



Tamil Times Australia

All in one Tamil magazine from the best minds

TOP NATIONAL HONOUR FOR Professor Eliathamby Ambikairajah AO

Education

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Impact




March 2026, Issue 05

\$3.30


(Inc GST)



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Tamil Times Australia stands as a voice for every Tamil heart across the nation, a celebration of identity, culture, and connection. Born from a vision to unite and inspire, the magazine brings together stories that matter, stories that reflect who we are, where we have come from, and where we are headed.

With each issue, we aim to honour the richness of Tamil heritage while embracing the dynamism of modern Australia. Our pages capture the triumphs, talents, and everyday experiences of Tamil Australians, from arts and culture to business, education, and community life. Guided by experienced media professionals and supported by passionate contributors, Tamil Times Australia continues to serve as a platform where our voices are heard, our achievements celebrated, and our stories preserved for generations to come.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.



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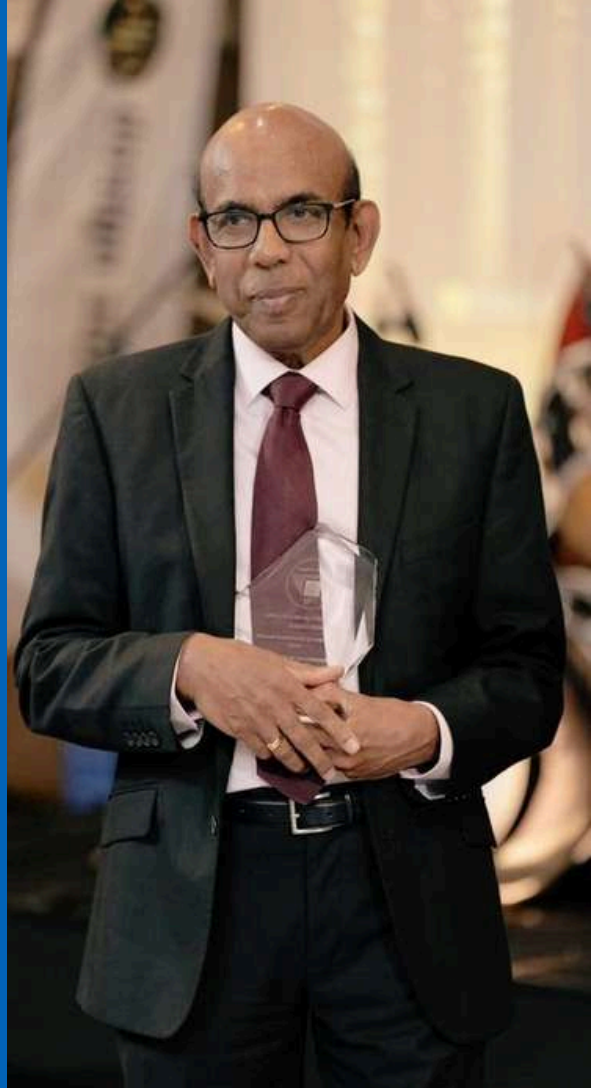
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Professor
ELIATHAMBY AMBIKAI RAJAH AO

He recognised for outstanding service to engineering, education and community.

Professor Eliathamby Ambikairajah, a senior academic in Australian engineering education and research at UNSW Sydney and a leading Tamil community leader, has been appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in the Australia Day 2026 Honours—one of the nation’s highest civic recognitions.

In the official honours citation, Professor Ambikairajah is recognised “for distinguished service to tertiary education and research, to electrical engineering, to technology innovation, and to the Sri Lankan community of Australia.” UNSW also acknowledged the appointment, noting his long-standing contribution through the School of Electrical Engineering and Telecommunications.





Professor Ambikairajah has held several major leadership roles at UNSW, including Former Head of the School of Electrical Engineering and Telecommunications (2009–2019) and Former Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Innovation and Enterprise) (2020–2021). His academic pathway spans multiple countries: UNSW notes that he completed a BSc (Eng) (Hons) at the University of Sri Lanka and a PhD in Signal Processing at Keele University (UK), before taking up senior appointments in Ireland and later in Australia.

Beyond leadership, he is known for his extensive scholarly output and his focus on translating research into real-world impact. He has authored or co-authored more than 300 research papers, received major internal recognition for teaching and leadership, and worked across areas including signal processing, speaker and language recognition, emotion detection, and biomedical signal processing.

A proud Jaffna Hindu College (JHC) old boy, Professor Ambikairajah’s national recognition is being celebrated across the JHC alumni network and the wider Sri Lankan diaspora. Over many years, he has remained actively engaged with the alumni community in Australia and has supported initiatives that strengthen the school’s intellectual and academic legacy.

For many Tamil Australians, the honour is also deeply symbolic. In an interview, Professor Ambikairajah reflected on the foundations that shaped his journey, acknowledging the role of education in enabling his life’s work and service.

