

Chairman's Message



Dear Members,

I welcome all of you to our first Annual General Meeting and thank you all for joining the Australian Tamil Congress (ATC) and giving your support in making it truly a national democratic organisation for Australian Tamils, a fete achieved for the first time in Australia.

We have only recently gone through a great trauma in our homeland losing so many lives of our brothers and sisters and leaving hundreds of thousands maimed, homeless and powerless. While our desire is to try to help them to relieve their pain and suffering urgently, it is our responsibility to bring immediate peace, freedom of movement, normalised living conditions, economic empowerment and self-determination achieved through short, mid and long term planning and actions. This needs to be achieved through creating support and understanding from the international community through political dialogue, diplomacy and most of all, unity among ourselves around the world. To reach our goals, we need a structured approach through organisations such as ATC in Australia, the British Tamil Forum (BTF) and the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC), just to name a few. These are the aims and objectives of ATC and your continuous unwavering support is paramount in making this a successful journey.

The recent referendum on the Vaddukoddai Resolution (VKR) reminds us what the Diaspora's aspirations are. ATC has been proactively involved in developing a structured approach through a blueprint to help achieve our goals through a systematic sequence of actions. To get there we need to be united and be aware that there is nothing on this earth that can be achieved without financial strength. Talk is cheap. I do realise that it is easier to get financial support from our community to carry out humanitarian projects to help our injured, elderly and most of all children and those who have lost the breadwinners in their families. Sending money to Sri Lanka will just keep propping up the government of Sri Lanka. What we must do is to keep up the pressure on the Government of Sri Lanka in order to make them listen to reason. Requests from the governments of United Kingdom, European Union, the United States of America and Canada are noteworthy and we welcome their efforts. To achieve something substantial, we must bring in India most definitely and China to a certain extent. We must also work with the Tamil and Muslim elected representatives in Sri Lanka and foster a strong relationship with our brethren in Tamil Nadu.

Our prime objective as members of ATC is to contribute to these international efforts through the lobbying of parliamentarians and raising the political awareness of the media and the public in general and simultaneously working with organisations such as the Global Tamil Forum (GTF). To this end we have achieved a lot during the past months following our official launch in August 2009. We have opened many doors we could not before. Many Australian parliamentarians know who we are and we have made tremendous inroads into the Australian media, as you would have seen quite a few good newspaper articles, radio and television programmes, supporting the Tamil cause and highlighting the injustices done to our brethren so openly with the tacit support of the international community.

These achievements did come at a cost. This was greatly achieved through the assistance of Public Relations professionals in Australia, a first for the Tamil community globally, and a lot of sweat and sacrifices from our members. This public relations venture cost us money but what this has brought us is immeasurable. I am so grateful to our community for being so generous by contributing more than half of the cost through a special fund and making this a reality. We set the scene and having seen our success, other organisations around the globe are taking a similar approach in a big way globally through the GTF.

Dear members, today you must all be so proud that you are taking part in this important occasion to hold our very first Annual General Meeting with nearly 1,500 proud members being part of our crusade and it is our dream that this number will increase to over 3,000 by the time we have our next AGM. The power to achieve anything politically and diplomatically lies with the number of members we can command and the financial support that brings with it. We have six chapters in Australia and we must endeavour to bring in Northern Territory and Tasmania.

Let us all drop our differences and work together to bring peace, dignity, freedom and the right to self-determination for our people in the island of Sri Lanka. They have suffered enough and should suffer no more and it is in our hands to deliver what they so desperately crave for.



Dr. R. T. Rajeswaran,
Chairman.

