

# **BANDI CHHOR DIVAS DIWALI YOUNG SIKH PROFESSIONALS NETWORK**

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**[yspn.org.au](http://yspn.org.au)**

# AGENDA

## **Background**

- Background behind Bandi Chhor Divas
- Background to Diwali
- Connections between the two celebrations

## **Who are the Sikhs?**

- What is Sikhism?
- Sikhism as a global faith
- Sikhs in Australia

## **Background about YSPN**

- Our call to action
- Our Strategy
- Our Strategic Pillars
- Our Achievements

# BACKGROUND — BANDI CHHOR DIVAS DIWALI

# BACKGROUND BANDI CHHOR DIVAS

## A Day of Liberation

Bandi Chor Divas (Day of Liberation), marks the day on which the sixth Sikh Guru, Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, was released from wrongful imprisonment and returned to the community. Bandi Chor Divas is celebrated with great joy as it was a time when "right" prevailed over "wrong".

According to tradition, Guru Hargobind Singh Ji was offered release from prison, but only agreed on the condition that 52 other unjustly detained prisoners would also be released. These prisoners were being held without trial or any other legal process. Emperor Jahangir offered release on terms, that those who clung to the Guru's coat would be set free, intending to limit the number of prisoners who could be released. However, in a masterstroke, Guru Hargobind Singh Ji had a coat made with 52 tassels attached to it so that all of the princes could leave prison with him.

