

Submission by Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) Australia, Queensland Chapter to the Queensland Government Inquiry into serious vilification and hate crimes.

The Honourable and Respected Committee Members

Hinduism is one of most ancient religions of the world with more than 1.3 billion Hindus. Statistical evidence all over the world confirm that Hindus in whichever part of the world they reside in, they are peace loving, law abiding, highly progressive, assimilating and highly contributing to the community they are part of.

Despite their amicable nature, they are the most persecuted group of people in the entire history of humankind. This is evident in academic lies, misinterpretations, historical bias, and media propaganda.

Hindus have been subject to ongoing invasions, loot, slavery, and religious conversions over the last 1500 years. This has resulted in Hindus being eradicated from vast stretches of their own land (for example, most recently from Kashmir in India). Despite such ongoing onslaught the Hindu community has been patient and tolerant. Unfortunately, they have not been given any recognition for their patience and tolerant virtues.

In modern times, wherever Hindus have ever migrated to, they have always strived for the betterment and upliftment of the new country they have called home. In addition to the economic contributions, Hindus also share their noble and rich culture and heritage, for example, through Yoga, Ayurveda, Meditation, festivals, dances, food, and music.

Hindu Australians feel that there is a systematic and continuous growth of deep-rooted, baseless and mindless “Hatred Against Hindus” and “Vilification attempts”. We are very sad that we have to voice our concerns. Below are some examples of incidents and articles which prove our concerns. We are very hopeful that the Committee will be able to provide a favourable response that will discourage vilification of Hinduism and Hindus.

We are mindful that some of the examples cited did not originate in Queensland, however in this highly interconnected society that we live in today using television, radio and online media, such incidents equally target Hindu community in Queensland and the Hindu community here is equally affected and traumatised by them as is at the place of the origin of the incident.

If immediate and co-ordinated steps are not taken by Governments in Australia to address and stop this senseless hatred against Hindus, such incidents will become widespread and more impactful in future

Also, we want to highlight an observable fact here. At first it may not seem to be directly related to this inquiry, but it is a major factor that increases the boldness of anti-social elements and groups who believe in their ideological supremacy over others, which ultimately leads to the hate, hate crimes and vilification of Hindus. And that observable fact is that almost every program which is ever run with the aim of inclusiveness and cohesiveness of all communities at every level, in-reality ends up being progressed with the notable ‘exclusion’ of Hindus and Hindu culture. For example, the inclusion for awareness about Hindu Culture and Hindu Civilisation in the Cultural and Linguistic Diversity programs at Government, Private or NGO levels is almost nil. Hindus struggle to find even a mention in most such programs let alone any visual or intellectual inclusion of the Hindus and Hindu culture. We find it great and satisfying to see the

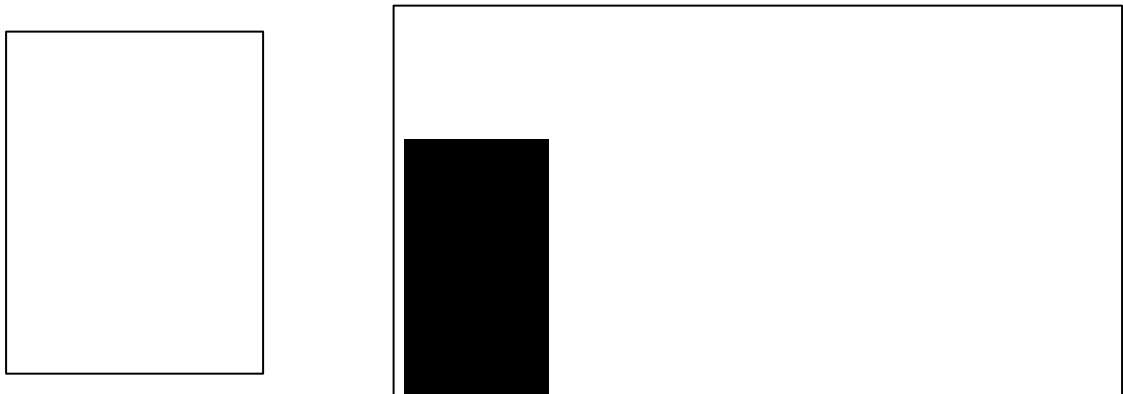
inclusion of our nation's great indigenous cultures, people with racial and genetic diversity, diverse skin colours, various sexual and gender orientations, many religious and cultural attires, etc. in the national and local government programs and advertisements. But Hindus and Hindu culture almost invariably finds no place anywhere. This non-inclusion is a big factor of hatred and vilification faced by the Hindu community at large due to misinformation spread by hate groups and lack of awareness about Hindus in government programs.

