



# Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia Inc.

## World Hindu Council

ABN: 78862155168, Reg No: Y2898719, Charity No: CFN10709

### MEDIA RELEASE

#### **Israeli Community is Inalienable from Australian Multiculturalism**

The Hindu Australian community strongly condemns the campaign by BDS Australia calling for artists to withdraw from the Sydney Festival in protest of sponsorship provided by the Israeli government.

Israel and Australia have had diplomatic relations since the Australian government of Ben Chifley recognised Israel on 28 January 1949 and Australia was the first country to vote in favour of the UN Partition Plan in 1947.

The festival, which started in 1977, is one of Australia's largest annual cultural celebrations, which is valued by both Australian and the international community. As a part of their fund-raising efforts, the festival organisers approached the Israeli government for sponsorship, which they kindly provided without any conditions.

Calls for cancelling participation in Sydney festival for this insignificant reason will prevent exchange of opinions or culture, especially in today's world which is increasingly politically divided and (recently) separated due to COVID pandemic.

Such divisive and destructive movements not only adversely affect Australia's relationships with our most trusted ally, Israel but also sows the seed of misunderstandings between the Australian community, about some political agenda that does not even have anything to do with us.

Especially in times of COVID when Australian hospitality and entertainment workers are already suffering, this irrelevant movement will harm our own community members.

Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia condemns, a politically motivated and misleading information campaign against the Sydney Festival and which is not only against the principles of justice and fairness held dearly in Australia but is also a threat to our spirit of multiculturalism and of artistic expression.

We have full confidence and faith in the organisers of the Sydney Festival and the Australian community that we will together make the Australia's most important festival a grand success.

**Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu** - Let the whole world exist in peace and harmony!

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**Australia's largest Hindu organisation**

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