

# Buddhist Education in Victorian Schools Newsletter No. 2.

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The Project aims to make Buddhist Religious Instruction available to children in Victorian primary schools and to support teachers interested in incorporating information about Buddhism into mainstream studies at primary and secondary levels.

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Sixteen Registered & Trained Buddhist R.I. Teachers: A First for Victoria!  
The Buddhist Education Project has conducted another two teacher training rounds in 2004. We now have a pool of 16 trained and fully registered Buddhist Religious Instruction teachers. This is the first time Buddhist R.I. teachers have been trained and registered by the Victorian Education Department to teach in Victorian Primary schools: an historic event!

As in the past, we were able to call on the skills of several Buddhist practitioners and educationalists to make the training stimulating and creative. Future training days will be offered to refresh skills and enable sharing of ideas and approaches. Congratulations and much gratitude to the volunteers and the trainers.

## Buddhist RI Classes in 2 Primary Schools

With the impetus provided by the new Project Officer, Sue Smith, and the availability of trained local volunteers, classes have been established at Essex Heights PS (Mt. Waverley) – 2 classes – Gde. P-2 & Gde.3-6. One class – P-6 is running at Narre Warren North. A great effort by all involved. Negotiations are underway to start in more eastern suburbs schools as well as in the west.

## Curriculum Development

A complete curriculum for Religious Instruction classes in primary schools was ready for the May/June training sessions and participants had the chance to practise teaching some of the lessons.

“The First Ten Lessons” sets out lesson plans, ideas, resources and worksheets to be used when beginning Buddhist RI classes. In addition, the booklet, “Meditation with Young Children” provides many examples of short guided meditations easily used by volunteer teachers.

We see the curriculum as an evolving, organic document with continuous reviews and feedback.

## New Project Officer Appointed

In April Ms. Sue Smith was appointed as part-time Project Officer to help the Project. Sue has been involved in education for many years and wrote her Masters thesis on the Jataka Tales and their relevance in Australian schools. She brings much experience and enthusiasm to the Project.

Welcome Sue! Her main focus for second semester will be to involve more primary schools in this new initiative and to provide on-going review of the curriculum and resources. She is particularly concerned to involve western suburbs schools. Quang Minh Temple in Braybrook has kindly provided office space for Sue and the Project.

**Sue can be contacted on: Email: [suericasmith@hotmail.com](mailto:suericasmith@hotmail.com) OR mobile: 0431 488 335.**

## Fund-Raising for the Project

Fund-raising is an on-going activity for the Project and a vital one. We need to provide the children with the best possible, up-to-date resources and materials. We need to train teachers to the highest possible standard and we need to have support staff and educationalists available. All this requires funds! As a religious organization, we are limited in the places where we can ask for financial assistance. So we are turning to Buddhist temples and centres in Victoria to make a contribution at this important time to keep the Project going. Much hard work has been done by volunteers and it is now a viable, functioning concern.

In the next few weeks, Buddhist organizations will be receiving a letter requesting financial support for the Project. It will enable centres to donate for a particular item eg. a set of books, or to train a volunteer, or to pay Sue's salary for one day! There is a sliding scale and freedom to choose the level at which you want to be involved. As the Project is run by volunteers, the administrative costs are minimal so you can be sure that every dollar is put to its full use!

Please draw the attention of your Buddhist temple or centre to this letter and the importance of the Buddhist Education Project. Every contribution will make a difference.

## Do You Want to Volunteer?

At the moment we have more trained teachers than we can place in schools but the Project is always looking for volunteers to contribute their skills in other areas. For instance we need people who would be interested in working on the steering committee, and people with skills in web site development, administration, curriculum and materials development and community liaison.

If you are interested in volunteering please contact one of the people below.

## For Further Information

Please contact :

- **Project Officer: Sue Smith** on Email: [suericasmith@hotmail.com](mailto:suericasmith@hotmail.com)  
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- **Committee Chair & Co-ordinator: Judith Macdonald.**  
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