

Atisha Buddhist Centre



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

2015 REPORT

THREE MAIN COMMITMENTS

His Holiness Dalai Lama Has Three Main Commitments In Life.



Firstly, on the level of a human being, His Holiness' first commitment is the promotion of human values such as compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, contentment and self-discipline. All human beings are the same. We all want happiness and do not want suffering. Even people who do not believe in religion recognize the importance of these human values in making their life happier. His Holiness refers to these human values as secular ethics. He remains committed to talk about the importance of these human values and share them with everyone he meets.

Secondly, on the level of a religious practitioner, His Holiness' second commitment is the promotion of religious harmony and understanding among the world's major religious traditions. Despite philosophical differences, all major world religions have the same potential to create good human beings. It is therefore important for all religious traditions to respect one another and recognize the value of each other's respective traditions. As far as one truth, one religion is concerned, this is relevant on an individual level. However, for the community at large, several truths, several religions are necessary.

Thirdly, His Holiness is a Tibetan and carries the name of the 'Dalai Lama'. Therefore, his third commitment is to work to preserve Tibet's Buddhist culture, a culture of peace and non-violence.

Home page - dalailama.com

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2014 TO NOVEMBER 2015

DIRECTOR - OUTGOING	LIAM CHAMBERS	To May 2015
DIRECTOR - INCOMING	RUBY KARMAY	From May 2015
SPIRITUAL PROGRAM CO-ORDINATORS - OUTGOING	RUBY KARMAY	To May 2015
SPIRITUAL PROGRAM CO-ORDINATORS- INCOMING	JEN KYNE	From May 2015
SECRETARY- OUTGOING	JEN KYNE	To May 2015
SECRETARY- INCOMING	CARLA LEWINSMITH	From May 15
TREASURER	JASON ISMA	
PUBLIC OFFICER	JEN KYNE	
ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS	MAXINE HAWKER	
	DIANE GEE	
	CAMERON YOUNG	
COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON	BRENTON RUSSELL	

THANK YOU

Thubten Shedrup Ling Monastery
The Great Stupa of Universal Compassion
Bendigo City Council
Bendigo Bank, Bob Waterhouse.
Susie, The Bead Shop Lyttleton Terrace,
Star Cinema, Ron Dixon Excavations,
The Florist Shop in Eaglehawk
AASB Accounting and Auditing Solutions Bendigo
Fitzpatrick's Hardware, Eaglehawk Bakery, Bendigo
Whole Foods Lyttleton Terrace,
Bolton's Office National, Cambells Cash and Carry
Roger King's IGA Eaglehawk.
Micheal Chambers- Deep Tread Internet ,
Michael and Thi Kodama (Plants)



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

I think it would be fair to say that the past twelve months were very productive, exciting, busy, harmonious, financially beneficial with much hard work, and only dampened by the sadness of the Gompa fire at the monastery.

Recently, our teacher, Lama Zopa Rinpoche wrote a short letter to us all in Dharma Centres entitled: 'The Benefit of Working for the Center – Wow!' He began;

"Sometimes people who are working at centers only think of the problems - problems, problems, problems. Maybe it makes them feel sick. Their heart becomes very dry, very uninterested."

I can say with a great deal of confidence that this was not the attitude or atmosphere at Atisha Centre over the past year. There has been more of an approach of things being a challenge rather than regarding them as problems so that a great deal of change has occurred in the center, in program, gardens, holy objects as well as preparation and planning for the upcoming CPMT meeting and month long retreat with Lama Zopa. The people involved, who are volunteers, have worked hard and harmoniously and have achieved wonderful outcomes and the centre, as commented on by many visitors, feels and reflects that harmony.

Rinpoche continued;

"[However] if you know how to think, it's really unbelievable."

It would seem, from what Rinpoche is saying and through the attitude and outcomes at our centre, that a lot of the right kind of thinking had been going on in the centre.

On this Rinpoche concluded that;

"The highest merit is collected and there is the greatest purification by working for the center."

I'm sure that Rinpoche would be proud and pleased, as we ourselves should be, with all our efforts this year.

During the past year and leading up to Lama Zopa Rinpoche's visit there was much to celebrate from the efforts of the staff and volunteers at Atisha Centre with their generosity of time, the quality of work and their dedication, in making the centre the best it can be. For me the sincerest form of recognition is to see one's ideas put to use. This has certainly been a theme throughout this year. To all our volunteers, I say a heartfelt thank you. Your efforts as valued partners have made a real and long lasting contribution to the beauty and function of Atisha Centre. Following is an excerpt from my welcome speech to CPMT 2014 delegates:

"...People often say to me how beautiful the Atisha Centre is and compliment me on the great job I am doing. My usual reply is that, "We are blessed with a great team of staff and volunteers and it is they who should get the credit."

"As a leader, I have a simple philosophy 'Be the best you can be'. Simply, be positive, caring and helpful looking for the best outcome for a situation. When I became director it was my aim, within the limitation of finances and the availability of volunteers, to have Atisha Centre be the best it can be. For that to be so it must start with me, 'being the best I can be' there should be a positive effect and a role model for others."

"I find that genuinely and openly demonstrating my appreciation for the work and effort of others creates a bond of harmony, trust and good communication. By valuing the knowledge, skills and experience that people bring to the centre and by building a large degree of autonomy into the role that they play, the causes and conditions are created that helps them to 'be the best they can be'."

