



Zone 3

Uluru Rock, Australia

ZONE 3 HIGHLIGHTS

COUNTRIES	CENTRES/ GROUPS	SSIO MEMBERS	SSE STUDENTS	ISSE	SATHYA SAI SCHOOLS
Australia/PNG	80	3,408	563	1	1
Fiji	9	354	176	1	1
New Zealand	26	1,020	141	1	1
TOTAL	115	4,782	880	3	3



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Australia

The SSIO of Australia made health and wellness a cynosure of their service and engagement activities. Over the past 5 years, SSIO volunteers in Canberra prepared more than 1,700 birthing kits for underprivileged mothers in developing regions. The kits offered vital medical supplies to assist with delivery and protect the mother and child afterwards. Presently, they are being distributed around the developing world.

Wellness was again a focus of the Sai Care project – aimed specifically at helping the elderly, for which a healthy ageing workshop was hosted for elders and their caregivers on 2nd April 2017. It offered practical tips for preventing illness rather than just treating disease. These and many other Sai Care projects were recognised with the prestigious Volunteer of the Year Award, specifically acknowledging the SSIO's contributions towards seniors.

Another major community served by the SSIO's global outreach is those with mental illness. Australia was no exception, with SSEHV students taking the lead in preparing fun and engaging activities for students at the Woodbury Autism Education and Research school on 3rd December 2017. A similar outreach effort was made to Australia's aboriginal communities via Kate's Home Kids Aboriginal Corporation. The collaboration allowed SSIO members to share in the activities



Australia



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and celebrations of these communities, bringing together the wisdom of diverse yet universal social and cultural values.

The ideal of oneness was again reiterated in a multicultural, multifaith community programme in Sydney in August 2017. More than 400 guests including faith and community leaders attended the joyful event, featuring insightful discourse and a diverse array of heart-warming performances by children. Ideals were put into practice in the town of Murwillumbah, New South Wales, when severe floods forced widescale evacuations. Fortunately, the town is home to Australia's national Sathya Sai School – where students and faculty worked together to prepare hampers of food and other necessities for the community throughout March and April of 2017.



New Zealand

Volunteers in New Zealand also undertook major projects under the banner of the global Serve The Planet initiative. This included a novel initiative not just to combat environmental degradation but to understand it at a practical level. Sathya Sai Young Adults coordinated a series of workshops, including one held at the Auckland Botanical Gardens, where amongst other lessons, the challenges of dealing with plastics in the environment was witnessed first-hand. The young adults then instituted these lessons into a “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Refuse”

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campaign seeking to reduce the impact of plastics in day-to-day life. Some 20 volunteers from the Sathya Sai Centre of Hamilton continued this effort by planting 600 New Zealand flax saplings along the banks of Lake Magellan in celebration of Guru Poornima, observed on 9th July 2017.

Also, during Guru Poornima festivities in Auckland, SSIO members hosted an interfaith seminar celebrating Teachers' Day. Some of the distinguished speakers included guests from the Islamic Ahlulbayt Foundation and the Sikh faith, all of whom emphasised the importance of the spiritual teacher in the shaping and development of character. Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the universal teacher, was honoured also during Mahasamadhi Day observations on 24th April 2017. The programme, "Form to Formless," opened with prayers and a melodious Maori chanting of Te Aroha. After a moment of silence acknowledging the sacrifices of veterans, the assembly was treated to a play by the SSE children, a stirring musical performance by Sai Young Adults incorporating both Eastern and Western melodies, and a series of immersive panel discussions.

In another project, inspired partly by the work of the SSIO of Australia, volunteers from the Sathya Sai Centres of Hamilton and Whangarei assembled 226 clean birthing kits. These kits are distributed around the world to facilitate safe birth deliveries in the coming years.



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Fiji

About 80 people joined in a Walk for Values event in Suva, Fiji, on 29th April 2017. Local Sathya Sai Centres and the University of the South Pacific Sai Young Adult Group organised the walk to increase awareness of human values. The leading banner and human values placards were artfully decorated in English and Fijian languages to reflect the Pacific nation's heritage. After the one-hour walk, participants enjoyed another hour of festive songs, talks, and activities on the importance of practising human values in communities and society.

During late September 2017, Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman of the Prasanthi Council, along with other senior SSIO leaders met with the staff and students of the Sathya Sai School and Institute of Human Values Education at Drasa, home to more than 100 students. Dr. Reddy inaugurated a new building for the Institute and laid the foundation for a school library.

Spiritual topics and service projects were also discussed at Fiji's Annual Sathya Sai Convention, held 23rd–24th September 2017. Two government ministers joined in discussions on the topic, "Building a Harmonious and Compassionate Society." The event included an interfaith service, cultural programmes, and an outstanding musical performance. Members of the iTaukei group also participated in the convention, underscoring Baba's message of unity of all faiths and the universality of the human values.



Fiji



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