

**-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-**

**27 AUGUST 2024:**

**NEW CITIZENS THRILLED TO BELONG:**

A welcoming and inviting Citizenship Ceremony was conducted at the Gundagai Council Chambers on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> August with five new Australian citizens presented with their citizenship certificates.

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council (CGRC) mayor, Councillor Gil Kelly officiated at his first ceremony as mayor with the five conferees accepting and taking the pledge to become Australian Citizens.

The Joshi family, Lalit, Papy, and children Garvita and Livaan along with Liliana Baker were joined by family and friends at the ceremony.

Liliana came to Australia in 1986 escaping war in Argentina, and to make a better life for herself and two daughters. Liliana has lived in Gundagai for 13 years, and said she loves it with a passion.

“Being a citizen now gives me a true sense of belonging,” Liliana said.

Lalit and Papy Joshi have lived in Gundagai since 2016 and have firmly entrenched themselves in the community. Setting up two businesses in the town with a travel agency and security company. Garvita attended Gundagai Primary School and is now a Mater Dei Catholic College student. Little Livaan was born in Gundagai in 2021.

“Gundagai is our hometown, it is very similar to where we grew up in India, we feel it is the best place to live,” Lalit said after the ceremony.

Mayor Kelly conducted the ceremony with warmth and sincerity, welcoming the new citizens and said it is vital we continue to provide a safe, welcoming, and inviting society being a beacon of diversity, and embracing contrasting cultural ideals.

“In our region it is the people that are its heart, the incredible community spirit and welcoming atmosphere. We are widely known for the friendliness and openheartedness our communities offer. Attributes that make me extremely proud to be a representative for this area.

We must overcome the voices of dissent and division among us to unite so that we can adapt to, and succeed in making our region the very best it can be. It is my great pleasure, as your mayor, to formally recognise you as citizens of Australia and welcome you all as our newest Australian Citizens,” Mayor Kelly said in his speech.

All conferees were presented with Australian Citizenship certificates and a native plant to mark the occasion. All enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea provided by CGRC at the conclusion of the ceremony and were able to speak with Council staff, and Councillors Penny Nicholson and Abb McAlister who also attended.

**Picture and caption:**

Five new Australian Citizens were welcomed at a ceremony held in Gundagai last Thursday.

1. Pictured left to right: Garvita, Lalit, Papy and Livaan Joshi, with Liliana Baker reciting the Pledge at the Australian Citizenship ceremony.

2. Mayor Gil Kelly presents Livaan Joshi with a native plant to recognise the occasion.



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**Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council**  
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