His appointment as an Officer of the Order of Australia stands as a proud moment for the Tamil community in Australia—and a reminder of the impact that sustained excellence in education, engineering innovation, and community service can create across generations.



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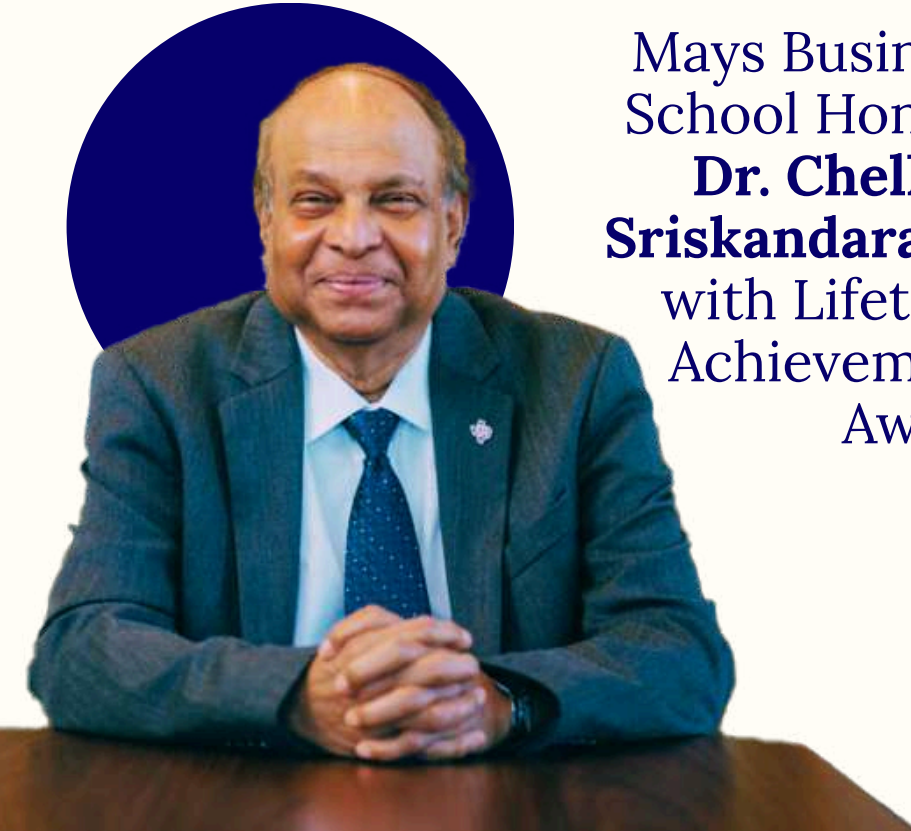
Six books by **AINKARAN WIGNESWARA**

Launched in Sydney

Sydney hosted the official release of six new books authored by Ainkaran Wigneswara, marking a significant contribution to Tamil literature and community discourse in Australia. The event brought together readers, well-wishers, and community members to celebrate the author's literary journey and the value of Tamil-language publishing in the diaspora.



Mays Business School Honors **Dr. Chelliah Sriskandarajah** with Lifetime Achievement Award



Dr. Chelliah Sriskandarajah has been named the seventh recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award in the history of Mays Business School, becoming the first faculty member from the Department of Information and Operations Management to receive the institution's highest honor. The surprise announcement was made during a department research seminar by Dean Dr. Nate Y. Sharp and school leaders.

Born into a modest middle-class family in Sri Lanka, Sriskandarajah's journey reflects perseverance and dedication. After earning a highly competitive public university seat in Sri Lanka, his academic path took him across Thailand, France, Canada, and the United States. He joined Mays in 2012 as the Hugh Roy Cullen Chair in Business Administration.

Recognized for rigorous and impactful scholarship, Sriskandarajah's research spans production scheduling, robotic systems, supply chains, healthcare operations, and currency management.

Tamil Festival 2026: From a Humble Beginning to a Collective Celebration



What began in 2011 as a modest gathering of a few families under the banner of the Casey Tamil Mandram Thai Pongal has today blossomed into one of Melbourne's most significant Tamil cultural celebrations. This remarkable transformation is not merely growth in scale, it is a collective achievement that every Tamil heart can proudly celebrate.

As the saying goes “Even a humble reed becomes mighty when bundled together” came alive before our eyes. Multiple organisations united in purpose, giving true form to “Oor Koodi Pongal” a celebration where an entire community gathers as one. In doing so, the festival quietly but powerfully reaffirmed our shared identity **"We are Tamil"**.

This year, Tamil Festival Australia delivered an event distinguished by excellence, precision, and thoughtful curation. After days of relentless summer heat in Victoria, even the sun seemed to relent, softening its glare and filtering gently through clouds, as if patiently waiting for the ceremonial Pongal pot to overflow at Melbourne Caribbean Gardens.



