

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF AIMGA – UIA PARTNERSHIP**

Fun-filled friendly socialising built on a platform of professional camaraderie and along way providing philanthropic service to the community. Such is the nature of AIMGA!

However, this happy situation did not come about easily. Although Indian-origin Medical Practitioners both internationally and locally trained, are a highly respected bulwark in the Australian health care system, initial migrant Doctors faced challenges of not just settling into a new country but also problems with Registration, recognition of qualifications and also that of building up trust within society at large due to the previous White Australia policies.

Through the 1990s, AIMGA's precursor organisation OMGA worked hard to overcome many of these hurdles by liaising with Australian Medical Council (AMC) to have a fair and just system of registration. Founding member of AIMGA Dr Hem Rao worked tirelessly to bring this about. Although initially meant to cater for only overseas trained medical graduates, the organisation later evolved to include locally trained medical graduates and the name was changed to OAMGA. With further evolution into more Indian-origin centric practitioners, the name AIMGA was formally incorporated in 2008.

Many of the issues faced by Indian origin Doctors also affected the wider Indian community in NSW and a need for a broader community organisation was felt necessary. In another pioneering move, Dr Hem Rao along with others including Dr Sid Orekondy and Ms Sumati Advani established India League and later in 1994 formally constituted it as United Indian Associations (UIA).

UIA is an umbrella body of different Indian-origin cultural, linguistic and professional organisations and AIMGA is proudly one of its founding members. Interests and aims of AIMGA and UIA overlap and not surprisingly AIMGA has been a consistent long-term supporter of UIA activities including providing the popular voluntary health checks at UIA's Annual Fair. These were run for many years by Dr Sundar with able support from Dr Nagamma Prakash and Dr Navin Patel. Happily after the pandemic, this has been recommenced by Dr Hingorani and the current Executive. AIMGA is a highly respected member of UIA and AIMGA members Dr Sid Orekondy and Dr Prabhat Sinha have served as past Presidents of UIA but as representatives of other organisations. Current UIA President Dr Sunil Vyas is the first President of UIA to have been elected as AIMGA's nominee.

Although Australia has developed into one of the finest multicultural societies in the world, challenges remain. Most people are not aware that unlike Doctors from 'preferred countries' many Doctors from the Sub Continent and Middle East who are Permanent Residents or Citizens and who have passed AMC examinations or their components face huge barriers due to catch-22 situations such as requiring a job offer for provisional registration and the latter requiring an offer of a job for registration! Recency of experience in relevant fields is another barrier. These difficulties from the Medical Board, State and Federal Health bureaucracies prevent utilisation of this dormant medical workforce in spite of Doctor shortages during and subsequent to the pandemic. Not just these Doctors but also their families suffer secondary health, financial and social problems and certainly is not in keeping with Australia's ethos of a "Fair Go" for all.

A team comprising Dr Ayaz Chowdhuri (Bangla Desh Medical Associations) A/Prof Dr Ahmad Alrubae (Iraqi Medical Association), Dr Imran Kassam (Pakistan Medical Association) and Dr Sunil Vyas (AIMGA and UIA ) have been working over the last few years to try and overcome these hurdles.

All these challenges illustrate the continuing need for a strong voice in solidarity of long-standing honourable organisations such as AIMGA and UIA for the benefit of Doctors and Australians of Indian origin.

Happy 40th Anniversary to AIMGA and long may it flourish!

**(Dr Sunil Vyas UIA President, Former AIMGA President 2015-2018)**

# UIA Fair Participation Photos



2022



2022



2022



2022



2014



2010



2007



2009



2006



2005