

GCHCA from Youth's Perspective...

By Ishvar and Vikram

THE recent increase of immigrant numbers from a plethora of different countries has added to the beauty and richness of Gold Coast's cultural diversity.

The presence of the Hindu community on the Gold Coast has also grown from strength to strength and the Gold Coast Hindu Cultural Association (GCHCA) has recognised the urgent need to build infrastructures that support the social and cultural development of younger members in the community.

This initiative, however, can only be achieved through the continuous efforts of all members in the community, and more specifically the youth. Since its inception, GCHCA has endeavoured to increase youth participation through a range of strategies including building youth leadership and encouraging volunteerism at community events. Young people have also been actively encouraged to contribute their time and ideas to the development of the upcoming Hindu Cultural Precinct.

After a year of planning the design of the precinct (which will include a temple, cultural and educational centres), the blood, sweat and tears of the numerous volunteers and association members have led to significant progress.

The GCHCA achieved a major milestone in late February 2016. The final lease registration of the land at Arundel has finally happened with the Gold Coast City Council and Queensland State Government (Department of Natural Resources and Mines) giving their assent and registering the title with the land registry.

GCHCA is quite close to filing the Building Application (BA) with the building certifier, having obtained the Development Approval (DA) about a year ago. GCHCA actively sought input from all sections of the community including the Youth Group that we belong to. In addition to this, GCHCA succeeded in obtaining financial support from GCHCA friends and supporters to the tune of \$80K within the past few months alone. Significantly, GCHCA was one of the successful applicants for a federal infrastructure grant from the Stronger Communities Programme (Federal Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development). The



• Engineers making final checks on the structural design.

federal infrastructure grant is solely for the development and building of the community square. The community square consists of a monastery-like retreat, a peaceful and tranquil place for the community to gather, hold functions and celebrate. The community square would be surrounded by neatly kept green lawns with a forest at the back, neatly maintained flower garden, running water, a fountain and a guardian Ganesh in the front. It would be a peaceful retreat for visitors to the Gold Coast Hindu Cultural Precinct. GCHCA will be starting this stage of the project soon (as early as July 2016) and is actively looking forward to your ideas to make it an absolutely unique place for the community and visitors from far and wide.

A/Prof. Muthu (Vice President) speaking to the Youth Group has acknowledged the support of the community and especially the Youth Group in taking the project this far in such a short time. A/Prof Muthu said support arrived in many forms: voluntary, intellectual, monetary, moral etc. For example, community engineers have done and still doing all the design work: civil, hydraulics, structural, architectural, electrical, landscape design, etc. The design teams are working collaboratively from as far as Melbourne, Sydney and here in Brisbane and Gold Coast. A/Prof. Muthu said GCHCA appreciates every contribution made by volunteers and intends to engrain all contributors in the list

of **builders of the precinct** for the benefit of future generations. Mr. Rathinam Srinivasan (Treasurer) speaking to us added that all surveying work has been completed, and building works are about to begin at 9 Dunkirk Road, Arundel!

A proudly inclusive organization, GCHCA welcomes interested parties from all over the nation to participate and contribute to this historic project.

If you would like to become a member of GCHCA or contribute to the construction of the Hindu cultural precinct on the Gold Coast, you can contact GCHCA through email at gchcan@gmail.com.

For further information, see the GCHCA website at culture.goldcoasthindu.org.

Donations of \$2 and above to the GCHCA building Donations Account is tax deductible.

<http://www.abn.business.gov.au/SearchByAbn.aspx?abn=14153639953>

You may get further information about this here: <http://culture.goldcoasthindu.org/donations/>

The GCHCA youth group thanks all of you for making the journey with us so far and enjoy you to continue the journey so that we can make this a one-of-a-kind Hindu Cultural Precinct worthy of visitors from all over the world to come and enjoy and spend a few hours on their visit to Gold Coast.