

## MC OPENING (ELEVATE)

**Malika Singh Kanwar**

Welcome everybody and good morning, to YSPN's Elevate 2020 Sangat of the Future. I don't need to read my notes to know what my name is, my name is Malika Singh Kanwar. I'm part of the YSPN's external affairs team and thank you again for all coming here. It is not 9:45 so we have commenced a little later than we had anticipated, but Indian's standard time as always, so to begin before we completely commence our proceedings I would like to acknowledge and pay respects to the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting today, they were injury people of the Kulin nation. I would also like to pay my respects to the eldest, past, present, and emerging.

A couple of housekeeping rules for today, the bathrooms are just to the left of the hall, where the tea and coffee are being served. All of our morning tea and afternoon tea will also be served outside. If I can get the YSPN team members around the room to raise their hands, and if you guys can familiarize yourself with these wonderful people today who will be there for any assistance that you need; hopefully they know the answers, if they don't you can find me. In case of an emergency please do not scream, or shout, or run but in a very calm manner make your way to the exit outside. If you do need any tea or coffee throughout the day for refreshments please feel free to enter and exit the room at your convenience.

However, if you could just be mindful of the speakers and the audience throughout the day and I said for any additional assistance please reach out to anyone of us and we'll surely help throughout the day. In terms of social, just to quickly show you guys we do have our hashtags (#) that we would hope that you'd use throughout the day for any social media or digital posts at #L82020 or #Sangat of the Future. Our Instagram handle is YSPN\_. We will be taking some photographs and videos throughout the day so, if you do have any concerns or issues with that please reach out [02:02 inaudible] down the front and we can certainly assist there as well.

Now to begin, I would like to firstly thank you all very deeply for being here today, your presence here not only signifies your interest in unpacking what the Sangat of the Future means but it shows your commitment to creating that Sangat that we all communally can be proud of. I thank with deep gratitude, our speakers, and board members that are here today who have taken time out of their schedules to explore with us their experiences and insights on concepts across Sewa, migration, and leadership. A big shout out and thank you to our generous sponsors VSA, Auspak finance, A.E.K, and Montaggio our media partners, SBS Punjab, Punjab express, and radio Haanji alongside our accommodation partner element by Weston at Marriott. In particular, Montaggio and Auspak have supported us through our seven years journey as foundational sponsors, so a big thank you to all of you for making today happen.

Finally, I would like to thank Sikh Youth Australia SYA, our parent organization for always supporting us and helping in putting this event together. I would like to acknowledge uncle Satwant Calais president of Sikh Youth Australia who is in the audience today. There is also an SYA stand outside which will be there for the duration of today for you guys to go

and network with and obviously talk to them and then, in particular, we do have [03:26 inaudible] in here as well who will be talking about his book that he's recently just launched 'I'm seeking', and they'll be giving out complimentary books as well so please do go out and I encourage you to talk to them.

Now a little bit about the organization that brought Elevate 2020 to you today. Young Sikh Professionals Network (YSPN) was envisioned by a group of professionals about seven years ago with a mission to create conditions for young Sikh professionals to amplify and succeed in their influence. The purpose was to create a platform where Sikhs in various professions in the industry have a space to seek advice network with various counterparts and essentially create a community of successful Sikhs across Australia. Since inception, we as an organization have hosted over 90 events across six geographies in Australia and New Zealand with a volunteer team of 50 plus and I've hosted over 4,000 people attending events across our geographies and even mentored a hundred young growing Sikh's and of course not to forget we curated and hosted Australia's largest Sikh and our first organization Elevate 2019 in Sydney last year which focused on the concept of Sewa in a rapidly changing world.

When preparing my speech today, besides trying to work out how do I incorporate Sangat of the Future and be a little bit funny, be a little bit charming and try and figure out how to captivate you guys as an audience throughout the day. I thought, how do I introduce the idea of Sangat of the Future which will resonate with you, similar to how it resonated with me so I thought, I'd share with you guys why I wanted to be a part of YSPN when I heard about it last year. I hope some of these thoughts sit with you today and while you're listening to our speakers and our panelists, you're also willing to share your stories, ask questions, and be involved in the process as wholeheartedly as possible. In 2019 I came across YSPN's economic report which highlighted as per the 2016 consensus Sikhs are the fastest-growing ethnic minority in Australia.

We have a population of over 125,000 who contribute annually 8.1 billion dollars to the Australian economy. I'm going to repeat that 125,000 people, 8.1 billion dollars annually which grows 22 percent year on year for the past 10 years. That's pretty damn incredible if I can say so myself, thank you. A deep dive into those figures and our demographics, however, told us that despite this contribution both socially and economically there remain risks within our community which result in underemployment and high representation in declining industries so essentially, though our contribution is paramount we are channeling our resources and into roles which are at risk, ultimately compromising our potential as an overall community. To learn this, that there could be a scenario for my community to move into the direction of an unproductive direction made me question what my responsibility as a young Sikh is.

My dad always used to tell me better, you need to do Sewa, you need to do Sewa outside of the Gurdwara, but to be honest with you I didn't know what Sewa outside of the Gurdwara looked like, so besides you know helping with the lungu what else is it that I could do to actually contribute or give back to my community naturally, then coming and finding out about YSPN made a little bit of sense, so that alignment for me was very natural and working towards creating a better Sangat for us just made sense from the economic report.

We know that this mass expansion in migration coupled with the economic and social concerns surfacing means now is the time for us to work towards creating a community that we can be proud of, where new migrants have strong economic foundations and are not relying on survival mode roles to sustain their livelihood, where organizations can come together and provide for a broader more inclusive community, and where our Sikh leaders are a cohort of professionals with strong ethical values and I emphasize strong ethical values with our leaders and they take ownership of other, younger Sikhs who also want to develop in those professions and industries. So essentially for me, our Sangat of the Future requires us to use our professional and social capabilities to develop a more productive inclusive community which we can all be proud of and call ours.

I challenge you to today to think outside the norm, think bold and think about our Sikh values that we've all grown up with and think about why you're here today wanting to learn about what mine, yours and our Sangat of the Future looks like, now I know I gave you a little bit of a lecture but I hope in hearing all of the above just like myself and the other YSPN team members in the room you're ready for a day of challenge invigorating conversation and again are ready to share your stories so that we can collectively be part of our Sangat of the Future, a little bit about the structure today.

I believe you were emailed a program booklet via email however, again if you have any questions please do ask. We will commence with an introduction and opening from our YSPN and Melbourne chairman Preet Toki followed by our keynote speech by Dhruv Saxena, we will then break for morning tea, post the break we will deep dive into the concept of Sewa and migration through our panel discussions which are comprised of 30 minutes moderated panels and then 30 minutes of questions and answers from the audience and again this is where I would encourage you to ask as many questions to our panelists, please challenge them they are prepared and then to ensure that you're following through with that promise that you've just made me about being challenged and welcoming a mindset change we've curated for you a collaborative ideation session.

What does that mean? So we're going to break you into smaller groups and focus on creating solutions that are going to address the problems that we would have discussed earlier on in the program. This concept is an example of the direction YSPN is moving in, whereby we are wanting to create a more collaborative environment where our community finds solutions and not just focuses on the problems within our Sangat. Towards the end of the day, we'll have another break where you can network with the members in the audience as well as your speakers before we proceed to the gala dinner with our keynote [10:06 inaudible] so with that enough of me.

I would like to invite our first speaker Preet Toki who is YSPN's Melbourne lead and will walk you through the ideation behind Elevate 2020 and what learnings we can anticipate from today and YSPN upcoming direction if you could just begin the applaud to welcome Preet Toki.