In preparing this report we have classified the incidents under the following categories:

1. Media (News & Cine – Print, On-Air and Online)
2. Political and Legal
3. Business and Non-Business Organisations
4. Other Ideologies
5. Academia

1) Media (News & Cine - Print, On-Air and Online)

May 2021: Whilst we appreciate the underlying message of the article in the Australian newspaper "The Daily Telegraph" where they showed compassion for Australian Indians stranded in India, the image printed was a blatant insult of the Hindu Deity Shri Ganesha for no fault of Hindus. As usual Hindus paid the price of just being Hindus. By using the image, the newspaper and the author showed total disrespect to the sentiments of the Hindus. The use of such an image was completely unnecessary.



The Hindu community filed a petition against this despicable representation of their Divine Almighty. Hindus are almost invariably humiliated with such representations. (Reference List: [1] [2])

April/May 2021: A number of newspapers has put India on the receiving end for the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic, which neither originated in India and nor has it been managed as badly as being projected especially considering the large population in India. There are other countries with higher total cases, per capita cases, total deaths and per capita deaths in the world. The current data can be searched and seen online e.g., on worldometers website (Reference List: [3]). The media has also continuously hounded India for inaccurate data. However, nowhere do they objectively portray the big picture, comparative studies (only absolute numbers are highlighted) and at least some glimpse of the mitigating efforts. This is done to indirectly send a

message subconsciously to the masses that India and Indians have failed in the efforts to combat COVID 19. The mental pain and agony an average Indian go through while watching such news is immense. Apart from the television, radio and online news, below are the links of a few of the many such published articles (Reference List: [4] [5] [6]).

Had it been any other country they would have been globally applauded for managing the pandemic with a population of 1.35 Billion, for developing their own vaccine, for manufacturing and delivering the vaccines to the whole world even before vaccinating their own and still doing so well. It is difficult to appreciate the cause for such hatred and bias against Indians.

2) Political & Legal

March 2021: Mr. David Shoebridge an MP from Australian Greens recently showed his reprehensible Hatred Against Hindus in NSW Parliament without any basis and factual evidence. (Reference List: [7] [8] [9])

He called a Hindu Organisation, a terrorist organisation. The organisation which is being solely run by dedicated volunteers for more than two decades in Australia. It has been working day and night for the betterment of our country, community and raising ethically and morally sound, great patriotic citizens. Was shocked to hear his diatribe from a MP who did not care to confirm the facts before tabling in parliament.

Below are just a few links (Reference List: [10] [11] [12] [13] [14] [15]) from the Governments of Australia, USA, Canada and UK and also the Wikipedia page which lists the terrorist organisations and groups in the whole world. Even a quick and simple check on these resources would have been enough for Mr. David Shoebridge to know and understand about Hindus and Hindu community.

We are happy that the NSW Parliament passed a motion condemning the vile, despicable and hate filled comments against the Hindu community made by Mr David Shoebridge. Below are the links (Reference List: [16] [17] [18] [19])

Proof: Legislative Assembly Hansard - 05 May 2021 - NSW Government (nsw.gov.au) - Vishva Hindu Parishad - Dr Hugh McDermott (Prospect).

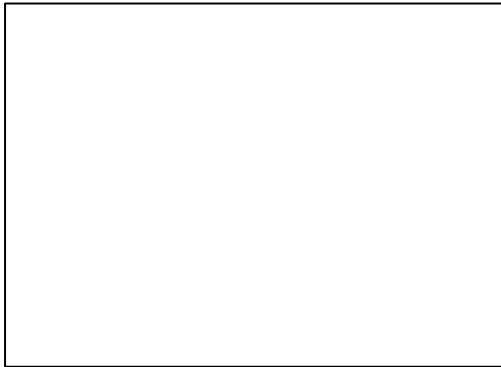
Proof: Legislative Assembly Hansard - 05 May 2021 - NSW Government (nsw.gov.au) - VHP Sanskrit School - Dr Geoff Lee (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, and Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans).

Proof: Legislative Council Hansard - 05 May 2021 - NSW Government (nsw.gov.au) - COVID-19 and INDIA: HINDUISM: The Hon. Daniel Mookhey.

