



Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia Inc., WA Chapter

### **Raksha Bandhan- 19th of August, 2017**

The afternoon of the 19th of August, 2017 in Butler Community Centre, Vishva Hindu Parishad, WA, celebrated Raksha Bandhan- a bond of mutual trust and respect. The chief guests on the day were Hon. Mayor Tracey Roberts, Attorney General Hon. John Quigley (MLA), Member for Butler, who also was representing Minister Paul Papalia, from the Department of Citizenship and Multicultural events and Pandit Subramanya Bhat ji, President of the Hindu Priest Services in Perth.

Soni Ji introduced the theme of Raksha Bandhan to everyone as a celebration of the bond shared between a brother and a sister and as a 'bond of protection'. Sisters tie the silk thread called Rakhi on their brother's wrist and pray for their well being and brothers promise to take care of their sisters. Taking from this value system and the sentiments attached to this festival, is the main reason why we gathered in Butler to tie this 'thread of trust', to promise to have faith in the system and lead a life of peaceful co-existence.

The chief guests were invited to light the lamp in front of Lord Ganesha and Bhat ji chanted shlokas to make it even more auspicious. Mrs. Neha Shinghal did a presentation on VHP's national agendas and how this organisation of over 500 volunteers in Australia helps Indian people connect with their cultural roots by various events and projects that are run from time to time. Neha stressed on the significance of this beautiful festival and being mindful of the importance of interdependence of societies for a peaceful co-existence. She said that, 'by having these events, we hope to bridge the cultural divide by extending our trust and support to the host community and inviting them to appreciate our value system. It is also a platform to meet, network and have support so that we can together benefit the whole community.'

Soni Ji invited the chief guests for a speech on stage and they were delighted to be a part of the occasion. After the speeches, Durba ji and Avinash ji took the stage for bhajans on the harmonium and tabla. The crowd was enthralled by the beautifully sung bhajans and the traditional sounds of the tabla and harmonium.

Soon after this, Saurabh invited everyone to be a part of the actual festival where they would put a tilak (a small coloured dot on the forehead) and tie the silk threads on the wrist. Everyone enjoyed tying the threads and some even colour co-ordinated with their outfits. High tea was served right after the ceremony with mouth watering pakoras, samosas and gulab jamuns.

Mrs. Neha Shinghal thanked everyone for being a part of the festivities especially the City of Wanneroo for their support, the chief guests, those representing Indian associations, temples and organisations, Saanvra Indian grocery store, Cellarbrations Clarkson, Salt restaurant, volunteers and friends and read apologies from Hon. Mia Davies Hon. Mia Davies, Member of Legislative Council, Hon. Bill Johnson, Minister of Mines and Petroleum, Hon. Roger Cook, Deputy Premier, Minister for Health, Hon. John Carey, Ms. Sabine Winton, Ms. Emily Hamilton and the Dept. of Fire and Emergency Services. It was an all inclusive event where there were representations from all parts of the society.

Some prominent groups and people on the day included Mr. Barry Middleton, president of the Lions Club, Hindu Swyamsewak Sangh, Tamil Association of WA, North Coastal Women's Shed, BAPS Swaminarayan Temple, and officers from the Clarkson Police station



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amongst others. Everyone took part in the festivities and thoroughly enjoyed the Raksha Badhan festival. Some even promised to be back for the upcoming Diwali festival on the 22nd of October in Carramar Community Centre.

