



Hon. JING LEE MLC

Working for all
South Australians.

12 September 2019

Mr Rajendra Pandey

President, Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia Inc. (SA)
(World Hindu Council of Australia)

Convenor, Hindu Organisations Temples and Associations (HOTA) Forum
PO Box 460, Goodwood SA 5034

Dear Rajendra

It is with great pleasure that I inform you that on Wednesday, 11th September 2019, I had the great honour to move an important motion in Parliament of South Australia to congratulate the **Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia (VHP)** for hosting the **Hindu Organisations, Temples and Associations Forum of South Australia (HOTA SA)** and **Raksha Bandhan Festival in 2019**.

This historical motion recognises the importance of the establishment of HOTA-SA Forum. The motion shines the spotlight on VHP and HOTA partners. More importantly, it allows the legacy and great work of the Hindu Community of South Australia to be documented on the public record in the Legislative Council of the South Australian Parliament, for this generation to acknowledge and future generations to remember.

Once again, my heartfelt congratulations to everyone involved, particularly to the volunteers and award recipients for their outstanding achievements and contributions.

Thank you to VHP and Hindu Women Forum partners for presenting an empowering platform in the launch of the Hindu Helpline for Australia. I congratulate you sincerely on this very important and meaningful helpline initiative.

It is my privilege to enclose my parliamentary speech for your reference.

I value my excellent working relationship with **VHP and HOTA** partners and look forward to continue working with the Hindu community of South Australia to build a stronger and more vibrant multicultural State.

Yours sincerely

The Honourable Jing Lee MLC
Member of Parliament in the Legislative Council
Parliament of South Australia



HINDU ORGANISATIONS, TEMPLES AND ASSOCIATIONS FORUM

On Wednesday, 11th September 2019
in the Legislative Council, Parliament House, Adelaide
The Honourable Jing Lee MLC moved:

That the Legislative Council in South Australia—

- i. Congratulates the Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia for hosting the Hindu Organisations, Temples and Associations Forum of South Australia (HOTA SA) and Raksha Bandhan festival in 2019.*
- ii. Acknowledges the outstanding contributions of individuals and pays tribute to award recipients in five different categories:*
 - (a) HOTA Volunteer Award;*
 - (b) Youth Award;*
 - (c) Entrepreneur Award;*
 - (d) Woman of Substance Award;*
 - (e) Senior Citizen Award.*
- iii. Commends the Hindu Organisations, Temples and Associations Forum for establishing the Hindu Helpline for Australia.*
- iv. Recognises the achievements and contributions of the Hindu communities in South Australia—socially, culturally and economically.*

As the Assistant Minister to the Premier with a strong passion for multicultural development in South Australia, it is a great honour to rise to introduce this motion to acknowledge **Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia** for hosting the **HOTA South Australia Forum** and for organising the auspicious **Hindu Festival of Raksha Bandhan** on 3 August 2019.

Since elected to parliament in 2010, I have had the privilege of serving our vibrant and diverse multicultural community right from the beginning. It was a great honour to represent the Premier, the Hon. Steven Marshall, to support the inaugural HOTA Forum and Raksha Bandhan festival last year and to be invited once again this year to present the volunteer recognition awards to outstanding contributors in the Hindu community of South Australia.



HOTA stands for Hindu Organisations, Temples and Associations. This year marks the second time the HOTA Forum was held in conjunction with the celebration of Raksha Bandhan in South Australia.

Traditionally, on the occasion of this Hindu festival, sisters generally apply tilak to the forehead of their brothers, tie the sacred thread called Rakhi to the wrist of their brothers and pray for their good health and long life. This thread, which represents love and responsibility, is called the Raksha Bandhan, which means 'a bond of protection'. It is wonderful to learn about the significance of this festival at the HOTA Forum, meaningfully promoted to pledging support to each other, respecting women in our community and promoting universal fellowship.

Many researchers have referred to Hinduism as one of the oldest religions in the world. Some practitioners and scholars refer to Hinduism as 'the eternal tradition' or 'the eternal way,' beyond human history. The 2016 census revealed that Hinduism is one of the fastest growing religions in Australia, due to our socially inclusive immigration policy.