Proof: Legislative Council Hansard - 12 May 2021 - NSW Government (nsw.gov.au) -Vishva Hindu Parishad: The Hon. Mark Latham.

March 2021: Here is an example (Reference List: [20]) which shows how articles are written in the public domain by hiding them under the veil of law firms and interviews. Vilification of Hindus by MPs like Mr. David Shoebridge acts as backing for such hate groups. Then they publish and propagate lies and hatred against Hindus. Until and unless it is checked by law enforcement such hatred will spread in the society against innocent community members.

Being Hindu is a sense of cultural and religious belonging that is without any geographic boundaries and above all nothing to do with political inclinations. It is sad when being Hindu is vilified for political decisions and activities in specific parts of the world.



March 2021: Father of the Indian Student said that his son Mr. Vishal Jood is languishing in Australia jail for peacefully opposing the Anti-India mob in Australia who were tarnishing the Indian Flag. (Reference List: [21] [22]).

March 2020: Treasurer Josh Frydenberg made repeated references to Hinduism in Question Time while criticising Labor's idea of potentially pursuing a "wellbeing budget". (Reference List: [23])

Mr Frydenberg said:

*"They (Labor) are inspired by their spiritual leader, the member for Rankin (Opposition treasury spokesman Jim Chalmers).....I was thinking yesterday, as the member for Rankin was coming into the chamber fresh from his **Ashram** deep in the **mountains of the Himalayas barefoot** in the chamber, **robes flowing, incense burning, beads in one hand**, wellbeing budget in the other, I thought to myself: **What yoga position** the member for Rankin **would assume** ... to deliver the first wellbeing budget?"*

Although it may sound funny and harmless to some but making such statements without understanding Hindu culture, the deep meaning, significance and science behind such practices that have been upheld for thousands of years does not go down well with the Hindu community.

Again, such acts happen because of the large-scale misinformation about Hindus and Hindu culture at all levels. So mass awareness and education programs about Hindu culture and customs through Government programs is the absolute need of the hour.

3) Business and Non-Business Organisations

January 2021: Global outrage over hateful toilet seat covers: A western Sydney online shop owner has sparked international outrage from Hindus who demanded that she withdraw a toilet seat cover from sale because of its depiction of Hindu Deity Shri Ganesha. Sydney-based online retailer [REDACTED] was found selling the cover and mat featuring images of Bhagwan Shri Ganesha for \$45 via its website and Facebook and Etsy stores. (Reference List: [24] [25]).



November 2017: A highly insensitive and hateful advertisement showing our Deity Shri Ganesha sitting at a table along with the heads of other faiths and ideologies that are eating lamb meat and drinking wine was released. It is a widely known fact that Hindus do not offer meat to the gods they worship. Therefore showing Shri Ganesha seated at the table where meat was being served and eaten, was considered very disrespectful and hurtful to Hindus. This shows intentional insensitivity and antipathy towards Hindu beliefs, especially when they were adamant and reluctant to take the advertisement off-air despite protests and outrage! (Reference List: [26] [27] [28]).



4) Other Ideologies

May 2021: The Honourable Peter Russo MP for Toohey had to post his photo (Reference List: [29]) with the option to comment being disabled, to avoid hateful comments by hate groups and individuals. Th photo related to a simple dinner with some members of the World Hindu Council, an organisation that works day and night for the ethical and moral upliftment and wellbeing of Australian children, youth and community at large. The angry reactions to the posts are proof of how such hate-filled people work to break the social fabric of great societies and great nations. We live in a liberal society where there is freedom of speech and everyone has the right to air their views. However, this freedom should not be used to vilify Hindus and Hindu Community.

