable for ISWA, as we continued to innovate and serve our community with unwavering dedication. From enhancing and establishing a management system at our community centre to spearheading innovative programs and initiatives, this Management Committee's commitment to the betterment of our community has been truly inspiring. I am proud of the achievements by this team.

You would have noticed for the second year in a row we have been able to send the Financial Report well in advance of the AGM so that all members get time to comprehend the details. The minutes of the past two AGMs were also sent within a month. This practice will hopefully be continued by future committees.

Many of you are ISWA veterans, who have worked hard and helped in many ways to elevate ISWA. For those who have recently joined, ISWA has grown to be the peak body that represents the interests of over 100,000 Australian Indians at various levels, with 119 partner associations. Our member Associations represent various interests and groups for the fastest growing Community in WA. They are an integral part of any program or event that we bring to you.

Through this annual report for calendar year of 2023, we will take you through some the previous year's achievement just to summarise the tenure of this MC.

Today, I would like to take an opportunity to highlight some of the key accomplishments by the current ISWA managing committee during its tenure:



Operational Excellence: Through effective management and strategic planning, our committee has demonstrated operational excellence in all facets of our work. From financial management to event planning, we have upheld the highest standards of professionalism that has resulted in **reducing our debt on ICC land by one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000)**. This has given confidence to the authorities that ISWA can sustain on their own once all debt has been paid off. I have ample reason to believe that day is not very far! The discussion with people in the highest level of government is in advanced stages and is just waiting for an appropriate time.

Transformation of Indian Community Centre (ICC): ISWA was awarded with a two hundred- and fifty-thousand-dollar (**\$ 250,000**) **grant under Capital Works Funds** to upgrade the facilities at ICC presented to us by **Premier of WA, Hon. Roger Cook MLA, Minister of Multicultural Interested, Hon. Tony Butti MLA, and Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier Dr. Jags Krishnan MLA** – this stands as a testament to our committee's dedication and vision for ICC. We would also like to thank the other Indian origin parliamentarians in the WA **Yaz Mubarakai MLA, Parliamentary Secretary and Kevin Michelle MLA**. The screen on which you see the presentation has come through this grant and I am very happy that it is the ISWA life members who are the inaugural users! This is dedicated to all the devoted volunteers over the years. Apart from the LED Screen, we also have **acoustics, security system, light, and sound work** in the pipeline. This work is estimated to be completed by November 2024.

Moreover, under **Community Support Funding**, Govt. of WA awarded an **annual fifty-thousand-dollar (\$ 50,000) grant for the next three years** to ISWA for employing personnel to provide **administrative support**. This is a game changer for us and has strengthened ISWA's operational administration and engagement, especially as the centre management has more than doubled the MC's workload.

Combining both these grants, current **ISWA managing committee secured \$400,000 dollars in 2023** in addition to other **event-based grants and sponsorships which also saw a substantial increase**. More information is available in the financial report already circulated to you. Our Administrative Officer has been working on a regular basis since September, which has enabled the MC to focus on larger issues such as ICC management.

ISWA's outstanding contributions have been recognized and celebrated at state level through a prestigious award: the **WA Multicultural Awards 2024**. This is the first time ISWA has received such recognition as an organisation. This recognition reaffirms the impactful work done by your committee in promoting multiculturalism and fostering inclusivity in Western Australia. We can proudly say that we are part of almost all celebrations by the various Indian and several other multi-cultural community groups across Perth.



Taking **Indian Independence Day to the WA Parliament**: Indian Independence Day was celebrated at the WA Parliament for the very first time, on 15th August 2023. This is historic from a point of view of consolidating ISWA's position as the peak body of the Indian Community. This should become an annual event.

Diwali Mela in Perth CBD: ISWA decided to take centre stage by hosting Diwali Mela in the heart of Perth. The grand success of the event was witnessed by the dignitaries and enjoyed by all. This was a big challenge but as they say no pain, no gain! and the proof is in the pudding! Not to mention our special guest **Terence Lewis** who made sure we all lost our voices (and my pride through the failed attempt at avoiding the dance floor) that night!

There were a couple of other big events we conducted recently which need to be acknowledged from the outgoing committee:

- **Australian Citizenship Ceremony- 26th January 2024**: We are extremely proud to have become the first community organization in WA to hold an open ceremony at such a level for 79 new citizens at ICC on. This is prestigious and in future makes us eligible to get grants for this purpose.
- **Visit by External Affairs Minister of India, Hon. Dr. S Jaishankar – 9th February 2024**: The high-profile dignitary's visit was hosted by the **High Commissioner of India to Australia, Hon. Gopal Baglay**, with restricted entry. The EAM had some flattering words of praise for the Center. ISWA worked closely with the CGI to ensure the success of this event. Congratulations to **CG Hon. Amarjeet Singh Takhi** for organizing such a well-presented event.

