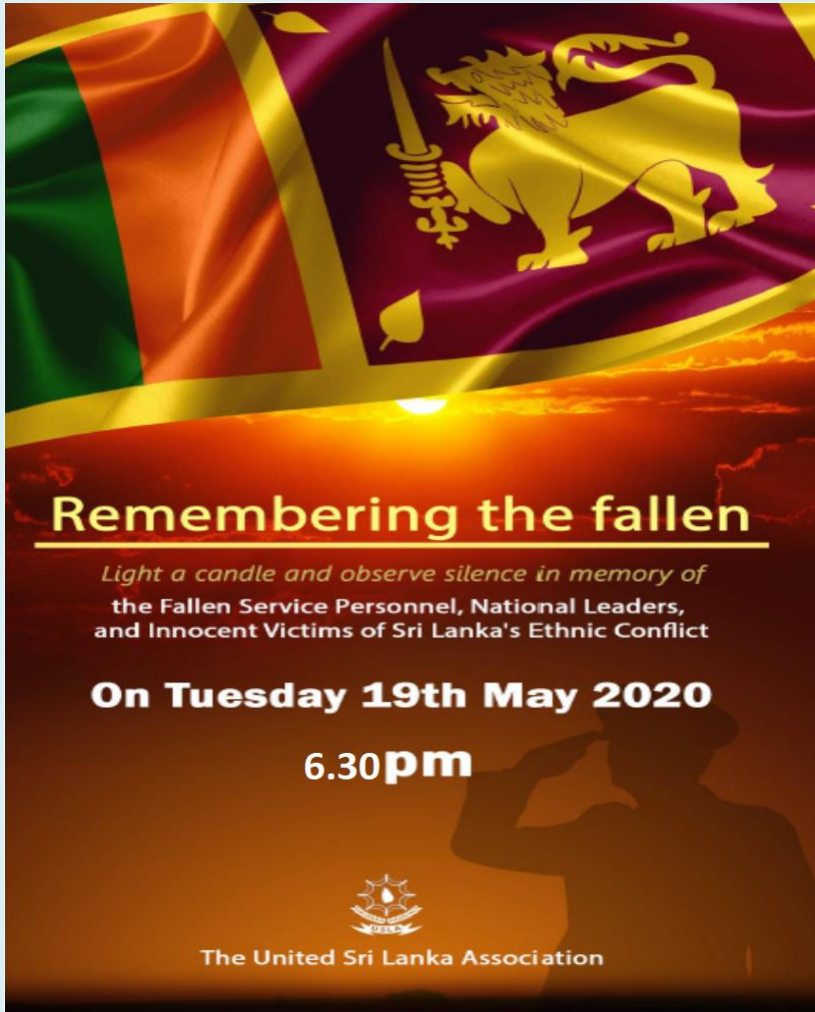




USLA Community Newsletter

Issue 19 - May 2020



On 18 May 2009, following a fierce year-long military offensive, the Sri Lankan government claimed an end to the 30 year civil war/ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. This was the longest running civil war in Asia, and more than one hundred thousand people lost their lives. The scars of the war have still not healed. All of us felt the pain of this war and for those of us living in New Zealand, it was a joy and relief to hear the news that the war had ended.

This year is the 11th Anniversary marking the ending of the civil war/ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. As we have done over the last 10 years, this year on 19 May, at a virtual commemoration ceremony (with the help of Sri Lankans NZ Facebook page (maintained by Mr Jayantha Nanayakkara)), USLA will remember the national leaders and security service personnel who paid the ultimate sacrifice. This includes remembering their families, irrespective of race, creed or religion, who contributed towards bringing peace to our beautiful motherland. We have invited all peace-loving Sri Lankans living in New Zealand to join the USLA Management Committee to light a candle in memory of those who gave their lives to achieve peace.

As we cannot meet in person due to COVID-19 L2 restrictions, USLA is hosting a live Ranaviru commemoration in collaboration with Sri Lankans NZ.

