

# Atisha Centre

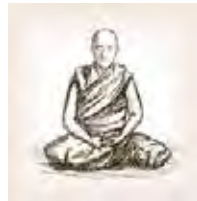


ANNUAL REVIEW **2017**

**‘A Land for Completing the Human Potential’**

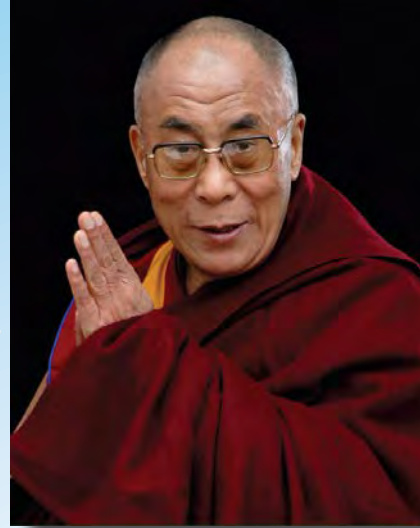
*Lama Zopa Rinpoche*

“To enter the spiritual path, you must begin to understand your own mental attitude and how your mind perceives things. If you’re all caught up in attachment to tiny atoms, your limited craving mind will make it impossible for you to enjoy life’s pleasures. External energy is so incredibly limited that if you allow yourself to be bound by it, your mind itself will become just as limited. When your mind is narrow, small things easily agitate it. Make your mind an ocean.”



*Lama Thubten Yeshe*





Our Spiritual Leader  
His Holiness Dalai Lama



Our Spiritual Director  
Kyabje Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche



Our Inspiration and Founder  
Lama Thubten Yeshe Rinpoche



Our Resident Teacher  
Venerable 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 Tsong Khapa.



# A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

*Dear Friends,*

It is a great joy working for Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche and the FPMT and our Atisha community. Gratitude to each one of our sangha members, Centre members, Board members, staff, volunteers and friends who work so hard for the Dharma.

Geshe Rabten and Venerable Dorje have now been with us for 18 months. Geshela's presence is stable and admirable, with regular teachings of incredible quality, guiding us and encouraging us to make the commitment to practise well, so that we can beneficially change our minds. He presents the bodhisattvas' path as a living treasure that is accessible to each and every one of us.

Over the last two years we have moved from having one resident to six and it is very evident that there is more of a core group that is central in the running of the Centre. This year, a team management group have been meeting monthly to prepare for the month ahead. I am very appreciative of the leadership qualities and confidence developing within this group.

A draft summary of a strategic plan has been developed over this year that will provide a blueprint for the period 2017 to 2025. This document has been developed from various previous strategic plans; Marilyn and Liam Chambers, Brenton Russel and more recently Dawn Cooper have assisted in bringing the plan together. We still have a long way to go with the actions and implementation of the plan including the master plan that will come out of our objectives. These include developing operational charts, guiding us in how we can grow in a stable, beneficial way.

Our challenges this year have included dealing with complaints

and grievances. Peter Stickles from FPMTA has been a guide in how we can mature in our governance. Another area is addressing our cash flow with an increasing demand on how to staff the Centre in a stable but flexible way to maintain facilities, and provide the teachings without charge.

Our partnership with Thubten Shedrup Ling Monastery and the Great Stupa continues to grow as we prepare for Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche returning to the Centres for six weeks, in 2018. We are implementing an integrated communications network between us.

Thank you to our staff, residents and volunteers who steadily work hard, cooking, cleaning, gardening, building and attending meetings. Through their kindness, we can continue to develop the space into a peaceful and beautiful environment where people can practise the spiritual path, walk in the gardens and be fed delicious nourishing food.

Thank you to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Geshe Rabten for your constant support and inspiration.

Big Love,

**Ruby Karmay**  
Centre Director



# A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

I have been a member of the Atisha Centre over the past 17 years, and it is with great pleasure that I write to you as the new Secretary. I have been on the Board for a few months and feel very privileged and excited to have the opportunity to be involved with the Centre at this level, as it continues to grow and expand.

On behalf of the Board, I would firstly like to say a very big thank you and farewell to Brenton Russell (Chairperson), Carla Lewinsmith (Secretary), and Cameron Young (Treasurer); and to welcome Peter Lane (Chairperson), and Tom Castles (Treasurer). Also, for the continued



support of ordinary members Diane Gee and Venerable Tsapel.

The Board is meeting on a monthly basis to keep abreast with all that needs attending to.

We have had the opportunity to work with Dawn Cooper who has been providing governance support; contributing to our ongoing strategic planning; and helping identify ways in which to work more efficiently as the Centre expands. Thank you to Dawn, for her expertise and guidance.

There has also been regular monthly management meetings with

the various working groups, including: accommodation, catering, shop, grounds / maintenance, and gompa duties. These working groups reflect the growing nature of the Centre, indicating an increase in the number of people required to help the Centre flourish. With heartfelt thanks to the support of the many regular volunteers that take on these duties.