Witnessing the South Australian Hindu community going from strength to strength is a clear example of how the HOTA platform has contributed to the multicultural landscape in South Australia.



The HOTA Forum is a collaborative platform created by Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia to bring Hindu communities and organisations together. The key vision for the HOTA Forum aims to bring members of the Hindu society together, collectively shape the Hindu identity, and strengthen the Hindu society from within.

The HOTA Forum brings diverse Hindu organisations together as community partners, to support each other, to strengthen collaborations and to collectively contribute to Australia. Forum partners recognise that a strong Hindu community is best supported by a strong and prosperous Australia.



It was a remarkable achievement that this year more than 40 organisations and groups in Adelaide came together in unity to celebrate the Hindu festival of Raksha Bandhan. The key themes of the festival embrace the spirit of universal fellowship, promote the values of respecting women and pledge support to each other for fostering mutual harmony.



At this point, I wish to place on the public record my special thanks to acknowledge the convener of the South Australian HOTA Forum, who is also the President of the South Australian chapter of VHP, Mr Rajendra Pandey, for his hard work and determination to create a unified platform and generate the culture of collaboration within the Hindu community of South Australia regardless of the country or region they come from or the membership size or the activities that these organisations represent.

Over the last couple of years, it has been a pleasure working very closely with Raj. I have seen firsthand the passion and dedication of his leadership, and as a Member of Parliament I am truly delighted to work with him.

I would like to quote some of the words expressed by Mr Rajendra Pandey, the Convenor of the HOTA Forum in his message to the HOTA Forum, which I quote:

In South Australia, this is the second Raksha-Bandhan celebration and on behalf of the entire Hindu community in South Australia, I express our gratitude and appreciation for protectors of our community. We all are truly grateful to all women and men from SAPOL, SAAS, MFS, CFS and many more such organisations who work day and night to keep us safe.

I am grateful for the trust and support provided by the Hindu community and their leaders in the Vishva Hindu Parishad and HOTA forum initiative.

We have received an incredible amount of support from the Marshall Liberal Government and the Hon. Jing Lee and we look forward to their continued support for delivering more services to the South Australian Hindu community.

This year we are recognising 145 volunteers who are like flowers of the large banyan tree whose roots are thousands of years old and strong. Reading through award nominations make me feel prouder to be a South Australian and gives me the confidence that the Hindu community is in good hands. I am convinced that the future of Hindu community is even brighter as we will continue or rather make even more contributions to a prosperous South Australia and a stronger Australia.

Those are beautiful words from Raj Pandey. It is very thoughtful and generous for all involved, to use the HOTA Forum as a platform to celebrate the Hindu festival Raksha Bandhan in South Australia and enable community members to build valuable connections and celebrate the importance of volunteering and community work. The HOTA SA volunteer recognition presentation program is an empowering and meaningful initiative.

I would also like to acknowledge and congratulate the 145 volunteers who have been awarded in the five categories: HOTA Volunteer Award, Youth Award, Entrepreneur Award, Woman of Substance Award and Senior Citizen Award.



Our Governor provided a generous message of support in the HOTA booklet, where His Excellency said:

I am proud of the goodwill and generous spirit that exists here in our state. Supporting others through volunteering helps to create an inclusive society, which provides people with a sense of belonging...I am very pleased that the ceremony hosted by HOTA Forum recognises the hard work and dedication of volunteers from the Hindu community.



That quote is from His Excellency the Hon. Hieu Van Le. I wholeheartedly agree with His Excellency that volunteers are the pillars of strength behind every community, and it was indeed a true honour to represent the Premier of South Australia, the Hon. Steven Marshall, at the HOTA Forum to acknowledge VHP and all the organisations for their outstanding efforts in building a respectful and rewarding program that acknowledges the wonderful work of volunteers in all aspects of community life.



The network of the HOTA Forum is open to all Hindu organisations, and currently there are more than 40 South Australian organisations that come together to discuss the objectives of community unity and empowerment.