Please join us at 6.30pm on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020 by visiting the link below:  
<http://facebook.com/srilankans.nz>

# Message from the President of USLA

*By Navindra Herath*



It was a great honour and privilege for me to be entrusted the position of President of USLA supported by a very capable Management Committee (MC) at the AGM in March 2020.

No doubt COVID-19 has been hugely disruptive to all of us. This one in a 100-year event has caused hardship and concerns to all of us. I am proud as Sri Lankans all of you have been at the forefront of keeping New Zealand safe and equally supporting your family and friends in Sri Lanka as they too face many hardships.

Regrettably, COVID-19 restrictions caused USLA to abandon some of our regular activities, including New Year Kavili workshop, the New year celebration, and the Ranaviru commemoration day to meet you in person.

Nevertheless, during these challenging times we took the initiative to bring other Sri Lankan community groups together to help Wellington Sri Lankan Community to overcome COVID-19 challenges. This brought Sri Lankan community organisations, individuals and the Sri Lankan Honorary Consulate under one banner. A COVID-19 WhatsApp community leaders' response group was launched to gather community views and share resources to focus on areas that we could tangibly help to make a difference. USLA established a bank account where members and well-wishers could contribute on an individual basis. These donations were channeled to meet the immediate and urgent needs of individuals and families that were identified by community members.

While we face this immediate challenge, we are also in the process of planning and organising future USLA activities and Initiatives. As I have outlined in the USLA vision and key initiatives, I wish to emphasise the value of USLA being more community-centric, open for new ideas, work alongside other community organisations, and importantly giving the platform for the emerging leaders from the community.

Some of the key initiatives we are working on to make them permanent fixtures in our calendar are:

1. Introduce Talent Show.
2. Annual 'Cultural-Show & Dinner Dance'.
3. Host a 'Parliament Day' to meet the MP's to promote Wellington Sri Lankan community, showcase our contribution to Wellington and ensure our needs and aspirations are noted.
4. Introduce permanent fundraisers targeting
  - i) Ranaviru remembering our fallen soldiers and their families
  - ii) Initiative to support Wellington Sri Lankan Community
  - iii) Help Sri Lanka.

No doubt the timing of these events will have to be guided by COVID- 19 restrictions. With your kind and able support, I sincerely hope we together will overcome COVID-19 challenge.

As the president and with my the MC, we look forward to working with you and invite you to be part of our future activities of our vibrant Wellington Community.

Let all of us be truly united.

# Proposed strategic intentions for 2020

*By Navindra Herath and Mahes Hettige*

**Promoting political engagement** - Connecting our community with politicians and key officials is vital to our future success and presence. We are committed to consolidating and expanding existing dialogue with government officials and key political figures. We will be looking to hold a Parliament day where the community will be provided a forum to engage, network, exchange ideas, and experiences with this key stake holder group.

**Community Welfare** - A key focus is to promote programmes that improve our community well-being. We intend to work with our members, the wider community stake holders, and external agencies to promote activities such as training and youth leadership etc. We will explore targeted fundraising and grants to make a difference under this objective.

**USLA Membership Drive** - The Management Committee (MC) is committed to identifying, retaining, and growing our membership. Growing and vibrant membership is the foundation of all successful voluntary organisations. We need your support, ongoing input, and active participation. More information on benefits of being a member and a supporter of USLA will be provided in our next edition of Lakmina.

**Community Shows/Entertainment** - Each year we have opportunities to host artistes and entertainers. As we have multiple community organisations having similar events, we will work with them to promote a community wide calendar, to ensure that these events do not clash during critical months.

**Promoting Sports & community participation** - The annual cricket tournament will be extended to a family event and encourage wider participation of youth whilst retaining the core objective of this event.

**Lakmadura** - We are launching a key project to look at options for developing Lakmadura or an alternative premise, taking into account our future needs. This requires an engagement with the Wellington City Council and USLA Membership. We will keep you informed of the progress.

**USLA Constitution** - It is time to revisit our constitution and align where practicable to constitutions of similar community organisations, whilst preserving our objectives and foundations of the current constitution. We will engage with our membership during this process and look at implementing any changes via an SGM before the next AGM.

