



Consulate of Nepal

Victoria, Australia

Press Release

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Nepal to Australia, Her Excellency Lucky Sherpa, concludes her official visit to Victoria

Thursday, 3 August 2017: Ambassador of Nepal to Australia, Her Excellency Lucky Sherpa successfully concluded her official six-day visit to Victoria on Wednesday, 2 August 2017. Ambassador Sherpa met with Victorian senior government officials, Members of Parliament, civil society and business leaders, community leaders and members and university students to discuss ways to enhance the interests of Victoria's Nepalese. Ambassador Sherpa proposed a specialised promotion of Nepal as a tourist destination in Victoria, and discussed how to bolster bilateral trade and investment. Further details of Ambassador Sherpa's visit are as detailed below:

Day 1, Friday, 28 July 2017:

Ambassador Sherpa arrived at Melbourne Airport Terminal 4, Virgin Airlines at 7:30am and was welcomed on arrival by Hon. Consul General of Nepal to Victoria, Mr Chandra Yonzon, community leaders and members, and participated in a *khada* ceremony. Ms Laxmi Yonzon, Nepal Consulate Office team, Nepal Tourism Board Honorary Public Relations Representative, Mr Chiranjebi Devkota, Non Resident Nepalese Association of Victoria Secretary, Mr Gautam Lamichane, Nepalese Association of Victoria (NAV) Secretary, Mr Norgen Norboo, Nepalese People Progressive Forum (NPPF) Australia President, Mr Mandab Karki, Solangture Director, Mr Raju Shakya, Khabar's Australia News Co-ordinator, Mr Manarishi Dhital, newly-elected Mayor of Aathbiskot Municipality, Rukum, Mr Gorakh Bahadur K.C., NPPF Australia Principal Adviser, Mr Sheshmani Sharma and student leader Mr Deepak Pandey also made part of the Ambassador's welcome party.

Hon. Consul General, Mr Yonzon, and the Nepal Consulate Office organised the Official Welcome Ceremony for the Nepalese Ambassador which was held at Thornbury Theatre that evening. The program's theme was 'Celebrating Cultural Diversity'. The program's MC and Nepal Consulate Office team wore traditional Sherpa attire, and the inaugural performance was a traditional Sherpa dance. Subsequent cultural performances were included, as well as an audio-visual package outlining the biography and achievements of Ambassador Sherpa. The documentary concluded with Hon. Consul General Yonzon offering his support and best wishes on behalf of the entire Nepal Consulate Office team.



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Honorary Consulate Adviser and immediate past NAV President, Mr. Sudhir Shakya, delivered a welcome speech followed by speeches by Hon. Consul of Nepal to Western Australia, Mr Frederick Brown, Friends of Nepal representative, Ms Sue Chamberlain, NRNA Australia President, Mr Tonnou Ghothane, and NAV President, Dr Anupam Pokharel. Special Guest, Member of Parliament for Wills, Mr Peter Khalil, expressed admiration for Ambassador Sherpa's achievements and leadership capabilities as MP in Nepal. Mr Khalil also expressed his strong desire to continue working for better relations between Nepal and Australia by forming a Special Parliamentary Committee. The Program was attended by Australian Government officers, local political party leaders, diplomats and over two hundred members of Victoria's Nepalese community.

Chief Guest, Ambassador Sherpa in her speech expressed her gratitude and outlined her vision for Nepalese foreign policy in Australia. Her Excellency reiterated her commitment to continue working for the betterment of Nepal by mobilising the skills of Nepalese living in Australia, and highlighted accomplishments gained by Nepalese students by citing successful entrepreneurs such as Mr Shesh Ghale and Mr Tonnou Ghothane.

Program Chair, Hon. Consul General Yonzon expressed rejuvenised expectations of the cordial relations between Australia and Nepal of reaching new heights during Ambassador Sherpa's tenure. Mr Yonzon said, "The Nepalese community in Victoria has always displayed extraordinary solidarity, support and camaraderie which should be strengthened in the future." Mr Yonzon concluded official proceedings, pledged that the Nepal Consulate Office in Melbourne will work closely with the Embassy of Nepal in Canberra in the future.

Day 2, Saturday, 29 January 2017:

Ambassador Sherpa, Hon. Consul General Yonzon and community members visited Bal Chautari in Preston, Melbourne. Members of Bal Chautari had performed at the Official Welcome Ceremony for the Nepalese Ambassador of Nepal to Australia the previous evening at Thornbury Theatre. Five children had performed the Australian and Nepalese national anthems and welcomed Ambassador Sherpa with a dance performance. Bal Chautari member, Mr Kiran Gurung briefed the visiting Ambassador on the formation and history of Bal Chautari and its contribution to the community. The envoy expressed appreciation of the efforts to preserve Nepali language and culture.