The air resonated with the stirring beats of Parai drumming, the rhythm of Kolattam, Thummi, and the commanding pulse of the ancient Urmi Melam. Each performance echoed gratitude to nature, heritage, and community, an artistic dialogue between tradition and the present.



Parai Drumming



Urmi Melam



Classical Dance



At the heart of the festival stood a beautifully designed open stage, where performances unfolded seamlessly. Veenai, violin recitals, Chinese dance, practical life-skills presentations, dynamic group performances, and vibrant festival dances followed one another with remarkable flow. The presenters' engagement ensured that every segment was delivered with clarity, energy, and cultural depth.



Chinese Dance

Veenai, Violin Recitals





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Tamil Pasnga Team



Uri Adithal

Kizhithattu



One of the heartening highlights was the participation of nearly 200 children, who enthusiastically immersed themselves in traditional Tamil games. Kizhithattu, Kabaddi, Uri Adithal and other age old games came alive as children showcased their skills with confidence, while parents cheered passionately. This was an intergenerational moment of pride and continuity.

Inside the indoor pavilion, visitors encountered a rich tapestry of Tamil heritage and contemporary relevance. Exhibits showcased ancient Tamil art forms, the importance of reading and literacy, reflections on the past and present of the Ilavenil magazine, strategies for mental rejuvenation in today's demanding lifestyles, traditional foods rooted in the philosophy of "food as medicine," and awareness on stem cell donation, thoughtfully presented under the guiding principles of Aathichoodi (Tamil literature for life). Each stall invited reflection, learning, and connection.

The setting at the Caribbean Garden felt like a symbolic convergence of the Five Landscapes (Ainthinai - Paddy, Beach, Forest, Desert and Mountainous). The grounds buzzed with life, lined with food stalls, refreshments, and a wide array of commercial products and services. Beneath shaded trees, families spread mats, welcoming the cool breeze and warm sunlight, fully embracing the festival's relaxed yet vibrant spirit.



Miniature Set



Tamil Games

A particularly meaningful segment was the ceremony honouring students who had chosen Tamil as a subject for university entrance in the previous year. I had the privilege of hosting this event. When asked why they chose to study Tamil, the students responded with clarity and conviction: Tamil is our identity, and learning it is our responsibility. When asked about challenges, they acknowledged curriculum related difficulties but shared an inspiring truth saying that those challenges strengthened their Tamil language skills rather than diminishing them.

Another defining feature of this year's festival was the growing involvement of the younger generation. From planning to traffic management, hosting, and even engaging with political representatives to communicate the importance of Tamil language and culture, their contribution was both visible and commendable. At the same time, it offered a quiet moment of reflection for elders to ensure that our support matches the discipline and commitment shown by our youth.



As evening approached, the festival reached a memorable crescendo. Susanthika, who rose from our own soil to international recognition, joined hands with Sri Lanka-born, much-loved Sabesan, alongside local artists Karthik, Giri, Charu, Akshan, Arun, and others. Their collective musical performance filled the twilight with energy, emotion, and celebration.

Behind the success of this extraordinary day stood the selfless volunteers, individuals who worked tirelessly, day and night, with no expectation of recognition. Their dedication formed the unseen backbone of the festival.



As I stood among the tens of thousands gathered, taking leave of Tamil Festival 2026, I did so with a silent prayer—that this festival continues to scale greater heights, that its purpose and impact grow stronger with each passing year. Let it remain a beacon of unity, culture, and pride for generations to come.



Author: Sathiya Niranjan




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Women entrepreneurs meet to celebrate and plan for 2026



The ATCC Victoria Women Entrepreneurs New Year Meetup was successfully held on 29 January 2026 at the Mount Waverley Youth Centre. The evening brought together inspiring and empowered women in business for a lively and engaging networking session. The program featured confident self-introductions, meaningful discussions on starting a business, balancing business and family commitments, and building long-term, sustainable growth.

Participants ranged from experienced entrepreneurs to enthusiastic newcomers eager to begin their business journeys, representing a diverse mix of service-based and product-based businesses. The session included interactive group discussions, activities, and thoughtful responses to some of the most commonly asked questions, creating a supportive and collaborative atmosphere.



It was particularly encouraging to see non-members attend, gain valuable insights into entrepreneurship, and express strong interest in joining—highlighting the growing momentum and impact of the ATCC network. The evening was made even more delightful with complimentary homemade nibbles and refreshments, generously sponsored by Madhuram Sweets & Savouries.



ATCC Victoria Announces Newly Elected Executive Committee for 2026

The Australian Tamil Chamber of Commerce (ATCC) Victoria Chapter has announced its newly elected Leadership Committee for 2026, with members unanimously elected to guide the chapter's initiatives and engagement for the year ahead.

