

Atisha



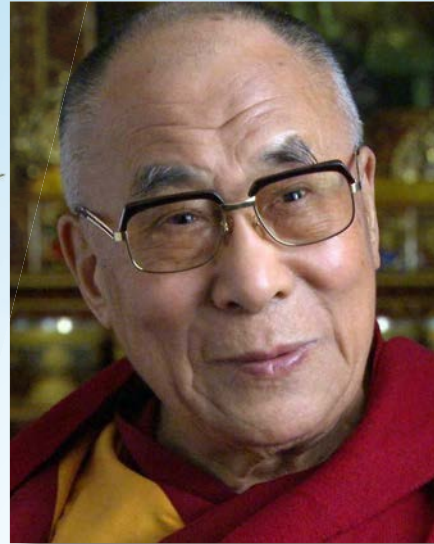
Centre

**'A Land for Completing
the Human Potential'**

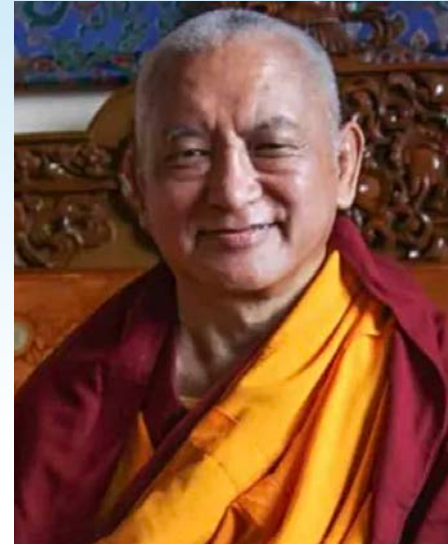
Lama Zopa Rinpoche



ANNUAL REVIEW 2025



Our Spiritual Leader
His Holiness Dalai Lama



Our Inspiration and Founder
Kyabje Thubten Zopa Rinpoche



Our Inspiration and Founder
Lama Thubten Yeshe Rinpoche

“In the Centres, everything that is done is for sentient beings. At the Dharma Centre, you teach basic Buddhism: compassion and wisdom. Students come to know about karma. They abandon negative karma, which causes suffering, and create good karma, which brings happiness. Dharma centres bring so much peace and compassion to the world ... That is why students need to learn Dharma ... not only *lamrim*, but philosophy too.”

Kyabje Thubten Zopa Rinpoche



Our Resident Teacher
Geshe Thubten Rabten

OUR PURPOSE WHAT WE PROVIDE

ATISHA CENTRE is dedicated to



- The transmission of Tibetan Buddhism through the promotion of study and dissemination of Buddhist teachings, emphasising the teachings of the Gelug lineage of Tibetan Buddhism.
- Atisha Centre's mission is to preserve the Mahayana Buddhist tradition by maintaining teaching and retreat facilities that support Mahayana practitioners in study, contemplation and meditation.
- We welcome people of all backgrounds and faiths to develop their natural wisdom and compassion through essential education and service.
- Maintaining at all times an affiliation with **FPMT Inc.**, a Californian, non-profit, religious corporation representing an international group of organisations and individuals devoted to the transmission of the Mahayana Buddhist tradition and values worldwide through teaching, meditation and community service, and based upon the Buddhist tradition of Lama Tsongkhapa.



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

“It is a simple truth that if we identify ourselves as being fundamentally pure, strong, and capable we will actually develop these qualities, but if we continue to think of ourselves as dull and foolish, that is what we will become... The sense world alone cannot satisfy the mind. We have been asleep for countless lives. Now it is time to wake up!”

Lama Thubten Yeshe

A successful year at Atisha Centre can be indicated by the fulfilment of Kyabje Zopa Rinpoche's and Lama Yeshe's purpose as reflected in the name of the organisation chosen by Lama ~ FPMT (Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition). So, if we as an organisation, are enabling that preservation by facilitating Mahayana teachings, being a centre open to everyone to attend and benefit from those teachings, combined with providing affordable Dharma events in a tranquil, beautiful setting, then I think we can safely say we have had another successful year.

