



# WALKING IN RESPECT...

**A** STRONG contingent from Mens Wellbeing (above) took part in the inaugural Men Respect (MR) Walk on the Gold Coast in early February.

The MR Walk (MR stands for 'Men Respect') is about promoting a positive image of men in society and the fact that:

- Men do make a very positive contribution to society in many ways but the public perception can often be the opposite.
- Men do have a deep respect for women and children.
- Men should respect themselves as men and the many positive things they contribute as good citizens, fathers, grandfathers, uncles, husbands, boyfriends and good role models for our boys and our young men.

- Males need to be nurtured from infant through boyhood and managed into manhood with strong male role models.

The walk was initiated by local Councillor Bob La Castra following a seminar entitled Boys To Men. It looks set to become an annual event and Cr La Castra said he hoped to have it adopted nation-wide throughout the NRL.

The inaugural 2.2km walk, hosted by the Gold Coast Titans, drew a crowd of

400 despite a disappointing lack of publicity from the media.

An equal number of men and women took part, many pushing prams and walking with their families. Also walking in support were firemen, ambos and senior police, including Gold Coast Assistant Commissioner Paul Wilson.

Mens Wellbeing stalwart Simon Santosha (right), as Centacare's senior practitioner for Men and Family Relationships, played a pivotal role in the walk, addressing the crowd at the start.

Simon told the crowd that children's, and particularly boys' perception of men is too negative and needs to change.

"The images they get are mostly from video games, TV or the news – much of which are negative - so they don't learn what it's like to be a man in the real world.

"These negative stories of men have a strong influence on our community attitudes and values and more importantly shaping the views of our boys and young men," said Simon.

"Boys naturally look towards men to challenge, guide and help them become good men. The transition from boy to manhood can be a very difficult stage. If positive male role models are absent dur-



ing this developmental stage, by and large young men will find their own, who may be less than ideal. This can lead to poor life choices."

Asst Comm Wilson said: "The community can never have enough positive male role models. If there are more men taking time and care to create a positive influence on the transition of boys through to men then it can only help bring positive results and better social outcomes."

- PAUL MISCHESKI