



Council of Indian Australians Inc

Incorporation No 9894521, ABN 24279345141
PO Box 1391, Macquarie Centre, North Ryde, NSW 2113

www.cia.org.au

Sydney, NSW
Monday 17, March 2014

The Council of Indian Australians Inc. (CIA) in association with Gujarati Samaj of NSW organised a dazzling celebration of Harmony Day 2014 incorporating Holi - the Festival of Colours on 16 March at the LakesEdge Park, Ponds!

After a successful 'Bollywood Under the Stars' event for Australia Day and Indian Republic Day and on great public demand by local residents, Council of Indian Australians organised another event at Ponds to celebrate the Harmony Day and Holi.

The celebration was attended by dignitaries from both the sides of politics. Among the dignitaries who attended the function included The Hon. David Clarke, MLC, representing The Premier of NSW - The Hon Barry O'Farrell, Mr John Robertson, Leader of Opposition, Shadow Minister for Western Sydney and Member of Blacktown, Kevin Connolly MP, Member of Riverstone, Dr. Vinod J. Bahade, Dy. Consul General, Gurdeep Singh, Councillor of Hornsby Council and local community leaders.

The function got off to a flying start with Mohit Kumar, Executive Member of Council of Indian Australians who played a role of Event Director and MC for the day addressed the crowd with importance of Harmony Day celebrations and Holi in Australia.

As a formal part of the program, in his welcome address, Mr Praful Desai, Vice President of the Council of Indian Australians said *"We're proud to be associating the Harmony Day celebrations with Holi as there are big similarities and common significance of both events. Holi is a festival of colours and celebrated without any distinction of cast, creed, colour, race, status or sex. Similarly, Harmony Day is about respecting cultural values of multicultural society in Australia. Holi is one occasion where sprinkling coloured powder on each other breaks all barriers of discrimination so everyone looks the same! These celebrations help NSW in getting multi-cultural society together and strengthen our ties and friendship with Australian Indian community. I request all of you to participate in playing colours with friends and families and enjoy the spirit and traditions of Holi."*

Mr Desai thanked Jayadatt Nayak, President of Gujarti Samaj and committee members for their support in marketing the event and all the politicians for attending the function despite there was a mid-day downpour which coincided with the official part of the function!

The Hon. David Clarke MLC, representing the Premier of NSW, Mr John Robertson, Leader of the Opposition, spoke highly of supporting the Harmony Day and Holi celebrations,

Australia India relationship and the contributions made by Indian Australians for the growth of multiculturalism in Australia. In fact, all political leaders as well as Dr Vinod Bahade, Deputy Consel General and local leaders braved a midday downpour to unite in harmony and played with colours.

It was a family fun, action packed day. The location of LakesEdge park with well-maintained green ground with lake at the backdrop added some extra glamour and beauty to the event!

The thrill and excitement was clearly visible with all attendees' including kids, parents and grandparents participating in sprinkling colours at each other. The colour throwing was a huge hit and Council of Indian Australians had to get more colours and emptied Indian grocery shops! Many of Indian heritage families took the opportunity to teach their children the joys of Holi colours, as well as work-mates and groups of friends embraced the child-like enjoyment of the day.

There was a classical dance performance by Arpita Shome and Belly Dancing that entertained the crowd. The DJ played Bollywood music and got the audience up on the floor throughout the day. A few performances from the local school children got cancelled due to rain disturbance at the crucial time of the event. However, the spirit of Harmony Day and Holi was very high throughout the day.

Overall feedback from the community attended the event was very positive and they want Council of Indian Australians to organise more events to cater to the growing Indian Australian population in Western Sydney!

Dr Balu Vijay, Secretary, in his vote of thanks, thanked the generous supporters, sponsors, Maya Da Dhaba for catering, Good Guys Castle Hills for donating prizes, media partners, stall members, The Ponds community, volunteers and guests for attending the event and making it as grand success!

**For further information, please contact: Dr Balu Vijay, Secretary – 0425 237 736,
baaluvijay@yahoo.com**

Harmony Day 2014 and Holi Celebrations – Full of Colours and Excitements



Council of Indian Australians Harmony Day 2014 and Holi Celebrations – Local Politicians and Members of Council of Indian Australians during the formal part of the function



CIA's Harmony Day 2014 and Holi Celebrations – A Family in Action!