When people are operating at their best, it shows in the quality of their work, relationships and eventually the harmony, atmosphere and progress...”

Our staff and volunteers have many different life experiences and yet all have at least one thing in common, their willingness to give their time to help others.

Throughout the year, I have been humbled by their generosity of spirit and their compassion for their fellow human beings. Because they generously give their time, their warmth, their humour and their caring, Atisha Centre continues to progress for the present and future sentient beings.

Thank you all for your kindness.

Spiritual Program.

How fortunate we are to have the precious Sangha at Thubten Shedrup Ling Monastery who work harmoniously with Atisha Centre to benefit students and the growing numbers of new students and visitors. During this past year Thubten Gyatso, Ven. Lhundrup, Ven. Jampa and Ven Dorje have given generously and enthusiastically to assist the spiritual program at Atisha Centre. Thank you, Venerable Sangha, may you all continue to impart the precious teachings for a very long time. Again, we have been blessed with wonderful teaching from very auspicious teachers - Ven. Robina Courtin and Ven. Tony Beaumont. I thank all our precious teachers for their wisdom, generosity and kindness.

I acknowledge the wonderful effort of Ruby Karmay, our SPC, who was very involved with preparation for the CPMT and retreat with Lama Zopa Rinpoche while maintaining the necessary hours planning, preparing and implementing our Spiritual Program. Our program is both robust and varied which caters for many different levels of experience and depth of knowledge. Ruby works in close consultation with our venerable sangha and has managed our spiritual program of local teachings and visiting teachers with great wisdom and care. Ruby’s personal knowledge of dharma and her long association with Atisha Centre add significant depth to our management and program. I thank Ruby for her advice, collaboration and support. Her passion for the Dharma is inspiring.

Financial and other achievements

Due to the projected increase in revenue in the 2013/14 financial year the management committee resolved to significantly reduce Atisha Centre’s debt and to acquire new holy objects.

We have achieved:

- Loan repayment to anonymous donors which has reduced total debt by more than 50 %
- Creation of a stipend for the director and SPC positions (Minimal amount established)
- Successful application to the Merit Box Project Fund for purchase of a Lama Atisha Statue
- Funds raised for the purchase of the Deer and Dharmachakra for the main Gompa
- Funds raised for the refurbishment of the Tara Pond
- Funds raised to complete the Reclining Buddha statue and throne
- Increased revenue from hiring the Centre to yoga and like-minded groups
- Steady increase in membership
- CBD meditation centre and teaching space established by renovating premises formerly occupied by Atisha Gifts
- Continued robust and vibrant teaching programme
- Strengthened collaborative relationship with Great Stupa by supporting public events such as Vesak Festival of Light and Vegecareian festival as well as ongoing support of touring groups
- Support of Thubten Shedrup Ling’s building project through provision of labour and financial donation.
- Completion of many of our Strategic Directions
- Work completed on the Compassion and Wisdom gardens around the Buddha statue.
- Front Entrance gate refurbished
- All gardens freshened and replanted
- Deer and Dharmachakra for the Gompa in place
- Lama Atisha statue for the main Gompa purchased and in place
- Tara pond refurbished, paved and garden established
- Reclining Buddha completed
- Preparation of the centre for the CPMT and Lama Zopa Australia retreat

CPMT and Retreat

Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, our precious teacher and spiritual head of the FPMT, lead a very valuable and successful Council for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition [CPMT] for a week in September. This gathering includes Centre Directors, Spiritual Program Coordinators, teachers and others from 160 centres, projects and services in 36 countries. The theme of CPMT 2014 was **Preserving the Dharma Now and Into the Future and What that Means for Us.**

Discussion occurred through the three main topics of 'studying and actualising the path', 'effective leadership and management' and 'supporting the vision of HH The Dalai Lama and Lama Zopa Rinpoche'. Obviously there was a great deal of discussion across the week in many areas related to dharma centres - far too much to mention here. If you wish to follow up or learn more of the CPMT meeting outcomes go to <http://new.livestream.com/FPMT>

Following the CPMT meeting, Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche lead four weeks of teachings on Shantideva's Bodhicaryavatara - A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life as well as the preparation for the transmission of the rare Rinjung Gyatsa initiations. The three host centres - Atisha Centre, Thubten Shedrup Ling Monastery and the Great Stupa of Universal Compassion were very pleased to welcome Lama Zopa back to Australia to continue these teachings, instructions and transmissions. Details of the retreat are covered more broadly in the Spiritual Program Coordinator's report.

In preparation for these events there was a great deal of activity across all areas of the centre, from polishing the kitchen, creating new and beautiful gardens to hanging many prayer flags. A heightened effort began in August last year to give all the existing holy objects some extra love and attention and they looked wonderful for Lama Zopa Rinpoche's visit. We also added some new holy objects - a Lama Atisha statue and a Deer and Dharmachakra for the main gompa and completed the Reclining Buddha statue on the pathway to the gompa.

Executive Committee

At the previous annual general meeting we were unable to fill the office of treasurer, however Jason Isma volunteered soon after to fill the position. Many, many thanks Jason. Due to my

resignation as director the management committee underwent significant change; Ruby stepped from SPC to the director role, Jen Kyne moved from secretary to SPC. Carla Lewinsmith joined the committee as secretary and Brenton Russell became, I think, the first ever official Chairperson of the committee.

