



The name Punjab comes from the Persian words "Punj" meaning five and "ab" meaning water - a misnomer, as the region has only two rivers, the Sutlej and the Beas. The Punjab is situated in north-west India and is mainly agricultural with many crops watered by irrigation, making Pukekohe an appropriate new home for settlers, who began arriving in the 1930s. Punjabis are the second largest Indian community in Franklin. Members of the New Zealand Punjabi Cultural Association gather from all over the country in Pukekohe for Baisakhi. The association's objective is to ensure children born in New Zealand remain close to their roots, receiving and passing on the ancient culture and traditions.

The Punjabi culture and traditions are ancient, based in an area dating back before the Indus Valley civilisation in 3000BC, making it one of the earliest civilisations in human history. It is a fertile and picturesque land with many ancient and sacred buildings.



Baisakhi is more than an annual celebration of harvest time for New Zealand based Punjabi. It is a time to gather and rejoice with dance and song, with fun and laughter, and honour the colourful rich tapestry of life from a beloved homeland.

Once more, the Pukekohe Indian Association Hall filled with people gathering from all over the country to mark Baisakhi. Poets spoke with emotion about the beauties of the Punjab, people reunited chattered happily and the children danced. Colour and energy mingled with a delightful mix of traditional and modern, as youngsters proudly showed off modern street dance techniques to a background of Punjabi music, while Bollywood came to life onstage. As always, the children best expressed the goals of organisers, the Punjabi Cultural Association - to pass on the old traditions and carry an ancient and proud heritage forward into a modern world.