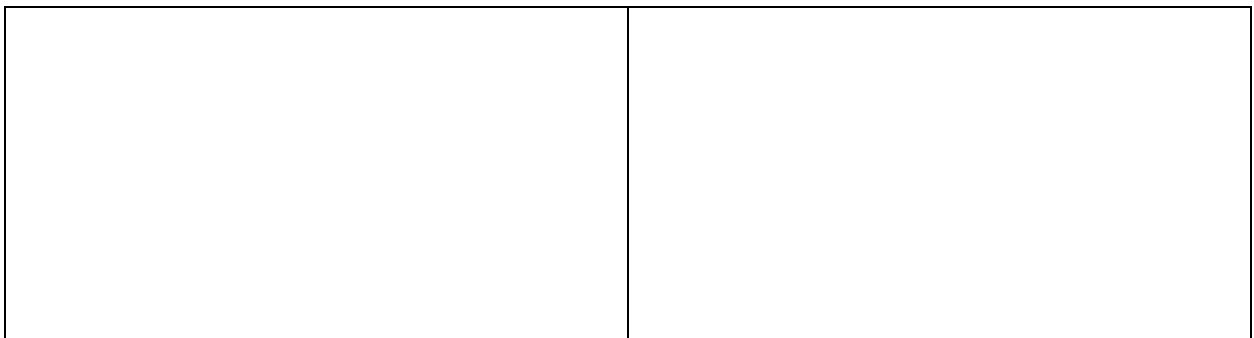
March 2021: Below are a few examples (Reference List: [30] [31] [32] [33]) proving how baseless and hate filled articles are written by people with anti-human and anti-social ideologies to vilify and spread hatred against Hindus, Hindu organisations and Hindu Community. If not

checked by law and society to book them for spreading hatred in the society against community members, they will succeed in spreading their malicious misinformation under the veil of 'opinions'.

May 2021: Hindus for whom a cow is revered as their mother, are outraged at the religious hatred filled attack after minced "beef" was found dumped in a community cricket pitch (Reference List: [34] [35] [36]) that was being used by Hindu Australians. This is a heinous hate crime which should have been taken very seriously.



November 2019: A very sacred Hindu symbol "Swastika" was defaced by delivery man (Reference List: [37]) after being mistaken for Nazi Hakenkreuz, Winkelkreuz, or Krummkreuz.



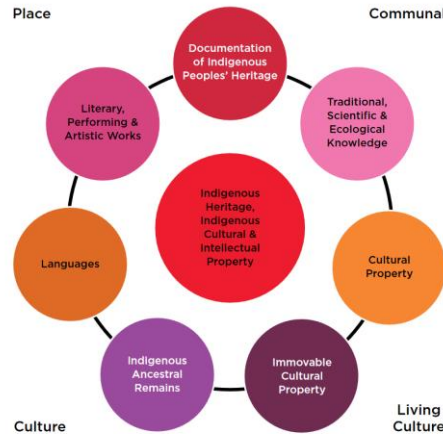
Such incidents highlight the fact that large-scale awareness about Hindu Culture and Hindus is immediately required and laws must be made which can practically end such incidents, crimes and vilification attempts.

October 2018: Hindu Mandir (Temple) vandalised in Regent's Park (Reference List: [38] [39] [40]). More than 30 Moortis (Idols) of Hindu Deities were broken. The whole Hindu community was shaken when they saw this.

5) Academia

We would also like to mention that, there are certain academic fields and circles where some 'academicians' and 'intellectuals' continuously work to divide Hindu society and whitewash all the crimes done against Hindus in the last 1500 years. The denial of genocides and barbarity against Hindus is the deep trauma that Hindu society goes through generation after generation.

Another very important matter to be mentioned is "protecting the sacred" as in the case of indigenous art and knowledge. As Australia Council (<https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au>) states in one of the following Reference List: [41] [42] [43] [44] [45], "While works by individual artists are protected by copyright, Australia does not yet have a law that prevents alteration, distortion or misuse of traditional symbols, songs, dances, performances and story that may be part of the heritage of particular Indigenous language group".



Similarly, although Hindus have their vast huge indigenous and aboriginal intellectual property which is very “sacred” to them, which has a very deep spiritual meaning and to which the Hindus are deeply spiritually attached to it but sadly the same respect is not yet extended to them. We expect that such laws are strengthened so that Hindu spiritual symbols, languages, literary and scientific knowledge is not abused.

Conclusion:

Hindus belong to religion, culture and civilisation that considers “everyone”, “every-being” and “everything” that exists in the Universe as sacred and divine. They also consider the whole world as one large family. They respect all faiths and considers them all equal. At no time in history have they conquered any foreign land or oppressed anyone. So, the continuous hatred becomes a matter of huge concern for the well-being of Hindu culture that we want to pass on to generations to come.

If this baseless and mindless hatred against Hindu Australians is not stopped asap, it will become a very big danger for our children and the Australian Hindu community in the days to come. We are very hopeful that the Honourable Committee Members will feel our pain and will review the laws, modify the laws to close the gaps and make them more robust, fast and effective based on the new emerging situations and challenges in our Multicultural Australia. We hope that the laws will cater for the need to equally include Hindu Australians and Hindu culture in awareness programs aimed at the inclusive, cohesive, multicultural, and progressive society to keep our nation the best in the world.