Like all businesses, Atisha Centre has a multitude of tasks to attend to. As the director you are very much aware of this and therefore you appreciate the enormous job of management and the support of the small group of people. Without these people implementing policies, reviewing and overseeing project performance and budgets, assessing how we are meeting the needs of those using the Centre, to check the Centre's direction and ensuring the financial and legal health of the Centre would be near impossible.

My heartfelt thanks go to the office bearers and committee members who have supported me during my time as director. Our joyful effort and energy have been most beneficial for the Centre. I thank those committee members who are stepping down, and welcome those who are joining the committee.

Property management

During the year we documented the position held by Steve Williams to be Property Manager, increasing his responsibility for the day to day management of the many volunteers who help in the garden, with maintenance and work on special projects on the property. Steve lives at Atisha Centre and attends to the myriad of repetitive maintenance and gardening tasks that need to be done on a daily, weekly, monthly, and annual basis. I know that Steve does a lot more than is evident, that is his nature. Thank you, Steve, for your support and contribution to the health, beauty and safety of our centre.

Administration and Finance

We said goodbye to Maxine as Finance manager this year and welcomed Wendy Buchan who brings a wealth of experience to the position.

Maxine has been with us for five years, working part time to manage the financial operations of Atisha Centre and Atisha Gifts so she is aware of most of what goes on in the Centre was always cheerfully willing to wear different hats for the benefit of the centre. Maxine contributed to all

aspects of the program in addition to her financial management role. She helped with office administration providing mentoring and support to the new office manager, Kathy Rice, assisted in retreat preparations, facilitated meditation sessions and ran meditation from time to time and, has been a member of the centre executive committee. Maxine has been a much appreciated professional and personal support to me as director.

Website and electronic social media

Many thanks to Lila Tucker for her website design expertise and for being the technical support behind our work and to Marilyn Chambers who manages the day to day content with input from the Director and SPC. Our thanks also go to Micheal Chambers, from Deep Tread Internet Services, for being on call and his help and patience in maintaining our network. Gina Macauley maintains a delightful Facebook page.

Impermanence at Work

Peter Lane was happily living and working in Fish Creek, Wilson's Prom. However, following a conversation with Venerable Roger in Kopan suddenly found himself as the Gompa manager at Atisha Centre. Peter contributes a great deal to the health and development of the Centre as gompa manager and gave wonderful support to SPC maintaining the gompa in good condition for teachings and to do the necessary setting up for retreats, teaching, pujas etc. We are indeed fortunate that this responsibility has fallen on the shoulders of Peter Lane. Welcome Peter.

You are responsible for your own problems just as you're responsible for your own liberation and enlightenment.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche

At the 2013/14 Annual general meeting the Atisha Buddhist Centre Inc. committee of management informed the members of its decision to close the shop at 324 Lyttleton Terrace from Monday 31st March. 2014. The Bendigo shop was refurbished during April and is now successfully operating as a meditation and teaching space affording us the opportunity to run short courses and teaching that are suited to its size and location.

Atisha Centre Shop

Atisha Gift Shop goes from strength to strength since the employment of Dechen, our stock

manager, who gives many more hours than she is paid. The physical layout of the shop is wonderful mainly due to her efforts supported by Jen Kyne, and she has made a huge difference in the shop's ability to financially support the centre.

Looking Ahead

We have plans for 2015/16 as part of our overall strategic direction and planning.

These include:

- Supporting the TSL monastery with its request for an Abbot. This has progressed and negotiations are well underway.
- Gift Shop extension (Subject to Finance)
- Kitchen up-grade and extension (Subject to Finance)
- Review and update of the strategic plan.

In 2009, Cherry Rattue became Director and I the SPC. Around us we developed a wonderful team of talented people who knew how to get things done. We began with a strategic plan and a vision and, as I have already reported, we have completed most of our goals from our strategic plans of 2009-2014. I'm sure that Cherry would agree that the vision has been achieved. To see one's vision and ideas brought to life is the sincerest form of recognition.

I take this opportunity to thank Marilyn, my wife, without whose undying support of untold hours of listening, her words of wisdom and administrative assistance, I would not be able to achieve the things that I do.

I thank Lama Zopa Rinpoche for his confidence and trust in handing the centre on to me to care for. Because of this I have grown immeasurably as a leader, and as a person and progressed unbelievably on my spiritual journey.

I wish His Holiness Dalai Lama, Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche and all our precious teachers long and healthy lives.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who showed confidence and faith in my ability; it is because of you that I have had the wonderful opportunity to work for the Dharma

Liam Chambers
Out-going Director

INCOMING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Thank you to Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche for giving me the courage and the support I need to take on the director's position.

As a very new director I would like to thank all the past directors for the valued infrastructure that has put in place to make the centre what it is today.

Liam was able to give me a very comprehensive handover that was very helpful. He used a flowering lotus picture to describe and detail what the position required.

I would also like to thank the present committee for their support, encouragement and assistance throughout the past 6 months, Jen Kyne for taking on the Spiritual Program Coordinator Position, Wendy Buchan for patience and skill as the financial manager position and Kathy Rice for her wisdom and support as office manager.