ATCC Victoria – Leadership Committee (2026)

President: Mr Jeyatheepan

General Secretary: Mr Mithun

Executive Vice President: Mr Senthilvel

Treasurer: Mr Neelakantan

Vice President – Membership: Ms Thirumalai Shelvi

Vice President – Community Relations: Mr Ganga

Board Members (2026)

Mr Jeremiah

Ms Padmini

Ms Francina

Ms Vandhana

Mr Anton Fernando

Nikhil & Jay By Chitra Soundar

What personal experiences or inspirations led you to create Nikhil & Jay, and why was it important for you to centre a dual-heritage family with a Tamil mum and grandparents?

I wrote a series of young chapter books called Nikhil & Jay inspired by my nephews and their dual-heritage. My nephews have a Tamil mum (my sister) and an English Dad, and Indian grandparents (my parents) and English grandparents. I wanted to tell stories set in a dual-heritage family because those stories didn't exist. Especially with a Tamil focus.

Then when I decided to turn the books into a TV show and it was picked up, along with the producers King Banana TV, Paper Owl Films and the BBC, we ensured that we stayed true to the origin story. The Nikhil & Jay family celebrates all dual culture families but in particular portrays a Tamil-English heritage - from customs to traditions, celebrations and language.





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How did you approach portraying Tamil culture—language, food, festivals, and family dynamics—in a way that feels authentic and relatable for both Tamil and non-Tamil audiences?

The key was to ensure I was part of the show, so I could read all the scripts, be in the room where ideas were generated and discussed. Secondly, our casting was very authentic. The character of Amma is played by Charithra Chandran, a wonderful and talented star with Tamil heritage, grandma Amamma was played by Janaki Sabesh from Chennai, and Thatha was played by Ravi Swami. Our titular characters Nikhil and Jay were played by two amazing Tamil boys, Sai Ganesh who has Sri Lankan Tamil heritage and Shiv with an Indian Tamil heritage.

Our production teams – from Paper Owl Films, King Banana and the BBC executive also tried to include as many people with South Asian heritage as possible to ensure that the show is produced with authenticity.

We introduced language and names of food and celebrations, as a matter of fact in the show like how real families would speak. To back that up, BBC produced a series of Tamil word videos for social media and their website for children of all backgrounds to learn some of the words we use. We encouraged Janaki Sabesh and Ravi Swami to speak as they would in real life, if they didn't live in the UK. So that when they used a Tamil word or phrase, it was quite authentic.

When non-Tamil speakers had to use the Tamil words, we ensure that they spoke it the correct way, having learnt it from Amma in the series. We were also very clear that we never ridiculed or made fun of, Tamil words even to get some laughs. All the words were in context and when they needed explanation, Amma's character or Amamma's character would answer a question to Nikhil and Jay.

What were the biggest creative and production challenges in bringing these characters and stories to life for ABC Kids, and how did you work through them?

The show was produced for CBeebies (BBC) in the UK and then distributed to ABC via our partners CAKE Entertainment who are enthusiastic in finding new audiences for Nikhil & Jay. From the beginning CAKE and all of us in the production were very keen for the show to reach ABC because of the big diaspora of Tamils who live here in Australia. We knew that similar to the UK, dual-heritage Tamil families were very much thriving in Canada and Australia, and it was important to represent them.

Creatively, the challenges are more ahead of us than the ones we have already overcome. To make a second series, we need both UK and Australian viewers to make it a hit! It's not easy to launch a show in the shadows of Bluey! But similar to Bluey, Nikhil & Jay puts the focus on the family, and the creative lives of Nikhil and Jay. In each episode we get a glimpse of the boys' imagination worlds, which is unique to the show, and we hope all children love all aspects of the show and find the language from Nikhil & Jay to express their creative selves.

What impact do you hope Nikhil & Jay will have on children in the Tamil diaspora, and what message would you like Tamil families in Australia to take from the show?

When the show launched in the UK, we received loads of messages from parents and grandparents of South Indian and Tamil families about how delighted they were to see Tamil representation on screen. Even the simple use of Amma, Appa, dosai and sambar has brought emotional responses.

I'm hoping Tamil children in Australia, both in mono or dual-heritage families get to see themselves. It's also important that all children enjoy the show for its comedy and amazing acting by a wonderful cast and it soon becomes a universal hit rather than a show just for a specific community.

We hope Tamil families in Australia, especially children are proud of their heritage and keep the language, food, customs and celebrations alive, while blending them into a cultural melting pot of Australia.

Nikhil & Jay broadcasts on ABC Kids and is available to stream anytime on ABC iview [iview iview.abc.net.au/show/nikhil-and-jay](http://iview.abc.net.au/show/nikhil-and-jay)



Classical Violin Concert by “Isai Mani” Kapbilaashan Vithushan



A fundraising initiative, Classical Violin Concert, led by the young, talented, violinist “Isai Mani” Kapbilaashan Vithushan, was organised to support a worthy cause and the construction of the Sydney Murugan Temple’s new cultural hall for the benefit of our community.