Thank you.

Reference List:

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- [2] <https://www.change.org/p/daily-telegraph-the-daily-telegraph-s-blatant-insult-of-hindu-deity>
- [3] <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries>.
- [4] <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/may/06/india-covid-crisis-narendra-modi-government-hiding>

- [5] <https://www.news.com.au/world/asia/indias-crematoriums-burning-bodies-day-and-night-as-covid-death-toll-rises-again/news-story/564ec5aa7825ecc7a8b76e3b5f014ec5>
- [6] <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-04-29/india-brazil-us-turkey-mexico-covid-19-death-toll/100100020>
- [7] <https://www.theaustraliatoday.com.au/australian-greens-and-david-shoebridges-hinduphobia-is-reprehensible/>
- [8] <https://hinducouncil.com.au/new/joint-statement-on-hinduphobia/>
- [9] <https://www.opindia.com/2021/03/hindu-council-of-australia-slams-senator-for-calling-rss-vhp-neo-nazis/>
- [10] <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/listedterroristorganisations/pages/default.aspx>
- [11] <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/references/terrorist-organizations/>
- [12] <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>
- [13] <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrct/cntr-trrrsm/lstd-ntts/crrnt-lstd-ntts-en.aspx>
- [14] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2/proscribed-terrorist-groups-or-organisations-accessible-version>
- [15] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_designated_terrorist_groups
- [16] <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx#/docid/HANSARD-1323879322-116933>
- [17] <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx#/docid/HANSARD-1323879322-117067>
- [18] <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx#/docid/HANSARD-1820781676-85423/link/135>
- [19] <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardFull.aspx#/DateDisplay/HANSARD-1820781676-85571/HANSARD-1820781676-85656>
- [20] <https://www.sydneycriminallawyers.com.au/blog/concerns-over-rising-hindu-extremism-an-interview-with-humanism-projects-haroon-kasim/>
- [21] <https://www.republicworld.com/india-news/general-news/indian-student-languishing-in-australia-jail-for-opposing-bid-to-tarnish-tricolour-father.html>
- [22] <https://www.opindia.com/2021/06/indian-national-student-vishal-jood-arrested-for-taking-on-khalistanis-in-australia/>
- [23] <https://www.9news.com.au/national/josh-frydenberg-treasurer-hindu-remarks-offensive-indian-community-urge-apology/ce3f6deb-ecdf-4e12-a138-1c9682c61577>
- [24] <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/international-outrage-over-hurtful-toilet-seat-cover/news-story/6e4f1558617a5478c9ed85c875fd9212>
- [25] <https://www.bharattimes.com/2020/01/16/lord-ganesha-toilet-cover-set/>

- [26] <https://www.news.com.au/finance/business/retail/hindus-get-lamb-ad-ban-as-advertising-watchdog-does-backflip/news-story/ff7528c4ae4cfdbc45fc77d1e67a10e6>
- [27] <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-09-05/lamb-ad-under-fire-for-portrayal-of-vegetarian-god-ganesha/8875048>
- [28] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWvKUzyqLDA>
- [29] <https://www.facebook.com/PeterRussoMP/posts/2049849528487456>
- [30] <https://www.amust.com.au/2021/03/australia-least-prepared-to-counter-far-right-hindu-extremism/>
- [31] <https://www.amust.com.au/2021/03/aimf-webinar-on-hindu-orientalism/>
- [32] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSFWU2M6IKg>
- [33] <https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/sikhs-fall-victim-to-rising-hindu-nationalism-in-australia-44851>
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- [40] <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/we-never-expected-this-to-happen-in-australia-vandals-torch-hindu-temple>
- [41] [Bibi Barba Takes on Polish Hotel in Infringement Case \(copyright.com.au\)](#)
- [42] [Protecting the Sacred Wandjina: the Land and Environment Court goes to the Blue Mountains - Arts Law Centre of Australia](#)
- [43] [Patricia Adjei on Bringing the Spirit of Reconciliation to Life - Live With Us - Country Road](#)
- [44] [Protocols for using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts | Australia Council](#)
- [45] [Enhance and Enable - Indigenous Knowledge Consultations 2021 - IP Australia - Citizen Space](#)