The success of the Centre is due to the generous energy of its members, friends and many volunteers who participate in working to make the Centre thrive and happen. As our motivation is to benefit others, by following the teachings and practices laid out by our teachers, the result, the Centre, is an entity which is very positive. For this, we can all rejoice!

This year we have held many events at the Centre. In September and October we hosted Heart of Wisdom's Kalachakra retreat which followed teachings and the Kalachakra initiation from His Eminence Jhado

Rinpoche. The retreat was held in our gomba and 50+ people attended. Prior to this event, in August, we were incredibly fortunate to be visited by His Holiness Ling Rinpoche who gave teachings and initiations in the Great Stupa and blessed all four site entities with his very powerful energy. We have invited Rinpoche to return and hope he will do so in the near future.

In addition to our regular programme, retreats and special events, we have hosted guest events which help provide funds to the Centre as well as enabling outside groups to benefit from the Centre. All these outside groups are quite keen to come back and repeat their experience!



Hayagriva Puja Led by Sera Jey Geshe October 2025

In April this year, in Kathmandu Nepal at Kopan Monastery, following the memorial day of Rinpoche's passing, there was a CPMT meeting (international gathering of many Centre directors, SPCs and movers in the organisation - also attended by HE Ling Rinpoche, by Zoom), which was the first meeting for 11 years. Many things were discussed and workshopped, but the overall takeaway from this, the largest ever CPMT meeting, was the harmony and cohesion of our umbrella organisation. International Office hopes to hold a CPMT meeting every two years.



His Eminence Ling Rinpoche Visits the Centre



This coming year in April, Atisha Centre will be hosting the FPMTA meeting (national + NZ gathering of Centre directors and SPCs).

Projects including holy object installations have been completed or are on their way to completion this year. Our beautiful Kadampa Stupa has been finished, blessed, consecrated, wept over, circumambulated and generally admired after several years in production. Thanks go to a multitude of people for the construction, the presentation and grounds, the mantra rolling and filling, the prayers and of course the financial contributions which made it all happen. The completing of the surrounding area is a work in progress.

Other works in progress include the beautification, restoration and housing of our golden Buddha statue, and the completing of the housing and surrounds of our Lama of Yeshe statue leading to our Ksitigarba statue.

Our wonderful teacher Geshe Rabten and his excellent translator Venerable Lobsang Dorje have been with us now for 10 years, delivering

really exceptional Dharma teachings and instructions on how to practise. I would like to thank Genla and Dorje for all their hard work and for the amazing opportunity they afford to everyone to receive these rare teachings.

I would also like to thank all the managers and coordinators of this year, including:

Spiritual Programme Coordinator - Venerable Lhawang

Property and Maintenance Manager - Kevin Haines

Office Manager and Assistant to Director and SPC - Jan Stewart

Library Manager and Office Assistant - Pauline Walden

Gompa Manager - David Moyes

Bookshop Manager and Community Garden Manager - Bel Howe

Accommodation Manager - Peter Lane

Publications Manager - Gail Haig

Kitchen Managers - Brian Ashen (outgoing) and Robert Leisk

Garden Manager - Ken Fox

Holy Objects Coordinator - Venerable Choying

As well as **Atisha Centre Board Members** - Venerable Lhawang, Peter Lane, Jackie Michael, Brian Ashen, Stephanie Mcgrane and Rose Mazza.

Thank you to all the volunteers who have put in many hours of work into various projects, managerial areas, Centre-caring activities, and the furtherance of the Dharma in the Centre. To list all the contributors to that work would indubitably cause me to miss some names. You know who you all are! Please rejoice in all the positive energy created on behalf of others.