Over the last 6 months we have set up a Strategic Planning subcommittee with Brenton Russell at the helm, Jason Isma, Carla and myself. We are presently working on a strategy map from which all of the other aspects of the plan will flow. After the AGM we will present an update on how the new strategic plan will work. Brenton describes the Strategic plan as the drum beat for the centre enabling our mission to be achieved.

During the CPMT meeting in 2014 Roger Kunsang introduced us to the '5 Pillars of Service' to enable our FPMT centres to engage more broadly with communities.

We are going to look at introducing the 5 Pillars at the committee level and slowly bring them into our structure and program and we welcome the challenge of initiating these changes. Aspects of the pillars are already in place and others could be developed further.

The five Pillars are:

- Dharma
- Universal Education for Compassion and Wisdom
- Social and Community Service
- Interfaith
- Revenue generating activities (compatible

business opportunities)

At the recent FPMTA meeting in Hobart Tasmania where Jen Kyne and myself were representatives of Atisha centre the 5 pillars were the main Topic of Discussion.

We are looking forward to welcoming Geshe Rabten to Thubten Shedrup Ling Monastery, The Great Stupa and Atisha Centre. The next 12 months will see many new changes in our program and community.

May you all have health and long life and the best conditions to practice the Dharma.

Love and prayers
Ruby Karmay

SPIRITUAL PROGRAM REPORT



Inspiration from our Great Lamas

His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama

"We are visitors on this planet.

We are here for ninety or one hundred years at the very most.

During that period, we must try and do something useful, with our lives.

If you contribute to other people's happiness, you will find the true goal, the true meaning of life."

Lama Zopa Rinpoche

"The minute you cherish others, you have happiness and peace in your life"

Lama Yeshe

"It is going to take time and continuous effort to establish Dharma in the west. It is something that will involve many generations; it is not just a short trip. Therefore we need to establish communities, where we can share the experience of bringing the universal Mahayana idea into our daily lives, I

think that is very, very important.”

I would like to respectfully acknowledge His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, and all the lineage holders of the past. We rejoice in their kindness and guidance for the spiritual program here at Atisha Buddhist Centre.

May the Dharma flourish in our hearts and minds and in the 10 directions.

The role as Spiritual Program coordinator has been an honor, serving Lama Zopa Rinpoche and the spread of the holy dharma.

Atisha centre is privileged to have the support of the Sangha from Thubten Shedrup Ling Monastery. Their ongoing commitment to give teachings, lead meditation and Pujas is of great benefit and necessary for the implementation of a robust spiritual program.

We rejoice in the presence of the Sangha Jewel, their presence and care for others and commitment keeps the Dharma alive in our hearts and minds.

I would like to sincerely thank Thubten Gyatso for leading us in the Abhidharma Kosha, Venerable Lhundrup for teaching Discovering Buddhism and Buddhism in a Nutshell. Venerable Tony Beaumont for leading Nyung Nä, Peaceful Living peaceful Dying and the Chenrezig retreat, Venerable Jampa for leading Vajrasattva practice Days, One day meditation, Daily Practices in Buddhist Life, Introduction to Buddhism, and casual discussions., Namgyal for assisting in leading the Medicine Buddha Pujas. Thank you to the Monastery who had provided accommodation for the visiting teachers.

This year we have had many wonderful and inspiring teachers to the Atisha centre and the Monastery and we hope they can continue to visit.

Within the spiritual program there are many teams of people helping in different areas and taking responsibility to maintain the program and support students.

It has been a pleasure to work with you all.

The Gompa manager position is a pivotal role and was filled by Cameron, Venerable Damchoe, Tom Young and Peter Lane during 2015.

Thank you to Hannelore for her assistance in the library.

Cameron Young has been a support for the program editing the e-groups, looking after Sunday meditation and sweeping the Gompa weekly.

We have been able to share the offering of the water bowls by taking turns each day. Thanks to Celia, Kathy, Sue, Rheese and Liam. Venerable Damchoe was Gompa Manager during October and prepared the Gompa for the Lama Zopa Rinpoche retreat.

Celia Weston and Jo Walters kindly assisted with the preparation of notes for the Discovering Buddhism classes and assisted with the coordinating of these courses. Thank you very much for this assistance.

Maggie Wallace, Ronda Rodwell have been assisting with preparing the community lunches for the past 20 years. We rejoice whole heartedly in their merit and kindness. More recently Maggie has been having new challenges with her health and her mother passing away.

Jenny Mellberg, Helen Sleswick, Kathy Rice, Amanda Buttler, Liam and Marilyn Chambers give their support and with preparing and serving lunch and caring for the Sangha on Community days.



This lunch is a very special tradition and important for us all in maintaining harmony and an opportunity to offer food to the Sangha.

Rinpoche made a special mention and encouraged us to continue with it in the future.

The Children's Dharma club occurs monthly and is

"tunefully" run by Cilla Brady with her ukulele, backed up by myself. We acknowledge Cilla's skill and thank her for assisting and guiding the children.

Thanks to Sandra Robertson and Helen Sleswick for allowing us to have amazing colourful healthy delicious vegetarian food at retreats and short courses.

