



Thorathuru

SLA Newsletter - September 2024

Sri Lanka Association of NSW (SLA) Inc.

Sri Lanka Association acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present, and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual, and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In this issue

- President's message
- Executive Committee 23-24
- Independence day Celebrations
- Vesak celebrations
- Sunfest celebrations
- Collaborations with ALMA on Ramadan
- Notice, AGM 2024 on 3 Nov 2024
- AGM nomination rules and form
- SLA Premier event, Spring Ball with Alston Koch

The President's Message

In November 2023 when elected as the President of the Sri Lanka Association (SLA), I stated in my inaugural address that I wish to reinvigorate our Association's founding principles and return to our roots.

The Association was founded in 1972 as a home for all those of Sri Lankan origin living in New South Wales. It was open to all, irrespective of ethnic origin or religious beliefs and affiliations. It was not limited to Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, Burgher, Malay communities or those following Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, or Christianity.

In pursuing this vision, the Association under my leadership reached out to all communities and religious groups.

For the first time in the history of our Association, we participated in an Iftar event during Ramadan organised by the Austra Lanka Muslim Association (ALMA) attended by over 400 Sri Lankan Muslims living in Sydney. We also participated in the Vesak Bakthi Geeta program of the Lankarama Buddhist Vihara and the Sinhala & Tamil New Year celebrations organised by the Sinhalese Cultural Forum (SCF). We collaborated with the Tamil community and the Sri Lanka Catholic Association and the Sri Lanka Malay Association by supporting and participating in their events.

Sri Lanka Association is a voluntary not-for-profit organisation devoted to community work for all Australians in New South Wales and contributes to charities in Sri Lanka and Australia.

Its program of community and charitable work includes:

- organising Blood Donation campaigns
- feeding the Homeless by providing cooked meals,
- raising funds to purchase lifesaving medical equipment for paediatric hospitals in Sri Lanka,
- economic upliftment of poor families in Sri Lanka,
- scholarships for poor rural children in secondary schools in Sri Lanka
- recognising and felicitating HSC High Achievers with an ATAR of 95 plus of Sri Lankan origin
- organising Seniors Day lunches and musical programs for Senior citizens

I am happy to state that we have built a firm foundation for the Association to continue its important journey in the coming years. I thank the members of my committee for their support during the year and the membership of the Association for supporting and participating in events organised by the SLA.

Kalinga Wijewardene
President 2023-2024

The 2023 - 2024 Executive Committee

The SLA annual general meeting was held in November 2023 and the following persons were appointed to the Executive Committee of 2023-2024.

2023/24 Executive Committee Sri Lanka Association of NSW Inc

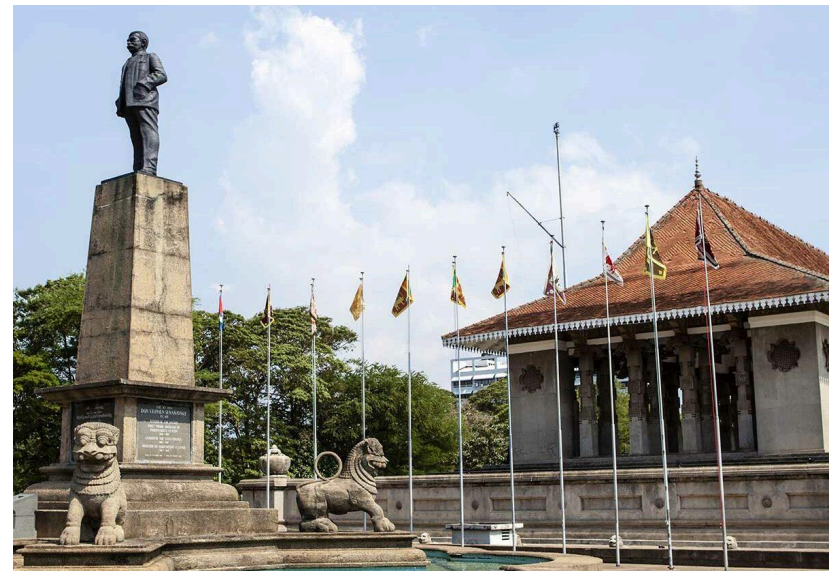
President	Kalinga Wijeyewardene
Vice President	Senani Gunasekera
Vice President	Jabeer Cader
Secretary	Swarna Christine Samuel
Treasurer	Anoja De Alwis
Public Officer	Presenji Jayawickrema
Editor	Lakshman Randeniya
Committee Members	
Hasitha Gunaratna, Thilak Ekanayake, Shiran Visvasam, Rajit Gunawardene, Indrani Wijeyesekera, Anula Dissanayake	

Sri Lanka Independence Day Celebrations

The 76th Independence Day of Sri Lanka was celebrated by the Sri Lanka Association of NSW Inc (SLA) and the Sinhalese Cultural Forum (SCF) with the active participation of Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, Malay, and Burgher communities on

4th February 2024 at the Roselea Community Centre, Carlingford.

