

**Minutes of the 13th Annual General Meeting of the Buddhist Council of Victoria**  
held on  
**Saturday 14th March 2009**

**Venue:** The Dhamma Sukha Meditation Centre (DSMC) Australia.

**Address:** 69 Glendale Road, Springvale Vic 3171

**Time:** 2 pm – 4 pm

**Apologies received:**

Ms	Cora	Thomas	Buddhist Society of Victoria
Ven	Carolyn	Lawler	Tara Institute
Ms	Linda	Morgan	Rigpa Fellowship Melbourne

**Attendance:**

Mr	Brian	Ashen	Great Stupa of Universal Compassion
Ms	Peggy	Page	BCV Education Programme
Ms	Helen	Ponder	BCV Education Programme
Ms	Maureen	French	Beaumaris Buddhist Meditation Centre
Mr	Michael	Chenh	BLIAV
Mr	Julian	Bamford	Buddhist Discussion Group (Upwey) & Ch'an Academy,
Mr	Frank	Carter	Buddhist Discussion Group (Upwey) & Ch'an Academy,
Mr	Michael	Wells	Buddhist Society of Victoria
Ms	Gloria	Lugay	Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation Australia
Mr	Ranjith	Soysa	Buddhist Vihara Victoria
Mr	Kosala	Jayasinghe	Buddhist Vihara Victoria
Ven		Wimalananda	Buddhist Vihara Victoria
Ven	Ol	Sam	Cambodian Buddhist Association
Mr	Thel	Thong	Cambodian Buddhist Association
Ms	Laura	Chan	Chan Mediation Centre
Ms	Linda	Marett	Chan Mediation Centre
Ven	Ashin	Pandita	Dhamma Sukha Meditation Centre
Mr	Peter	Memmel	Diamond Way Buddhism
Mr	Michael	Chenh	IBCV Fo Guang Shan Melbourne
Ms	Alex	Butler	Ordinary Mind
Ms	Anja	Tanhane	Ordinary Mind
Ms	Rachael	Wass	Quang Minh Temple
Ven	Aya	Sucinta	Sanghamittarama Bhikkuni Residence
Ven	Beom Hyon	Sunim	Seon Centre
Ven	Chi Kwang	Sunim	Seon Centre
Mr	Petr	Svoboda	Seon Centre (Minutes)
Mr	Daniel	Tokarev	Seon Centre
Ms	Di	Cousens	Siddhartha's Intent Melbourne (Meeting Chair)
Mr	Gim	Soon	Yun Yang Temple

**Di opened the meeting at 15.05 pm**

## **1. Guest Speakers**

### **1.1 Ven U Pandita on his experiences from his work in Burma.**

Ven U Pandita talked about what happened in Burma and what people have been doing to help the survivors of Cyclone Nargis. He described his three trips between June and October 2008 and he will also go back in May this year to monitor the progress of the relief work. They are slowly rebuilding. The focus of his aid work is on establishing children's education and the rebuilding of monasteries.

### **1.2 Ven Chi Kwang on Victorian Bushfires**

Di introduced Ven Chi Kwang to talk about the Victorian bushfires. Ven. Chi Kwang informed the meeting that there are 1,000 displaced people and some are still missing. There are many levels of impact on the community. She personally and many of her neighbours and friends fought the bushfires on 7 February. All the local people have taken in their neighbours who lost their homes. There have not been enough customers for the local businesses and consequently the businesses are struggling to pay their bills. People are still lining up to receive food. Ven Chikwang has participated in a lot of community meetings and assisted people to express their needs.

There are about five areas that she has identified that need immediate funds. As well, small business are suffering as well as survivors and, in particular, children. There has been good fundraising and some of the funds have been allocated but some have not. Many people have offered large donations to the Red Cross.

There will be a 49 day ceremony at the large Chinese temple in Kinglake West on the 28<sup>th</sup> March. The ceremony will be promoted widely and the temple authorities will allow around 150 people to attend. Each of our temples can send about ten people, but there also has to be space for the local people and officials like Christine Nixon and others. The Kinglake area is being cleaned up but many of the burned houses have created an asbestos hazard. It is dangerous for people to walk around the bushfire areas at the moment. Currently it is still shocking to see.

We can put 10% of fundraising to the Buddhist relief fund that has just been established. We have around four truckloads of clothes, household goods and food, all of which shows that the Buddhist community has been contributing generously.

### **1.3 Ms Alex Butler on the Parliament of the World's Religions**

Di introduced Alex Butler who talked about the Parliament of the World's Religions. Alex expressed admiration for Ven Chi Kwang and her work. She said that the Parliament will be an opportunity to talk about how we can work together more cooperatively.

Alex will hand around flyers that explain more about the PWR. If people have programs to submit they should submit them quickly. These submissions are for the official programs but we will have extensive offsite events. Offsite events provide an opportunity for people to hold activities at other places so that people can attend who may have trouble getting to the Parliament site, or who may wish to attend events in languages other than English. It is little bit like the associated events of the Commonwealth Games. We will soon have a formal process for accepting offsite programs. Early bird registrations – which are cheaper -

have been extended till the end of March but they will not be extended again. It is good to get a group together so that the experience will be enhanced.

