Press Release

Statement following Meet and Greet with Political Parties

Date: 15th May 2022

Over the last few weeks, in the lead up to the Federal election, the Hindu Council of Australia has met with political parties to learn their views on various issues of importance to the Hindu community. This has included events with the ALP, One Nation, Animal Justice Party and the Liberal party. The Hindu community would like to thank these parties and politicians for their time and engagement.



Figure 1: Meet and Greet Political Parties events held by Hindu Council.

The Hindu community would like to thank the Leader of the Opposition, Anthony Albanese, and the Shadow Spokesperson for Multiculturalism, Kristina Keneally, from the ALP for taking the time out of their busy schedules to meet face to face at their meet and greet event, hearing our concerns, answering questions and spending time with the Hindu community. The ALP has also committed to engage with the various faith groups to explore the possibility of setting up a National Centre of Excellence into Religious Education to improve public education around the various faiths and help with social cohesion and understanding in our multicultural society. We are grateful for this commitment.

As part of the ALP event with the Hindu community, Mr Albanese and Ms Keneally were presented with scarves as a gift of appreciation.



Figure 2: Hindu Council engaging with Anthony Albanese and Kristina Keneally from the ALP

The Hindu community is shocked and appalled to note that in response to our meeting with the ALP, former Greens Senator Lee Rhiannon repeated a scurrilous and dis-proven slur against one of our organisations, Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP). By doing so she vilified the Australian Hindu community by falsely characterising us as right-wing extremists.

The Hindu community is not only distressed and hurt by such racist and ignorant remarks from the Greens, but also puzzled about why the Greens have again singled out the Hindu community as a target of their polemics. We remember that in NSW in 2021 Greens MP David Shoebridge made similar remarks about VHP. The Greens' vilification and bigotry towards the Hindu community has no place in tolerant, peaceful, multicultural Australia.



Figure 3: PM assuring Hindus

The Hindu community also condemns the attack by the Greens on the ALP and Anthony Albanese arising out of their meeting with the Hindu community. It is disgraceful that someone running for a position in public office to serve the Australian people should be attacked on social media for accepting a heartfelt gift to display love, peace and unity.

The Hindu community calls on Adam Bandt to dissociate his party from Ms Rhiannon's remarks and condemn them as incorrect and an abhorrent form of bigotry. We likewise call on all other parties to do the same. We note with gratitude that the One Nation party, which ironically has often been attacked by the Greens for alleged racism, has not hesitated to defend our community from the Greens' racist polemics, and shown us nothing but kindness.

We also We thank the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, and Multicultural Minister, Alex Hawke, from the Coalition for taking the time out of their busy campaign to come along and meet with the Hindu Council of Australia face to face, and for his generous comments addressing the issue of Hinduphobia and strongly condemning this in Australian society. The Hindu Council appreciated the Coalition's encouragement to apply for their funding for cultural education

facilities, as well as his comments regarding faith as one of the underlying strengths of this country and the statement that he was against the discrimination on the basis of faith.

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