In the absence of a Sri Lanka Consulate in Sydney, the Sri Lanka Association and the Sinhalese Cultural Forum steered the celebration of Sri Lanka's National Day in an elegant and grand event graced by a large gathering of Sri Lankans from all ethnicities and well-wishers and dignitaries from the wider Australian community.



Independence Square, Colombo 7, Sri Lanka

A highlight of the event was the blessings from the invited religious dignitaries from the four major religions Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam practiced in Sri Lanka for a prosperous and united Sri Lanka.

SLA Thorathuru September 2024

The Independence Day Messages from President Ranil Wickremasinghe, Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardene, and Foreign Minister Hon Ali Sabry were read out in Sinhalese, Tamil, and English languages.



Dignitaries lighting the oil lamp

Among the highlights was the hoisting of the Sri Lankan flag inside the hall by the President of SLA Kalinga Wijewardene and the President of SCF Champa Buddhipala amidst the beating of Magul Bera, the children's choir singing the national anthems of Sri Lanka and Australia, and lighting of the traditional lamp by dignitaries.

In his address to the gathering President of SLA, Kalinga Wijewardene said that the SLA was formed in 1972 with the

sacred goal of unifying all Sri Lankans of all communities and religious faiths represented in New South Wales. It is the only organisation representing all residents of Sri Lankan origin in NSW. During its fifty years of service to the Sri Lankan community SLA has helped our community in NSW and our brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka during periods of adversity. SLA together with SCF spearheaded the fundraising for Tsunami relief. More recently, during the economic crisis, SLA lobbied the Federal Government to assist Sri Lanka, and as a result, it provided \$50 million of assistance to SL through UN Agencies. SLA also raised funds and donated medical equipment and medicines to the Paediatric Unit of the Cancer Hospital in Sri Lanka during the crisis.



SLA President Kalinga Wijewardene addressing the audience

SLA Thorathuru September 2024

Another highlight was the commemoration of the friendship between India and Sri Lanka two tree saplings were presented by the Indian Support Centre President Subba Rao Varigonda to the Presidents of the SLA and SCF.



Former Federal Minister and the current Mayor of the Hornsby Shire council addressing the gathering

Sri Lanka's diverse culture was showcased through many Sinhalese and Tamil music, dance, and song items providing entertainment to the guests.

Morning refreshments with Kiribath and traditional Sri Lanka food were served for the guests and lunch with Hoppers and Rice and Curry was served after the event.





Some colourful moments of the Independence celebration

Vesak Day Celebrations

Lankarama Temple Wesak Programme

The Sri Lanka Association and its members participated in the celebrations and religious observances this year at the Lankarama Buddhist Temple, Schofields.



SLA Association members chanting Bakthi Geetha

The Wesak festival commemorates the Birth, Enlightenment (Nibbāna), and Death (Parinirvāna) of Gautama Buddha. It is a holy day in the Buddhist calendar and falls on the Full Moon day in May.

SLA Thorathuru September 2024

In particular, the SLA participated in the Wesa Bakthi Geetha (Devotional Songs) program. The SLA choir consisting of twelve committee members sang the song “Mal Sugande Dham Sugande” before a large gathering of devotees. The performance was well received and the skills of the choir were commended by the audience.



Colourfully decorated Stupa at Lankrama on Vesak Day

Wesak is celebrated grandly at the Lankarama Temple every year. As in previous years, many thousands of devotees gathered at the temple on this year's Wesak Day. The Temple was decorated with colourful lanterns and mini Pandals.

In Sri Lanka, the Vesak is celebrated by the Buddhist community with religious observances in temples, providing free food to people at roadside stalls (dansas), and decorations with colourful lanterns and multi-coloured illuminations in homes and commercial premises. People gather to watch and listen to the narration of Pandals (illuminated giant paintings on the roadside) with several panels depicting stories from the life of the Buddha and stories from his past lives (Jataka stories).