I would also like to celebrate and congratulate all who have been involved in the completion of the Comprehensive Development Plan, what a wonderful effort! This plan sets out a clear vision for the Centre into the future (refer to Director's Report for more details).

We are very excited about the Heart of Wisdom Retreat with Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche to be held on site at the end of March next year. It provides a wonderful opportunity to work collaboratively with The Great Stupa, and Thubten Shedrup Ling Monastery. As you can imagine we are all very busy and focused on all that is required to make such an auspicious event run smoothly.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to Ruby (Director) and Andy (SPC) for their generous and tireless dedication to the running of the Centre - outstanding effort!

Warmest Regards,

**Nic Aunger**  
**Board Secretary**

# SPIRITUAL PROGRAMME



*"One must practise with the bodhisattva attitude every day. People can't see your mind, what people see is a manifestation of your attitude in your actions of body and speech. Pay attention to your attitude all the time, guard it as if you are the police, or like a maid cares for a child, like a bodyguard, or like you are the guru and your mind is your disciple."*

*Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche*

*"Judge your success by what you had to give up in order to get it."*

*"The seed for nirvana exists in all of us  
The time has come to think more wisely, hasn't it?"*

*His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama*

Many thanks again for the continual spiritual support and imparting of wisdom and knowledge from Venerable Geshe Rabten and the monks of Thubten Shedrup Ling Monastery. Geshela's teachings and those of the monks and their meditations constitute the major part of our Spiritual Programme, fulfilling the main purpose of the Centre. Many individual thanks to Venerables - Thubten Gyatso, Jampa Choephel, Thubten Lhundrup and Losang Yeshe for led-meditations, discussion groups, teachings and advice and for all the other demands we make on them. Also, many thanks to our superlative translator Lobsang Dorje without whose skill and very comprehensible translations, none of us would understand Geshela's teachings. Our teacher, Venerable Geshe Thubten Rabten, who is a *lharampa geshe* (highest geshe qualification) from Sera-je Monastery, has not only given several amazing teachings, covering important Tibetan Buddhist texts, he has also made himself available to many



students who requested personal advice. Geshela has very generously always agreed to see everybody who requested it, straightaway.

This year, Geshela has continued his regular Wednesday night teachings, the commentary on "Words of My Perfect Teacher", by Patrul Rinpoche. This very in-depth text on the *Lam Rim* has been well-attended. Geshela presents this traditional series of meditations on the Graduated Path in an easy-to-understand

way and gives experiential and practical advice on how to integrate the teachings into our lives, right now.

“Study Group” has been running regularly, approximately every other weekend with a session on Friday nights and all-day teachings, meditations and discussions on the Saturday, with food and accommodation available. There is a core group of students developing, with new people joining at any point. Last year Geshela completed the teachings on “Buddhist Tenets”. Then he taught over a period of eight months on Gyalse Tokme Zangpo’s text, “The 37 Practices of Bodhisattvas”. Geshela’s teaching of this whole text was completed in July, after which he began to teach the current Study Group topic, Nagarjuna’s “Letter to a Friend”, which is on-going.

In June, at the request of Tara Institute in Melbourne, we organised a three week Yamantaka retreat, which was held in the monastery gomba. Venerable Jampa Choephel led the retreat, the whole of which was attended by 25 people (none of whom dopped out at any point!) This was a powerful and exceptional retreat. Everyone had great praise for the leadership (Jampa), the location (the mandala of the monastery) and the accommodation and fantastic food provided by Katie Ward. I think this will have marked the start of future tantric retreats to come.

While the Yamantaka retreat was taking place Geshe Rabten continued to teach in the Atisha gomba and gave two Saturday course-style teachings called “Truths”, in which he covered the “Two Truths” and “the Four Noble Truths”. This 2-Saturday event was very popular and so has begun a new once-a-month programme event: “Afternoons with Genla”.

Additionally, Geshe Rabten continues to teach on a general subject every Community Day, when visitors get an opportunity to meet and share lunch. At this time also there is Dharma Club for children hosted by Cilla Bradley. Once again, many thanks to Cilla for engaging the children and also for her weekly coordination of the meditations hosted in Bendigo at the Anderson Room adjoining the Anglican cathedral (“Tuesday Night Meditations”). This year, these Tuesday meditations have mainly been led by Venerable Jampa, supplemented by Venerable Yeshe and Venerable Lhundrub. Many thanks to these people.



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His Holiness Dalai Lama’s birthday this year was a very enjoyable day. After prayers and speeches and sticky rice and offerings in the gomba, Geshe Rabten and the sangha gave animal blessings outside in the sunshine. Many animals, mainly dogs and (liberated) worms, received blessings. This was followed by a community day lunch. All the merits of the day were dedicated to His Holiness’ long life.



*His Holiness Dalai Lama’s birthday and International Sangha Day.*

We have restarted the “Discovering Buddhism” modules with Venerable Lhundrup. The first module “Mind and Its Potential” was very successful and everyone enjoyed and benefitted from it.

