

**Address by H.E. Ms Neeta Bhushan, High Commissioner
on the inauguration of Community Garden
(22nd January 2025, Rotorua)**

Hon Tania Tapsell, Mayor of Rotorua

Distinguished Guests & Members of the Indian Diaspora,

Members of the Hindu Heritage Centre in Rotorua

Ladies and Gentleman!

Namaste and a warm Good Evening to all!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor and privilege to be here with you today in Rotorua, at the inauguration of this beautiful community garden and the launch of sustainability Initiative. I feel immense joy and gratitude to be part of this wonderful celebration, one that aims to bring our community together in a spirit of sustainability, spirituality, and unity.

Today is a momentous occasion, not just for Rotorua but for many of us who carry the values of community and environmental stewardship close to our hearts. We are also marking a special milestone in the journey of our cultural and spiritual heritage. One year ago, on January 22nd, the Shri Ram Mandir in Ayodhya was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with over 500,000 devotees gathering for the grand opening. The ceremonial Pran Pratishtha of the Ram Lalla idol marked a significant and historic moment for millions of Hindus around the world, and it is a reminder of the power of faith, tradition, and collective effort.

I am very happy to learn about this initiative that the rainwater harvesting system, which will collect water from the community hall's roof.

This simple yet impactful solution will support the cultivation of fresh produce and serve as an educational resource for all who engage with the garden. It is a wonderful example of how small actions can lead to meaningful change, not just for today, but for generations to come.

I am especially excited about the fact that this initiative brings together volunteers from Hindu, ethnic, and wider Rotorua communities. It is a space that is inclusive and sustainable, where all can come together, share knowledge, and enjoy the fruits of their collective labor. This community garden is more than just a project; it is a living testament to what we can achieve when we unite for a common cause.

At this moment, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Guna Magesan, the President of the Hindu Council of New Zealand, as well as to the entire organizing team. Their dedication and hard work have made this event a reality, and their efforts will continue to inspire all of us as we build a brighter, more sustainable future together.

Through initiatives like this, we not only help our environment but also strengthen the bonds within our community, ensuring a better and more sustainable world for those who come after us.

Thank you once again for the honor of being part of this magnificent celebration.

Jai Hind!