We have a large volunteer program and we may need up to 1,000 volunteers. People should go to the PWR website and apply to be volunteers. We offer proper volunteer training. The subset of the volunteer program is the home stay program. We would like to offer up to 1000 home stays especially for visitors from overseas. Offering home stay is a good experience for both hosts and guests. The Catholic home stay program which was run at the Youth event in Sydney last year was successful and meant that older people were also able to get involved.

The Communities Night will be on the evening of Friday the 4<sup>th</sup> December. Local communities are asked to host events. The BCV should be on the Communities Night committee. In response to a question about registration, Alex read out the fee structure for the conference.

## **2. Acceptance of Minutes from previous AGM**

Di asked all present to review the minutes of the previous AGM and asked if there were any changes. There were no changes.

It was moved by the Chair that the minutes from the 12<sup>th</sup> AGM held on Saturday 23 February 2008, 1.00 p.m. at Wat Buddharangsi, 159 Clark Road, Springvale South, be passed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Seconded: Peggy Page

Motion passed unanimously.

## **3. Chair's Report**

Laura Chan thanked our host, Ven U Pandita, and the committee of the Dhamma Sukha Meditation Centre for their hospitality. She then read out her Chair's report. She mentioned that she was looking forward to participating in the future activities of the BCV. Laura led the members in a minute's silence for the victims of the recent Victorian bushfires.

## **4. Education Report**

Peggy welcomed everyone and asked us to record our appreciation of the work of Judith McDonald who resigned from running the Education Project a year ago.

The previous year was a successful one for the Education Project. The education committee received a grant from the VMC to finalise the Education Curriculum Manual. The manual provides teachers with a core curriculum. Peggy thanked Judith, Serena, and Sue Smith for their skill and hard work.

The committee also prepared a DVD to promote the program at schools. Helen Ponder is the new Education Officer and looks after volunteer teachers. She tabled a report that listed the number of schools and teachers that are participating in the program. Helen handed out a copy of the statistics report. There are 9 state primary schools participating in the program at different year levels. The maximum is 20 to a class but in some schools there are fewer students.

The program needs volunteers and at the same time schools who want to have this program as we need to encourage principals. The main place that we can get teachers is from dharma centres. Helen asked all those present to email Helen at [rednoph@hotmail.com](mailto:rednoph@hotmail.com) to send suggestions for teachers.

Helen is also developing a joint proposal with Erasmus School to introduce a children's program at the Parliament of the World's Religions.

Ven Chi Kwang mentioned that it was discussed at a recent meeting in Brisbane that the Victorian materials have been accessed by interested people in Brisbane and also in overseas countries, including Switzerland.

## **5. Special Projects Report**

The special project report was delivered verbally by Linda Marret.

### **The Melbourne Buddhist Film Festival 2008**

The first festival took place last year and was very successful. It was also a lot of fun for those involved. The Melbourne Buddhist Film festival took place over 7 days and included workshops and talks. We are planning that the next film festival will be in November and we have already booked the space.

It was a chance to meet up with old friends. We had a terrific response from people seeing the movies and the speaker answered questions. We had a small committee that was efficient and it was good learning experience. We raised \$14,000 through this project.

The next one will be held in the last week of November this year. It will be for only three days, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. There will be more workshops. The tea ceremony was well received so we will hold it again.

## **6. The Prison Chaplaincy Report**

The Prison Chaplaincy report was delivered by Daniel Tokarev.

Paul Gardiner is the coordinator and Daniel is one of the chaplains. There are only three chaplains and we need more chaplains. We can only service a small number of prisons. Paul has attended a number of prisons but because of his commitment he is not able to commit on a regular basis. Ideally, people should commit on a regular basis, such as once a month. It is rewarding as Daniel was running weekly meetings at the Melbourne Reception Centre, which was good as there were regularly new people.

The prison sessions include guided mediation, basic teachings, discussions, sharing of issues, and incorporating understanding into the Buddhist world view. Some of it is helping with practical concerns, but there is also space for inspiration. The typical meeting is 90 minutes. There have not been any threats to the teacher. Most people who are interested are Australians and the ethnically Buddhist communities.

Daniel needs books and cushions. Daniel also needs malas for people who have shown commitment and who wish to identify themselves as Buddhists. We might need a printed 'Guide to Prison Chaplaincy', as a resource of material. We need a repository of basic materials. Attendance as a chaplain is paid by the government. The salary is modest and reasonable and comes from Corrections Victoria on the basis of an hourly rate. Daniel can explain how it works if anyone is interested.

Ven Chi Kwang said that the Buddhist Society of NSW have books that they can provide. Peggy said that the Schools Manual is good for the Chaplaincy project. Di mentioned that monks are encouraged to volunteer as the ethnic communities, in particular, feel blessed just to see someone in robes.

## **7. Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer's Report by Maureen French

Our financial year has gone from ending in October to ending in December as we changed the constitution. Last year's Special General Meeting changed the dates to a calendar year. Maureen reported on the spreadsheets and balance sheets given in the AGM report pack.