Overall, it has been one of the best years financially. All the details can be found in the financial report to be presented by our Treasurer. We saved a considerable amount despite paying \$100,000 of the mortgage. I should bring to your attention that to service the outstanding loan, we would still be paying about \$170,000 from June this year when the principle repayment starts.

Now, I will provide an overview of the events that have occurred over the reporting period.

The **Commonwealth funded Day Care Centre for Seniors**, in **January 2023** saw our day care for seniors operating from the ICC at 12 Whyalla Street, Willetton on Wednesdays and Thursdays by MSCWA. This was well-led by our **Seniors' Wing Lead - Dr. Divya Sharma**. ISWA and the Multicultural Services Centre are exploring the feasibility of operating the service on Tuesdays for eligible clients of Indian origin. They are just waiting to attain the minimum number of



participants required (15) to get going. Seems like our seniors are keeping themselves busy!

There was another initiative for the Seniors which is making available five **laptops for short-term hire** to distribute between seniors residing North and South of the river. Combined with digital literacy training, it will ensure our seniors have the skills they need to complete their daily and weekly tasks efficiently and with ease.

Breakfast Session and Health Seminar: a wide range of topics concerning the community's wellbeing are being discussed ranging from domestic violence, health, and mental wellbeing, etc, by eminent speakers. There were three events in 2023 targeted at these causes, coordinated by **Kirtida Shah, Assistant Treasurer**. We thank **Australian Indian Medical Associations** for their continued support. We had yet another successful event on 11th June 2023 at ICC, Coordinated by **Bithika Kastha**, our current **Women's Wing Lead**.

Visit by Union Minister of state (India) for External Affairs & Parliamentary Affairs, V. Muraleedharan – March 2023

Founding Member board at ICC -21 March 2023 – all those who contributed to acquire ICC land have been recognised through the founding member board displayed at ICC's reception.

We had a couple of **Fundraising events** to help the people in need:

- **Fundraiser for Sowjanya Kaniganta - 15th April 2023**
- **Fund Raiser for Late Amandeep Singh - 27th September 2023**

You would have noticed a new **Life Member Portal** we started in **May 2023**. Please ensure you log in and enter your up-to-date information. This will help us keep connected with you.

International Day of Yoga - 25th June 2023 in collaboration with the Consulate General of India and other Associations like HSS, Art of Living and Isha Foundation. This was coordinated by **Deepak Gupta, Vice President** our Yoga guru who has also been conducting weekly classes at the ISWA centre for the past several years.

ISWA has always been committed to supporting causes close to our hearts. In March 2023 we welcomed the bold initiative by a young Indian woman from Pune – **Ms Ramabai Ramila Latpate**, at the Indian Community Centre, extending our support to her inspiring bike journey and the noble cause she championed.



NAARI 2023 was held at ICC for the very first time, on 12th March to commemorate International Women's Day. We witnessed the power and resilience of women while celebrating their achievements. Let us continue to uplift and empower the incredible women within our community. **Coordinator: Dr. Divya Sharma.**

In 2023, the Aussizz Holi event reached new heights with a new venue and thrilling water attractions. The enthusiastic crowd danced to the beats of the DJ, revelled in the vibrant colours, and enjoyed the exhilarating rain dance. It was a true testament to the joy and unity that Holi represents. This was coordinated by **Jasjit Maan.**

The **Student Festival -15th July 2023** was a huge success with the youth of our community. This again was a new initiative. In a pioneering move, a unique concept aimed at bringing young adults together for a memorable celebration. This festival offered a platform for colleges, universities, industry and leaders, alongside discounted food stalls. This was an amazing initiative implemented by **Rohan Amlani, Student Wing Lead.**

Sangam 2023: Confluence of Cultures-22nd July 2023 was moved to Perth Concert Hall from our regular venue, to save costs. Like 2022, we finished the event within the scheduled time. The 4-hour event was appreciated and brought back the audience. **Coordinator Veeranna Sattareddy (current ICC chair)** did an exceptional job coordinating this event. We have moved this event to July as India Parade is growing in size. The **Cultural Coordinator Virendra Parekh** worked meticulously to ensure it was a crisp event.