Venerable Jampa has gone from strength to strength leading meditation of Tuesdays. He has also lead 'Introduction to Buddhism' over 8 weeks twice and a study group on the 3 Principals of the Path. Maxine Hawker has been a wonderful support for the Atisha Gifts in town, assisting with leading meditation and being a friendly presence for participants and reading out announcements. Lydia Chee, Karina Smith and Leah Vogel has also being a support.

Compassion is the radicalism of our time

-Dalai Lama

Molly Wiseman has lead Tara Pujas on the first Wednesday of the month. This has been steadily growing and enjoyed by many.

In 2015 Jen Kyne and Peter Lane organized HHDL birthday and the IMI Sangha day celebrations. We had various people from the Victorian Tibetan groups and guest speakers from the Tibetan community, Victoria Buddhist Council.

Medicine Buddha has continued to grow steadily, assisted by myself, Trish Norman, Robyn Cleeland. Thanks to Venerable Namgyal for assisting in leading the pujas.

Marilyn and Liam Chambers do an enormous amount to publicize the program on the website, making posters, producing a 3 monthly newsletter and e-group letters. Both their kindness and generosity of time and a good heart and humor is so invaluable.

Thanks to all of those people who put up posters monthly.

Thank you to all those who have taken on course coordinator positions for one day courses, weekend retreats of up to 10 days and assisting with visiting teachers. It has been very much appreciated and admired.

Jen Kyne has given generously of herself on many occasions over the year, looking after students with much care, kindness and guidance. Thanks also to Brian Ashen, Lydia Chee, Sascha and Rhett, Celia Weston, Justin Butler.

Jason Isma kindly lead the Heart Sutra practice day over January and contributes regularly to the heart sutra count for the Green Tara statue. Steve Williams assisted with recording and preparation of the Abhidharma Kosha notes.

On each of the courses we have a Karma yoga task list. This is an integral part of our practice. Karma yoga gives us the conditions for us to mindfully integrate our practice in a grounded way.

Thanks to Dechen Gerrard who has stock our bookshop with relevant books for the courses. Thanks again for all those who make the program possible. I rejoice wholeheartedly and request you to continue to help in any way that you can.

Education is the very heart of FPMT our umbrella organization. Through comprehensive study programs, practice materials, training programs, and scholarships, FPMT Education nourishes the development of compassion, wisdom, kindness and true happiness in individuals of all ages. We thank the FPMT central office for their program support this year and we welcome Lyndy Abram who has generously taken on the position of Regional Education support. We have had 2 telephone meetings over this year.

Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche stayed here in Bendigo with us for 10 weeks in total from Sept through to November 2014. Thanks to Thubten Gyatso and his team who completed the Abbot's and teachers' residence only weeks before his arrival. Rinpoche felt very at home and was able to offer advice, teach, guide, humour and inspire us.

This was a very special addition to an already incredible year.

MONTHLY PROGRAM

- Community Day – Meditation with Venerable Sangha and Dharma Club for Children Pujas and Precepts
- Medicine Buddha Puja: held at 5.30pm on Wednesdays except first week of the month.
- Tara Puja: first Wednesday of the Month at 5.30pm
- Guru Puja 10th and 25th of every Tibetan month

- Precepts

WEEKLY PROGRAM

Sunday

- Buddhist Meditation with Venerable Sangha at 10 am followed by Chai. Variable in numbers 20 to 60 in attendance.

Tuesday

- Meditation at Atisha Gifts. Regular attendance with Venerable Jampa and Maxine Hawker with a back up from Jen Blades, Cameron Young and Ruby Karmay.

Wednesday

- Abhidharma Kosha with Thubten Gyatso

COURSES AND RETREATS

Courses

- Discovering Buddhism – Establishing Bodhicitta Feb 2015
- Discovering Buddhism – Transforming problems May 2015
- Discovering Buddhism Wisdom of Emptiness – June 2015
- Vajrasattva Practice Days x 2
- Heart Sutra Practice day Jan 13
- One Day Meditation retreats x 6
- Casual Discussion x 4
- Practices in a daily Buddhist life x 2
- Introduction to Buddhism 8x Tuesday nights Oct & Nov / Feb & March 15
- Study Group Mind and mental Factors May/June 15
- Question and Answer over 4 weeks Nov 14

Weekend Courses

- Nyung Na June 15
- Peaceful Living Peaceful Dying Aug 14
- Venerable Tony
- Buddhism in a Nutshell Cancelled

Essential Education

- 16 Guidelines for Life with Venerable Dorje.
- Cultivating Emotional Balance 3 weekends in Feb Mar 2015

Retreats

- 1 Month Retreat with Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche.
- Including 2 weeks Shantideva's Bodhicaryavatara A guide to a Bodhisattva's way of life. As well as 2 weeks with the transmission of the Rinjung Gyatso initiations.
- Chenrezig Retreat Dec 14 with Venerable Tony
- Golden Lamp Lam Rim Retreat Kopan Style April 15 Venerable Tony Beaumont.

Six day Heart Sutra retreat Venerable Robina.

Special Celebrations

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's birthday
International Sangha Day
Lama Tsong Kapa Day and Guru Puja
Assisted in the Festival of Light and Vegecareian Days

After 12 Years of operation we are closing the Atisha Meditation room in Lyttleton Terrace as our lease has run out (November 2015). We have been fortunate to have this venue for so long and we have been able to offer regular on going meditation and resources through Atisha Gifts to the Bendigo Community.