**USLA IT Infrastructure** - USLA website will be relaunched to portray our activities, enable access to USLA resources, and your valued feedback.

**Financial Governance** - A project is underway to introduce a software package to manage USLA finances, including tracking performance against budgets on all our key projects and activities.

**Asset management** - We have considerable amount of equipment that we use for community activities. We are also considering purchasing musical and sound equipment to support our future events. In order to manage these assets, we intend to upgrade our Asset Register that will enable us to track and manage effectively.

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## Upcoming Events

- Ranaviru Commemoration - 19<sup>th</sup> May
- Parliament Day - June Tentative
- Talent Show (Roti Party) - 25<sup>th</sup> July

# Helping our community during COVID-19

*By Mahes Hettige*

USLA has established a bank account to facilitate members and well-wishers to contribute to help our Sri Lankan community facing hardship during the COVID 19 contagion. These donations are channelled to meet the immediate and urgent needs of individuals and families that approach us directly or those who are identified by our community members.

To date, we have provided NZ\$400 in emergency assistance. The management committee will assess the needs of such requests for assistance, and a suitable decision would be made before disbursing any funds. As with any assistance, we rely on representations made to the MC rather than based on a detailed review of individual circumstances for finances. In the first instance, we expect those in hardship to seek assistance/ support through welfare programmes announced by the NZ Government, before seeking assistance from your kind contributions. Clearly, there are some individuals and families who are not eligible for such assistance (e.g. persons in NZ on student or visitor visa).

From the perspective of transparency, the Treasurer will keep a record of all receipts of purchases etc. MC has delegated the Treasurer to provide emergency assistance once President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Assistant Secretary acting jointly have approved the distribution. To preserve privacy, USLA will not disclose details of the recipients of funds or those who have contributed. Any surplus funds held in the account post COVID-19 will be utilised to support USLA community welfare initiatives.

You are most welcome to make your contributions to USLA bank account [**Account Name: United Sri Lanka Association, A/C No: 01-0517-0292026-04**] to help fellow community members who face hardship during the COVID-19 contagion.

## Covid-19 Community response group

Name	Phone	Email
Navin Herath	0204511511	<a href="mailto:Navindra.Herath@VERIFONE.com">Navindra.Herath@VERIFONE.com</a>
Aruna Abeygoonesekera	049768434 02102679214	<a href="mailto:arunaabey1956@gmail.com">arunaabey1956@gmail.com</a>
Dr Chula Rajapakse		<a href="mailto:cnarajapakse@gmail.com">cnarajapakse@gmail.com</a>
Sadun Kithulagoda	0212081655	<a href="mailto:Sadun.Kithulagoda@ccdhb.org.nz">Sadun.Kithulagoda@ccdhb.org.nz</a>
Mr Bunny Saldin	045678098 0211174125	<a href="mailto:saldin@orcon.net.nz">saldin@orcon.net.nz</a>
Dayani Gonsalkorale		<a href="mailto:news.slida@gmail.com">news.slida@gmail.com</a>
Anjana Abeyratne		<a href="mailto:news.slida@gmail.com">news.slida@gmail.com</a>
Athula Wanasinghe	049798051 0274284852	<a href="mailto:athula.wanasinghe@collectivefn.co.nz">athula.wanasinghe@collectivefn.co.nz</a>
Shahane de Costa	21342276	<a href="mailto:shahanedecosta@yahoo.com">shahanedecosta@yahoo.com</a>
Wimal Herath	02102364684	<a href="mailto:slcomhub@gmail.com">slcomhub@gmail.com</a>
Mahes Hettige		<a href="mailto:m.hettige@xtra.co.nz">m.hettige@xtra.co.nz</a>
Gamini Settinayake		<a href="mailto:settinz17@gmail.com">settinz17@gmail.com</a>
JP Nanayakkara	0211707561	<a href="mailto:jpnana@gmail.com">jpnana@gmail.com</a>

# Sports Day 2020

*By Navindra Herath*

USLA sports day was held on 19th January 2020 in Tawa, Linden Park. The main attraction was the Men's cricket tournament where teams from Wellington suburbs competed against each other to win the 'Liberation Cup'.