Similarly, the destination of the **Thejo Australia India Day Parade -13th August 2023** was moved to Supreme Court Gardens, which was more colourful and vibrant than ever before. **Secretary, Deepak Sharma** did an outstanding job ensuring the success of this event. More than 40 associations/ groups participated in this colourful display of culture and celebration.

As a tribute to all the MC members from yesteryear, we recently added a list of the MC members on our website. An **honour board** of all ISWA presidents since 1968 has been placed on the ground floor, next to the elevator. **Binod Agarwala, former ICC chair** has tirelessly worked through mountains of data and records to achieve this. His hard work and contribution to setting up system at ICC is very well appreciated. I would need to thank one more volunteer while talking of ICC – **Ernie Abraham** has been untiring in his efforts. There are others like **Jerry Cherian** and many others from the marvellous ICC project team which helped us a couple of years ago.



Approval of the new Rules (Constitution) of ISWA – 12th September 2023

At last year's AGM, we made a commitment and presented a roadmap for making a new constitution. This was done exactly as per the timeline in a very disciplined manner. As per the endorsement by the members, a Constitution Reference Group (CRG) was established. The CRG reviewed the document prepared by the sub-committee and worked on the feedback from members. The finalised constitution / Rules of ISWA was a result of numerous meetings and consultations with many, including community leaders, members, and elders of ISWA. In chronological order:

- EOI from ISWA life member / Association member to be a part of the CRG – **April 2023.**
- Constitution Reference Group (CRG) – **May 2023**
- Public consultation – Heads of Associations – **June 2023.**
- Public consultation - ISWA life members – **July 2023.**
- Final Draft Constitution – **August 2023**
- Final approval – **September 2023**

The entire team led by **Renchi Matthews** and **Jignesh Shah**, with the support of **Mahesh Mehta, Bimal Kaul, Bijan Mohapatra and Dr. Divya Sharma** are who we thank for this new direction in how we operate to ensure ISWA's continual growth. I must thank **Krishna Prasad** for his amazing legal knowledge and advise.

Health Seminar: Bunbury - 17th September 2023: Spreading our wings to the regions, we collaborated with the South-West Indian Group to conduct this event. This was coordinated excellently by **Kirtida Shah, Assistant Treasurer.**

Digital Literacy: Multiple dates **October-November 2023** held at ICC – **Instructor: Virendra Parekh.**

Women Wellbeing Brunch: Wangara - 1st October 2023 - was **Coordinator Bindiya Manchanda's** effort to take ISWA North of the River.

Sikka Sangam Diwali Mela: Langley Park - 4th and 5th November 2023

ISWA's biggest event has grown even bigger. The decision to move Diwali Mela to Perth CBD proved to be a great success, with the event becoming more colourful and substantial than ever before. Our children, families, friends, and the wider Perth community enjoyed delicious food from our stallholders whilst getting amongst the rides and entertainment. The event at Langley Park was



much bigger and better in various ways, taking it to the next level. One of our special attractions this year was a raffle prize which was a return ticket to India sponsored by Maan Travels and gold coins by Perth Mint. We also a live telecast of the cricket match, a cricket bowling machine, stilt walking, etc. **Subrata Bhattacharjee, Treasurer and Diwali Mela Coordinator** managed this mammoth task of organising the huge event at a new location almost from scratch. We also like to thank the Cultural Coordinator **Jay Chetnani**. There are **many other volunteers who worked very hard at various departments** and to whom we are thankful for their efforts.

Live Telecast of T20 Cricket World Cup Semi-Final (India Vs NZ): ICC - 15th November.

Volunteer Day: Held at the ICC - 3rd December 2023. Coordinator: Deepak Sharma, Secretary.

For information of the members and to make everyone aware of how we operate, I would like to take you back to Administrative Assistant appointment topic. We went through an interview process for the overwhelming number of applications received, back in July 2023 under the watchful eyes of our **then ICC Chair Binod Agarwalla**. We also hired an HR consultant to advice about pay, health, and safety, etc. A time sheet is sent to a consultant though the ICC Chair, who in turn raises the invoice which is directly paid to the staff from ISWA's account. All these monies come from the grant. The next ISWA MC would be eligible to reapply for this grant at the end of the three-year period. However, when ISWA become debt free, the current part-time fixed term employment contract for the Administrative Officer may need to be converted to a full-time position.

I must also thank our **Rakesh Bhan, Assistant Secretary** for his continued effort and all-round support.

Circling back to the topic of the Indian Community Centre, a lot of work has been completed in the past two years. We took inspiration from the quote that says, 'give a house to a woman and she will make it a home'. We inherited a building and now it is has become a hub for the Indian Community. From upgrading facilities to expanding services, we have transformed ICC into a vibrant centre that caters to the diverse needs of our community.

