

CSA Report of Sydney General Meeting Sunday 27 August 2023

The August meeting was held at the Pennant Hills Community Centre on a fine Sunday afternoon on the 27th, where the guest speaker was the new High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Australia, Her Excellency Mrs Chitrangane Wagiswara. The topic of the talk was “*Sri Lanka - Road to Recovery: Challenges and Opportunities*” - of much interest to the Sri Lankan expatriate community.

Mrs Wagiswara outlined the current situation in the country, and talked on the measures Sri Lanka is taking to recover from the economic and political turmoil of last year. She dealt with the country's forced default on debt repayments and the assistance being afforded by the international community, the multilateral and bilateral arrangements being negotiated, and the hope for the future.

The main steps projected were to revive the export sector, encourage tourism, invest in long term relevant infrastructure, and proactively seek foreign direct investment in Sri Lanka. She made the point that while it would take time for other measures to take effect, the incentives for growth in the tourism sector would be the quickest way to kickstart the economy with the boost to foreign dollar earnings now that the world is travelling again.

The challenges Mrs Wagiswara outlined were inflation, corruption in the state sector, income inequality and political volatility. She encouraged expatriates to visit the country of their origin, to contribute to its recovery by investing in enterprises where possible, and to lend their professional skills to foster growth and development in identified areas.

There was a lively and interesting Q&A session, and everyone enjoyed a delicious High Tea after.

The CSA and its members and guests were most appreciative of the time allocated by Her Excellency to make a special trip to Sydney to be our guest speaker on this very important topic, despite the many demands on her in this her first year in Australia.

Special thanks should go to our President Pauline Gunewardene who organised the function and to the CSA Committee members who ably assisted in making it a most successful occasion.

Here are some photos from the event.



Adam Raffel