The rest of the Programme continues as normal. The monks regularly take turns to lead the morning meditations on a Sunday (“Sunday Meditation”). This consistently attracts a large group of able meditators, often including people new to the Centre.

Medicine Buddha pujas, Guru pujas and Tara pujas are held regularly in our main gompa and Geshe Rabten often attends. Thanks to our Director Ruby for having organised these events.

The “One Day Meditation” courses, “Introduction to Buddhism” and “Buddhist Practice Days” held over a whole day on a Saturday have each been well-attended. These have been led either by Venerable Jampa or Venerable Tsapel and the feedback from all of these retreats has been extremely favourable. Thank you to them; we hope they will continue with these.

Other Programme events have included Dharma movie nights (“Soup and Movie Night”) which provide an opportunity for a social Dharma event and an extra activity for people attending Saturday events, who have booked to stay in the accommodation. Also, this year we added another event, “Relaxation Meditation” on Friday mornings, led by Carol Donne. These have been attracting regular attendees.



The bookshop-cum-giftshop, which falls under the portfolio of the Spiritual Programme, is blooming under its new management. Thank you to all the hard work from our new Shop Manager, Tim Allen, and to all his volunteers who help serve in the shop.



Thanks once again to our Gompa Manager, Peter Lane, for all his setups and general care of the gompa and to his audio recording abilities.

This year, the “Publications Project” has developed substantially. All Geshe Rabten’s teachings are being transcribed and edited. For example, all of the Study Group teachings of “Tenets” and “The 37 Practices of Bodhisattvas” have now been completely transcribed and many of them have been edited. We are always looking for more volunteers to be involved with this project. Additionally, ALL the teachings given by Geshela are available online as audio files, together with supporting handouts etc.

Finally, many thanks to everyone who has helped with the Programme and to Michael Chambers for his continued IT troubleshooting, and special thanks also to Helen Sleswick for her coordination and catering of Programme events.

Please rejoice in all the good work done by everybody mentioned above, rejoice in the good work of anyone whose name I forgot to mention and forgive me for having forgotten.

Much love,

**Andy Melnic**  
Spiritual Programme Coordinator

## *TUESDAY MEDITATION IN BENDIGO*

This meditation evening has been going so well for the past 12 months with between 15 and 30 people attending, even over cold, rainy evenings. The hour between 5:45pm and 6.45pm seems to work well for a lot of people. The format is simple – an hour of meditation.

Participants appreciate the regularity; the only break is over the January period each year. The first Tuesday Meditation of the year begins in February.

While Venerable Jampa was away last year, Venerable Lundrup led the meditations; occasionally Venerable Yeshe and myself also led the evening.

While I was away this year, Ben Dyett, with help from Jude, stepped in to manage the opening, setting up chairs and cushions, welcoming participants, reading announcements, setting out flyers, packing up and closing. Since my return, he has continued to manage the evenings, and does a great job in this role.

Last winter I alerted the dean of the church to issues of mildew in the Anderson Room, and that caused them to check, find, and clear a blocked drain at the roof level which was making one entire wall damp. We changed to the other room for the rest of the year while the mildew problem slowly resolved, and this year returned to the Anderson Room.

I have also let them know about other issues, for instance an electrical short in a light switch, which they are glad to hear about so they can keep the building safe and in good order. They appreciate our feedback in this way and it is a comfortable, friendly and open communication we have together.

Many thanks to everyone who makes donations on Tuesday evenings; we deliver those donations to the Centre usually on Sunday mornings.

**Cilla Brady**

**TUESDAY NIGHT MEDITATIONS COORDINATOR**

## *CHILDREN'S DHARMA CLUB*

This programme has had sporadic numbers of participating children over the last 12 months. At times we have had 8 children, and on other days none! The average has been about three children. We have had some lovely times together with singing, meditations, stories, discussions, art projects and trips to the monastery, the Great Stupa, and Exhibition Centre.

All the parents have been made aware to check the website for the Community Day date. I have expressed my need to have someone else take over this group, but it has not happened yet.

While I was away, Penny, mother of Leigh, and her friend Kim, both from Charleton filled in for me. To facilitate this group one needs to have a current "Working With Children" certificate. I think we have been asking parents to bring snacks, donations, etc. I am not sure what we need to do for this to be a more dynamic programme. Having others involved would help. It is also tricky as we can have a great range of ages, so the children can be on completely different levels of understanding.

**Cilla Brady**

**DHARMA CLUB COORDINATOR**



## ATISHA BOOK AND GIFT SHOP

It was an honour and a blessing for me to assume the role of Atisha Shop Manager in early May 2017. Building on the strong foundations built by previous practitioners, we can all rejoice in the considerable achievements of the last 5 months, highlights of which include:

- the extension of the shop opening hours to 6 hours per day and 6 days a week (5 hours on Sunday);
- the active participation of a community of volunteers and assistants;
- a successful Festival of Light on 17 May, traditionally our busiest day of the year;
- improvements in inventory management, allowing stock levels to be more consistently and efficiently tracked and reported;
- a reorganisation and tidy up, especially in the use of storage space and the rear office;
- a strengthening of security, with the installation of money and key safes;
- increased communication and cooperation with the Great Stupa, its Shop and community.

