



Hindu Organisations, Temples and Associations Forum

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

Jai Swaminarayan

The Hindu community of New South Wales came together for the Annual HOTA meeting on 30th April 2022 at BAPS Swami Narayan Mandir, Rosehill, NSW. The event was organized in a grand style by the incoming host BAPS Swami Narayan mandir. This year marked the 8th year of HOTA Forum Annual meeting since the launch year 2014.

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

(In the year 2020, the event was not organized due to Covid-19 pandemic)

2021 – Hare Krishna Cultural and Community Centre (HKCCC – ISKCON West Sydney)

HOTA meeting this year witnessed a record attendance of 80 representatives from over 40 Hindu Organisations comprising Temples, community language schools, community-based organisations and associations participated. Representatives from each organisation presented their future vision for the next 2 years and how they plan to increase the strength of their volunteers. The presentation from some of the organisations were eye-openers for other organisations. In particular, Jai Desai ji, the representative from the host organisation BAPS explained the concept of volunteerism that covers the entire family in all facets of Hindu Dharma and the way to nourish the knowledge and retain volunteerism. 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 Shriya and Bhumi Patel ji from BAPS volunteers’ team. The special guests for the event included Hon Mark Latham, Member of Parliament (One Nation Party), Labor Party Clr Raj Datta from Strathfield and Liberal Party Clr Sreeni Pillamarri from Hornsby Shire Council.

The event started with a prayer and lighting of the lamp by dignitaries and Smt. Leele Gune from Sri Mandir, Auburn. Shri Ramarathinam, HOTA Coordinator presented a HOTA

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video followed with a brief speech about the history of NSW HOTA forum since its launch in 3rd Australian National Hindu Conference 2014, organized by VHP Australia in Sydney. It was then followed by a presentation by Shri Jai Desai on BAPS Swami Narayan Mandir initiatives and how they develop and maintain volunteers. The VHP President Shri Subramanian Ramamoorthi who is also a member of Religious Advisory Committee in Australian Defence spoke on the concept of Hindu Chaplaincy in Australian Defence,

The chief guest Hon Mark Latham spoke about the contributions of Hindu and Indian community in Australia. He highlighted how the new migrants from India quickly settle down with employment without being a burden to the country. He also cited the number of new migrants from India acquiring property in North West and South West suburbs of Sydney. He was proud of the Indian community who have been contributing to NSW's multi-culturalism in a big way. Clr Sreeni Pillamarri and Clr Raj Datta spoke about the contributions from the Indian community across the country and their roles as Councillors in maintaining and developing harmony among the various communities.

As a part of the proceedings, Shri Vijay Gopikesh Das Prabhu representing HKCCC - Hare Krishna Cultural and Community Centre (2021 HOTA host), handed over the HOTA baton to Shri Rajanibhai Patel, Director of BAPS Swami Narayan Mandir, the incoming host for 2022. Hon MP Mr. Mark Latham presented a certificate to HKCCC acknowledging their HOTA related services in 2021.

The host organisation provided sumptuous vegetarian breakfast in the morning and lunch at the end of the proceedings.

The major outcomes of the 8th Annual HOTA meeting were:

- The host organisation BAPS demonstrated the openness to uniting communities and share valuable tips to developing and connecting all ages of volunteers to serve the society.
- Assistance offered by various institutions to strengthen the HOTA network amongst all Hindu organisations and share volunteer resources among them during their major events.
- Willingness by organisations to come together for an united approach to represent common issues pertaining to Hindu community to the government authorities for better resolution.

Looking forward to see you all again during 'Raksha Bandhan' event in August 2022. A formal invitation will be sent to all HOTA member organisations once date is finalised.

Please see few photos of 2022 HOTA Forum meeting day and share with your community. More photos will be available in the near future via web link.

Namaste & Jai Swaminarayan

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