

# *Hindu Society of South Australia*

**2020**

**ANNUAL REPORT**



# HSSA ANNUAL REPORT 2020

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Mrs Usha Rajagopalan

The twin Year of 2020 was dramatic and impactful.

First of all, the Hindu Society would like to thank its patrons, members, supporters for the splendid response we received for our fund-raising dinner towards the bushfire relief operations. A Very Big Thank You to each and every one of you, who attended this event and to our hard-working team of volunteers behind the scene who made it possible. Also, to those who contributed to our GoFundMe campaign. We raised a total of \$5K and made two sets of contributions - one to the SA Premiers Emergency Relief fund and other to the Kangaroo Island Mayoral Bushfire Fund.



In January, The Hindu Society launched a free cricket coaching for children from 5-12, in collaboration with the South Australian Cricket Association. The kids were trained by specialists and each received a cricket kit free of charge. We had good participation with nearly 40 families coming to this initiative. Unfortunately,

it has been cut short due to COVID-19 situation.



A Sanskrit Class was arranged with the help of a very dedicated teacher, Srirama Srinivasan at the Community Cultural Hall. Fifteen people of all ages registered for the 9 classes held weekly on Sundays. No-one had previous knowledge of Sanskrit. A unique teaching technique was used by Srirama Srinivasan, who developed this new technique, to accelerate the learning in just 8 classes, followed up by a mock test.



We also introduced Zoom-based Vedic Chanting classes and lectures on Santana Dharma and many of our members took advantage of these. Sanskrit classes were also held online following the success of the first batch of students. This has formed part of our Well-Being Plan for our members. During the Navrathri period streamed the cultural program.

We also launched a collection drive of non-perishable food items to support our international students and new migrants impacted due to job losses. We are very grateful to the overwhelming generous support from you - thank you again for responding so generously.

Looking further back, at the end of last year, we held a function to recognise the Voluntary contribution of members who had served the Hindu Society Executive Committee in excess of 5 years. It was an enjoyable and memorable event and many of our hard-working seniors were felicitated.

March 23rd was a historic day for the Hindu Society. This marked the day when the Temple was closed in response to the directive of the Prime Minister of Australia. The priest has been conducting the daily Pooja in the Temple to ensure we keep up our tradition of religious sanctity. We have worked to make archanas, havens and other pujas available online.

A Special General Meeting was successfully held at our Community Cultural Centre to provide details to our members of the comprehensive audit report. This is the first time that we have arranged a full audit and the results have been helpful in progressing our commitment to strong governance.

I am also delighted to announce on behalf of the HSSA Committee that we **have repaid in full the loan/overdraft** raised to complete the Community Cultural Centre. The Hindu Society can proudly say that there is no debt outstanding. Once again thanks to all our devotees, generous members and the support of the State Government which has made this possible.

I mentioned at the beginning that this year has been eventful and that the current happenings will be engraved in our hearts and minds as the year when humanity faced a life-threatening virus. We seek the blessing and support of our beloved Lord Ganesha during this time. My appeal to our members

has been for us to stay connected, stay positive and help out each other and the community in every way possible big or small. Each person's contribution matters. Our community has risen to the occasion and we are continuing to manage and implement the social distancing required to halt the spread of COVID-19. **A very big thanks** to all for complying with the social distancing and other safety measures introduced at the Temple while at the same time continuing to visit and support the Temple. Your support has enabled us to celebrate the recent festivals of Janmashtami, Ganesh Chaturthi, Navrathri and Diwali well. The advent of the Zoom era has enabled HSSA to stream the celebrations at the Temple on these occasions.

We request that you continue to **strictly follow the social distancing, hand sanitising and all other requirements** needed to keep our families and communities safe.

My humble appeal to our devotees is to continue to support our Temple as best as you can during this difficult time.

Please take care and stay well and practice social distancing. We hope and pray that our community in Adelaide, Australia as a whole, and our families overseas overcome this serious health threat and ensuing economic impact.

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### SECRETARY'S REPORT: Mr Madhava Bhat

Before we have recovered from the devastating damages of 2019 bushfire, the nature's fury is again in full display engulfing the whole world. Perhaps it has come to deliver us a simple message: respect nature and our Mother Earth. Our ancestors saw divinity in everything. They respected nature as Mother and God. They loved her and took care of her. They understood the delicate balance of interdependence between biological species and nurture. Perhaps it is our arrogance to ignore this ancient wisdom. Is that a reason why we are humbled by a microorganism?

I think it is appropriate to quote a mantra from Rudram:

त्र्यम्बकं यजामहे सुगन्धिं पुष्टिवर्धनम् उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनान् मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मामृतात्

Tryambakam yajamahē sugandhim puṣṭivardhanam urvārukamiva bandhanān mṛtyōrmukṣīya māṃṛtāt

We worship the three-eyed One (Lord Siva) who is fragrant and who nourishes all beings; as is the ripened cucumber is freed from its bondage (to the creeper), may He liberate us from death for the sake of immortality.

We are living through a difficult and historic moment. We have played an important role keeping our community safe by observing the national social distancing protocol while maintaining our services to our members.

As many of you may remember **our Temple was closed from 23rd March to 11th May 2020** due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Community gatherings are an integral part of people's lives and the COVID-19 outbreak has been the most disruptive crisis we have seen in generations. As devotees were not allowed to come to the Temple during this period, we offered live video streaming of our services. Many of our local members and members from interstate were very pleased about this service and our priests have done an excellent job.



*Temple Closed*



*Streaming prayers and puja directly into people's homes during COVID-19 lockdown - even interstate and overseas.*

Our two priests and the Committee members also successfully completed the **prescribed COVID Marshal training**. The training module covers the fundamentals of infection prevention and control for COVID-19.