Andy Melnic
CENTRE DIRECTOR



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD - CHAIR



We respectfully acknowledge the Dja Dja Wurrung people as the traditional custodians of the land on which Atisha Centre resides. We also acknowledge that the land is unceded. And we pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging.

Dear Dharma practitioners,

This has been a busy year, and stable. We have seen several key events, including hosting the Heart of Wisdom Kalachakra Retreat following the initiation offered by His Eminence Jhado Rinpoche, as well as wonderful teachings at the Great Stupa from His Eminence Ling Rinpoche.

Thank you to all who have worked for the Atisha Buddhist Centre this year and assisted to enable many people to access the Dharma. Also, thank you to all the members of the Board for their involvement.

As our most dear Kyabje Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche often used to say, "Loving kindness comes first". May Atisha Centre continue to contribute to maintaining the spread of the Buddhadharma, to benefit all sentient beings.

Peter Lane
BOARD CHAIR



His Eminence Jhado Rinpoche
Great Stupa Ceiling Consecration Ceremony



SPIRITUAL PROGRAMME

The year of 2025 is the second year since our precious guru, Lama Zopa Rinpoche passed away. Rinpoche's presence remains with us very strongly in hearts and minds and Rinpoche continues to be our holy Spiritual Director. We continue to recite the *Swift Return Prayer* at the end of all events in Atisha Centre gompas and pray that Rinpoche will continue to spread the Dharma throughout the ten directions.



Good news is that His Holiness the Dalai Lama has confirmed that Lama Zopa Rinpoche's incarnation has taken rebirth in Nepal to a Tibetan family.

The year was again packed with programme events.

Many thanks once again to our excellent teacher, Venerable Geshe Rabten and his fantastic translator Venerable Lobsang Dorje, for many hours of teachings on traditional texts and instructions.

Everything Geshe has taught continues to be recorded and made available (for posterity) to everyone for replaying and personal study.

Many thanks for the continued programme support from the nuns from Machig Labdrön Nunnery and the monks at Thubten Shedrup Ling Monastery. As always, we are very grateful to all the volunteers and coordinators of our different events.

Our weekly programme:

- Wednesday Night Teachings from Geshe Rabten with his commentary on Shantideva's famous text *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*



- "Engaging in the Bodhisattva's Way of Life". Over the years we have studied Chapter 5 - Guarding Introspection. Detailing how we can develop mindfulness of how to conduct and train our activities, our speech and minds in the ways of bodhisattva practices. Thank you to Kathy Rice for coordinating Wednesday Night and Study Group.

- Tuesday Meditations in Bendigo led by Venerable Damcho. Damcho has done a splendid job of introducing the 16 Guidelines with the meditation session leaving the participants feeling positive and confident.
- Sunday Meditations led by a team of various sangha and non-sangha members: We are very grateful to each leader who provides this wonderful opportunity for people to meet the Dharma through meditation in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. Thank you to our chai makers Bel, Orsen, Helen and Rose.
- "Prayers for the Deceased" (monthly) has been led by Venerable Drime and Venerable Nangsel.
- Children's Dharma Club has recommenced with Donna McMahon, teaching the children how to meditate, reading stories to develop imagination and creativity and fun activities.

This year, our programme has included the following events and topics:

- A five day Winter Retreat with Geshe Rabten and Venerable Dorje, led by Venerable Tsapel - "Profound Personal Instructions for the Protector of Beings, Dorje Päl and Other Heart Students";
- A one month Yamantaka Retreat led by Venerable Wanchuk and 30 participants in August 24;
- Ultimate Healing Retreat with Venerable Tsapel in September 24;
- Five-day Shamatha Retreat led by Venerable Tsapel in October 24;
- Four-day Spring Retreat with Geshe Rabten, led by Venerable Tsapel; November 24 - "Parting from the Four Clings";
- This year's annual Chenrezig Retreat was led by Venerable Tsapel;
- Introduction to Buddhism with Venerable Jampa in January;
- "Being Your Own Therapist" with Martin Ström in February;
- Three-day retreat - "Close Placement of Mindfulness" with Venerable Tsapel in March;
- A special all-night Tara Night led by Andy Melnic over the Day of Miracles in March;
- Tai Chi and Qigong with Tao in March. This is the first time we have provided this retreat and it was well attended;
- Kadampa Stupa consecration in April;
- Opening of Machig Labdron Nunnery accommodation in April;
- "Setting Up a Daily Practice Day" with Venerable Jampa in April;
- Our six-day Easter Retreat with Geshe Rabten and Venerable Dorje, led by Venerable Tsapel - "Foundation of All Good Qualities", followed by a refuge ceremony with Geshe Rabten;
- Pilgrimage to Melbourne in June to different Buddhist centres, organised by Brian Ashen;
- Three Nyung Nä's at Sakadawa with Lysse Valez;
- Weekend course - "Unlocking the Wisdom of Tibetan Medicine" with Menpa Pema Gyaltzen in July.

Thank you to all our wonderful coordinators, leaders and drivers.

Holy Days: Chokyur Duchen - 10 July 24, Lhabab Duchen - 22 November 24, Losar - 28 February 25. Lama Tsongkhapa day was lead by Venerable Drime on 25 December 24.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 90th Birthday celebration was well-attended, with Geshe Rabten giving an inspirational talk about His Holiness's life and great deeds. Venerable Tsapel led us in prayers. A talk was given by Menpa Pema who shared how His Holiness has been like a father to him, and about his struggles and joys as a Tibetan refugee in India and more recent life in Australia. MP Lisa Chesters also joined us with a talk about how His Holiness's kindness has inspired her in her work in government.

Regular pujas (Guru, Medicine Buddha, Tara) led by Venerable Tsapel and Venerable Drime. Set-ups and support given by Venerable Choying.

This year, our Buddhist Study Group topic from Genla has been: "Middle Length Lam Rim", a commentary on the text by Lama Tsongkhapa, explaining in great depth the stages on the path to enlightenment. Genla's great attention to detail makes this a very rich and inspiring course of meditation and pure practice of Dharma.

"Lama's Dharma Shop", our book and gifts shop, continues to improve and gets more exciting all the time, under the management of Bel Howe.

Thank you to Venerable Drime who has held the Gompa Manager position for 5 years at Atisha Centre. An extraordinary effort and care over a long period. Thank you to David Moyes who started the Gompa Manager position in January.

Thank you to all those who support and participate in the programme.



Tenzin Lhawang
SPIRITUAL PROGRAMME COORDINATOR

LIBRARY



Atisha Centre Library has been busy during the past year with various projects, much of which relates to the history of the Centre and the materials that have been in the Library for many years. The transferring of cassette tapes of the early teachings at Atisha Centre

to mp3 is in the final stages, with over 400 tapes having been completed. Work has now begun on digitising the many historical photographs to establish an archive file. The teachings of Geshe Lama Konchog in 1987 and the transcriptions of those teachings, have now been digitised, and a fortunate opportunity arose in July this year to present Geshe Tenzin Zopa with the originals. The development of an archive web page of the early teachings at Atisha Centre is being considered now that we have many Dharma texts in digital format.

The Library has been assisting with contributions to the Chorten Newsletter through interviews, photographs and the new "From the Archive" section. This has also enabled more history to be documented and to hear the personal stories of those people connected with the centre, either currently or from the early pioneering days. The Library greatly appreciates those people involved and looks forward to more interviewing opportunities. The Chorten newsletter continues to be forwarded to the State Library where a complete set is located.

Cataloguing and maintaining the book collection and borrowing continues with the Library receiving most use during retreats, and by guests visiting the Centre. In January this year the purchase of a transcription programme has assisted the documentation of interviews and past and current teachings at the Centre.