**It was moved from the Chair that the BCV accepts the reports given including the treasure's report.**

**Seconded: Linda Marret**

***Motion passed unopposed***

## **8. Election of BCV office bearers**

Nominations forms received were as follows:

**Chair** Laura Chan of Chan Mediation Centre nominated by Tzu Chi Foundation.

**Vice Chair** Ranjith Soysa of Buddhist Vihara Victoria nominated by Laura Chan of Chan Mediation Centre.

**Treasurer** Maureen French of Beaumaris Buddhist Meditation Centre nominated by Di Cousens of Siddhartha's Intent, Melbourne.

**Secretary** Petr Svoboda of Seon Centre nominated by Di Cousens of Siddhartha's Intent, Melbourne.

**There was no other nomination received**

The Meeting Chair asked if all the nominated individuals accepted their nominations. All nominated members accepted.

***All of the above nominated members were elected unopposed***

## **9. Selection of Ordinary Members**

The Meeting Chair explained that according to the constitution the meeting needs to select five ordinary members

- Quan Duc Temple
- Hoa Ngiem Temple
- Buddhist Society of Victoria
- Dhamma Sukha Mediation Centre
- Yun Yang Temple

Spare member in case any of the above members are not able to accept:

- FWBO – Friends of Western Buddhist Order

## **10. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

We have discussed most of the issues arising from the previous AGM and we have implemented the changes from the AGM.

### **10.1 Buddhism in Victoria Book**

Ven Chi Kwang mentioned that funds are available from the Victorian Multicultural Commission to finish the book on the history of Buddhism in Victoria. Dr Shiva has been in touch with Di and Linda and explained that the revisions have been done. The final version has to be brought up to date and Di and Linda have not done it yet. It needs to be finalised.

Ven Chi Kwang suggested to talk to VMC they are ready to fund it at any time. Printing it overseas would be cheaper. It needs to be well edited and brought up to date.

Di will be able to put in the time to finalise this project this year. Last year she was busy completing her PhD and managing family obligations.

### **10.2 UN Vesak Day**

Linda mentioned that the UN Day of Vesak will be held at the Melbourne Town Hall.

Frank Carter said that this Vesak date is recognised by all the temples. It will be held on 9<sup>th</sup> of May at the Melbourne Town hall. The next meeting of the organising committee on the 21<sup>st</sup> March at 2pm at DSMC.

At the moment we are inviting temples to hold a stall. We can cater for up to 1,000 attendees.

We need to reserve a stall for the Education Project.

We would like all the members to be part of the program. It has a serious side as well as an entertainment component in the program. There will be hip hop dance performance, choirs, and other music. We have invited Andrew Williams who will sing. We have a large screen on which we will project images of Buddhism and sayings relevant to the event. If we have beautiful images or profound sayings we will compile them and those images will be projected. We will have a celebration at the end of it. We will invite VIPs to do bathing of the Buddha and share celebration cakes. We want them to remember the event in a positive way. There will be chanting, meditation, celebration, and theatre play. It is 2.5 hour program and the pictures will be screened on a tape loop.

We are looking for at least 20 young people to perform in the dance. We have Vietnamese Chinese young people but hope to have Australian kids also who can contribute some good energy. Helen Ponder asked for a leaflet for the program. She offered to encourage students to come together during the classes and bring something to the performance. Linda said that children can do a song. Linda said that the pictures can be sent to Linda's office at UDG in Southbank.

Frank mentioned that the purpose of the event is that Buddhists as a community do not often come together. This is a special opportunity. The intention is that all traditions will be reflected in some form. The

entire Buddhist community can come together in fellowship. We need the whole of the Buddhist community to get involved.

Ven Wimalananda is the chairman of the event so will bring some images. Peggy will speak to Thai temples to get photos showing the Vesak.

### **10.3 Bushfire Relief Ceremony**

28<sup>th</sup> March is the 49<sup>th</sup> day commemoration of the bushfires and a ceremony will be held from 11 am to 3pm at the Kinglake West Chinese Temple with lunch included. It is at 210 Burtons Road which is on the corner of the National Park Road. There will be a ceremony, with monks and nuns, lantern making, speeches, offerings, entertainers, and dignitaries such as Christine Nixon and the Mayor will be in attendance.

Ven Chi Kwang said that there will be additions to the program including food. Food has to be provided by the two temples with food handlers' licenses and approved kitchens, in the form of a lunchbox. We will also need water, tea and coffee.

The contact is 5786 1081 and [rev.chikwang@gmail.com](mailto:rev.chikwang@gmail.com)

We can get some lotuses from the lotus farm. The temples that contribute food need to communicate with each other. There is limit of 150 people but a few more can come. The Kinglake region will be opened to be people from outside after next Tuesday.

#### **Important Issues**

- Vesak Day is Sat 9 May
- Ongoing request for assistance to the Education Program and Prison Chaplaincy Programs.
- We need volunteers and books and cushions for the prisons.

**Meeting closed at 15:50 pm**

#### **Minutes Approved**

**Date:**.....

**Officer:** .....