I wish to place all those organisations on the public record, because I understand that this is very important for those organisations to continue their great work.

I wish to acknowledge the following:

- Adelaide Arya Samaj;
- Adelaide Ayappa Seva Sangam;
- Adelaide Kannada Sangha Inc;
- Adelaide Marathi Mandal;
- Adelaide Nepal;
- Adelaide Nepali Samaj Australia;
- Adelaide Sarvajanic Ganeshotsav Samiti;
- Adelaide Telangana Association;
- Art of Living;
- Australian Hindu Samaj Sewa Samiti;
- Bangladesh Puja and Cultural Society of South Australia;
- BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir;
- Bengali Cultural Association of South Australia;
- Bharatheeya Hindu International Malayalee Association;
- Chinmaya Mission, Adelaide;
- Divya Jyoti Jagrati Sansthan;
- Gayatri Pariwar, Adelaide;
- Hindu Society of Australia;
- ISKCON Adelaide;
- Jai Durga Sankirtan Mandal;

- Jat Mahasabha South Australia;
- JET Australia Foundation, Adelaide;
- Kali Bhavan South Australia;
- Manavta Ramayan Mandali;
- Punya Foundation;
- Saaketham Adelaide;
- Satsan Oceania, Adelaide;
- SEWA Australia;
- Shirdi Saibaba Community and Cultural Organisation of SA;
- Shree Ram Sharnam Parivaar;
- Shree Santram Bhakt Samaj;
- Shree Sita Ram Ramayan Mandali of South Australia;
- Shree Swaminarayan Temple Adelaide;
- Shruthi Adelaide;
- South Australia Telangana Association;
- Telugu Association of South Australia;
- United Indians of South Australia;
- Vaishnav Sangh of Adelaide;
- Vedic and Cultural Centre of Australia; and
- Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia.





Furthermore, since the HOTA Forum on 3 August 2019, I am delighted to learn that over the last six weeks an additional 12 Hindu organisations have also joined HOTA South Australia. These 12 organisations are:

- Aalap Indian Association;
- Australian School of Meditation and Yoga Adelaide;
- Fiji Senior Citizen Association;
- Hindu Council of Australia;
- Hindu Swayamsewak Sangh;
- Nirankari Mission Adelaide;
- Niswarth Sewa Samiti Adelaide;
- Raj Traditional Yoga and Kriya Yoga School;
- Shiv Garjana;
- Shree Sanatan Dharam Gyan Jyoti Mandali of South Australia;
- Shri Ram Sharnam; and
- Temple of Fine Arts.

I ask honourable members for your forgiveness and patience (for reading out a long list of all the organisations) because these organisations are important to be mentioned within HOTA and I appreciate the generosity of the chamber today.



Congratulations to all the organisations that come under the HOTA network with shared values. Their combined wisdom and leadership provide a powerful platform of unity for all Hindu communities in South Australia to collaborate and work together for the betterment of an inclusive and harmonious society.



In addition, one very important initiative that came out from the HOTA Forum and all these organisations working together is the Hindu helpline. The launch of Hindu Helpline Australia, managed by volunteers, is a 24-hour seven-day service with counsellors who speak different languages, catering for India and the subcontinent.

The helpline is tailored to address any concerns that Hindu women may raise, be it domestic violence, family issues, legal issues, guidance with children, mental health, or any questions they have in terms of a healthy work-life balance and relationships, self-esteem and general life inquiries.



I wholeheartedly support this helpline because I think they are providing a wonderful, excellent and outstanding service. It is a confidential caring service and, most importantly, the helpline is offered in eight languages of the Indian subcontinent. For example, it is available in Hindi, Telugu, Bengali, Tamil, Malayalam, Fijian, Nepali, Kannada and English.

On behalf of the Parliament of South Australia and the government of South Australia, I once again extend my wholehearted congratulations to Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia and all the organisations involved in the HOTA Forum for their wonderful work to recognise their achievements and contributions to the South Australian social and economic landscape.

I commend the motion to the chamber.



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