It was a highly successful and inspiring evening, held on 8th February at the Sydney Murugan Cultural Hall, and all ticket sales contributed towards this meaningful Sydney Murugan cultural initiative.



PONGAL *a* PARLIAMENT



Attending the Pongal celebration at Parliament was both a formal civic occasion and a deeply personal experience. Pongal is a harvest festival centred on gratitude, renewal and community, traditionally celebrated in homes and villages. To see it recognised within a political space was powerful. It showed that our cultural traditions are not confined to private life, but are part of the wider public story.





The event brought together community leaders, elected representatives and members of the Tamil diaspora. It was opened and MC'd by Abitharany Chadran, who guided the program with warmth and pride. Dance performances by Bharatha Kalanji and Tamil Viluthukal were a highlight of the evening. Their performances reflected the beauty of nature and explored themes of peace, creation and vulnerability. The dancers held the audience's full attention and created a moment of stillness and reflection within the formal setting of Parliament.

The event was hosted by MPs Lee Tarlamis, Ann-Marie Hermans and Anasina Gray-Barberio, who each spoke about Victoria's commitment to multiculturalism. Anasina's speech was particularly moving. She encouraged Tamil women to be proud of wearing sarees, while she herself stood in traditional Samoan dress. Her words were a reminder that our strength lies in our cultural differences, not in hiding them.

These speeches highlighted why recognising cultural celebrations in civic spaces matters. Pongal is rooted in giving thanks to the sun, the earth and the labour that sustains communities. Celebrating it at Parliament extended that meaning. It became not just about harvest, but about recognising the contributions Tamil communities continue to make to Australian society.

On a personal level, the event meant a great deal. Seeing my culture represented in Parliament reinforced a sense of belonging. It reminded me that cultural identity and civic life are connected. The presence of young people was especially meaningful, showing that traditions are being carried forward while adapting to new contexts.

Author: Ashwini Satheeshkumar



Natya Manjari

A Celebration of Tradition, Legacy, and Service

Natyakshetra (Temple of Dance), currently marking its golden jubilee, joined hands with its Sydney-based sister institution of over three decades and its offshoot, Nrithyasagara (Ocean of Dance), to present a special fundraising production titled Natya Manjari at the Bryan Brown Theatre. The event was organised in support of the Sivan Arul Foundation, reflecting the shared commitment of these institutions to both artistic excellence and community service.

Guru Anursha Tharmarajah, widely regarded as one of Sydney's most distinguished exponents of the Bharatanatyam classical tradition, is an alumna of the renowned Kalakshetra in Chennai. She had the rare privilege of receiving training in dance and allied arts under the legendary Rukmini Devi Arundale. Her distinguished teaching career spans several prestigious institutions, including the Vivekananda Society, the University of Jaffna, Kalakshetra, and the Indian Fine Arts Society in Singapore.

Inspired by a profound dedication to preserving and promoting Bharatanatyam for future generations, Amesha Darshana established Nrithyasagara in Sydney in 2005 under the guidance of Guru Anursha Tharmarajah. A teacher by profession, with over three decades of learning and performance experience, she deeply valued the opportunity to collaborate with her guru in presenting this meaningful production in aid of the Sivan Arul Foundation.





The performance commenced with Pushpanjali, a traditional floral offering to the Divine, followed by Alarippu, symbolising awakening and serving as a rhythmic introduction to the evening's repertoire. Two contrasting Jathiswarams followed, showcasing both technical precision and aesthetic grace, and led seamlessly into a Keerthana honouring Nataraja, the Lord of Dance. A Shabdham dedicated to Lord Murugan continued the devotional theme.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of Pillai Tamil, depicting the birth, growth, and divine triumphs of Meenakshi Amman through an expressive Swarajathi. This was both visually captivating and emotionally resonant. The performance then moved into a Padam on Lord Muruga, which flowed naturally into the devotional fervour of Thiruppugazh, before concluding with an energetic and vibrant Thillana.

The orchestra added depth and richness to the performance with their accomplished musical accompaniment:

- Namrata Pulapaka – Vocal**
- Janakan Suthanthiraraja – Mridangam**
- Kranthi Kiran Mudigonda – Violin**
- Jathushan Jeyarasa – Flute**

The elaborate and elegant costumes enhanced the visual splendour of the performance, perfectly complementing its artistic and emotional depth.

A particularly touching aspect of the evening was the visible continuity of tradition through the teacher-student relationship. Three senior students of Guru Anursha Tharmarajah shared the responsibility of Nattuvangam, occasionally stepping in to support their guru on stage. This symbolic gesture beautifully reflected the transmission of artistic knowledge and responsibility from one generation to the next, ensuring the enduring legacy of Bharatanatyam.