Ambassador Sherpa and delegation then proceeded to visit the 'NEPALI COLLECTION', a collection of Nepali books, DVDs and CDs at Coburg Library. Coburg Library is the first public library in Victoria to collect and store information on Nepal in Nepali language available to members of the public. It aims to help



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Melbourne's Nepalese community remain in touch with their history and cultural heritage. The delegation recognised and acknowledged the individuals whose efforts and contributions helped to establish the Nepali book section in the library.

Day 3, Sunday, 30 January 2017:

Ambassador Sherpa, Hon. Consul General Yonzon, Mrs Laxmi Yonzon, NTB HPRR, Mr Chiranjebi Devkota, Tamang Society of Victoria President, Mr Bom Yonzon, former Geelong Nepalese Association President, Mr Ram Kumar Shrestha, and Editor at *Nepali Times Melbourne* and Nepal Consulate Office PR Officer, Ms Niru Tripathi attended programs in Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo. The Geelong Nepalese Association of Victoria organised a welcome ceremony for the Ambassador in which Geelong's Nepalese participated with in enthusiasm. Ambassador Sherpa praised her love for Geelong's Nepalese community and wished them continued success. Ballarat Nepalese Association also welcomed Ambassador Sherpa with the organisation of an interactive session with friends of Nepal as well as Ballarat's Nepalese community.

AusNep Foundation Inc. and Rotary Club of Bendigo, supported by the Nepal Consulate Office, Melbourne, organised a special session in Bendigo to welcome Ambassador Sherpa and delegation. Special Guest representing of the City of Greater Bendigo's Mayor's Office, Councillor James Williams, Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services Chair Mr. Abhishek Awasthi, Dja Dja Wurrung clan member Ms. Karen Smith, and Bendigo's Nepalese and wider community members and media personnel welcomed Ambassador Sherpa and the delegation upon arrival at The Bendigo Club at 3:30pm. Cr Williams, Mr Awasthi, event organisers and Bendigo's Nepalese and wider community members greeted the delegation in the gardens and photographs were taken before official proceedings commenced. AusNep Foundation Inc. member, Ms Jenny Donaldson, delivered a moving presentation of AusNep Foundation Inc.'s work supported by Rotary Club of Bendigo in assisting Nepalese following the devastating April 2015 earthquakes. The presentation included photographs of AusNep members' community work in Bendigo, as well as Nepal. AusNep Foundation Inc., proudly supported by Rotary Club of Bendigo, has raised over \$73,000 in their mission in rebuilding and supporting devastated Nepal, including their project of rebuilding the local school in Mulabari villages in Gorkha. Ms Donaldson thanked the efforts of all those who have contributed to their mission, expressed her love for Bendigo's Nepalese and commended their work with the wider community.

Mrs Julie Sloan delivered a presentation on Rotary Club of Bendigo's work with AusNep Foundation Inc. and Bendigo's Nepalese community. Rotary Club of Bendigo's direct work with Nepalese in Nepal prior to and following the devastating 2015 earthquakes has seen enormous benefit to the lives of many Nepalese in earthquake struck regions in Nepal. Rotary Club of Bendigo's support and work with



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AusNep Foundation Inc. has seen Bendigo's Nepalese and wider communities come together, with their work continuing to bring together Bendigo's Nepalese and wider communities. Mrs Sloan expressed great hopes for the strengthening of Bendigo's relationship with Nepal in the future.

Miss Subrina Shrestha showed all attendees that authentic, vibrant Nepalese culture can be found in the heart of regional Victoria with her self-choreographed performance of a traditional Nepalese dance. Miss Shrestha, who is self-taught, was invited on stage and introduced as the talented young performer that she is, and was commended for her past performances at various multicultural events in Bendigo and surrounding towns in regional Victoria. Miss Shrestha's performance was certainly a highlight of the program, with Hon. Consul General Yonzon getting everyone clapping along.

Following an Acknowledgement of Country, Cr Williams delivered a speech in which spoke of Bendigo's humble beginnings as a sheep station prior to the discovery of gold which led to the Victorian-era boomtown. Cr Williams acknowledged the history of Dja Dja Wurrung Country, before speaking of the vibrant, welcoming and multicultural community that the City of Greater Bendigo is today. He elaborated on Bendigo's proud welcoming of migrant communities and its wholehearted acceptance of its Nepalese community, and the contributions that Bendigo's Nepalese make to the city. Cr Williams' enthusiastic participation in the session saw him as one of the first to arrive and one of the last to leave the session, and expressed a desire to build upon the Bendigo-Nepal friendship.