I am grateful to library volunteers Gail, Sarah, Aileen, Christine, John and Leonie for their work and support over the past year. We rejoice at the beautiful artwork on the door of the library that has been done by Andrew. Over many months he has designed, painted and donated the materials for this special project that was instigated after the Library door was renovated. My thanks also go to the staff, residents, sangha members, and Centre members for their continued support throughout the year.

Pauline Walden
LIBRARY MANAGER



LAMA'S DHARMA SHOP

Lama's Dharma shop continues to grow and prosper alongside the ever-evolving nature of Atisha Centre.

This year's financials showed a healthy turnover of \$87,238, with visitors bringing \$72,951 through the shop in person and \$14,287 through online sales.

With over \$2000 gifted through cash donations and offerings for cherished items previously held in the care of others, Lama's Dharma Shop continues to support our precious community with quality items to enhance their practice.

As always, I offer a wealth of gratitude to our dedicated team of volunteers. A huge thank you to Cilla, Darren, Lou, Fiona, Warwick, Rose, and Pauline.

These treasured people give freely of their time and energy and provide helpful, friendly service to all who flow through our door, communicating through their actions, the generosity of spirit that is so valued at Atisha Centre.

By extension, I give thanks to all staff and volunteers at Atisha Centre, who embrace the many opportunities, changes, and sometimes struggles that go into creating an atmosphere of welcome and peace so prized by the diversity of people visiting the Centre for meditation, study, and retreat.... or just to sit and appreciate a quiet moment.

I hold endless gratitude for my position as Manager of Lama's Dharma Shop, and look forward with enthusiasm to witnessing, supporting and participating in the continued growth of this wonderful centre.



Bel Howe
SHOP MANAGER

PROPERTY

Highlights of first half of 2025 include:

- Reinstating the gompa snow lions, thanks to Lucy and her team.
- The repointing and painting of the tsatsa house roof, thanks to Josh, Craig and Reese followed by the complete filling under the direction of Venerable Choying.
- The repainting of the reclining Buddha statue's roof.
- The completion of waterproofing and drainage around The Kadampa stupa as well as the finishing touches to the mountain of landscaping work carried out by Mark, Jill and Barry in time for the consecration ceremony.
- The Golden Buddha received many hours of repair and fiberglass work thanks to Craig. Body paint by Adam, Ricciardo and myself. The Buddha's amazing face painting thanks to Lucy.
- The workshop roof extension was also installed.

Some less glamorous jobs were dealing with the power outages caused by a fault in the sewer system. Thanks to Steve for his help. Numerous blockages, leaking pipes, pumping up of garden water gutters, fresh water monitoring which has continued through the entire year. I am happy to report the sewer system has been running trouble-free since midyear. Second half of 2025 until present Maitreya Buddha display and plinth refurbishment completed as well as Green Tara cabinet ready to be reinstated thanks to Bill, Neil and Jamie. The Lama Yeshe statue now has concrete blinding for tiles laid. Grouting and additional posts added. Works continue thanks to Bill, Neil, Jamie, Steven, Duncan and Andrew. The Library door is completed by the great work of Andrew.

Many thanks for everyone for their help over the year, and apologies to anyone I have forgotten to mention.



My focus for the remainder of the year and the next will be the completion of Lama Yeshe's statue area, and the completion of the Golden Buddha as required and annual maintenance jobs.

Kevin Haines
PROPERTY MANAGER



GARDENS

Despite our variable, sometimes harsh climate, animal appetites and the numerous ant real-estate complexes, Atisha Centre's gardens are looking great, thanks to a variety of willing and hard-working volunteers. Many thanks to Ken Fox and Bel Howe for managing the different areas of the gardens. I would also like to thank our exchange volunteers - Krishnaleela who goes and comes and stays in her bus and Rose Claiden who was with us for the early part of the year. Also to Justin who joined us recently. Thanks to everyone who comes to "dig in" with the garden.

