



28th Feb 2025

**Good evening, Rabbi Daniel, members of the Caulfield Hebrew Congregation, and dear friends.**

**It is a profound honour to stand before you tonight in this sacred space, one of faith, reflection, and enduring friendship.**

**I begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of this land and paying my respects to the elders past, present, and emerging. I also honor my ancestors, whose wisdom, courage, and values continue to illuminate my path.**

**Tonight, we gather not just as representatives of two religions but as kindred spirits—communities bound by history, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to our faith and traditions.**

**Yet, as we celebrate, we must also confront a sobering reality: the rise of intolerance and division, threatening the very fabric of our multicultural society. Antisemitism, Hinduphobia, and all forms of religious bigotry are not merely injustices against individuals—they are an affront to the values of democracy, respect, and human dignity.**

**Let me be clear: Hindus stand in unwavering solidarity with our Jewish brothers and sisters. When one community is attacked, we are all affected. Silence is not an option; apathy is not a choice. We have a moral duty to challenge hatred wherever it arises, and we do so not with fear but with conviction. Not by retreating, but by strengthening the bonds that unite us.**

**Our histories bear striking parallels. Both Hindus and Jews have endured exile, persecution, and attempts to erase our identities. Yet, we have never yielded. We have preserved our languages, scriptures, and customs through centuries of upheaval. Our communities are living proof that faith is stronger than oppression, that culture is indestructible, and that identity is eternal.**

**Family is the cornerstone of both of our traditions. We raise our children with a deep sense of duty towards faith, service, and the betterment of society. Whether through Shabbat dinners or Diwali celebrations, Passover or Navaratri, we instil values that transcend generations—values of justice, compassion, and unwavering devotion.**

**But faith is not just about preservation; it is about action. Both Hinduism and Judaism emphasise Seva - selfless service. Our scriptures call upon us to uplift the vulnerable, to serve with humility, and to ensure that prosperity is shared, not hoarded.**

**In a world that too often seeks to divide us, let us be the counterforce. Let us be the ones who build bridges instead of walls, who seek understanding instead of division. Let us ensure that our children grow up not just knowing their heritage but appreciating the richness of others.**

**As I stand here tonight, I call upon each of us to be beacons of unity, voices of wisdom, and symbols of hope. Let our friendship not just be remembered in words but demonstrated through action. The future of our multicultural society depends on people like us—people willing to stand up, speak out, and lead with courage. May our bond grow ever stronger. May we continue to walk together, learn together, and inspire future generations to do the same.**

**Thank you to Rabbi Daniel and this wonderful congregation for your warmth and hospitality. Shabbat Shalom and Namaste.**