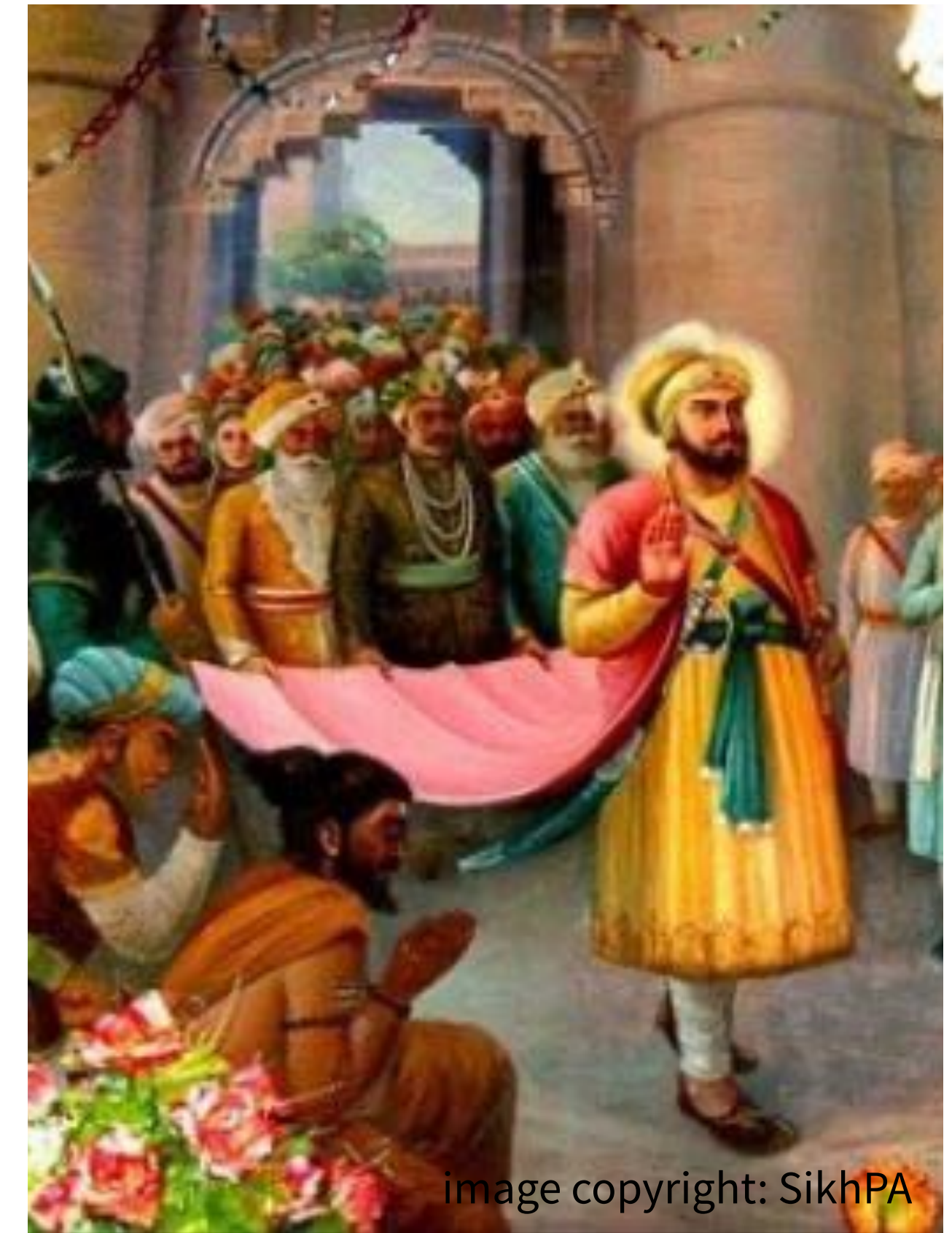


image copyright: SikhPA



# BACKGROUND DIWALI

## A festival of light

Diwali is celebrated by Hindus to honour the Lord Rama-chandra. It is believed that on this day, Rama returned to his people after 14 years of exile during which he fought and won a battle against the demons and the demon king, Ravana. People lit their houses to celebrate his victory over evil, of light over darkness.





# BACKGROUND JOINT CELEBRATIONS

## How are the events related?

The reasons Sikh and Hindus celebrate Bandi Chhor Divas and Diwali on the same day is because Guru Hargobind Singh Ji arrived on Diwali at the Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar, India (also known as the “Golden Temple”) which was lit with hundreds of lamps and he was received in the same way as the Lord Rama and the day came to be known as the “*Bandi Chhor Divas*” (the day of freedom).









**WHO ARE  
THE SIKHS**

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# WHO ARE SIKHS BACKGROUND

## Seekers of Truth

The Sikh tradition, known in the Punjabi language as Sikhi, is a relatively young tradition that was founded over 500 years ago in the Punjab region of South Asia. There are more than 25 million Sikhs around the world, which makes Sikhism the world's fifth largest religion.

The word 'Sikh' means 'learner' or 'seeker of truth'. Sikhism advocates equality, social justice, service to humanity, and tolerance for other religions. The essential message of Sikhism is spiritual devotion and reverence of God at all times while practicing the ideals of honesty, compassion, humility and generosity in everyday life.

Sikhs believe that the ten Gurus were one with the Divine Being and each had divine attributes. The first Guru is Guru Nanak Dev Ji and the tenth Guru is Guru Gobind Singh Ji. The tenth Guru anointed the Divine Scriptures "Guru Granth Sahib Ji" as the living eternal Guru of the Sikhs.



# WHO ARE SIKHS

## GLOBAL OVERVIEW

### Fast facts

- Sikhism is a monotheistic faith, found in North-western India/Pakistan in the 16<sup>th</sup> century
- Sikhism is an independent faith, adhering to the principles of 'selfless service' and non-discrimination on a strong spiritual base
- Sikhs can be identified by their turbans
- There are ~25m followers worldwide, with ~80% residing in India, mostly in Punjab
- Sikhs make up ~2% of the Indian population, but constitute >20% of the armed forces and have contributed 1 PM and 1 President
- Sikhs have strong industry dispositions towards defence, agriculture and transport
- However, trends in the diaspora point more to white collar, service based professions
- The largest diasporas are in the UK, US, Canada and SE Asia (each have >500K Sikhs)
- Canadian Sikhs in particular have made an incredible impact; the Canadian cabinet currently has 4 Sikhs



# WHO ARE SIKHS

## SIKHISM IN AUSTRALIA

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Australia's first Sikh Temple, built in 1968 in Woolgoolga, and is now heritage listed. Source: SBS.



# WHO ARE SIKHS

## SIKHS IN AUSTRALIA

### Connections to Australia

While 80% of the world's Sikhs reside in India – primarily in the state of Punjab – there are more than 125,000 Sikhs living in Australia today having first arrived in Australia 180 years ago. The 'Economic potential and impact of Sikhs' report prepared by YSPN, revealed that according to data from the 2016 Census Sikhs made a net contribution of \$8.1 billion to the Australian economy.





