

# SRI LANKA SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND Inc *NEWSLETTER*

Established 1978



Incorporated 1984

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## *New Year Celebrations*

On 22<sup>nd</sup> April Sri Lanka Society of Queensland held the Sri Lankan New Year celebrations at the Mansfield Function Centre, Mansfield for the 39<sup>th</sup> year in succession. The guests for the evening were:

Sri Lankan High Commissioner for Australia His Excellency Somasundaram Skandakumar, Hon Grace Grace MP Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Ms Alison Carrington, Director, Queensland State Office, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Councillor Steven Huang, Councillor for MacGregor, representing the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Councillor Angela Owen, Councillor for Calamvale, Mr Lal Wickrematunge Consul General for Sri Lanka in NSW and Qld and Mr Anton Swan Honorary Consul for Sri Lanka in Queensland, Mrs Kathryn Hermosilla-Silva, consul for Chile and Dean of the Consular Corps.

Dr Ludovico Camussi, consular for Italy, Mr Umesh Chandra, President Queensland Multicultural Council and Mrs Usha Chandra, President of GOPIO, Queensland, Mrs Janeth Dean, founder of the Queensland Muslim Welfare Association.



The guests were ceremonially welcomed by the President and led in procession by the Sri Lanka Society drumming troupe. It was commendable to see the society drumming troupe has been revived after many years of absence.

The celebrations started with the traditional practices of lighting of the oil lamp by the invited guests to the beat of Magul Bera, boiling of milk, drumming of rabana and serving of rasakevili , which comprised of kavun, kokis and bibikkan. Mr Randy Wijetunga, the son of Ivan Wijetunga, a former founder member and president of the Sri Lanka Society, was invited to join the guests in lighting the lamp in remembrance of his father. Mrs Jayanthi Tennakoon was invited to boil the milk, a tradition observed for thousands of years in Sri Lanka.



society drumming orchestra who were trained by Ashani Jayawardene. This year our comperes were Miss Yehanka Ranasinghe and Mr Kunchana Meregnage who did a fantastic job presenting each cultural item to the audience.

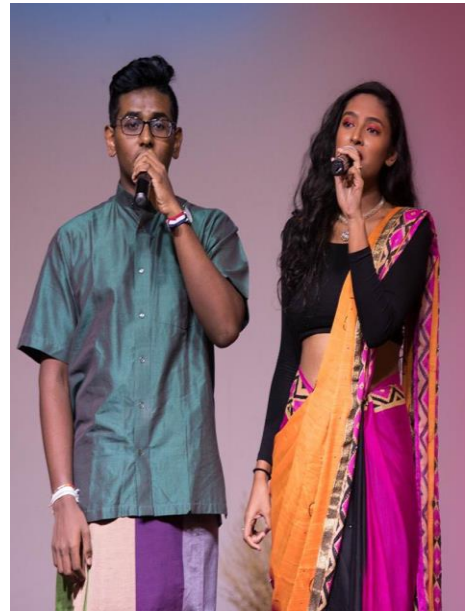
Sri Lankan buffet dinner prepared by Chef Sam was served after the conclusion of the cultural show. All guests enjoyed the scrumptious dinner. A raffle was organised for Headspace organisation that deals with mental health wellbeing and also for Queensland flood relief in aid of Cyclone Debbie while the dinner was being served.

DJ Rush from Melbourne started the night with dance music. Guests were enjoying the baila and old and new English and Sinhala songs. All in all it was a fantastic night for everyone to enjoy and take memories of Sinhala and Tamil New Year.

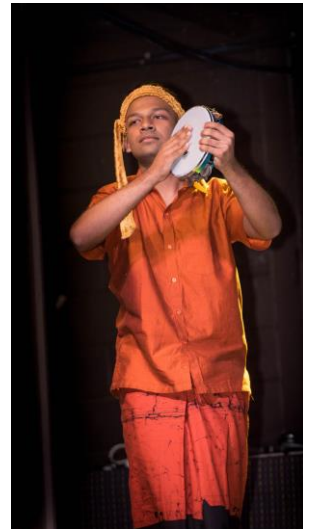
Sri Lanka Society of Queensland wishes to acknowledge the funding received from the Multicultural Association of Queensland and the Brisbane City Council to make this event possible. The management committee of Sri Lanka Society of Queensland wishes to thank present and past members and friends of the society who assisted the organisers and all those who attended the function and also advertisers for their continuing support for Sri Lanka Society New Year function.