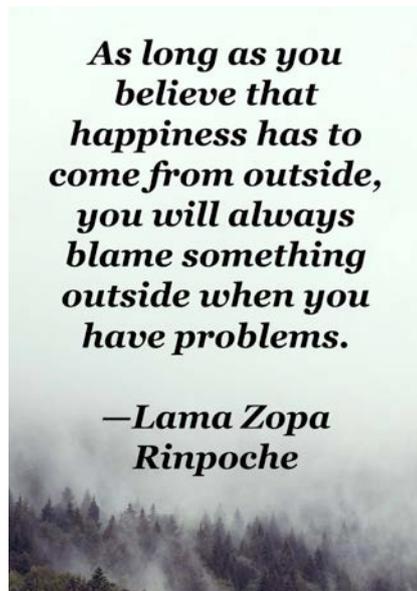
Thank you, thank you, thank you to our Ven Sangha Lhundrup and Jampa for leading meditation, Introduction to Buddhism and Discovering Buddhism and for Liam and the volunteers who have helped in the gift shop. We will be moving to the Anderson Room at St Paul's Anglican Church in November.

My role of SPC finished on the 10th of May 2015 and it gave me great pleasure to welcome Jen Kyne into the position from the 10th of June 2015. I have enjoyed the position over the last 2 years and look forward to taking on new challenges.

Out going Spiritual Program Coordinator
Ruby Karmay

*As long as you
believe that
happiness has to
come from outside,
you will always
blame something
outside when you
have problems.*

*—Lama Zopa
Rinpoche*



GOMPA KEEPER REPORT

First I would like to say that it is a joy to work in the Atisha Centre Gompa. When I arrived in February and first walked in, I was greeted by a feeling of great peace. Congratulations to the designers and builders, and the committee and members of that time.

Working there has allowed me to realize the truth of the idea of work being a privilege.

I'd also like to thank a previous Gompa Manager, Hannalore, for her excellent storage organisation and for the Atisha Gompa Manual, that made it possible for a 'beginner' to take on the job.

In the coming year we are looking at planning and building storage for both the texts and equipment room, and the kitchen, as finances and skilled volunteer time are available. We are also looking at purpose built auxiliary furniture for the thrones. This will include a side and front table for both thrones.

Finally I'd like to thank all the Atisha Centre workers for making me welcome.

Peter Lane
Gompa Keeper

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Our current membership stands at 94. Of these, just over 50% pay by direct deposit. There are 10 Family Memberships, 50 Single Memberships and 34 Single Concession Memberships. This total is down on last year's figure of 105.

During the year FPMT changed from quarterly publications of the Mandala magazine to half yearly publications, the first of which was sent out to our members in June this year. The second issue is scheduled for December 2015.

There has been a slight increase in the number of members opting to use their 2 free nights accommodation, up from 14 in 2014 to 20 in 2015. Several members have chosen to donate their 2 free nights enabling others to attend retreats such as the Vajrasattva retreat.

A survey from the Committee of Management regarding proposed changes to the 10% discount on all items in the Atisha Gift shop was met with a poor response. All members received notification,
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however, only 4 responses were passed onto the Committee. Of these, only one response against the proposal was received. The changes will be implemented after the November 2015 Annual General Meeting.

Kathy Rice
Membership Manager

ATISHA CENTRE LIBRARY

The library has had another good year, with members using it regularly. In particular the library has provided a good resource for students undertaking Discovering Buddhism. The small Gompa provides a conducive environment for reading and browsing the shelves. There are changes yet to come and the plan is to utilize summer to make these changes. Any changes to the library will be announced in the e-News.

Happy reading!
Hannelore

Be optimistic. It feels better.

— Dalai Lama

CHILDREN'S DHARMA CLUB

This year the Dharma Club has been held every Community Day. Sometimes it has been well attended, with up to six children. At other times a few children, two to four, have enjoyed the morning of meditation, songs, stories, art and craft activities.

We have also toured the Great Stupa of Universal Compassion and exhibition centre a couple of times, which the children enjoyed.

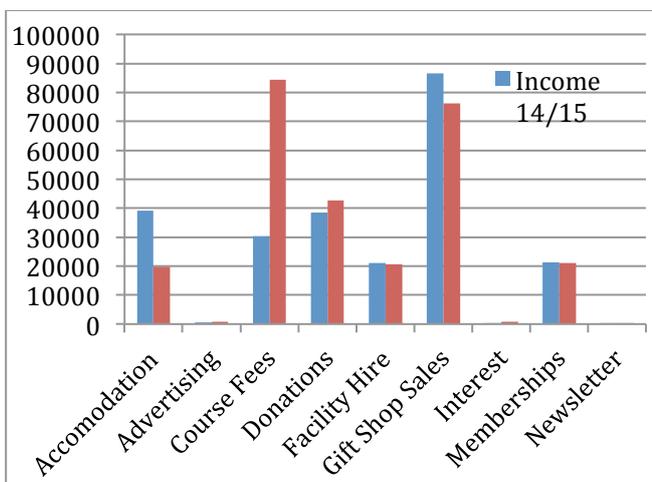
It would be good to advertise the Children's Program a bit more, but also if we do this we need one more person to help. In fact it would be good to have one or two more people on board as soon as possible to lead the program, as I may be travelling again in 2016. Thanks to Ruby for happily leading the group when I have been away.

