

Namaskaram and Kia ora,

The past year has been a busy year for WMA connecting families and whanau, building friendships, and supporting each other.

WMA 2022-2023 Event Report

Below mentioned are the activities carried out by WMA for the year 2022-23.

- We realized that we don't have a huge amount of awareness about what good mental health is, what it looks like, and how we can each work to build it. That's why we decided to conduct a **Mental Health Awareness Talk & Wellbeing campaign** in July 2022 – well-being is important! Growing good mental health is so important that promoting well-being is one of the key strands of the new national suicide prevention strategy.

- On 06 September 2022, we gathered to celebrate our flagship celebration Onam event - **Onam Nilaavu**. About 450 people gathered to attend this annual event conducted at Forum North, Whangarei with over 60 performers presenting various items.

The chief guest for the Onam Nilaavu 2022 event was Sheryl Mai, Mayor, of Whangārei.

Other dignitaries and guests in attendance include Dr. Emily Henderson (Whangārei MP), Dr. Shane Reti (List MP National Party Whangārei), Nicholas Connop (Councillor WDC), Vince Cocurullo (Councillor WDC), Mario Kake (Ethnic Liaison Officer Northland Police)

We also took this opportunity to felicitate and thank Sheryl Mai, who was stepping down from office.

The Onam 2022 flyer was unveiled by Dr. Emily Henderson, MP in July 2022.

Guests were served the traditional 'Onam Sadhya' - which is a feast of Kerala origin consisting of a variety of traditional vegetarian dishes usually served on a banana leaf. Sadhya means banquet in Malayalam. There were 25 items on the menu. A Pookalam (Floral carpet) was laid too. Various cultural programs including Pulikali, Chenda melam, Thiruvathira, and other classical dance forms were presented.

- Sports Day - 28 August 2022

No Onam is ever complete without experiencing the fun and thrill of the various sports competitions that are tagged along with it. Various sports items including Vadam vali (Tug of war), Badminton, Lemon and Spoon race, Sack race, and many more games added to the joy of this festive season.

- We collaborated with the Northland Police to organize a **Crime Awareness & Prevention Hui** for the members of the community on 31 Jul 2022. This was a time to deepen our understanding of Crime Prevention.

- **Christmas Gathering 2022** was organized on 26 Nov 2022 at Whangarei Intermediate School with Circus Kumarani, Face painting for children, and a delicious dinner.

- **Easter Vishu Oruma 2023**

About 240 people gathered at Whangarei Boys High School on 06 May to celebrate this important event on the festival calendar of Keralites. The community got together to celebrate Easter, which marks the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and Vishu which marks the start of a new year.

-WMA FIFA World Cup **Predict and Win contest** in collaboration with Thommans Grocers. Lucky dip prizes were distributed to the winners.

-We have also lent out a helping hand to support families financially when a medical need arose and carried out various **fundraising activities** to support the community during Cyclone Gabrielle. With the support of many generous helping hands, we were able to contribute to the Whangarei Mayoral Relief Fund during this state of National Emergency.

-WMA Website

This was long in the pipeline and finally turned into a reality this year. I would like to acknowledge Mr. Jolly and Mr. Gintomon for their efforts in making this a reality.

I would like to wrap up by taking this opportunity to acknowledge and thank my committee members who volunteered their time for guiding, supporting, and sharing their wisdom over the past year. Also, a big thank you to the amazing volunteers, they are the backbone of any organization, and without them, this would not have been possible.

Last but not least a wholehearted thanks from our entire committee to the Malayalee and the wider community in Whangarei. Your support allows us to continue to fulfill our mission and serve people in our community each year.

Thank you!

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Rabin Ranji
Secretary

Whangarei Malayalee Association (WMA) 2022-23