There are also plans for further developing the Shop in the following areas:

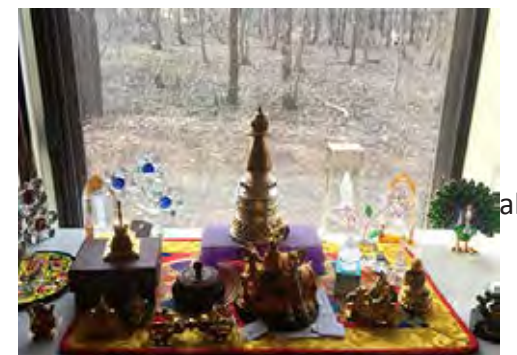
installing a computerised Point-of-Sale system, which will improve efficiency of customer service, stock control, ordering and reporting;

- opening an online store;
- taking a stall to local markets;
- opening a coffee shop serving drinks and refreshments;
- enhancing marketing, using traditional and online media.

I would like to thank the following Shop volunteers and assistants for their service and dedication (alphabetical): Brian Ashen, Vanessa Conroy, Margaret Davey, Ken Fox, Linley Kerlin, Shannen Peers, Cindy Puddick, Robyn Ralton, Lynne Saunders, Fiona Silver and Pauline Walden. My apologies in advance if I have forgotten anyone. In addition, I would like to thank Andy Melnic and Dechen Gerrard for their generous and expert advice, as well as Ruby Karmay and the rest of the Atisha Centre staff for their support and friendship. Finally, I would like to thank the support and example of the sangha at Thubten Shedrup Ling Monastery, including our wonderful resident teacher Geshe Rabten.

The core purpose of the Atisha Shop is financially to support the activities of the Centre in teaching and spreading the Dharma. For the year ending July 2017, the total income was \$35,171. The goal of the coming year is further to improve the profitability of the Shop. The Shop also plays a deeper role in the life of the Atisha community. Firstly, its materials and resources directly support the education and spiritual growth of its customers. Secondly, it plays an important role in welcoming and supporting visitors and new-comers to the Centre. Finally, and most importantly, the Atisha Shop is committed to service, based on the Buddha's message of love and compassion for sentient beings.

Tim Allen  
SHOP MANAGER



## GOMPA KEEPER'S REPORT

This year has seen the most teachings and events since I arrived in 2014. We now have regular teachings Wednesdays, Thursdays, two Fridays and four Saturdays a month, as well as Sunday and Tuesday meditation every week. We all can rejoice in a great expansion of opportunities for people to train their minds through Dharma.

We have continued with the improved audio system including the headset for Dorje translating for Geshe la, and recording all of Geshe Rabtens' teachings.

Thanks to all who have helped support this expanded programme over the year:

To Brian, Cameron, Celia, Kathy, Marcus, Rheese and all the others who have made precious water bowl offerings on our altars to the buddhas, bodhisattvas, yidams and deities, the Dalai Lama, Lama Zopa Rinpoche and other gurus.

To all of you who assisted with puja and teaching setups and audio operation, including Andy, Cilla, Jeremy, Lloyd, Linley, Marcus, Mick, Steve, Tim, Rheese and Ruby.

Also thank you to all who helped with events in general, including Brian and Brian, Caleb, Carla, Carole, Charlie, Cilla, Connor, Helen, Jake, Jenny, Ken, Linley, Lisa, Maggie, Nic, Rhonda, Kathy, Sally, Samantha and Wendy.

Thanks to Kathy and Ruby for the extra flowers, and Christine for assisting with flowers and altar cleaning.

Special thanks to Cameron for his work supporting Wednesday teachings and Sunday meditation, prior to gaining work in Melbourne, and to Lloyd for filling in on audio while I was on retreat.

I am really sorry if I have forgotten anyone, but believe me we do appreciate everyone.

Thanks to all the students for attending and giving us workers the opportunity to help spread the Buddhadharma!

Big Love

Peter Lane

GOMPA KEEPER



## *L*IBRARY

I have started working on the Library since the beginning of September and am now updating the digital catalogues received from Hannalore.

I will integrate the new resources into the system as soon as possible, and will commit to running the library for the next 12 months.

*Cilla Brady*



## *T*SATSA-MAKING

Thanks once again for all the many *tsatsas* made by Keith Garrett, the sales of which benefit the Centre. We rejoice in your merit.



# ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation facilities at Atisha Centre have been used throughout the year for retreats, study groups, individual personal retreats and also by people wanting to stay at a beautiful, peaceful place.

The accommodation facilities have passed council inspection with the hard work and valued contribution of Norma and others. I would also like to extend my thanks to Carmel who was helping Norma till earlier this year and also a very special thanks to Rhonda who has been helping Norma of late.

Throughout my time looking after the accommodation the main issue in my view holding back occupancy rate has been the need for accommodation facilities to be available exclusively for retreats. I am hopeful that this will change and that general accommodation will be available year round.