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THE THAI PONGAL Celebrations

hosted by the Tamil Association of Western Australia, together with all Tamil-speaking organisations across the state, opened with a Smoking Ceremony, Welcome to Country, Cultural Procession and Kummi Dance at Weep Park, Midland on Saturday, 28 February 2026. In the lead-up to the festivities, a traditional Kolam decoration competition was also held. This community event is proudly supported by the City of Swan.



The formal event began with a Smoking Ceremony, Welcome to Country, Cultural Procession and Kummi Dance. A traditional Kolam decoration competition and Pongal cooking by participating organisations took place ahead of the festivities. The event was sponsored by the City of Swan and the Office of Multicultural Interests.





As a gesture of respect to Western Australia's diverse communities, the Thai Pongal performance stage was shared with a range of multicultural organisations who presented their own traditional cultural performances. Students from Perth-based Tamil schools and other Tamil organisations also showcased a variety of cultural items. A large number of participants attended and remained until the end, including the Mayor of the City of Swan. Food trucks and cultural stalls added colour and vibrancy to the venue throughout the celebration.

Mr Moses Vedamuththu



received the Citizen of the Year from Parramatta Council for his outstanding contribution for feeding the needy community through his organisation SOHAS, Support organisation for Homeless and Asylum Seeker.s, a charity organisation . Moses has been delivering food to the homeless and the people who are shuffling financial crisis since 2018. In addition to his food services he also combined community services such as job search, student support, and youth support services

Ms Renuga Inpakumar

received the Young Citizen of the Year from Cumberland Council for her outstanding contribution to the community. Ms. Inpakumar has been tirelessly working towards the betterment of the refugee and migrant communities. This award is an encouragement for the other Tamil youth to contribute to the community effectively.



Tamil baker crowned Paris' best baguette maker



Sri Lankan-born baker Sithamparappillai Jegatheepan, an Eelam Tamil artisan based in France, has won the 2026 Grand Prix de la baguette de la Ville de Paris, securing the title for the best traditional baguette in the French capital.

Jegatheepan, whose bakery Fournil Didot is located in Paris, impressed judges in the competition's 33rd edition, which attracted 143 entries. Baguettes were assessed on appearance, taste, baking, crumb and aeration, with additional checks on size and salt content.

City officials noted he arrived in France in 2003, later moving into pastry work in 2008 before dedicating himself to bread-making. His winning baguette met strict specifications and stood out for its carefully controlled fermentation. The win includes a €4,000 prize and major prestige for the neighbourhood bakery.



INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY



International Mother Language Day, recognised by UNESCO, was recently celebrated by Cumberland City Council at the Red Gum Centre with great enthusiasm and community participation. The event showcased a vibrant range of multilingual performances, with young participants proudly expressing their linguistic heritage and cultural identity.

The observance of Mother Language Day aims to preserve and promote linguistic and cultural diversity within the community. With more than 120 languages spoken across the Cumberland local government area, the Council has commemorated this occasion for over a decade, bringing together multicultural and multilingual communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, to honour and celebrate their mother tongues.

This year's program began with a Welcome to Country delivered by Uncle Shane Laws, followed by a cultural heritage performance by students from Hilltop Road Public School. The event also featured an engaging storytelling session for children and a book launch designed to encourage creative expression and writing in native languages.



Young members of the Tamil community delivered insightful presentations highlighting the ancient origins and continuing relevance of the Tamil language in the modern world. The celebration further included a variety of children’s activities, cultural performances, and speeches emphasising the importance of preserving and nurturing mother languages for future generations.

The event was attended by representatives from the Tamil School of Wentworthville, Tamil Valarchi Manram, Services Australia, and the Western Sydney Local Health District, alongside community leaders including Dr Chandrika Subramaniyan, Nirmal Paul, and others.

A significant highlight of the celebration was the official launch of the book *Thirukkural: A Holistic Blueprint for Effective Government*, authored by Dr Chandrika Subramaniyan. The book was released by Councillor Suman Saha in recognition of the Tamil language and its literary heritage. The publication presents scholarly research on the ancient Tamil classic *Thirukkural*, exploring its enduring relevance to ethical governance and leadership, based on wisdom that has guided societies for nearly three thousand years.



THAIPOOSAM CELEBRATIONS AT BALA MURUGAN TEMPLE



Thaipooosam is an annual festival celebrated on the day of the first full moon of the year and it's conjecture with the Poosam star. This commemorates the time when Murugan, with the power of his vel, defeated the asura Surapadman.

Hindus and Tamils of all ages across the world, commemorate this festival annually, paying homage to the victory of Murugan and celebrating culture and tradition together as one.



The Perth Bala Murugan Temple in particular celebrates this festival in great fashion, with hundreds of visitors coming to enjoy the spectacle. The festival first initiates with devotees coming to the temple in the early morning to seek blessings and perform poojas. When the time is auspicious, the large procession of hundreds of devotees takes place, starting with a revolution inside the temple carrying the Murugan statue, with an entourage of Kavadi dancers.



