

20th August-2013

To,
The Hon. Victor Dominello, MP
Minister for Citizenship and Communities, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Parliament of NSW

Dear Mr. Victor Dominello,

Proposal for Illumination of the Opera House during Diwali 2013 Festival

A large community of nearly half a million people of Indian-origin has made Australia its home and is making a significant contribution to NSW and Australia.

Sydney is a vibrant and multicultural city and is home to a substantial population of overseas Indian migrants - professionals and business people, students and tourists. India is the largest source of skilled professionals in NSW and Indians are the fastest growing ethnic group in Australia.

As is well known, India is a land of festivals and Diwali/Deepavali, celebration of Joy, Happiness and Prosperity, is India's main festival. Indians in NSW love to share the Diwali Festival Celebrations, the spirit of friendship and goodwill, blessings of prosperity and joy, widely with their Australian and multicultural friends.

Diwali is always in Oct./Nov. This year it is on 3rd November.

The importance of Diwali can be gauged from the fact that in New Zealand, it has been recognised as one of main festivals celebrated by the Govt. of New Zealand, both in Wellington and in Auckland. The Prime Minister and prominent ministers and Government officials also attend the Celebration.

Similar recognition has been accorded in the UK and the USA and it is also symbolically celebrated in the White House.

Recently, the Harbour Bridge in Sydney and the Opera House, were illuminated with laser lights from 24 May to 10 June during the celebrations of Vivid Sydney Festival.

Nothing symbolises Australia as much as its iconic Opera House in Sydney.

While NSW Government gives due recognition to Diwali celebrations with a function being held in the NSW Parliament every year since 2003, it is strongly felt that the current proposal to illuminate the Opera House for Diwali 2014 needs to be reconsidered and instead made into an annual feat **starting the illumination from this year itself** as it will make a bigger impact because of the following reasons:

- A signature event "Pravasi Bharatiya Divas" (Non-Resident Indian Day) Convention is being held in Sydney from November 10-12, just a few days after Diwali. The theme of this one off event in Sydney is "Connecting For A Shared Future - The Indian Diaspora, India And The Pacific". This event has full support of NSW Government.
- India is an important partner of NSW and the Premiere looks forward to continuing to develop deeper cultural and commercial ties with India.
- Preparations are already under way for Parramasala Festival, proudly supported by NSW Govt. and inviting the leading Bollywood superstar Sharukh Khan on October 7.
- Premier Barry O'Farrell's forthcoming visit to India shortly thereafter, on 1st December.

Focusing on the above, commencement of illuminating Opera House this year along with the above Govt supported events, will definitely make a bigger impact; where as its start next year may not add the same spark.

It will bring praise to your good efforts and the NSW Govt. as this event will convey and strengthen your message of multiculturalism, community unity and harmony.

This would be a creative way of inviting all people of Sydney to experience sharing the message of happiness and prosperity, enhancing friendship and harmony as well as delighting Sydney people with entertaining images on the iconic Opera House. Our team will organise good images for this theme.

It is clarified that the proposal would involve only limited expenditure as these days illumination does not involve physical effort, but only laser lighting with the equipment projecting images on the sails of opera house.

We request that the Opera House be illuminated from 1st November to 12th November.

We will be happy to discuss the matter with you at a mutually convenient time and address if you have any queries.

We look forward to your positive response.

Sincerely,

Shubha Kumar

President, India Club Inc.

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