Ambassador Sherpa was invited to deliver the final speech of the program, in which she thanked on behalf of the delegation and community members, organisers' contributions to the welcome session in Bendigo. Her Excellency expressed her thanks to everybody for their hard work and their support, especially Dja Dja Wurrung clan member, Mr Karen Smith. Her Excellency expressed gratitude in surviving the 2015 earthquakes, saying that she was one of the lucky ones. Her Excellency expressed thanks to the Nepal school building project, and commended Ms Donaldson from Rotary Club of Bendigo and Mrs Sloan from AusNep Foundation Inc. and their fine display of women power. Her Excellency encouraged Cr Williams to one day visit Nepal to experience life of Nepalese in rural areas before presenting the Councillor with a token of love.

Following the program, Ambassador Sherpa, Hon. Consul General Yonzon, accompanying delegates and organisers visited The Great Stupa of Universal Compassion in Bendigo before dining in Bendigo and returning to Melbourne late that evening.

Day 4, Monday, 31 July 2017:



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Ambassador Sherpa and Hon. Consul General Yonzon visited La Trobe University City Campus where they were warmly welcomed by the La Trobe University Nepalese Student Association as well as other international students. They began a tour of the campus before meeting with students for an interactive session. The Nepalese student community said that they were hoping for guidance and support from the Embassy of Nepal in Canberra to facilitate and ease their student life in Australia. Ambassador Sherpa assured them that they will receive full support and help from the Embassy in addressing issues requiring assistance. Ambassador Sherpa suggested that the students maintain close ties with the Nepal Consulate Office and communicate any request for assistance to the consulate team. The delegation then met with university officials including Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor John Dewar. Discussions addressed staying on top of the dynamic nature of the education sector and its evolving needs of educational exchanges and knowledge transfers.

Ambassador Sherpa and Hon. Consul General Yonzon then proceeded to Government House in Melbourne where they met with Governor of Melbourne, Her Excellency Linda Dessau AC. Discussions addressed the enhancement of cooperation between the Australia and Nepal, inclusive provisions of Nepal's new Constitution, and the commendation of women empowerment and leadership.

The duo's day concluded with a visit to the state office of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Melbourne where they met with DFAT Director, Ms Jenny Bloomfield. Director Bloomfield and Ambassador Sherpa discussed areas of cooperation between DFAT and the Nepalese Embassy to increase bilateral trade and investment. Several policy options were explored and they agreed to work closely in the coming days and looked forward to meeting again to strengthen the relationship.

Ambassador Sherpa and the Nepal Consulate Office team participated in a welcome dinner at Base Camp, Northcote, organised by NRNA Victoria that evening. Ambassador Sherpa congratulated all winners and asked for increased unity and collaboration.

Day 5, Tuesday, 1 August 2017:

Ambassador Sherpa visited Oxfam and met Oxfam Associate Director Program Partnerships, Ms Anthea Spinks. Ambassador Sherpa thanked Oxfam for their assistance during the humanitarian response following the 2015 earthquakes and long-term development efforts in Nepal.



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The delegation then met with Legislative Assembly Honourable Speaker, Hon. Colin Brooks MP and Legislative Council President, Hon. Bruce Atkinson MLC. They shared the experiences of parliamentary processes in Nepal and Australia. Legislative Council President expressed keenness in working closely with the Embassy of Nepal in sharing experiences of female members of Victorian parliament given Ambassador Sherpa's role as MP in Nepal.

Day 6, Wednesday, 2 August 2017:

Ambassador Sherpa and delegation visited CSIRO and Monash University and met with CSIRO Principal Scientist, Dr Raju Adhikari and several PhD students. They toured the science laboratory and the facilities.

Ambassador Sherpa also met with Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade, Hon. Philip Dalidakis MLC, and discussed bilateral business cooperation for Nepalese business enterprises. Ambassador Sherpa encouraged Minister Dalidakis MLC to visit Nepal and to explore the welcoming Nepali market for FDI. Future discussions were also planned. After meeting with Hon. Dalidakis MLC, Ambassador Sherpa visited the Nepal Consulate Office, Melbourne, where Hon. Consul General Yonzon presented Her Excellency with a ceremonial *khada* as a token of love. Nepal Consulate Office team was in attendance.

Regards,

Niru Tripathi

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Niru Tripathi | Public Relations Officer



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