Continuing, the community connect magazine "**ISWA Pulse**" was initiated by the current MC in 2022 and is going strong with 7 editions published so far. This helps disseminate information and keeps the community connected with member Associations and community-run organisations.



As we reflect on these accomplishments, I would like to acknowledge the tireless efforts of the entire managing committee. Their dedication and commitment have been integral in driving ISWA's success in shaping a brighter future for our community. There is a lot of work that goes behind the scene for getting all the flyers and artwork done, which we manage internally.

In conclusion, our heartfelt gratitude to the admirable volunteers for their exemplary leadership and remarkable achievements. It has not gone unnoticed. Hand in hand, we will continue striving towards a future filled with even greater possibilities for our community.

I wish to thank each one of you for the opportunity to serve you. It's with immense gratitude and profound honour that I hand over the baton to the incoming President in the next few weeks. ISWA is growing, and hence it is crucial we continue to nourish the lovely organisation we all nurtured over the years. We cannot undervalue the responsibility we have to deliver quality services and support to our community.

Evidently, it has been an excellent year for ISWA. We have fostered all-round partnerships with multiple multi-cultural community-run organisations.

Our team has also provided support to victims of domestic violence. In the past year we have dealt with numerous cases and were able to help people in need through liaising with counsellors and other service providers. For confidentiality reasons, we cannot provide details, but this initiative has been deemed an essential service, especially for new migrants. We would like to thank **Communicate** and **Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Services** for the fortnightly counselling sessions they provide to our affected members. In addition to the assistance, we have provided for our community members with different needs, we had many ministers, politicians, departments agencies and sponsors meeting / inviting us for various matters related to people of Indian origin. This reaffirms the attention our Indian community is receiving at state and federal level conversations.

Our partner associations of all categories, community/spiritual/cultural/ sports, incorporated or not, etc. have been very busy doing an amazing job preserving our culture and teaching the next generation the best of both worlds. This has been a huge year for ISWA, and our successes have not come without its challenges. We have done our best to accommodate various sections of the community in all our endeavours. Despite our best efforts, we



are aware is always room for improvement and welcome your feedback. I now have a few acknowledgements to make.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our members

- **Life Members and the Life Member Representatives**

On behalf the committee, I extend my heartfelt thanks to our life members and all the 30 representatives. Thank you all for the amazing support and the volunteer work that you have done and will continue to do.

- **Partner Associations**

As I mentioned earlier there is great relevance to work done by various affiliated members. They are backbone of the structure that was created a few years ago for this peak body. I wish to thank each one of them for the amazing job that they do.

Our sincere thanks to **WA Government, politician from all sides, OMI, City of Perth, Lotterywest, government officials, City of Canning** for their continued support. A special mention to **Consul General Amarjeet Singh Takhi and the entire CGI office** for guidance and amazing support.

Our Sponsors and Partners

All these activities are not possible without the generous support from our major sponsors and partners – **Aussizz Migration & Educational Consultants, Murdoch University, Cikka Sangam, SBS, Perdman, Thejo Australia Pty Ltd, Legacy Iron, HSBC, and Perth Safety Deposit Boxes**. I would also like to thank all our **Platinum and Cooperate sponsors**, whom without their support would also not have been able to execute such wonderful events.

ISWA Volunteers

Associations like ISWA cannot run without consistent efforts and good will of volunteers and supporters. On behalf of ISWA, I thank each and every one of the many volunteers who have supported us throughout the year.

ISWA Management Committee

From the outside one may not get know the amount of work that goes into running an organisation such as ISWA or the many times that committee members and their family members go beyond reasonable expectations to ensure the future of ISWA.



I would like to thank the management committee members and their spouses who have volunteered to support the community through their commitment to ISWA. On behalf of the house, may I thank the MC and their spouses for supporting them:

- Deepak and Manisha Gupta
- Deepak and Rashmi Sharma
- Subrata and Rashi Bhattacharjee
- Rakesh and Jyoti Bhan
- Kirtida and Jignesh Shah
- Dr Divya and Sandeep Sharma
- Bindiya and Sanjeev Manchanda
- Rohan and Asheema Amlani
- Binod and Lalita Agarwalla
- Bithika and Gautam Kastha
- Jasjit and Nirbir Mann
- Veeranna and Rupa Sataraddi
- Sindhu Nair

Thanks & Regards,

Satish Nair

President, ISWA, 2022-24