Thanks also to Colin for organising the instillation of the new large blackboard outside the 'Samten Gompa', where we now announce the Children's Dharma Club dates for any visitors to the centre to see. This is much appreciated and a good way of getting the message out.
Cilla Brady

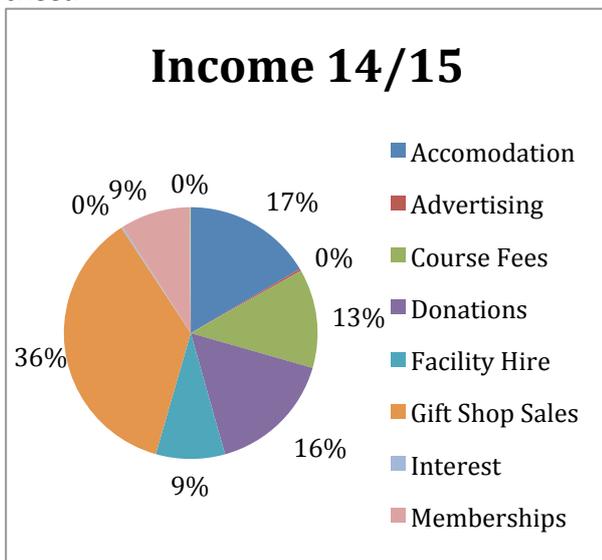
FINANCIAL MANAGERS REPORT

This financial year has seen some progress being made with a number of loans being paid off or reduced. The Gompa Loan has been cleared along with the \$17,500 anon. loan. The Great Stupa loan will be paid off by January 2016.

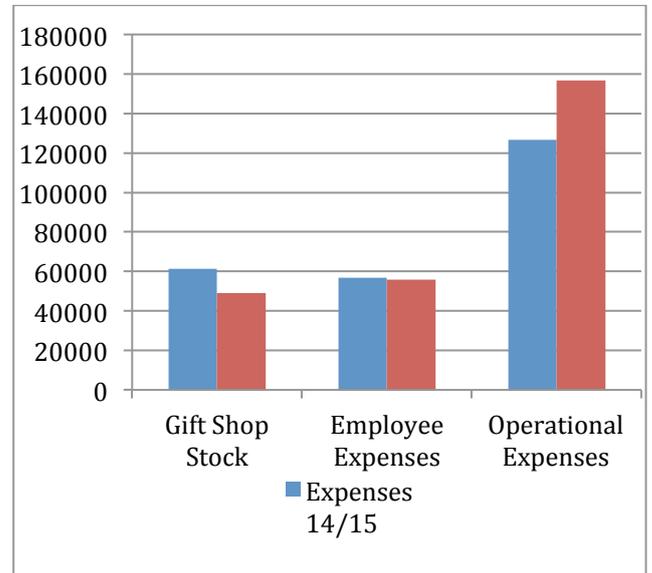
Unfortunately the Profit and Loss does not reflect such a great year with a loss of \$12,586. As shown below, there has been a major decrease in course fees for this financial year due to being unable to run any retreats while Lama Zopa Rinpoche was here which has contributed significantly to this loss. One area that has shown a major increase is the accommodation that has doubled in the last financial year.



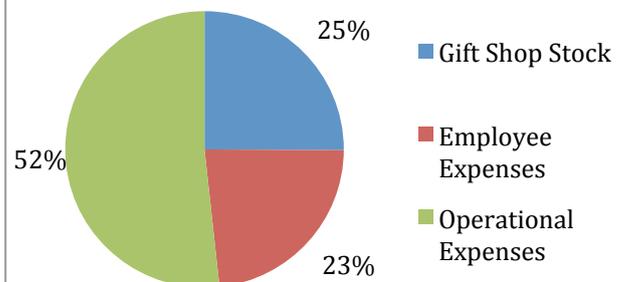
It is great to see that even with the close of the shop in town, gift shop sales have continue to increase and are a vital stream of income for the Atisha Centre. As a result of this there was an increase in stock expenses to cover this increase as well as build up the amount of stock being held in the shop, which is reflected in the balance sheet.



The expenses for the year have decreased by approximately \$30,000 compared to the previous year with catering and repairs being the main contributors to this. There has been a substantial increase in offerings of approximately \$6,000 due to the financial support being offered to the Monastery for the Geshe.



Expenses 14/15



Monthly recurrent payments include:

- Great Stupa Loan \$335.00
- Insurance \$885.32
- FPMTA Levy \$388
- IT assistance \$50
- Photocopy Hire \$258.40
- Shop Rental \$873.47 (lease ends in November)

Offerings are also made on a regular basis including:

- \$50 to TSL Monastery

- Offerings to Sangha for meditations, teachings and retreats
- Geshe and translator since February 2015 of \$1,000 per month
- Long life Pujas for HHDL and Lama Zopa Rinpoche
- Light offerings
- And other times throughout the year as required.
- Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive for distribution of books \$1250.

2016 will hopefully see a further increase in Accommodation income with the listing now on AirBnB, an increase in Facility Hire and a turnaround in course fees.