Then Murugan is taken outside to sit on his magnificent 23-foot-tall chariot, to behold the sight of the many devotees performing various arts and sacrifices. Youngsters and adults of all age groups led the procession, performing Kaavadiyaatam, Silabattam, Parai and Kolattam with great effort.

Devotees in the morning and evening also carry Paatkudam on their heads around the temple. Many individuals have also garnered the strength to undergo mortifications to their will, in their hopes to clean their past sins and start afresh.

The event has demonstrated the passionate adoration of the diaspora towards their traditions, granting a spiritual and entrancing experience for all present.

Author: Shriram Narendran



Seevaga Chintamani (Civaka Cintamani) Story and Music Come Alive in Melbourne

An inspiring youth-led cultural programme in Melbourne brought the timeless Tamil epic Seevaga Chintamani to life through a rare blend of storytelling and music. Spanning nearly three hours, the evening held the audience in rapt attention as the epic’s essence was thoughtfully shaped into a flowing narrative, enriched with familiar film songs and classical musical interludes. Even the brief interval felt too short for many, as the audience eagerly awaited the next segment.

The production showcased a remarkable range of talent and teamwork. The programme was carefully curated and guided by Usha Manivannan, while Akshayan led the overall direction and presentation. Ashvin’s violin and veena segments added a memorable depth to the evening’s soundscape, supported by compelling vocal performances from Karthik Kumar, Oviya, Vanisree, and Manivannan. Abitharani, Kavin, and Kanoos strengthened the concert experience with rhythmic accompaniment, while Yuvarnika and Kaviya elevated the storytelling with expressive Tamil narration. Akshayan and Abisayan also contributed additional musical moments that enhanced the overall flow.

Beyond artistic excellence, the event carried a meaningful community purpose: funds raised during the programme were presented toward a worthy cause, underscoring the group’s commitment to giving back. The event was smoothly anchored by Ms. Moshika, with Thevan overseeing coordination and event management. With sustained applause and an engaged full hall, the night stood as a proud reminder that Tamil—through iyal, isai, naadagam—continues to thrive through the passion and leadership of the next generation.





Nivethan Radhakrishnan

is an Australian cricketer, born in Chennai, India, who has developed his professional pathway in Australia as an all-rounder. A left-handed batter with the rare ability to bowl spin with both arms, he has drawn attention for versatility and tactical creativity—attributes that can be highly valuable in modern cricket.

As a young player, he represents the evolving face of Australian sport: increasingly multicultural, globally mobile, and shaped by talent pathways that welcome newcomers. For Tamil Australians, Radhakrishnan’s progress has a special appeal because cricket remains a strong cultural bridge across the Tamil diaspora, connecting family memories, community clubs, and national pride.

His career is still emerging, but his unusual skill set and ambition position him as a name to watch. In Tamil Times, he fits as a forward-looking profile: a young Tamil-heritage athlete whose next chapters may include higher honours and broader recognition.



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ONE FAMILY TURNS HEARTBREAK INTO HOPE

In the wake of a tragedy that has shaken a Tamil family in Victoria and the local community, the family is choosing to meet unimaginable grief with a remarkable act of service.

The parents and sister of 16-year-old Chris Rua Antony from Melbourne have launched a GoFundMe campaign to collect \$35,000 for pedestrian safety and educational scholarships to ensure that Chris' name becomes synonymous with protection and opportunity.



The mission began after February 13, when Chris was struck by a vehicle while walking on the footpath of Pound Road in Narre Warren, a suburb in Victoria. After seven days on life support, Chris died on February 20. Though Chris' parents, Antony and Agal, and his sister, Auxilia, are shattered by their loss, they are determined that Chris' story will not end there.

“No parent should ever have to plan their child's funeral,” Antony shared on the GoFundMe page he started to secure crowdfunding for the two worthy causes. “...we want to ensure no other family faces this fate,” Antony added.

The family's first goal is infrastructure reform. They are calling on VicRoads to prioritise safety on 70km/h roads by installing metal barriers and advocating for February 20 to be recognised as 'Pedestrian Safety Day'.

Members of the Victorian community have come forward to support the cause, with \$35,000 being raised within a week to provide free educational resources and to establish an endowment for one scholarship a year in Chris' name for a Year 11 student.

Author: Ramya Manoharan



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My home in
FRAGMENTS



Poojitha Ramesh

is a tamil student in Melbourne, who is dearly attached to her tamil roots and culture and finds every oppurtunity to find an essence of home here , however possible.

As enchanting as this foreign lands appears,
as immaculate as their skylines stand,
there is a quiet absence
it cannot seem to mend.

Nothing here feels entirely like home,
except in fragments.

In the distant echo of temple bells
ringing through city chaos,
in the scent of sambar rising
from a Western kitchen at dawn.