On Friday the 31st July we celebrated the **Varalakshmi Vrith** at the Temple under the current COVID-19 restrictions of 1 person per 2 sqm. It meant a limit of only 55 people sitting down and performing the puja at the Temple. Entry was allowed only to those who made advance booking. Fifty women participated in the celebration. Spouses of participating women and their children were accommodated in the Community Cultural Centre which also had a limited capacity of 75 people. Only pre-packed food was served.

**Ganesha Chaturthi** was the next major festival that we celebrated under the COVID-19 restrictions, on 22 August. As it was a Saturday, we kept the Temple open for an extended period in the morning as well as in the evening. This helped to maintain the number of visitors to the Temple at any given time within the allowed limit and social distancing requirements.

Recently **two families have become HSSA Life Members**. I'm thrilled to introduce Mrs Prema Srinivasan and Mr Srirama Srinivasan, and Dr Seshu Krishna Boda and Dr Radha Dara as our new Life Members. I am excited to have the new life members on board and look forward to their contribution to our community. Please make them welcome to the Society.

This is a challenging situation for international students, who have lost their part-time jobs and are finding it very difficult financially. The President took the initiative of delivering emergency relief to such those struggling. Thank you, all donors who have donated generously. I would like to share a story of a young lady who met me recently while distributing the emergency food relief to international students. She approached me to say that she too was standing in a queue to receive food support just two months ago. I asked whether she needed a food packet. She politely declined. Later, the young lady approached me to say she got a job in Melbourne and will be relocating soon and wanted to donate money to HSSA. She donated a substantial proportion of her fortnightly pay. Her story really touched my heart. She was a recipient of food donation from another organisation. That organisation itself received donations from other anonymous donors. She saw that we were helping the students without discriminating their nationality, religion or beliefs and she decided to express her appreciation by donating to the Hindu Society.



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### TREASURER'S REPORT: Mr Siva Selvakulalingam OAM

I am pleased to inform that the last invoice of our major project - the Community Cultural Centre and the new Kitchen and ladies' toilet project has been paid. All is now fully paid. This has left us with a small loan. We know that at present all of us are going through financially tough times. However, I am pleased to mention that some members have made donations even at this difficult time. We appreciate this gesture which shows their commitment to support our Temple and the Hindu Society of SA.

The audit of our books for the last three financial years has been completed and the report is now with us. The auditor produced a report and recommendations. These were presented at a special general body meeting which was held as soon as the restrictions in place due to COVID-19 were lifted.

The auditors also gave us valuable advice. We are in the process of implementing all of the recommendations of the auditors and have introduced some additional checks while counting/accounting for of the Hundi collection and Archana payments.

From now on, our bookkeeping is being done by our Committee member Rajah Thiyagarajah.

I'd like to finish with some exciting news, which the President has already shared in her report. We have **paid in full the loan and the overdraft is now closed**. Thank you for your continued support in these difficult times.

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### THE 2020 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Your Executive Committee of the Hindu Society of South Australia, elected at the AGM held in November, 2019. The AGM was held in our new Community Cultural Centre, for the first time.



**President:** Usha Rajagopalan  
**Vice President:** Nitin Bhis  
**Secretary:** Madhava Bhat  
**Treasurer:** Siva Selvakulalingam  
**Ass Secretary and Editor:** Ganga Sivanathan  
**Members:** Shasith Janarthan  
Rajah Thiyagarajah  
Swapna Sengupta  
**Co-opted Member:** Subrahmanyam Kuppa

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## OTHER NEWS

### FELICITATIONS TO DR. SADANAND LIMAYE OAM



Congratulations to Dr. Limaya on receiving a well-deserved OAM for his services to medicine and the multi cultural community. Due to COVID-19, the actual presentation will be delayed. However our Treasurer, Siva Selva OAM, honoured him in a speech at his celebration.

A cardiologist and humanitarian, Dr Limaya has generously supported the Hindu community in Adelaide since 1974. Now retired, he worked at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as well as running his own practice. Even after retirement he continued to teach and share his knowledge. Dr Limaya has always devoted his energies to community work and the study of Hindu philosophy and religion and the Sanskrit language. Until the recent restrictions he conducted weekly classes at his home on the

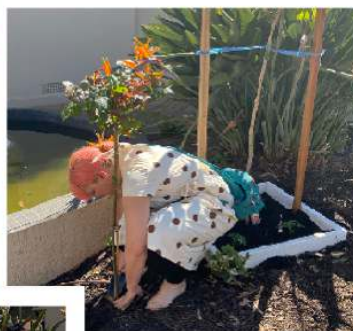
Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita etc. and performs pujas and solemnises marriages upon request. When Adelaide's Shri Ganesh Temple first started in 1985 and there was no regular priest, Dr Limaya was one of the people conducting the puja.

Dr. Limaya says the secret to a happy life is to remember your blessings, remain active and keep a happy attitude. "I am happy. My name Sadanand means 'happy forever'. And I am!"



**Aarna Lakhani** received a merit scholarship for **displaying excellence and great promise in Visual Arts and Community Spirit.** Awarded at Shri Ganesha Temple by Dr Suren Krishnan on 27th October 2019. Thirteen year old Aarna is seen here with her parents and Dr Krishnan.

**Our Past President, eighty years young, Mr Siva Selva** receives a special puja for his birthday on 1st November, 2019.



*Recently the family and friends of one of our devotees came for prayers after her passing, and planted 2 rose bushes in the garden. She was a great supporter of the Temple and HSSA and left a donation in her will.*