## **ADD FIJI TO YOUR BUCKET LIST**

**BY MAHESA ABEYNAYAKE**

A mere speck in the Pacific Ocean, famous for its magnificent holiday resorts, championed by a world's best seven-a-side rugby team and birth place of one famed golfer, The Republic of Fiji is an archipelago consisting of 332 islands. Of these, 110 are permanently inhabited, and more than 500 islets amount to a total land area of about 18,300 square kilometres. The land is a mecca for tourists, where the greeting of "Bula" with a wide smile complements friendly down-to-earth salt-of-the-earth people.

Fiji is now full steam ahead in economic development and rapid growth having recovered from some recent political mishaps. Many expatriates are hungry to be a part of this rapidly growing economy and flock to this Pacific Island to become employed in a variety of industries, non-governmental organisations and universities. Sri Lankans, too, are part of this vast expatriate community, working within local businesses and within the government. The judicial system employs several Sri Lankan judges.

The very place where expatriates deliver their expertise is the same place from which they take back some unique lessons. Politicians, especially the ones from Sri Lanka, can learn a lot from the Fiji statesmen. The Prime Minister of Fiji, a retired Rear Admiral, is an exemplary example of a down-to earth Fijian. You can find him doing his own grocery shopping in the local supermarket or mingling with the holiday makers in a resort.

As an astute orator, he makes a statement in his Bula shirt (a bright coloured cotton shirt with island themed flower prints) and Sulu (a type of below-the-knee, tied at the waist skirt traditionally worn by men and women in Fiji) and will stand in line at the buffet behind the guests. I have never been able to come within 100 metres of a Sri Lankan politician but have shaken the Prime Minister of Fiji's hand and chatted to him several times.

There is no convoy of armoured cars with madly-waving bodyguards to clear the way. For a person of such importance he travels in a single vehicle with just one person with him as a minder.

There is much to learn from the interracial integration in Fiji. The population of just under one million people is divided into two main races: The native Fijians, who are called iTaukei, and the Fijian Indians. Most of the Fijian Indians are descendants of the sugar cane workers brought in by the colonial rulers to work while the rest are the Indians who have arrived for business purposes. The cane workers very much analogue the Sri Lankan Tamil estate workers except that some of the workers now own their land and even employ native Fijians. The indigenous Fijians, the native inhabitants, are a mixture of Polynesian and Melanesian, resulting from having migrated to the South Pacific over time. Except for occasional bickering, the two races live in harmony and with respect for each other - another moral lesson for people in some countries.

Tourists flock to Fiji looking for rest, recreation and romance. The resorts are popular for wedding parties, mostly Australian, where these tourists spend a week attending nuptials of friends and loved ones and enjoy the friendly Fijian hospitality, snorkelling or diving in the pristine waters. Whether it is a day trip to a little atoll for some fun and frolicking or a horse ride along the beach or a hike to a beautiful waterfall, the island caters for most tourists, regardless of age or level of relaxation and adventure that they are seeking.



Visitors will be introduced to Kava, a traditional intoxication to be drunk sitting around with others, experiencing talanoa (story telling), clapping hands and cracking jokes. Looking like muddy water and tasting the same, Kava is a part of a village welcoming ceremony. Pounded from the root of the sun-dried plant and grounded by hand with a mortar, the fine powder is strained in a mesh cloth into a tanoa (large wooden bowl carved from a single piece of hardwood), and cold water is added. It is shared in a half coconut shell, called a bilo, and is followed by a “chaser” which Sri Lankans would call a “bite” since it is usually a spicy snack. The effect of what is commonly known as “grog” is supposed to send one to serene slumber.