In Tamil songs humming softly
through the corners of an Indian café,
In the accidental grace
of a stranger uttering a familiar word
from a language that carries centuries in its
breath.

In framed gods
resting against apartment walls,
In the sight of malli poo being sold
and In the fevered celebration
of a Thalapathy release

I try to gather these fragments,
arrange them into something whole,
convince myself that belonging
can be assembled.

But perhaps home
is not something truly replaceable.

And so I stay alive here,
for these small tamil fragments,
for only in these moments,
do I feel a place I can call home.

Australian Tamil Sangam marks Clean Up Australia Day with youth-led action

Australian Tamil Sangam in Melbourne successfully hosted a Clean Up Australia Day activity, celebrating the outstanding contribution of young participants who helped keep the local environment clean and green. Children who took part were presented with certificates in recognition of their effort, teamwork, and commitment to protecting the community's surroundings. Organisers thanked the “young environmental champions” for leading by example and inspiring a cleaner, greener future for all.



Builders of New Beginnings



When first generation Tamil men left Sri Lanka, it was rarely by choice. War, discrimination, and the loss of a secure future forced them to leave the only home they had ever known. They left behind familiar streets, close friendships, and the comfort of their mother tongue. Many left careers, dreams, and loved ones they would never see again. They left not for themselves, but for the safety and future of their families.

Arriving in Australia was not the end of hardship. It marked the beginning of another struggle. A new language to learn. Work that often did not match their skills. A society that did not always understand their story. Alongside this was the weight of starting over with little support. Many carried unspoken trauma from what they had witnessed. Loneliness, guilt, and the pressure to remain strong followed.

Yet this story is not defined only by loss. It is also one of resilience. These men built new beginnings from almost nothing. They created homes where there were none, formed communities, established language schools, and created spaces where Tamil culture could survive far from home. Through their sacrifices, they gave their children and grandchildren the freedom to dream without fear.

Today, many are learning that strength does not mean silence. They are speaking about trauma, seeking support, and breaking cycles of unaddressed pain. In doing so, they show that caring for mental health is not weakness, but a continuation of the courage that carried them across oceans.

The builders of new beginnings did more than survive. They transformed pain into purpose and displacement into possibility. Their legacy is not only resilience, but an ongoing journey of healing for themselves and generations that follow.

Check out, www.thadam.com.au or follow on @thadamofficial

By Thadam

Thadam is a multigenerational volunteer-run nonprofit in Sydney and Victoria, raising mental health awareness in the Tamil community.




Tamil Times CONTRIBUTOR PACK

Thank you for your interest in contributing to Tamil Times.

We welcome high-quality articles that inform, inspire, and connect the Tamil Australian community—covering community stories, diaspora connections, business/professional insights, culture, interviews, events, and opinion pieces.

Submission Deadline: Due date: 10th of each month

What to Submit (Required)

- Please send a complete submission pack including:
- Final article text (Word / Google Doc link / plain text)
- Suggested short heading (5-10 words preferred)
- Pull-out quotes/highlights (2-3 short lines we can feature in the layout)
- Author name (as it should appear in print)
- Author photo (clear headshot)
- Accompanying images related to the article (high-resolution where possible)

Optional (recommended):

- 1-2 line author bio
- Image captions and photo credit (where applicable)

Images – Quick Guidelines

- Send high-resolution originals (avoid low-quality screenshots).
- If your images include identifiable people, please ensure you have permission to publish.
- Include captions (who/what/where) and credits if needed.

Article Size (A5 Print Format)

Please choose one option:

1 x A5 page: ~160 words

2 x A5 pages: ~320 words

Email your submission to: info@tamiltimes.com.au

Subject line suggestion:

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We look forward to publishing your story in Tamil Times.

Tamil Times

Melbourne :

07 & 08th Mar (Saturday, Sunday) -
Kamban Vizha 2026, Victoria

21st Mar(Saturday) - Iyal Isai Nadaga
Vizha, Victoria

21st Mar (Saturday) - Guruguhanjali
Music Event, Victoria

18th Apr (Saturday) - Chiththirai
thiruvizha

13th Jun (Saturday) - Signing Fish
Annual Dinner

20th Jun (Saturday) - Musical Dinner
by Global Tamil Welfare Vision

29th Aug (Saturday) - Ishta
Tatpalliar's Bharathanatyam
Arangetram,

Sydney :

21st Mar (Saturday) - T.M.Krishna
Music concert, Sydney Opera
House

19th Apr (Sunday) - Tamil New
Year Celebrations, Girraween Park,
NSW

3rd May (Sunday) - Sydney
Chiththirai Thiruvizha

**06th & 07th June (Saturday,
Sunday) -** Swara Laya Fine Arts
Music Programme, Sydney

Brisbane :

18th Apr(Saturday) - Tamil New
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