

What is Vaishnav Sangh

Vaishnav - The Vaishnav philosophy comes from Indian Vedic Culture. Vedic scriptures and the general Indian lifestyle gave all recognition and protection to Mother Nature. Our duty is to achieve a level of realization which will convince ourselves and humanity to act in such a way that no other living entities are unnecessarily harmed.

Key beliefs and values:

- Accept a spiritual way of life which does not allow those who follow this path to do any harm to others.
- Lead a vegetarian life. Do not eat meat, fish, or eggs. In this way we cultivate mercy and compassion within the heart.
- No drugs which put our physical, mental and spiritual well-being into jeopardy.
- Eat in a way which preserves the maximum energy for others.
- Meditate. It gives us strength and success.
- Associate with those who are like-minded and who embrace the Indian culture and values
- Never mistreat anyone.
- Love thy brother like thyself by giving them the best you have. And what is really the only valuable thing we have? Our sincerity and love.

Sangh – simply means an organized group of people with a shared aim or interest; an association or other organization.

Vaishnav Sangh of Sydney - Profile

Executive Summary:

Vaishnav Sangh of Sydney a not-for-profit organisation established in Sydney in 2001. Our main objective is to be a Service of Excellence within our community and in particular the Indian community, by upholding the Indian values and culture. We serve the cultural, educational and welfare needs of the Indian Australian Community.

Vaishnav Sangh of Sydney celebrates key festivals and events, conduct educational classes and provides and participates in cultural activities. We are looking for public and government support to establishing a permanent base where we can expand and continue to provide our services to the community.

Vision Statement:

To establish a permanent place for the Indian community, to preserve and promote educational and cultural activities. With the growing and expanding Indian Community, especially in the northwest region of Sydney, it is critical that support this community via our services.

We also aim to promote a strong vibrant, secular and multicultural relationship between the Indian and Australia communities.

Background in Sydney & activities

Vaishnav Sangh of Sydney (VS-SYD) was established in 2001 and has grown from strength to strength over the years. With the hard work and dedication of our volunteers, VS-SYD continues to grow in promoting Indian values and teachings.

We currently hold monthly events at Granville Town Hall and have the community join together for celebrations. At these gathering, we expect between 150 - 200 people. It's a great opportunity for the elderly, families and youngsters to get together. With an ageing population and elderly migrants to Aus, it is invaluable to involve them, keep them active and valued.

The organisation is managed by a professional committee of 7 people and supported by an army of volunteers. The volunteers provide services to the elderly, teachers for the young, cooking at the monthly events, plan for the events, formalise blood donation drives, amongst many other activities.

At these gatherings, we:

- organise and celebrate Indian Festivals (please refer to the 2018 schedule & photos)
- provide education to young children for their growth and development (language, art, drama, Indian culture)
- promote India culture and values amongst the Indian community
- welfare service for the elderly as required (social gatherings, food service)
- actively participate in the broader community eg volunteering, blood donation drives

As a Gujrati Community, we love to dance. At the monthly gatherings, we always hold Garba (folk dance) for about 30 minutes - which is accompanied by talented musicians.

Please see annual calendar of events for more details. We would hope to continue these activities and celebrations at the proposed Community Centre.

We also hold a three-day event annually, which is our main fund-raising event. **This will always be continued to be held at an external larger hall to cater for 500+ people, staging, sound, parking etc.** At this ticketed event, we invite a priest from India, local and overseas artist to perform dramas, music show, Indian feasts and other social activities – such as Garba (Gujrati folk dance). This event is attended by dignitaries, local & community politicians and other guests.

There are also many other social activities and gathering that we organise for community participation:

- Sports days for all ages
- Cruises
- Picnics
- Ticketed cultural music & dance events

These activities will continue to be held outside the proposed community centre.

There are many other ethnic community centres that promote their culture and heritage.

Croatian Community Centre - http://www.cawc.org.au/about_us.html

Dalmacija Sydney Croatian Club -

http://www.dalmacijasydney.com.au/dalmacija_sydney_croatian_club.html

Greek Orthodox Community - <http://www.goc.com.au/index.php/en/home/about-us>

The Australian Lebanese Christian Federation - <http://www.alcfed.org.au/index-2.html>

Use of and activities for the proposed Cultural & Community Centre:

Activities at the cultural & community Centre:

- Hold monthly community gatherings to celebrate key Indian festivals and a place of belonging for the community,
- Hold music and drama performances as part of the monthly activity,
- Conduct language, music and drama classes for young children,
- Promote and teach the Indian Hindu way of life, and
- Welfare for the elderly

1. Formal Monthly Community Events

We currently hold monthly events at hired venues and our plan is to hold them at the proposed Culture & Community Centre.