We have recently had a 2 for 1 accommodation offer that was taken up by many. If you have not thought about staying at Atisha Centre please consider staying, or if you have friends and relatives looking for accommodation please let them know about our accommodation facilities.

We are embarking on Facebook promotion for the accommodation facilities and hope to gain significant traction with targeted advertising.

It has been a delight having the opportunity to be of service at Atisha Centre and I hope with the mind of joyful perseverance that I can continue to make a valued contribution.

*Marcus Travaglia*  
ACCOMMODATION COORDINATOR

# PROPERTY REPORT

This year the summer was a relatively mild one which meant the gardens and bush environment have had two years of good growing conditions and are all looking very healthy. The autumn began with some heavy downpours which meant we had full dams early which was quite a blessing as the winter rains were inadequate to have filled the dams. Thus going into the hot dry period our dams are ready for the watering required to keep the gardens alive.

Caterpillars are back with a vengeance busily consuming the lush growth on the ironbark trees. This means a lot of active cleaning of the water-collecting rooves to prevent contamination of the water from their faeces. Stump removal throughout the Centre has been completed for the year.

Repair and renovation of the accommodation verandah deck and railings has been ongoing this year with Bill sanding, gap filling, replacing rotten timber and painting. It is very slow and tedious work and Bill has been doing a fantastic job. The outside toilet block has been tidied up with



holes in the walls filled and a fresh coat of paint thanks to volunteers Bill and Gareth. Work has continued through the year to improve the drains and gutters throughout the centre and along the driveway to reduce the damage from the annual flash floods. Justin has been a great help with this work as he works

hard and with great concentration. Ian is working on completing a roof over a caravan and it looks great and has been at almost no cost as the materials used were collected from a shed that the property maintenance team demolished on the Vo property next door. Mr Vo has been very generous to the Centre – allowing us to use the dam on his land for water, letting us remove the old shed – and we continue to look after and improve his land, cleaning up the old fencing for him etc.

*above: Neighbourhood choughs' nest*

Gareth has painted several animal garden statues which now reside throughout the gardens. His next project will be to paint the Chinese lion statues that are at the Gompa entrance. He will also paint the reclining Buddha statue when the weather is dry and warm. We are awaiting a carpenter to build a roof over the reclining Buddha for protection.

The original buildings (kitchen, library, unit and toilet block) are showing their age (35 years approx.) and needing more attention. The next task is to treat the increasing rust on their rooves and paint them with a heat repelling paint which will extend their life and reduce the heat transmitted to the inside as these buildings have no insulation in the roof spaces. Timber is also needing to be replaced on the eaves and the support posts.

Over the past year the water tank fund has been accumulating funds from donations, as well as money from the sale of firewood and the collection of aluminium cans, pots and any other scrap aluminium. So far we have purchased one 32000 litre water tank (\$3600) and we are still working towards the funds needed for the second tank which will be about a 20000 litre tank. Please collect cans and any other aluminium scrap (pots, screen doors, window frames) and bring them to the centre as once the tanks are purchased the money raised will go towards the Geshe / Translator fund and the Kadampa Stupa project. Firewood collected over the previous year was sold during the winter and wood collected this last winter has been cut ready for sale for the next winter.

Steve Williams  
PROPERTY MANAGER



# KITCHEN, DINING-ROOM AND COURTYARD

The past year has brought extra business and activity in the kitchen as the Centre continues to grow. The nurturing food service we provide to our Dharma students and the wider community is one in which we can rejoice.

Our gratitude is extended to Sandra who is been a constant support, cooking for our teaching days and retreats. This year we welcomed on board Helen G and Katie who bring an abundance of experienced cooking in Dharma centres. Both have brought their unique delicacies and nutritious cooking to our retreats and we look forward to their return.

A huge thank you to our volunteers who present each month to help with our Community Days and special events. Thank you to Norma, our regular weekly volunteer who assists me in cleaning and maintaining our kitchen and dining area to a standard that we are proud to present to all who enter. You are all truly valued and appreciated for the contribution you make to Atisha Centre.

Helen Sleswick

KITCHEN MANAGER



# MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Our current membership stands at 89. There were 93 members this time last year. We currently have 13 Family Memberships, 59 Single Memberships, up from 55 last year, and 17 Single Concession Memberships, down from 28 last year. Over 50% of our members have chosen to pay on a monthly basis.

In addition to our fee paying members we have two Lifelong Members and two Honorary Members.

There have been changes to the benefits that flow onto our members over the past year, for example the 10% discount in our shop is once again given to members. The Mandala Magazine is sent to members twice a year and there are discounts on Programme events which carry a charge.

