



**PRIME MINISTER
THE HON ANTHONY ALBANESE MP**

*** **CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY** ***

**FESTIVAL OF COLOURS CELEBRATION
BAPS SHRI SWAMINARAYAN HINDU MANDIR & CULTURAL PRECINCT
KEMPS CREEK, NSW
15 MARCH 2025**

Jai Swaminarayan.

It is such a great pleasure to be with you all today – at this sacred place for such a special occasion.

One of the joys of being Prime Minister is the opportunity to come to an event like this – to witness the incredible devotion of communities who have given so much to our country.

I would especially like to acknowledge His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj, who once again comes to us with his message that “in the joy of others lies our own.”

Your Holiness, it is an honour for all of us that you have chosen Sydney to celebrate this festival outside India for only the second time in more than 115 years of B-A-P-S history.

Your Holiness, as we gather here on the very site you blessed and chose 10 years ago, I want to say on behalf of the Australian people that you are always so very welcome here.

As part of the great Festival of Colours, what Fuldol holds out to us is the greatest hope of all: the triumph of good over evil.

It is a hope that never loses its currency. And as Australians of Hindu faith so compellingly remind us, it is something we must never stop striving for.

Through the beautiful power of your example, you have firmly cemented the Festival of Colours as a cherished fixture in the Australian calendar.

This year, we have gathered to celebrate it in what is already becoming an invaluable addition to our country.

The B-A-P-S Shri Swaminarayan Hindu Mandir and Cultural Precinct is a work in majestic progress.

It was His Holiness's vision that first brought this mandir to life. And now, that dream has been realised. I am told that when His Holiness first saw the completed mandir, he simply said, "I am home."

That simple statement speaks volumes. Because this mandir is not just a place of worship — it is a place of belonging, tranquillity and peace, a place that makes everyone feel at home, regardless of their faith or background.

The first stage is open and available for all to enjoy and appreciate.

And when it is completed, it will be the largest Hindu Mandir precinct in Australia, a place of spiritual growth and development for anyone seeking peace amid all the noise of everyday life.

Just as it is important that you have somewhere to be immersed in your faith and strengthened by all the gifts of your forebears, it is also important you have a school where your children can be guided by Hindu culture.

We will have more to say about this in coming weeks, but today I can say to you that my Government will support the first Hindu school right here in Western Sydney.

This is the right thing to do.

In all your energy, your ingenuity and your aspiration, the Hindu community is an integral part of this country.

It is only right that you have your vision of a school realised.

For generations, you have added so much to what Australia is – and you are a profoundly important part of the future we are building.

His Holiness has always taught that: "Unity is strength. When hearts are united, nothing is impossible."

I've had the privilege of visiting India in an official capacity many times, including twice so far as Prime Minister.

Yet I often think back to my first encounter with India – as a backpacker in 1991. The memories from that trip are still so fresh and vivid.

I spent six weeks catching trains, buses, video buses and even catching a lift. If you want to understand India, catch a train!

Last decade I was in Delhi and caught the magnificent metro to visit Swaminarayan Akshardham.

And what struck me is that amid all the change India had gone through since my first trip, all that Swaminarayan Akshardham stands for and all that it contains is timeless.

It is a monument of faith that will stand firm through the ages.

Just as this wonderful mandir and cultural precinct will.

And standing here today, I am confident that the Kemps Creek Mandir will be the Akshardham of Australia.

That is the power and the great heart of your community.

Australia is a better country because of you.

To the B-A-P-S community, and to all who have contributed to making this dream a reality, you should be very proud.

And to Your Holiness, on behalf of the Australian people – welcome home.

Jai Swaminarayan!