I would also especially like to thank Bel Howe for taking on the design, management, joining in and overseeing the completion to-date of our **Community Kitchen Garden Project**. Thank you also to her volunteers. Hours were spent shredding unwanted mattresses to produce a garden fence perimeter. Beds (garden ones) were built, planted and cared for, and our very kind grant from Highways and Byways was carefully and appropriately and lovingly spent.

Of course, this is an ongoing project. *Here are some pics:*

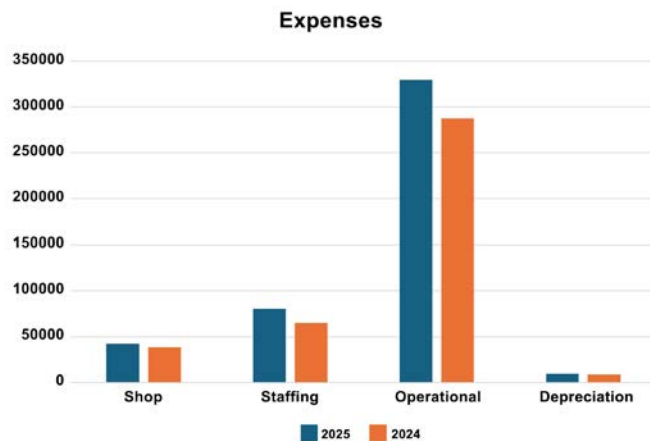


Andy Melnic
CENTRE DIRECTOR

FINANCES 2023/24

FINANCIAL REPORT

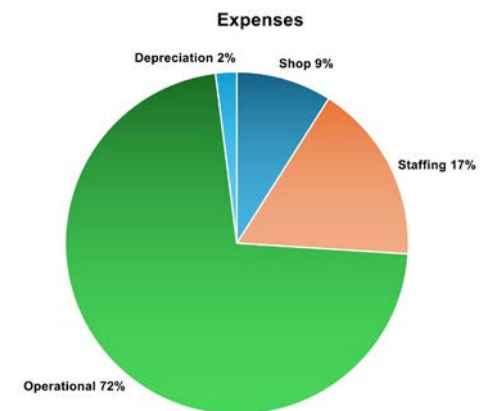
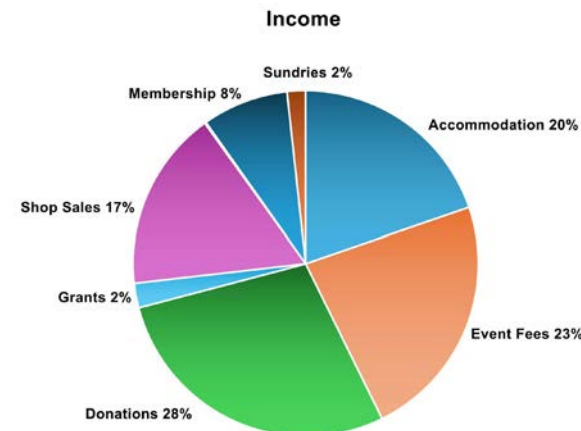
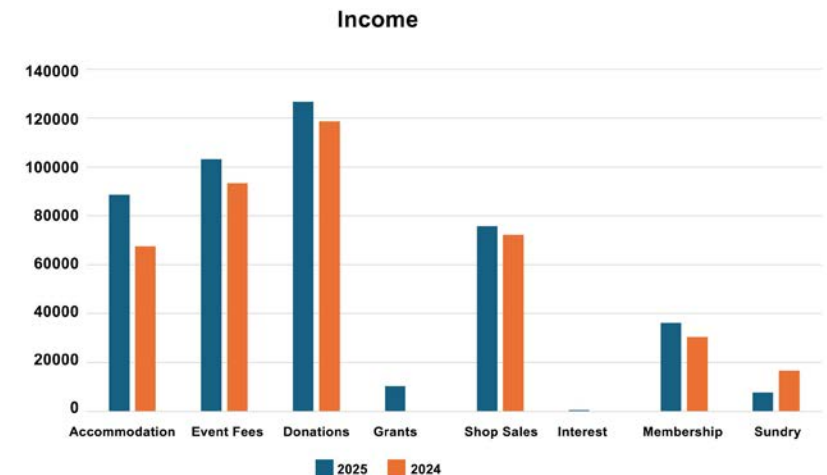
The 2024/25 financial year ending 30 June recorded a profit and loss deficit of \$12,000. This outcome was primarily driven by increased insurance premiums (up by \$10,000) and legal and associated costs relating to translator expenses (up by \$7,000). As our translator has now been granted permanent residency, these visa-related fees are not expected to continue.



