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महाराष्ट्र मंडळ व्हिक्टोरिया

Maharashtra Mandal of Victoria

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## President's Report: 2016

Dear Members,

It is my great pleasure to present a report on the MMVIC's performance for the year 2016.

MMVIC Management Committee 2016 has taken lots of efforts to give a new momentum to Maharashtra Mandal and present to you an entertaining year. The highlight of the year was obviously the AAMS 2016 back in March 2016 which I believe will remain in the memory of most of us for a long time to come. In addition to this we were successful in presenting various other programs which I will briefly discuss later.

**Membership:** It has been always our endeavour to increase the membership base for MMVIC to get on board not only the newly arrived Marathi migrants but also those who for some reasons discontinued their membership. It is indeed a challenging job given the geographical spread of Melbourne metro, travelling distance, and understandably becomes a decision making point to some families, especially with young kids.

Year 2015 did see a surge in our membership due to the forthcoming AAMS2016 and its ticket pricing. We saw around 372 families registered for MMVIC membership in 2015. But this number has dropped slightly to 301 for the year 2016. Many families assume that the membership fee is applicable for one year from the date of payment. I would like to stress again that the MMVIC membership fee was always and will be always for a calendar year, no matter which month you paid it in the year. So I urge you all to pay your membership for the CY2017 as soon as you can. It is a very tiny amount.

**Directory:** It is always a challenge to collate all members' correct information and print a directory. The 2016 committee has made a decision to print the details of only those members who paid the 2016 membership with a cut-off date of 20 October 2016.

### Program Highlights:

We started 2016 programs on a musical note by screening the movie *Katyar Kaljat Ghusli* on 30 Jan 2016 in association with a local film distribution company. January is usually a tough month to organise a program due to holiday period. Although for this event we did see a lot of members turning up to enjoy this movie along with Sankranti til gul.

Thereafter in March we of course had our flagship event AAMS 2016 which was attended by over 30 overseas Marathi artists under various categories of entertainment, education, spirituality, health etc. During AAMS2016 we had over 300 local artists' participation including some interstate artists presenting their talent to members. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Abhijit Bhide, coordinator for AAMS 2016 for his immense contribution and setting up a huge team of enthusiastic volunteers to make AAMS2016 a great success. Over a period of 3 days we had an attendance of about 3000 persons who were entertained and fed well through our efficient caterers from BAPS. Overall AAMS 2016 was a financially positive event for MMVIC, thanks to the sponsorship we could obtain to organise this event.

We took a short break after an indeed tiring AAMS2016 and presented our next program on the occasion of Ashadhi Ekadashi. This was Abhangvani by Pt. Upendra Bhat. In this music program Pt Bhat enthralled the audience with famous songs by Pt Bhimsen Joshi. The attendance to this program was less than expected.

On Aug 14<sup>th</sup> we presented our annual Yuva program. For the first time, if I may say, we started this program on time and finished on time. This program gives a wonderful platform to our young community members to present their talents and I thank all the mums and dads for their tireless efforts in rehearsals for this event to make it a great success.

Followed by Yuva, on 24<sup>th</sup> Sep MMVIC presented 3 One Act Plays or Ekankika as we call it. We have been experimenting this concept for the past 2-3 years and I am pleased to inform you that it has been a great success. Instead of presenting on 2.5 hours Natak, we though a 45 minutes Ekankia by 3 teams will help engaging a larger community in the realm of Theatre. I wish this trend continues in the years to come as it nourishes local talent and helps presenting at least 3 separate themes to the community.

In October on the occasion of Kojagiri Pournima MMVIC presented a musical program Fite Andharache Jale which was a great success. Shri Shridhar Phadke and Mrs Shilpa Puntambekar, along with an able accompaniment on Tabla by Tushar

Agre presented a highly entertaining Marathi nostalgic songs program. If you remember, another highlight of this program was presenting Masala Milk to mark the occasion.

We finished the MMVIC 2016 calendar of programs on the occasion of Diwali Program on 12<sup>th</sup> Nov. This time we went across the borders and brought in a Marathi Natak from Sydney "Sukhanshi Bhandato Amhi". Although the theme was a bit on a serious note I am sure this natak has touched many members' hearts. In addition to this we also presented a well prepared program from the local artists called Utsav Maharashtra coordinated and presented by Ajinkya Pawar and Reshma Parulekar and supported by at least 70 members of our community. At this Diwali function, we were able to get you the delicious "faral items" directly from Pune. In addition to this we also managed to get 2016 "Diwali Ank" in time to distribute at a nominal price during this event. I hope you have enjoyed reading them.

#### **Disappointments:**

As you all can appreciate, we cannot please everyone, whether in personal life or community living. Moreover community work is a tireless and thankless job in which we try to strive and do our best for the community.

MMVIC wanted to continue screening of Marathi movies for our members, but unfortunately there was no interest shown by the commercial venture handling the film distribution after KKG screening in January. Perhaps, there is always going to be some issues due to not for profit nature of MMVIC and any other commercial organisation.

AAMS2016 also provided a lot of learning for us in spite of its success. Venue selection was our biggest challenge, which could accommodate up to 1000 patrons and also allow Marathi catering. Kingston City Hall was such a venue but unfortunately did not have adequate parking facilities.

MMVIC was engaged with the Consulate of India in Melbourne to organise a Classical Music Program by Pt Sanjeev Abhyankar through Indian Council of Cultural Relations. We were really hoping to get a platform to represent ourselves at this level, which we usually lack in many ways. But due to some unknown reasons from Delhi, this program was cancelled.

Our Yuva program was originally planned at a venue in the Western suburbs to enable participation from Marathi community living on that part of the town. However this venue insisted on their expensive catering and the program booking numbers did not give us enough volume to sustain. So unfortunately we had to do a last minute change of timing and venue for this event. I would like to thank all the members and performers for extending their support in this truly crucial decision making time.

#### **Some Wins:**

For the first time last year, we took some initiative to import Ganesh Moortis from Pen, Mumbai. Although it was our first experience, we received a reasonably good response from members.

If you remember, back in 2015 we completely revamped our MMVIC website to create more digital awareness among our members. We also launched AAMS2016 website to provide you all the information on the Sammelan. We have been successful in changing our website host in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of last year which has now enabled us to accept credit card payments. I believe this is a paradigm shift in a way we will operate in the future. Credit card payment, although attracting a small charge, allows us to better track our membership and later this year, program tickets payment. I would like to thank Mihir Mone, Nikhil Patodekar and Sachin Chaudhary for their contribution to achieve this. They have also kindly accepted to continue their support for the next 3 years for MMVIC for digital media.

We have been successful in creating and maintaining our presence on the Facebook platform in the past one year or so. I am pleased to inform you that most of our posts reach out to about 1200 individuals. I urge you to use facebook as an effective means of staying in touch with the Mandal. Let our kids "like" MMVIC and get them involved.

Some of the members in our community have their own business ventures. We have come up with a new policy of allowing them to advertise or display their products, either at the MMVIC function or through our digital media platforms with a nominal charge.

I would also like to thank all those members who have contributed towards 2016 Hitguj, our annual magazine

And that is all I have to say in this report card of 2016.

Thank you

**Makarand Bhagwat**