## THANK YOU TO:

- Thubten Shedrup Ling Monastery;
- The Great Stupa of Universal Compassion;
- Bendigo City Council;
- Bendigo Bank;
- Bob Waterhouse;
- Star Cinema, Ron;
- The florist shop in Eaglehawk;
- AASB: Accounting and Auditing Solutions Bendigo;
- Fitzpatrick's Hardware;
- Bunnings, Eaglehawk;
- Food Share Bendigo;
- Officeworks - Bendigo;
- Bolton's Office National;
- Cambells Cash and Carry;
- Roger King's IGA Eaglehawk;
- Micheal Chambers Deep Tread Internet;
- Michael and Thi Kodama (Plants);
- UFS Pharmacy.



Kathy Rice  
MEMBERSHIP MANAGER



# KADAMPA STUPA PROJECT

Lama Zopa Rinpoche suggested that Atisha Centre build a Kadampa Stupa, and in 2014 chose an auspicious site on the path to the Monastery to the West of the Atisha Gumpa.

Thanks to the generous financial support of individual donors, a grant from FPMT International of USD\$4,000, and the wonderful fundraising efforts of Brian Ashen, we began building earlier this year.

After Gary Foulkes gave us valuable design and costing assistance,



Geshe Rabten blessed the land, appeased the local landlords and spirits, and broke the ground. Liam Chambers led a team to build foundations.

Ricciardo Ferrari came down from Chenrezig to begin the stupa proper, and we have half built the main structure. The next stage, scheduled for November, is to complete the rendering with a smooth finish, and put steps inside to enable filling.

In the meantime, the gathering of filling materials has begun! Many things go inside a stupa, such as

mantras, statues and tsa tsa's, the eight auspicious symbols, grains, medicines, perfumes, and stones, water, soil and wood from holy places.

Once the fillings have been gathered, and substantial funds raised,

we will fill the base and cap it, and begin the completion of the main structure and decoration.

We will shortly be contacting members and students offering the chance to contribute financially, in the building process, or to the fillings for the stupa.

This is a great project, offering many benefits. It will not be quick to build, as we are making this structure to last a very long time. Please get involved!



Peter Lane  
KADAMPA STUPA  
PROJECT COORDINATOR



*Artist's impression*

# MACHIG LABDRON NUNS' COMMUNITY REPORT

I was appointed as manager of Machig Labdron Nuns' Community in February on the "Day of Miracles", and have joined Atisha Centre Board of Directors in that role. My main job at present is managing the building project to accommodate 11 resident and visiting nuns.

The site for the building is on the south side of the Monastery's "yellow brick road" and on the high side of the access road to the Great Stupa that runs north-south between the Monastery and Atisha Centre. It is a pleasant, treed site with a gentle slope to the east and with a view of the Great Stupa to the north-east. The directors of the Great Stupa, Shedrub Ling Monastery and Atisha Centre have approved the site and have expressed their support for the project.

Sketch plans have been developed in consultation with interested nuns who currently live at FPMT centres in Australia and overseas, Atisha center personnel, and others. These plans are ready for submission to Council. Facilities and bedrooms will be arranged around a central courtyard. We are consulting with David Robb and Peter Weiss to prepare plans to be included in the next five year Master Plan for the whole site.

An operational and investment account has been opened with the Bendigo Bank to manage contributions and expenditure when things get underway. Some seed capital existed prior to my appointment and additional contributions are welcome and building.

Tenzin Tsapel

MACHIG LABDRON NUNS' COMMUNITY



# FINANCES 2017

## TREASURER'S REPORT

I am pleased to report that Atisha Centre is in a stable financial position as at 30 June 2017. Our Finance Manager, Wendy Buchan, has provided in her report some good insight into the significant income and expense items relating to Atisha operating activities. I will cover a few key financial statistics as at 30 June 2017:

- Cash in the bank (all accounts) balance \$126,000 vs \$47,000 in the previous year. Whilst this is a pleasing improvement, approximately \$100,000 of the balance is held for 'committed' purposes, in particular donations for the planned nunnery, and is not therefore available for day-to-day spending.
- Liabilities (what Atisha owes others) total \$15,000. This is a modest amount, most of which relates to accrued expenses (services and bills we have received but for which we haven't yet paid).
- Net Assets (mainly buildings) total \$273,000 versus \$216,000 in the previous year.
- The centre has essentially operated on a breakeven basis. As Wendy noted, the accounting 'profit' of \$57,000 was primarily the result of a large donation to the nunnery.

The Board closely reviews the financial results for the centre each month and has been very supportive of recent initiatives to improve our understanding of income and spending, and physical controls over cash. In particular:

- New safes, including a 'drop safe' (money can be securely 'dropped' into a slot in the safe without the need for the safe to be unlocked),

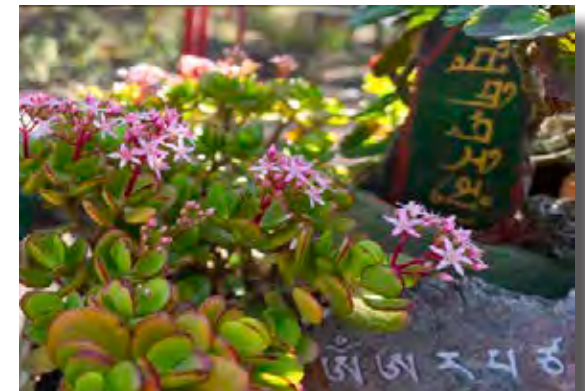
have been installed. Together with improved cash handling procedures, these have greatly enhanced control over cash in Atisha. The Board is most concerned to be able to demonstrate to you, the members, and the broader community that any donations and other funds received are carefully stewarded.

