

MEDIA RELEASE

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Cudgewa's newest Aussies

On Tuesday 19 April 2016, the Delpitiya family of Cudgewa became Towong Shire's newest Australian citizens.

Del and Taan Delpitiya's journey started many years ago while they still lived in Sri Lanka when, in 2001, Del began building a ship. At that time Del was a tea plantation Manager and Taan was a school teacher. They made a commitment that wherever they went the ship would travel with them.

It took six years to complete and finally in 2007 together with their sons Budvin and Chenul, the family set sail. They anchored at Pambegama for a year, Haughton for another and then in Avonlea Hill where Del again managed a tea plantation. Taan was a well recognised physical education instructor/teacher.

But the time had come for the family to make the big decision about the boys schooling. The family explored possibilities of migrating to the West. "There were many things to consider" said Del and "Australia was considered the best." Continuing their love of sailing they set sail in 2009 and anchored on the shores of Mandurah, a regional city south of Perth.

Del says he was walking the streets to find a job, they couldn't find a house and they had to stay in a motel – this meant savings were running low. After 14 days Del found a job and within a month Taan found employment too.

But Del was not happy, Del said "I wanted to be with my plants, the soil and the animals" so he kept an eye out for jobs in agriculture. "After about 50 rejections I was nearly done, when Taan found a job in Dairy Farming" he said. Bill and Pam Simpson of the Cudgewa Valley were looking for someone to work with them in the dairy business. Del was very enthusiastic and persuaded Bill that he and Taan were 'right for the job'.

Three months later the family was on The Indian Pacific on their way to Cudgewa - the place of 'pure escape'. It was a long journey, through red, rugged country for days on end. Del said his heart sank at the landscape and seriously wondered how on earth Agriculture can survive in this country.

That was six years ago. The family has been working ever since in the dairy business and say Bill and Pam Simpson have been the mast of the ship over these years, holding them above the waters in the rough seas and providing a home away from home.

Since making their lives in Cudgewa, Del quotes Napoleon Bonaparte, "We are the masters of our fate, we are the captains of our soul" and advises that "the ship is now anchored".