



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

International Yoga Day

SPEECH

Monday, 22 June 2015

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Date Monday, 22 June 2015
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Questioner
Speaker Hawke, Alex, MP

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Mr HAWKE (Mitchell) (16:01): In December 2014 the United Nations General Assembly declared 21 June as International Yoga Day. The first International Yoga Day was celebrated on Sunday, 21 June 2015. It was a great privilege for me to be at Parramatta Town Hall for the free yoga presentations and with the state member for Parramatta, Geoff Lee, in front of 300 people.

The declaration of International Yoga Day comes after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for it in his address to the United Nations General Assembly on 27 September 2014, during which he stated:

Yoga is an invaluable gift of India's ancient tradition. This tradition is 5000 years old. It embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfilment; harmony between man and nature; a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and the nature. By changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can help us deal with climate change. Let us work towards adopting an International Yoga Day.

It was a great privilege to be with the Australian Indian community as chair of the parliamentary Australian Indian community to meet Mr Modi when he travelled here to Australia, informing great relations—the first visit from a Prime Minister in 30 years. It is of course fantastic to see that yoga has a great cultural influence in Australia today. In fact, my wife and every member of her mother's group does yoga, and yoga, of course, is a 5,000-year-old tradition. There are not many human traditions of any culture that are 5,000 years old, and it is fantastic to see it still carried on today by Australians of Indian descent—the Australian Indian diaspora here in Sydney and Melbourne. I welcome the opportunity to spend some time with the Hindu Council of Australia and International Yoga Day.