This year we introduced a different format of cricket to the traditional T20 format. T10 eight a side competition with generic cricket rules were introduced as an ongoing format. This format was well received by the cricketing community and they loved the fast phase of the game combined with traditional rules of cricket. This format was chosen for a few main reasons; reducing the number of players from 11 to 8 per team, a maximum of 10 overs per game, no extras, six legitimate balls per over, to enhance the skill and teamwork of the game.

T10 format increased the traditional T20 four teams to ten men's teams. This allowed more players to participate, making way to widespread opportunity for youngsters to compete in Men's grade. We are encouraging ladies and young children to participate in the future to experience this format of cricket.

Congratulations to Team Tawa for another splendid performance led by Thisula Kithulagoda. Team Hutt Mighty Lions-Black&White led by Chulaka was runner's up and fought to finals as an unbeaten team. Better luck next time, Chulaka.

USLA MC arranged a variety of food and drinks on this day. We saw the majority of players and families enjoy the day's proceedings. We encourage you to reserve 24th January 2021 for the upcoming sports day and participate in this occasion with your family and friends.

We encourage you to write to us to give constructive criticism to improve this activity. We are always looking for new ideas and initiatives, so, the next event would become more attractive to you and your family. This is not only to play cricket but to play other sports like Netball, Elle, Croquet, etc.

Sports Day 2021 main organizer will be Thushara Sanjeeva. Get in touch with him without hesitation for any answers, queries that you may have.

We hope to see all of you on 24<sup>th</sup> Jan 2021 for an exciting sports day.



# Update on 2020 USLA activities

*By Yashodha Jayawardhana*

## **Ranaviru Remembrance**

This year is the 11th Anniversary marking the ending of ethnic conflicts in Sri Lanka. Unfortunately due to COVID-19 restrictions, we are unable to hold the Ranaviru Commemoration at Lak Medura. With the help of Mr Jayantha Nanayakkara, we have initiated and organised a virtual commemoration ceremony to remember the fallen.

## **Letter to New Zealand Prime Minister**

We sent a letter to the Rt. Hon. Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister, acknowledging and appreciating her judgments and decisions to keep New Zealand safe during this challenging period of COVID-19 contagion. We've received a courteous reply from the Prime Minister.

## **COVID-19**

On 26 March 2020, New Zealand entered an unprecedented COVID-19 shutdown. USLA anticipated that this shutdown may continue for a number of weeks and our community will need our help and support, especially the ones who are vulnerable to this illness and want to protect themselves.

To prepare to respond to the people who will need help, USLA engaged with Leaders of other Sri Lankan associations in Wellington, and individuals to and explore possibilities of how we might be able to assist our fellow Sri Lankans who are in need. A virtual meeting was then held, and as a result of this meeting Wellington Sri Lankan COVID-19 Respond Group was formed.

To date, this group has helped a number of Sri Lankans across the country who contacted them for assistance.

## **Lak Medura**

We've had discussions with the Wellington City Council about the wobbly deck at the entrance of Lak Medura. As a result, it has been fixed to ensure safety of the building.

Further discussions are under way on options of developing Lak Medura to suit our needs.

## **Remembering 2019 Easter Sunday victims**

As we were unable to organise a commemoration for the victims of the 2019 Easter Sunday bomb attacks on churches and hotels in Sri Lanka, we called upon all Sri Lankans living in New Zealand to observe a two-minute silence on Tuesday 21 April 2020, at 3.10pm NZ time (8.40am Sri Lankan time), and light a candle or lamp to remember those who lost their lives and their families in Easter Sunday bombings.