As Sri Lankans are said to be born with a cricket bat in their hand, the Fijians grow up with a rugby ball. Sri Lanka went on to win the One Day World Cup in 1996 despite the shortage of cricket grounds and using a busy thoroughfare or the splendid sandy beaches to play the game. Similarly, Fijians practicing rugby on uneven and muddy surfaces in villages brought the World Rugby Sevens trophy home in 2015.

As legends from the chronicles indicate, Sinhalese, are a race descended from Prince Vijaya and his 700 men who arrived on a ship. According to oral Fijian tradition, the indigenous Fijians today are descendants of the Chief Lutunasobasoba and his entourage who arrived on the Kaunitoni canoe to the Fiji Islands all those years ago.

Whether you are going to Nadi (sounds Nandi), through the “Yako Village” or pass Malabe on Kings Road, there is lush green scenery when driving around the islands that will remind you of your Sri Lankan home. A country roughly one-third the size of Sri Lanka, a population of under a million people, and a land of amazing waterways and island beauty that is safe and primed to welcome its visitors and reveal its secrets, Fiji should be on everyone’s bucket list.



## News

# Sri Lanka Flood Appeal

Federation Of Sri Lankan Organisation in Queensland Inc (FSOQ)



The numbers of deaths reported in Floods and Land Slides have increased to **126**, while **97** people have gone missing. **49** Injured and in Total **423,068** have been affected by the Floods. (29/05/2017)

Please send your donations to the following account established by FSOQ;

**Bank:** Suncorp Bank  
**BSB:** 484-799  
**Account No:** 506 548 040  
**Account Name:** Federation of Sri Lankan Organisations of Qld Inc.  
**Reference:** SLFloodAppeal

Please email / SMS / call to inform about your donation;

**Jayantha Weerasekera**  
0422 368 851  
jweera251@gmail.com

**Senarath Weerakoon**  
0434 244 260  
weerakoon@hotmail.com

For further information;

**Thisara Srimal**  
0431 308 513  
thisara@hotmail.com



All donations collected will be sent to the **Foundation of Goodness** to be used in flood relief effort in Sri Lanka  
[www.unconditionalcompassion.org](http://www.unconditionalcompassion.org)



CCC Foundation Queensland Branch | Radio 4EB Sri Lankan group  
Sinhala Association of Queensland inc | Silver Fawn Club inc  
SPUR Queensland | Sri Lanka Society of Queensland  
The Sri Lanka Sports Association Queensland

**Sri Lanka Society of Queensland Inc.**

## Membership Application Form

### Objectives of the Society

1. To promote harmonious co-operation and friendship amongst immigrants from Sri Lanka and Australians irrespective of racial, religious, political and other differences.
2. To preserve, promote and project the culture of Sri Lanka.
3. To render assistance to students and immigrants from Sri Lanka.
4. To encourage and foster recreational, sporting and social activities.
5. To publish and circulate news of Sri Lanka and local events.
6. To render assistance to the people of Sri Lanka in times of need, at the discretion of the Management Committee.

Name (with preferred title).....

Postal address: .....

Telephone: .....

Email.....

Category (please tick) Family (\$20) ☐ Single (\$10) ☐ Concession Family (\$10) ☐

Concession single (\$5) ☐

I apply for the membership of Sri Lanka Society of Queensland Inc. under the category marked above. I agree with the objectives and the rules of the society.

The relevant fee is enclosed, herewith.

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Signature

Date

I need a printed copy of the newsletter ☐ (This option is for those members who have no access to email)

Payments can be made by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).

Account Name : Sri Lanka Society of Queensland Inc. BSB: 06 4000 Acc: Number: 10725278

Bank: Commonwealth Bank, Queen Street, Brisbane.

Please include your name in reference field and email completed membership form to **Sri Lanka Society of Queensland**, PO Box 15099, CITY EAST, BRISBANE, QLD 4002. Email: [secretary@srilankansqld.org](mailto:secretary@srilankansqld.org)