# WHO ARE SIKHS

## SIKHS IN AUSTRALIA

### Fast Facts

- First traces of migration started in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, focussed on agriculture and cameleering
- Early Sikh settlements were in agricultural areas including Victoria, North Queensland and Northern NSW
- Sikhs are the fastest growing ethnic minority in Australia, with the population growing 404% between the 2006 – 2016 census period
- As of the 2016 Census there are 125,000 Sikhs living in Australia
- Sikhs as a group contribute \$8.1bn to the Australian economy
- Large Sikh populations currently reside in Western Sydney, Outer Melbourne, South Brisbane, North QLD, Northern NSW, Southern Perth and Northern Adelaide
- Eminent Australian Sikhs include Harinder Kaur Sidhu, Deputy Secretary, Dept. Foreign Affairs; Sarv Girm, CIDO, Cuscal Payments; Sukhdeep Singh (aka L-Fresh the Lion), ARIA nominated rapper; Gurinder Sandhu, Former Australian cricketer



# WHO ARE SIKHS FIND OUT MORE

## Additional resources

- [Our website](#)
- [The Economic Impact of Migrants Report](#)





# BACKGROUND C31 ABOUT THE YOUNG SIKH PROFESSIONALS NETWORK



# OUR WHY

## CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Collectively, we have a legacy worth preserving
- 2 That we have more that unites us than separates us
- 3 That we are the first mass generation of Young Sikh Professionals in Australia
- 4 That we have a responsibility to act. We bear the burden of that responsibility collectively. And we bear it now.



# OUR STRATEGY

## MISSION STATEMENT

*YSPN uses its capabilities to channel Sewa (energy, resources, and motivation) to where it is required most--organisations and people--in a systematic and scalable way.*

*YSPN actively develops the skills within our community, and provides opportunities for everyone to take ownership of their professional development on a foundation of ethics and values.*

**YSPN channels sewa to develop ethical Sikh leaders for a productive and inclusive broader community**

*YSPN inspires our audience to achieve economic, social and political security through more productive contribution to the economy, and their local community especially for new migrants; and facilitates the relevant connections across people, skills and resources that will deliver this result.*



# OUR STRATEGIC PILLARS

## WE WILL AMPLIFY, IGNITE, ENABLE AND CO-ORDINATE TO WIN

### WE DEVELOP AND AMPLIFY ETHICALLY GROUNDED LEADERS

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By putting in place programs that help us identify, target, develop and amplify self-motivated leaders from within our community built on a base of ethical integrity

- **A multi-year accelerated leadership fellowship program** with explicit coverage of ethics and a commitment to give back to the community.
- **Awards and other recognition** highlighting the achievements of Sikhs related to our strategy
- The delivery of a best in class **Mentoring program**

### WE IGNITE THE DORMANT ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF MIGRANTS

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By putting in place programs and initiatives that provide avenues for more economically secure Sikhs to help the most vulnerable people in our community, and inspire them to achieve their highest potential

- **A systemised CV Check** program delivered across all our chapters
- **A migrant buddy program**, pairing established migrants with new migrants.
- **The distribution of a tacit skills curriculum** to migrants

### WE ENABLE OUR COMMUNITY TO DEVELOP THEIR PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITIES AND NETWORK ORGANICALLY

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By providing our community with the requisite skills, spaces, and networking opportunities for them to own their professional development

- **Delivering an annual program of events** that balance frequency and impact
- **Carving out spaces on social media platforms** and developing thriving online communities through curation, facilitation and management
- **Licensing our intellectual property** to enable people anywhere to leverage our experience in hosting networking events

### WE CO-ORDINATE SEWA ACROSS OUR COMMUNITY

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By channelling the surplus motivations, skills, and energy of our community to organisations that need it

- **Delivering a project management framework** to enhance the professionalism of other community organisations.



# ACHIEVEMENTS OVER 8 YEARS

1. Held [Elevate2019](#), the first Sikh Professionals Conference of its size and caliber in the southern hemisphere, and followed it up in 2020
2. Produced the first ever [Economic Potential and Impact of Sikhs Report](#)
3. Mentored approximately 150 people in two years
4. Reviewed over 200 migrant CVs
5. Held over 100 events across 7 locations, hosting >4,100 people since inception
6. Engaged over 25,000 professionals across multiple social media channels annually
7. Interviewed in social and mainstream media channels, and represented at forums
8. 2x [IABCA](#) and 1x [WSABE](#) Finalists and Award winners from Khalsa Aid and GOPIO Sydney.





# THANK YOU YOUNG SIKH PROFESSIONALS NETWORK

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