




First Sikh Gurdwara and 2003 Sikhs in Australia

Posted by [Roger Atwal](#)  on Thursday, 5/08/2003 7:52 PM MDT updated 17 April 2023

Sat sri akal,

As many of you may be aware, Australia is a home to significant number of Sikhs. The first Sikh elders came to Australia in the late 19th Century to work on sugarcane fields.

I am a grandchild (3rd generation Australian Born) of one of those early Sikh settlers. My kids are fourth generation Australian Sikhs and loving it. We are forever thankful to our ancestors for us to be so blessed so we may live in a country like Australia.

Australia being such a large country and very sparsely populated, its challenge to get all the Sikhs/Punjabis together once a year to hold event of any type. But we do it, and we get together each year in different city or town to hold Sikh/Punjabi Games. The games are always held over the easter long weekend, this year (2003) the games were held in town/city of Coffs Harbour located in the State of New South Wales on the eastern seaboard. This part of Australia is considered to have the best climate

Children of those early settler, also made many sacrifices and working under very trying conditions. But they endured and their children and grandchildren are reaping the benefits. Our parents followed a vision of building The First Sikh Gurdwara (Temple) in Australia. The First Sikh Gurdwara (Temple) was officially opened in 1968 Woolgoolga by Senator Wright, Federal Minister for Works.

The First Sikh Gurdwara (Temple) was built with collective generosity of the following men and their families.

Mr Mangha S Atwal was kind enough to allow the Local Sikh community to acquire the very valuable land which he could have easily kept himself, where the First Sikh Gurdwara now stands. Mr Mangha S Atwal put the interest of the Sikh Community above himself, for which he will always be remembered.

Other elders who contributed to the build by mortgaging their personal assets for bank loan and donating funds are as follows....

Mr Piara S Ratandia, Mr William S Malhi, Mrs Jagir S Sodhi, Mr Gurbakhsh S Atwal, Mr Naranjin S More, Mr James Guljara S Malhi.

Thus the First Sikh Gurdwara (Temple) was built a Sikh Community not by any one individual or family.

It was an honour to be part of hard working and unselfish 2003 Australian Annual Sikh/Punjabi Games Organizing Committee. The games were a great success and all those who attended, and there were many thousands had a great time. Free Breakfast and Lunch were provided to all who attended.

No financial burden was imposed on the Sikh local community, significant monetary and in-kind donations were made by the larger local business community to whom the

Games Organizing are very thankful. Without them providing free meals and covering other expenses in organizing the games would not have been possible. 2003 Sikh games set the standard that has not been matched and were considered to be best games ever.

The Sikh Games are a magnet for Sikhs from all over Australia and Southeast Asia, to get together. Its great way to catch up with old friends and make new ones.

Sikhs for ever

Best regards

R Atwal