Since the end of that reporting period, our financial position has improved significantly. As at the end of October, the profit and loss statement showed a positive balance of \$34,400.

We have implemented several new financial measures that are strengthening our capital position. For example, we transferred capital to a higher-interest account, generating approximately an additional \$600 per month. In addition, a recent review confirmed that our accommodation income can be treated as GST-free, providing further benefit.

Accommodation revenue at Atisha Centre increased substantially this financial year, as did programme event fees. Gift shop sales were slightly higher, and membership revenue also grew. These improvements collectively support a stronger and more sustainable financial outlook.



Jackie Michael
TREASURER

ATISHA CENTRE PERSONNEL



BOARD

CENTRE DIRECTOR: Andy Melnic

SPIRITUAL PROGRAMME COORDINATOR: Venerable Tenzin Lhawang

CHAIR: Peter Lane

VICE-CHAIR: Andy Melnic

TREASURER: Jackie Michael

SECRETARY: Rose Mazza

ORDINARY MEMBERS: Stephanie McGrane, Brian Ashen

FINANCE and ADMINISTRATION

OFFICE MANAGER / OFFICE ASSISTANT: Jan Stewart and Pauline Walden

FINANCE MANAGER: Bendigo Bookkeeping

MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR: Vacant

SPIRITUAL PROGRAMME

SPC: Venerable Tenzin Lhawang

GOMPA MANAGER: David Moyes

SHOP MANAGER: Bel Howe

LIBRARY MANAGER: Pauline Walden

PUBLICATIONS COORDINATOR: Gail Haig

STUDY GROUP COORDINATOR: Kathy Rice

DINING AND CATERING

KITCHEN MANAGER: Robert Leisk (OUTGOING: Brian Ashen)

VOLUNTEERING

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR: Vacant

PUBLICITY

WEBSITE: Andy Melnic

NEWSLETTER: Venerable Tenzin Lhawang

MAINTENANCE AND GROUNDS

PROPERTY MANAGER: Kevin Haines

GARDENS AND GROUNDS COORDINATOR: Ken Fox

COMMUNITY GARDENS COORDINATOR: Bel Howe

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

IT CONSULTANT: Micheal Chambers

ACCOMMODATION

ACCOMMODATION MANAGER: Peter Lane

PROJECTS

HOLY OBJECTS COORDINATOR: Venerable Tenzin Choying



THANK YOU

*A*tisha Centre would like to express the deepest gratitude and appreciation to all our teachers, members, supporters, volunteers, friends and benefactors.

Your kindness helps provide the conditions needed to carry out Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche's great vision for the Centre and the FPMT organisation.

Our accomplishments are the direct result of your generosity and commitment to the Centre. May we all rejoice together.



Atisha  Centre
Atisha Buddhist Centre

Atisha Centre Inc. No. A0045465N / ABN 44 568 476 377

25 Sandhurst Town Rd, PO Box 97, Eaglehawk, VIC 3556 / Phone: 0493 247 400 / Email: office@atishacentre.org.au / Web: www.atishacentre.org.au