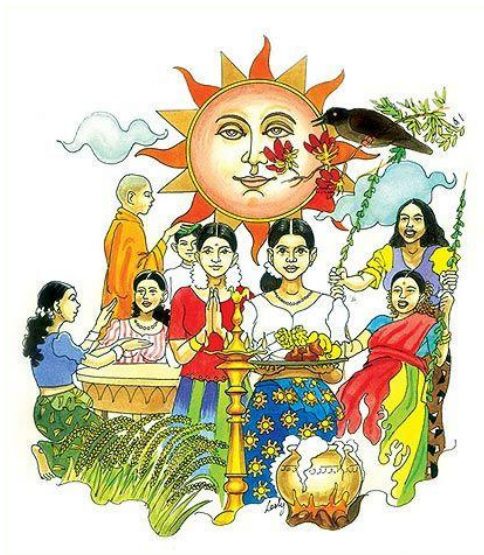


The Temple was decorated with colourful lanterns and mini Pandals.

A special thanks to Thilk Ekanayake for encouraging our members to participate in this event, organising several practice sessions, and ensuring that the choir arrived on time.

“Sunfest”, Sinhala & Tamil New Year Celebrations

The Sri Lankan traditional New Year, generally known as “Aluth Avurudda” in Sri Lanka, is a Sri Lankan holiday that celebrates the traditional New Year of the Sinhalese and Tamil population of Sri Lanka. It is a major anniversary celebrated by the Sinhalese and Tamil people and most Sri Lankans.



Sinhala and Tamil New Year is celebrated in Sri Lanka by the island's two main ethnic groups in April. Originally a harvest

festival, this event marks the passage of the Sun from the constellation Pisces to Aries. The special holiday is celebrated in Sri Lanka with the observance of traditional rituals, merrymaking, feasting, and community games and festivals.



SLA President lighting the Oil Lamp at Sunfest 2024

The Sri Lanka Association participated in this years Sunfest Festival celebrating the Sinhala & Tamil New Year

SLA Thorathuru September 2024

Celebrations organised by the Sinhala Cultural Forum. It was attended by a large audience and featured traditional food, games, and cultural performances.

Addressing the gathering, Sri Lanka Association President Kalinga Wijeyewardene thanked the Sinhala Cultural Forum for grandly organising the event. He said that it is essential for the younger generation of Sri Lankans born in Australia to experience the roots by participating in the traditional customs, foods, games, and performances associated with the New Year festivities so that they appreciate and value our traditional culture.

He commended the parents for bringing their children to this event so that they would live and feel the cultural heritage that is theirs. He further said that it is important as the future leaders of our community, the children are entrusted to carry forward these traditions in the years to come.

The President of the SCF, Mr Champa Buddhipala, expressed similar sentiments in his speech and thanked all participating community organisations.



President of the Sinhalese Cultural form addressing the audience of Sunfest 2024

Collaboration between Sri Lanka Association and Austra - Lanka Muslim Association during Ramadan

As part of President Kalinga Wijeyewardene's initiative to build bridges between the various Sri Lankan Communities in NSW, the SLA participated in an Iftar Event during the Holy Month of Ramadan organised by the Austra – Lanka Muslim Association (ALMA).

Iftar is the meal eaten after sunset following the breaking of the fast-following Maghrib prayers. Iftar or the breaking of the fast, is one of the most significant points in the day during Ramadan, the ninth month in the Islamic calendar.

The Iftar event at the Granville Community Centre in Sydney was attended by over 300 Sri Lankan Muslim community members. The SLA Committee and their spouses participated in the event and were warmly welcomed by Mohamed Rizme Cassim President of ALMA and the committee members of ALMA.



Religious observances on Ramadan

Both SLA President and ALMA President observed that this was an excellent opportunity to foster collaboration and mutual support between our organizations for the betterment of the Sri Lankan community in NSW and to understand and appreciate the culture and religious observances of the Sri Lanka Muslim community.

SLA President thanked SLA Vice President Jabeer Cader for taking the lead in organising the event on the decision taken by the SLA Committee to collaborate with ALMA.

SLA Thorathuru September 2024

This was a historic occasion as it was the first time that the SLA had participated in a significant religious observance of the Sri Lanka Muslim Community.



Some fun-filled moments at the festival

AGM notice and documents

We cordially invite all members to participate in the AGM on 3 November 2024. The notice, nomination rules, and nomination forms are attached here. If you want soft copies by email, please contact kalingawijeyewardene@gmail.com. Your continuing support of the organisation is vital.



SRI LANKA ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND AGENDA

Notice is hereby given to Members that the 2024 Annual General Meeting of the Sri Lanka Association of NSW Inc will be held on **3 November 2024** from **4 pm** onwards at the **Pennant Hills Leisure & Learning Centre, 8 Warne Street, Pennant Hills NSW 2120**.