We organise 10 to 12 formal events a year, once a month on a Sunday between 4pm-7pm (plus pack up & cleaning time). Please see 2019 calendar below for more details.

- Monthly gatherings for the community, both social and to celebrate key Indian festivals
- Activities and classes for children and youth, as part of the monthly events
 - Bal Sabha (“children gathering”) classes for 5 - 11 years old. We teach Indian values and culture, dancing, drama and Gujrati language classes.
 - We conduct Kishor Pusti (Pusti generally means Nourishment or Endorsement) classes for 12 - 18 year old children. Similar to Bal Sabha, but in a little more in-depth.
 - Recently we have also commenced a Youth Wing (for 18 – 30 years), where they actively participate in assisting with the educational classes, organising social & cultural events. volunteering in their local community, eg Blood Donation drives, coordinate charitable activities in the local community

Month	Event
January	Kite flying festival
February	Festival of flowers
March	Holi – festival of colours
April	<i>Annual Fund Raising Event – held at another larger external venue</i>
May	Music, Drama and cultural presentation
June	Sports Day – venue varies and possibly held externally
July	Cultural Gujrati music & dance performance - children
August	Independence Day celebrations
September	Garba Dance
October	Diwali – festival of lights
November	Food festival
December	Annual picnic day

FREQUENCY OF USE AND PURPOSE

	WEEKDAYS (once to twice)	WEEKENDS	EVENT DAYS (12 times/year approx..)
No. of people	Up to 15	Up to 50	Up to 200
Time	Mostly between 5pm - 7 pm	Between 12pm to 7 pm	Between 2pm - 7 pm / Event time 4pm - 7pm
Purpose	Admin work, maintenance event preparation	Volunteers meeting, admin. work, site preparation, rehearsal	Community attendance, dramas, dance, singing, celebrating community events

At the end of each event, somehow all the people love to participate in a folk dance. We also then celebrate with an Indian feast. The community loves preparing and sharing their culinary skills with the community. Many of the volunteers bring food to the events to share.

2. Monthly Committee Meeting

In organising the monthly events, the committee of 7 people and volunteers will meet once a month (generally two weeks before the event) at the venue to discuss and finalise the plans. These meetings would be held on the weekend, lasting for 3-4 hours.

Volunteers may revisit the site a week before the events to lock in the plan and add any finishing touches, including any decorations. This also gives us the opportunity to clean and maintain the property.

3. Other opportunities

In the short term, there is no plan to open the facilities for public hire. Once established, we would consider hiring for family events, birthdays etc... As this is an Indian based community centre, the serving of alcohol or non-vegetarian food would not be allowed.

Over time we would also seek feedback from the community for other uses for the facility, as long as they are compliant and within the approved usage of the centre by the committee.

We do not consider this as a place of worship

With any Indian place of worship, there are certain processes, daily rituals, particular practices and all conducted by a qualified priest. We will not have any priest on site for any of our education or cultural activities. In particular, there are NO daily, weekly or monthly prayer meetings, worship of deities or religious practices. There will be nobody residing at the centre.

At any Indian place of worship, there are certain specific daily rituals with a priest on site. There are several examples of these in Sydney – Sri Mandir Auburn; ISKCON temple; Gurdwara Sahib Glenwood; Nan Tien Buddhist Temple.

Background:

There was an earlier Community Centre in Granville owned by the Gujrati Samaj of NSW...and due to poor organisation structure and internal differences, after approx. 8 years it closed and sold it off.

With a new structure, generous public support, we are trying to re-establish a Community Centre for the Indian Community.

Our objectives and purpose are similar to these organisations.

Australian Chinese Community Association of NSW

<http://www.acca.org.au/drupal/en/about-acca-4>

ACCA is a non-political, non-religious, and a not-for-profit organisation that was specifically formed to serve the Chinese-Australian community in New South Wales. Since its foundation in 1974, ACCA has been providing community services such as aged home care, aged day care, dementia service, interest classes and Chinese language classes as well as organising various cultural and Chinese festival events throughout the year. ACCA has also organised and been involved in various activities promoting multiculturalism and anti-racism as well as fundraising for victims of natural disasters.



The Australian Lebanese Christian Federation Inc. is a (Non-Profit) Charitable Association

<http://www.alcfed.org.au/services.html>

