



Hindu Organisations, Temples and Associations Forum

(Coordinated by Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia Inc – www.vhp.org.au / www.vhpnsw.org.au)

Jai SriKrishna

The Hindu community of New South Wales came together for the 9th Annual HOTA meeting on 17th June 2023 at Sri Mandir, Auburn NSW. The event was organized in a grand style by the incoming host Sri Mandir, which incidentally was the first registered Hindu temple of Australia established in 1977.

HOTA (Hindu Organisations, Temples and Associations) is a forum of Hindu temples and other Hindu organisations working together to discuss and deliberate various topics of common interest, issues, ideas and opportunities with the objective of enhancing community service and preservation of Hindu culture.

Since the HOTA launch year, the following organisations have hosted the event.

- 2014 - Sydney Sri Ayyappa Temple
- 2015 – Shri Shiv Mandir, Minto
- 2016 - Shri Venkateswara Temple, Helensburgh
- 2017 – Shri Ram Krishna Temple, Austral
- 2018 – Mukti Gupteshwar Mandir, Minto
- 2019 & 2020 – Sydney Shri Sai Mandir, Regents Park
(2020 Online meeting due to Covid-19 pandemic)
- 2021 – Hare Krishna Cultural and Community Centre (HKCCC – ISKCON West Sydney)
- 2022 – BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir, Rosehill

The theme of this year's meeting was "Unity is our Strength". Thanks to the continued support from the Hindu organisations, this year witnessed 90 representatives from 45 Hindu organisations comprising Temples, community language schools, community-based organisations and associations participating in the forum. Representatives from each organisation presented the concept of Sanghe Shakti Kaliyuge (Organisation is Strength) from various perspectives and the ways to build unity amongst the Hindu organisations. This session clearly demonstrated the message that Swami Vigyananand ji, International Coordinator of VHP Bharat quotes in his speech, "*HOTA demonstrates that there is definitely added strength and value in sharing resources, networking, collaborating and working together...*".

The proceedings of the day were well managed by the young Ketan Parmar from Sri Mandir volunteering team as the Master of Ceremony. The special guests for the event included Hon Chris Bowen, Federal Energy Minister, Hon Julia Finn, Member of Parliament (Granville), Hon Suman Saha, Deputy Mayor, Cumberland Council and Hon Raj Datta, Councillor, Strathfield Council.

The event started with a prayer and lighting of the lamp by dignitaries and hosts from Sri Mandir, Auburn. Shri Chand Chadha, President of Sri Mandir, welcomed all the

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dignitaries and attending representatives from various Hindu organisations. Shri Ramarathinam, HOTA Coordinator, presented a HOTA video covering the history of NSW HOTA forum since its launch in 3rd Australian National Hindu Conference 2014. It was then followed with a video presentation of World Hindu Congress to be held in Bangkok, Thailand from Nov 24 - 26, 2023. Shri Subramanian Ramamoorthi, President of VHP Australia, who is also a member of Religious Advisory Committee in Australian Defence, welcomed the guests and highlighted few key messages regarding Hindu Chaplaincy in Australian Defence,

The chief guest, Federal Energy Minister Hon Chris Bowen spoke about the contributions of Hindu and Indian community in Australia. Hon Julia Finn, Member for Granville highlighted her long association with Hindu community and Sri Mandir. The Cumberland Council Deputy Mayor Hon Suman Saha and Strathfield Councillor Raj Datta spoke about the contributions from the Indian community particularly the Hindus across the state and their roles as Councillors in maintaining and developing harmony among the various communities.

As a part of the proceedings, Shri Rajanibhai Patel representing BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir, Rosehill (2022 HOTA host), handed over the HOTA baton to Shri Chand Chadha, President of Sri Mandir, the incoming host for 2023. Federal Minister Hon Chris Bowen presented a certificate to BAPS – Swaminarayan Mandir acknowledging their HOTA related services in 2022.

The host organisation provided sumptuous vegetarian lunch at the end of the proceedings.

The key points raised by the HOTA members during the presentation focussed on the following:

- Feasibility of issuing one common festival calendar that can be followed by all Hindu organisations
- Need for establishing Hindu schools in NSW
- Need for on-line and in-person legal helpline for Hindus and Hindu organisations
- Necessity of Hindus participation in political parties of their choice and be a part of decision-making process
- How the Temples and Hindu organisations should go about setting up modern security system by taking advantage of the sanctioned State and Federal grants

Looking forward to see you all again during ‘Raksha Bandhan’ event in Aug / Sep 2023. A formal invitation will be sent to all HOTA member organisations once date is finalised.

Please see few photos of the 2023 HOTA Forum and share with your community. More photos will be available in the near future via web link.

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