AGENDA

1. Welcome Address by President
2. Adoption and Approval of the Minutes of 2023 AGM
3. Presentation of the Financial Statement for 2023/24
4. Presidents Report for 2023/24
5. Any Other General Business
6. Election of Office bearers and committee members
7. Election of an honorary auditor

Swarna Christine Samuel
Secretary
24 September 2024



Nominations of candidates for election as Office Bearers of the Association or as Ordinary Committee Members

IMPORTANT

Nominations

(a) shall be made in writing, signed by two members of the Association entitled to vote at a general meeting and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate, entitled to vote at a general meeting (in conformance with Appendix 3 of the Constitution); and

(b) shall be delivered to the Secretary of the Association not less than 14 days before the date fixed for the holding of the annual general meeting at which the election is to take place.

Application Forms for Office Bearers and Committee Membership should be mailed to The Secretary Sri Lanka Association of NSW Inc, GPO Box 3120, Sydney NSW 2001 to reach the Secretary not less than 14 days before the date fixed for the holding of the annual general meeting at which the election is to take place.

Application Form is attached

APPENDIX 3

Clause 16.1 (a)

**Application for Committee Membership of the
Sri Lanka Association of NSW Inc.
GPO Box 3120, Sydney NSW 2001**

Applicant	I
	of address.....
	Email.....
	Phone.....
	I hereby declare that I am a current member of The Sri Lanka Association of NSW and apply to become an Ordinary Committee Member OR Office Bearer (namely this office) of the above association. In the event of my admission, I agree to be bound by the Constitution of the Association for the time being in force.
	Signature of the applicant:.....
	Date applied:.....
Proposed by	I a member of the association, nominate the applicant, who is personally known to me, for the position noted above (either an Ordinary Committee Member OR an Office Bearer).
	Signature of the person proposing:.....
	Date:.....
Seconded By	I a member of the association, second the above proposal. The applicant, is personally known to me.
	Signature of the person seconding:.....
	Date:.....
Office use only	Date and time of receipt:.....
	Signature of the Secretary:.....

The SLA Premier Event

The Association is organising a Dinner Dance on 19 October 2024 at Waterview, Homebush, NSW to raise funds for its activities and cover the costs of the community programs. **See attached flyer.**

The Association will be grateful and humbled if you could support us by attending the Dinner Dance

Date	Saturday 19 October 2024
Time	7:00pm to 12midnight
Venue	Waterview, Bicentennial Park, Homebush
Parking	Free Parking at Bicentennial Park
Entertainment	Alston Koch Sri Lanka's only Gold Winning superstar vocalist Ebony (popular Melbourne band)
Raffle Prizes	Two Return Air Tickets from Sri Lankan Airlines and many more prizes including luxury hotel stays
	Raffle Ticket \$10
Ticket prize	\$160

Options to Purchase Tickets / Form Tables

1. email kalingawijeyewardene@gmail.com
2. Call **Kalinga** 0419 254 068, **Senani** 0418 291 624.
Shiran 0438 001 215
- 3 Online <https://www.trybooking.com/CUONL>



The flyer for the Spring Ball 2024 features a vibrant purple and blue background with a glowing circular light effect. At the top, the Sri Lanka Association of NSW Inc logo is displayed next to the text 'SRI LANKA ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC GALA DINNER DANCE'. The main title 'Spring Ball 2024' is written in a large, ornate, golden font. Below the title, the date 'Saturday 19 October 2024' and the venue 'at the "WATERVIEW" Sydney Olympic Park' are listed, along with the start time 'From 7.00 pm onwards'. The flyer highlights a 'Featuring Guest Appearance by Sri Lanka's only Gold winning Superstar Alston Koch' and 'Live Music by Ebony'. It also mentions 'Canapes & Three Course Dinner' and 'Unlimited Beer, Wine & Soft Drinks'. At the bottom, it states 'Raffle Draw, Two Return Air Tickets from SriLankan Airlines and more valuable gifts'. A large price tag shows '\$160 P/P'. The bottom section includes a QR code and contact information for purchasing tickets.

**SRI LANKA ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC
GALA DINNER DANCE**

Spring Ball 2024

Saturday 19 October 2024
at the
"WATERVIEW"
Sydney Olympic Park
From
7.00 pm onwards

Featuring Guest Appearance by
Sri Lanka's only Gold winning Superstar

Alston Koch

Live Music by

Ebony

Canapes & Three Course Dinner
Unlimited Beer, Wine & Soft Drinks

Raffle Draw,
Two Return Air Tickets from

A BLACK TIE
EVENT

SriLankan Airlines

\$160 P/P

and more valuable gifts

PURCHASE TICKETS BY CLICKING THE LINK BELOW, SCANNING THE QR CODE OR GIVING US A CALL
Kalinga - 0419 254 068 | Senani - 0418 291 624 | Shiran - 0438 001 215
<https://www.trybooking.com/CUONL>