TREASURERS REPORT

Since the last AGM the financial focus of Atisha Centre has been to create more structure and transparency in the management of the centre's finances. This process began under the Direction of Liam Chambers and has continued with Ruby Karmay as Director.

Brenton Russell has created a 12 month budget based on the previous year's income and expenses. This, coupled with Wendy Buchan's regular monthly finance reporting, has made the financial position of Atisha Centre clearer to the committee. This has assisted with decision making and future planning.

Since regular monthly reporting began, Atisha Centre has been shown to be in profit each month.

Early in 2015 Atisha Centre began requesting our members to sponsor Thubten Shedrup Ling's hosting of Geshe Rabten and his translator Venerable Dorje. Atisha Centre members are making sponsorship offerings which Atisha Centre adds to each month. The monthly contribution is currently set at \$1,000 per month.

The committee recognizes the importance of developing a culture of sponsoring the Dharma in the west. We also see the centre has an opportunity to benefit our members in the longer term by creating opportunities for them to practice generosity, particularly towards the Sangha Jewel.

The centre itself is also committed to creating financial stability, practicing generosity and creating merit as an organisation. Recently the committee agreed that 10% of our larger income stream such as venue hire be set aside for growth and maintenance and 5% be put towards a portfolio of generosity which will include offerings to Dharma related organisations as well as local community charities.

In 2015 Atisha Centre has also made an offering to LYWA of \$1000 and \$250 to ABC free book distribution. These offerings were made from donations made to the LYWA and ABC books in the Gompa.

Donations for the Long life Puja for HHDL and Lama Zopa Rinpoche have been made this year as they have been made each year in the past. Presently we are reviewing our insurance policy and making sure it is appropriate for the centre's needs.

Please see the financial managers report for more details.

Jason Isma

ATISHA GIFTS REPORT

The enhancement of the Dharma Shop has continued this year under the wonderful guidance of Dechen Gerrard, our Stock Manager. The shop now holds a vast and diverse collection of Dharma items and gifts, as well as over 300 different book titles.

In 2015 the shop opening hours were increased to include Saturdays. This has been successful when retreats and courses are being held but not so successful on other days.

These extended hours have also stretched our shop volunteer base.

Therefore, the shop opening hours will be reviewed for the coming 2016 year.

I would like to formally thank Dechen and all the shop volunteers for their joyful effort and commitment to making the shop such a vibrant and welcoming experience for Dharma students and visitors alike.

Jennifer Kyne – Shop Manager

PUBLICITY

Atisha Centre website continues to be the public electronic face of the Centre, providing

up to date information about programs and providing the vehicle for online bookings and membership renewal. The quarterly Newsletter adds a 'hard copy' support and convenience for members. For the internet savvy, Facebook keeps us informed and reminded of what is happening.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Most of the goals and objectives of the previous strategic plan have been achieved during its five year life. A workshop was held in May 2015, facilitated by Marilyn Chambers, to gather input from members for the new strategic plan, which was then handed over to the new committee to assemble, refine and develop new strategies and prioritise as a blue print for future growth and development of the centre.

PROPERTY REPORT

Winter at Atisha Centre was cloudy and there was enough rainfall to fill the workshop dam by the beginning of Spring. The access to the dam on Mrs Greens land has seen the power turned off at their pump when they are not using the water which means the flow into our network becomes a trickle. We are now using the workshop dam for watering which will see us through to the year's end. After that we will need to pump water from the dam on the Vo's land to replenish our dam. I will be ordering 350 metres of 1 and ¼ inch polypipe.

Tim has been working hard at maintaining the gardens around the courtyard and car park areas. Tim's passion brings life to the gardens. Ian has continued to work on the drainage of the storm water, placing a small bridge on the way up to the Thubten Shedrup Ling Monastery. We are just about to enter the summer and appreciate all of the watering system now in place. Dietmar will be attending to the watering systems over November whilst Steve attends the Kopan course. Rheese has been fixing some broken drains and re-mortaring areas, raking paths and generally keeping the Centre tidy. An 8 step water feature has been installed by Ian down near the garden Buddha. Molly has picked up some conch shells from Nepal to sit at the top of the feature to resemble the spread of the holy dharma. Celia has continue to tend the garden Buddha

area and Karen has placed some of the precious mantras strategically around the ground. Brian Gleeson is frequently seen around the gardens circumambulating the Gompa and other holy objects. New signage continues to go up around the grounds with a new sign for the Library and Me Yo Samten Ling Gompa and recently a sign to be mindful of the snakes. Over the Winter Steve continued to remove stumps from the garden area and the camping site. These stumps can be very hazardous at night. By removing the stumps the centre has a more park like feel to it. We now have additional caravan to house exchange volunteers. Peter Lane has been occupying the caravan, this is allowing a private space for longer term residents. Norma and Carmel have been essential in the up keep of the accommodation and utilities block. Thank you to Brian Gleeson for Donating a caravan for long term exchange volunteers. Property Manager Steve Williams

OBITUARIES

Len Derby, a long time member of Atisha centre passed away on the Friday 4th July 2014. Len will be remembered by for his determination in the face of enormous physical hardships and his contribution to the centre over many years. His steadfast belief in the dharma, were hallmarks of his life.





MEMBER OF THE FOUNDATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE MAHAYANA TRADITION

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Allies Hotel (Allies Rd) turn right into Sandhurst Town road