

MINISTER OPENING

Gursimrat Bawa

Moving on, next up we have the Honourable Ray Williams to deliver the opening address, may I please welcome you on stage. Ray is a member of parliament from Castle Hill, he was sworn in as the Minister for multiculturalism and Minister of disability services in 2017, prior to this Ray was parliamentary secretary for transport and roads and for Western Sydney. Ray studied at Curtin University achieving a graduate certificate and development planning and a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning and has 22 years of experience across the transport industry please join me in welcoming the Honourable Ray Williams.

[applause]

Hon. Ray Williams MP

Thank you very much and good morning ladies and gentlemen it's indeed a pleasure to join with you this morning at this very very important forum can I first of all I'm very very respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, pay my respects to elder's past and present. Can I acknowledge your chairman Ramneek Singh and his opening remarks. Can I also acknowledge the various leaders who are here from the Sikh organizations. Can I acknowledge the people from overseas from around our country who has come here. The first thing I said to Ramneek this morning was this doesn't surprise me at all, Young Sikhs Professional Network, because I get to see on almost a weekly basis the efforts of the Sikh community here in New South Wales and I'll explain a little bit more of that in a moment but some important statistics over and above what have already been mentioned is the fact that Sikhism in New South Wales it has grown by 500% in the last 10 years, you are indeed a community on the move, but you have immersed yourselves in all aspects of not only of this country but you continue to move forward and in my own backyard and even just as recently as yesterday I was very very pleased to attend the Gurdwara at Glenwood which I think with we call the beating heart of Sikhism in New South Wales it is right next to my electorate of Castle Hill and I've known and been associated with the temple and various people and members for many, many years, hard-working people, people who not only operate businesses, create wonderful employment, but bring and support their community on a daily basis but outside of Glenwood and indeed right across New South Wales whether it is in Griffith and the temple that I visited there or in Woolgoolga and we've spoken about the six who moved here many many years ago, who are in farming communities in large numbers in that particular area and I'm very very proud to just mention ever so briefly about the foray of six in politics the Liberal Party and the National Party as you know are a coalition in New South Wales and we very very proudly have a member of that Sikh community running as the National candidate for Coffs Harbour who will be elected as the first Sikh representative in Australia on the 23rd of March this Year.

[applause]

And so certainly, and I'm trying to think Rom of his first name I know his last name is Singh, that would come as no surprise to anybody but his first name escapes me, Gurvansh. We'll make an indeed an important impact in our parliament because if you look at the representation of parliamentarians in New South Wales it's like the United Nations, it very much is a celebration of our cultural diversity here in this country where very, very proudly our people are the sum total of every nation around the world

but importantly as I say that we live in great social cohesion that we are a harmonious community and I really want to pay my respects to the Sikh community who practice that practice that cohesion reach out deep into the community and support for harmony of our various communities and our various members of our community. The Sikh Olympics at Bass Hill last year and that wonderful gesture of Sikhism of giving everyone a free meal and I lined up there with tens of thousands of people to enjoy a meal alongside those people and then to witness the various attributes of the athletes who were competing there, the Sikh the Super Six game, my good friend Balraj Agra is in the audience somewhere, I know who makes Powermate, how hi great to see you, has made a great inroads not only just on behalf of the Sikh community but so importantly he reaches out, he reaches out across Western Sydney and says to people come and join a team and play soccer and play basketball or play cricket or play in various sports bringing large members of the community together that is wonderful because people then get a greater understanding of Sikhs of your culture but greater social cohesion of our communities on the whole. I see these people, I mix with these people I'm proud of these people you're a great attribute to our multicultural and indeed our optimistic modern-day multi-cultural society here in New South Wales, so to see the Young Sikhs Professional Network commence and it's proud to my indeed my pleasure to be here on behalf of Elevate 2019. I will be interested to see how the forum progresses but I am sure this will be a wonderful inaugural meeting and I encourage you indeed to network together but to certainly not only grow as a community but grow as great Australians and can I thank you on behalf of my premier the Honourable a Gladisbury Clan and myself as the Minister for multiculturalism for the outstanding contribution that Sikhs have made in this country of New South Wales and indeed to our state of New South Wales have a wonderful day thank you.