- Financial reporting has been improved to provide much greater insight into our cash position and projecting that position ahead. Further improvements are also planned.
- Several Board members are looking into opportunities to improve the reliability of our income from more business focussed areas such as accommodation rentals.
- For the coming year, the Heart of Wisdom(HoW) retreat in 2018 will be a substantial undertaking for Atisha, in conjunction with the Great Stupa and Shedrup Ling monastery. A detailed budget for this retreat has already been agreed with the HoW committee.

I am confident that over the coming year, Atisha Centre's financial position will continue to improve, and with this, the ability to help the dharma flourish in our community will also grow.

Regards,

Tom Castles ~ TREASURER

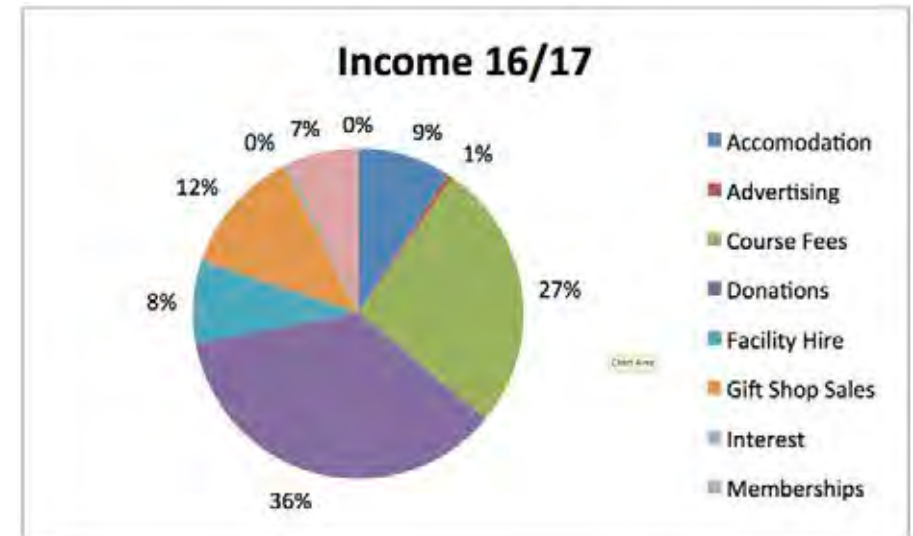
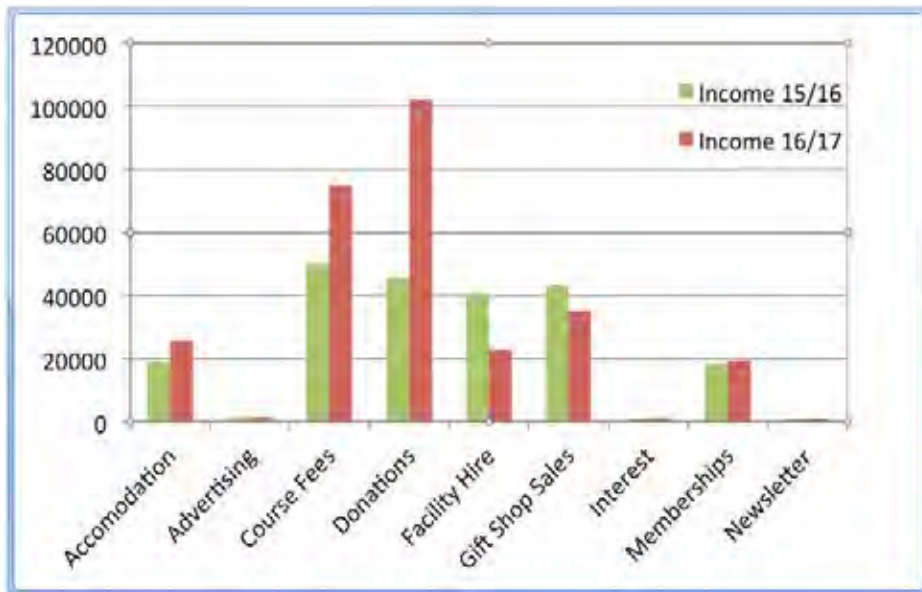


## FINANCIAL MANAGER'S REPORT

The 2016/17 financial year has seen the Atisha Centre report an overall profit of \$57,070. This profit is a result of a large contribution to the Nunnery earlier in the year of \$58,000

We have continued to see an increase in Course income this year. The majority of this increase relates to the Yamantaka course held in June. This year there was a decrease in the facility fees due as we had a couple of yoga groups cancel.

Accommodation income has shown an increase this year of nearly \$7,000. Gift Shop income has decreased by approximately \$8,000 possibly due to the number of staff changes and instability earlier in the year.



