

HOTA Forum 2018 at Mukti-Gupteshwar Mandir, Minto

The HOTA NSW Team organized the 5th Annual HOTA Forum meeting at Mukti-Gupteshwar Mandir, Minto on Sunday, 29th April 2018. 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.

HOTA was launched by Sri Swami Vigyananand Ji at 3rd Australian National Hindu Conference in April 2014. Since then the following organizations have been hosting the event.

2014 - Sydney Sri Ayyappa Temple

2015 – Shri Shiv Mandir, Minto

2016 - Shri Venkateswara Temple, Helensburgh

2017 – Shri Ram Krishna Temple, Austral

This year Mukti-Gupteshwar Mandir hosted the event at their Mandir premises on 29th April, 2018. More than 20 temples and Hindu cultural associations came together and presented their contributions and future ideas for community service, which will never be possible by working individually in isolation. Quoting Swami Ji, *“HOTA demonstrates that there is definitely added strength and value in sharing resources, networking, collaborating and working together...”*.

VHP HOTA representative spoke on the vision, benefits of conducting HOTA Forum as an annual project by networking and collaborating on a common platform. He also presented evidence on how similar HOTA Forums have benefited the cause of preserving Hindu culture and enhancing community service in other countries such as USA and New Zealand. He highlighted how HOTA has been taken into international platform as a part of World Hindu Congress, first of which was held in New Delhi, Bharat in 2014. He presented a video on the forthcoming 2nd World Hindu Congress scheduled to be held in Chicago, USA during 7-9 September, 2018 coinciding with Swami Vivekananda’s memorable speech at Chicago in 1893.

Sri Prem Misra, founder of Mukti-Gupteshwar Mandir extended a warm welcome to the participating delegates and briefly explained about the origin of Mukti-Gupteshwar Mandir, the abode of 13th Jyothirlingam. He also highlighted the community service rendered by temple through various programs at the mandir premises.

The HOTA baton was handed over by Sri Sushil Kumar of Ram Krishna Temple, Austral to Sri Prem Misra and Smt Rama Misra founders of Mukti-Gupteshwar Mandir.

During the mid-session, 3 groups were formed for brainstorming on what the needs of Hindu community and how it can be addressed.

Group 1 – Temples came up with the following points:

- Major festive events – calendar linking different events
- Organization as host and create a link for individual temple and put it in HOTA forum

- Providing premises facility to host events (Mukti-Gupteshwar Mandir) – weddings, other events
- Counselling services – already on board. If others are willing they can join. Over the phone services also possible
- Mutually facilitating manpower (volunteers) specializing in different area – current problem is lack of adequate skilled volunteers
- Annual event for hosting community-based participants
- Channels for procurement – fruits, flowers, etc

The representatives from Mukti-Gupteshwar Mandir and Sydney Sri Ayyappa Temple agreed to take the above points for further follow-up tasks.

Group 2 – Service Organizations came up with the following points and identified the person / organizations to lead each of these areas:

- Focus on youth & youth camps – VHP Australia
- Indian games - Ajoy, Hindu Council
- Indian matrimonial – Ashok Vadera
- Vedic education – already happening – more opportunities - Jaishankar
- Blood donation – Sewa Australia
- Migrants assistance – job services – Sewa Australia

Group 3 – Associations came up with the following list of action items:

- Volunteering
- Review of progress on action items each quarter - HOTA Forum
- Resources to develop skills among volunteers through HOTA website - Shubasree Sanjeevan
- VHP projects promotion for more community awareness - Akila
- Meeting needs of Indian Senior Citizens - Dave
- Promotion of language and cultural activities thru HOTA website – Akshay Agarwal
- Fund raising and coordination – Sushil Kumar
- Prevent events clashing - thru coordinated effort by publishing in advance – HOTA Team
- Promote Hindustani classical music – Tamal, Manoj
- Make Hindu culture and tradition as relevant to other Australian communities – Raj Datta
- Create website for HOTA for publishing activities all participating organizations – HOTA Team

In each of the above areas, the nominated representative will develop further action plan, follow-up and keep updating the other representing organisations through HOTA media.

HOTA Team representatives will get in touch with the representatives on a regular frequency (at least once per month) to ascertain the progress and send updates to other HOTA team members. If appropriate, HOTA team will organize a quarterly meeting for fast tracking the progress.

The summary of outcome will be presented in 2019HOTA Annual meeting.

The 2019 host of HOTA is to be decided. Please advise if your organization is willing to take the role.

The current year host Mukti-Gupteshwar Mandir will be hosting Raksha Bhandan on Saturday, 25th August 2018 at the Mandir premises. A formal invite will be sent to all HOTA member organizations in due course.

Here are a couple of photos for your viewing. More photos can be viewed using the link below.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ruQFv83i3o6yywQLdzXOmbcXpHCGxljF>