# 'For You' Sinhalese poem

By Piumi Jayaweera

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# Wellington – Sri Lankan Community Event Calendar 2020 April – 2021 March

Association	Event	Date
USLA	Ranaviru Commemoration	19th May 2020
USLA	Parliament Day	Jun 2020
USLA	Talent show	Jul 2020
USLA	WLG SL Community fund Raiser	Aug 2020
SL Senior Citizens	Mid year Dinner	22nd Aug 2020
SL Senior Citizens	SL Senior Citizens Fund raiser	18th Sep 2020
USLA	Annual Cultural Show / Dinner Dance	Oct 2020
SL Senior Citizens	Quiz Night	17th Oct 2020
USLA	X'mas Party	Nov 2020
USLA	Sports Day	Jan 2021
USLA	Community Fund Raiser ( Help Sri Lanka )	2021 Feb
USLA	AGM	2021 Mar

The details provided above are as at 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and will be updated as and when new information is available.

## Membership Renewal

USLA is in the process of updating the membership information and would like to request you to provide us with your details by completing the form provided on the next page.

If you are not a member and wish to become a member in 2020, please select financial year 2020 and first time member.

If you are a member and have not paid your membership fees for the year 2019, you can pay for both years (2019 and 2020) by selecting both financial years and renewal for both years.

If you are a member and renewing the membership for 2020, only select financial year 2020 and renewal.

Once you have completed the form, please email to [admin@usla.org.nz](mailto:admin@usla.org.nz) and make the payment to the account [Account Name: United Sri Lanka Association, A/C No: 01-0517-0292026-00] and include your name in the reference.





# USLA

United Sri Lanka Association Incorporated  
Established in 1983



## Membership Application Form

Please provide mandatory fields (marked as \*)

### Financial Year

2019 (1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2019 to 31 Dec 2019)

2020 (1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2020 to 31 Dec 2020)

### Membership

Renewal (\$25.00)

First Time Member (\$10.00) or  Renewal (\$25.00)

### Personal Information

Title \*:  Mr  Mrs  Miss  Other \_\_\_\_\_ Gender:  Male  Female

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \*: First \* \_\_\_\_\_ Last \* \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_

Number \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \* \_\_\_\_\_

email Address 1 \*: \_\_\_\_\_

email Address 2: \_\_\_\_\_

### Family Member(s) Information

(partner information and children under 18 who are eligible for Associate membership)

1. Partner	First *	Last *	Relationship *	DOB
	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Child	First *	Last *	Relationship *	DOB
	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Child	First *	Last *	Relationship *	DOB
	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Child	First *	Last *	Relationship *	DOB
	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Child	First *	Last *	Relationship *	DOB
	_____	_____	_____	_____

### Other Information

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ First USLA Membership Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_ In the current committee:  Yes  No

Other Info: \_\_\_\_\_ Was in the committee:  Yes  No

Last time was in the committee: \_\_\_\_\_

.....  
Name and signature.

.....  
Date:

Please make your payment to account [Account Name: United Sri Lanka Association, A/C No: 01-0517-0292026-00].  
Please email scanned/signed copy of application form to USLA admin email (admin@usla.org.nz).

# Is journalism your passion?

Journalism is not dying, rather, it is evolving into something completely new and unprecedented, still one of the noblest professions.

If you are passionate about community service and have the skills in interviewing, writing and storytelling; this opportunity is for you, come join us in this noble act and expand your understanding of the world of Sri Lankans in New Zealand. At USLA, we are into community-building journalism and social journalism where you use social media, blogging, and other internet-based channels to interact with our community.

We are looking for energetic and passionate individuals with good writing skills, with outstanding grammar and punctuation are a requirement. You should be proficient at proofreading your own work before submitting it to your editor. Additional skills like programming, graphic design and multimedia journalism, as well as community building are proving valuable for this role. Most of all with 'time' and 'passion' to spare on this course of serving the community.

To start with, we would like you to meet and interview people in the community on any topic attracted to the community and tell the story in the language of journalism to the public. USLA will provide you with the platforms to take your great story to the community; Lakmina digital newspaper, USLA Facebook page, Lakhandu radio programme and any other media you can come up with...the audience we are focusing on is Sri Lankan community in New Zealand.

If you are interested to take advantage of this rich opportunity, the new media landscape offer, please send your expression of interest to Secretary USLA: [admin@usla.org.nz](mailto:admin@usla.org.nz)