The expenses for the year have increased by approximately \$40,000 compared to the previous year. Most of this increase is in operational expenses. An increase in catering, course expenses and program expenses account for the majority of this increase which is expected when income for courses have also increased.



## *PRACTISING GENEROSITY AS A CENTRE: 2016 - 2017*

A percentage of the income from our yoga courses and larger donations have been redirected back into our community this year.

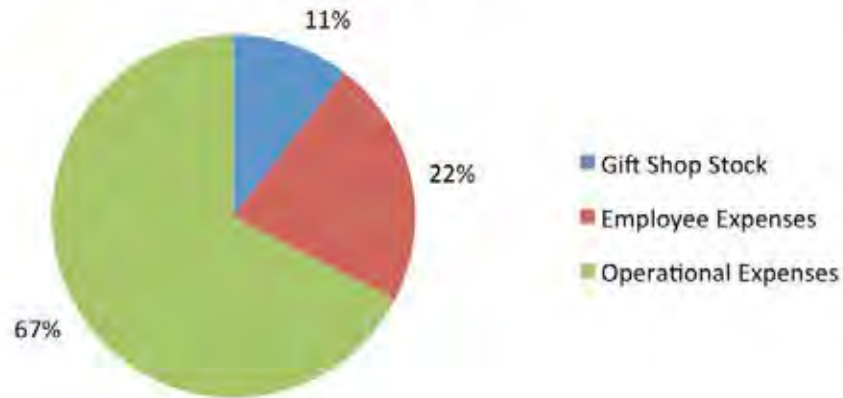
### ***Offering have been made to:***

- Thubten Shedrup Ling Monastery;
- Food Share Bendigo;
- Lama Zopa Rinpoche Food Fund - Sera Monastery;
- International Mahayana Sangha Inc;
- Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive;
- World Society for Protection of Animals (WSPA);
- Drati Khantsum;
- Tenzin Rigsel - Day of Miracles;
- "Work for a Day" - Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

Wendy Buchan  
FINANCIAL MANAGER



### **Expenses 16/17**



Monthly recurrent payments include:

- Insurance \$986
- FPMTA Levy \$388
- IT assistance \$50
- Photocopy Hire \$208

Offerings are also made on a regular basis including:

- \$50 to TSL Monastery
- Offerings to Sangha for meditations, teachings and retreats
- Geshe and translator offerings (\$1100/fnt) and insurance expenses (\$554/mth)
- Long life Pujas for HHDL and Lama Zopa Rinpoche
- Light offerings
- And other times throughout the year as required.

# ATISHA CENTRE STAFF

## BOARD

CENTRE DIRECTOR: Ruby Karmay

SPIRITUAL PROGRAMME COORDINATOR: Andy Melnic

CHAIR PERSON: Peter Lane

TREASURER: Tom Castles

SECRETARY: Nic Aunger

BOARD MEMBER: Diane Gee

MACHIG LABDRON NUNNERY: Venerable Tsapel

## FINANCE and ADMINISTRATION

OFFICE MANAGER: Sally Mason

FINANCE MANAGER: Wendy Buchan

MEMBERSHIP: Kathy Rice

## SPIRITUAL PROGRAMME

SPC: Andy Melnic

GOMPA MANAGER: Peter Lane

SHOP MANAGER: Tim Allen

LIBRARY: Cilla Brady

TUESDAY NIGHT MEDITATION COORDINATOR: Cilla Brady

DISCOVERING BUDDHISM COORDINATOR: Carol Donne

RELAXATION MEDITATION COORDINATOR: Carol Donne

## DINING AND CATERING

KITCHEN MANAGER: Helen Sleswick



## PUBLICITY

WEBSITE: Andy Melnic

NEWSLETTER: Andy Melnic

FACEBOOK - Ingrid Sorum

## GROUNDS

PROPERTY MANAGER: Steve Williams

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Michael Chambers

## VOLUNTEERS COORDINATION

VOLUNTEERS COORDINATOR: Vacant

ACCOMMODATION COORDINATOR: Marcus Travaglia

## MANAGEMENT TEAM MEETING

COORDINATOR: Sally Mason

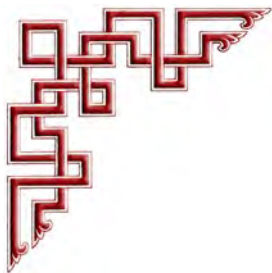
## MASTER PLAN

COMMITTEE: Ruby Karmay, Venerable Tsapel, Andy Melnic, Peter Lane, Steve Williams

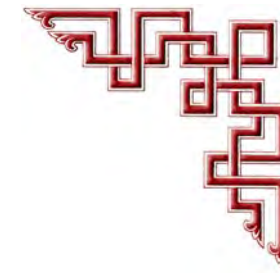
## PROJECTS

MERIT BOX: Vacant

KADAMPA STUPA: Peter Lane



# 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.

*M*ay we all rejoice together.



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

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