

BUDDHIST COUNCIL OF QUEENSLAND INC. (IA29696)

AN UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING BUDDHISTS THROUGH BUDDHIST GROUPS AND INSTITUTIONS
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President's Report to the Annual General Meeting, May 20, 2006.

The past twelve months in the history of this Council has been quite progressive and has now positioned the Council to be truly representative of Buddhism and it's practitioners in Queensland, and to effectively represent this state at the Federal level.

After the previous couple of years of tireless struggle by Terry and Lynn O'Connor, to keep the Council afloat while operating with literally no funding or other support, the last AGM, one year ago almost to the day, seems to have re-ignited the flame of support for the aims and goals of this Council.

The dedication of Terry and Lynn during their years at the helm cannot be dismissed without recording a strong vote of appreciation for their ceaseless striving for the promotion of Buddhism and recognition of this Council as the voice of Buddhism in the public and private sectors of Queensland.

The 2005 AGM brought together a strong committee of nine, offering a good cross-section of traditions and experience, and offering an enthusiasm not seen for some time. This has subsequently been proven to be the strength of this Council this past year. The committee has members from Theravada, Mahayana and Zen traditions as well as a diversity of skills and backgrounds.

The table below identifies those elected and their contributions as active members of the Council, in both attending the various management and general meetings as well other events where the Council was invited to participate in some capacity.

A tenth member was added to the management committee in the course of the year, Rachel Hannam, whose later assistance in securing two people to deliver religious education to Brisbane State High School students was most beneficial.

Sadly, also during this year three committee members - Terry, Lynn and Jay - were obliged to cease their council roles when they resigned from their own dharma centre, and another member, Tan, also resigned at about the same time. The present committee now consists of six members who continue to diligently represent the interests of all members. All these members have indicated their willingness to stand again for re-election at this AGM.

Committee Member Participation 2005-06

<i>Position</i>	<i>Full Name</i>	<i>Known as</i>	<i>Meetings</i>	<i>Events</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%Input</i>
President	James Ferguson	Jim	19 of 19	7 of 7	26 of 26	100
Secretary	Lynn O'Connor	Lynn	13 of 13	4 of 4	17 of 17	100
Treasurer	Kaluutarage G Fernando	Siri	15 of 19	1 of 2	16 of 21	76
Vice President	Kim Hollow	Kim	17 of 19	4 of 4	21 of 23	91
C/Tee Member	Terry O'Connor	Terry	13 of 13	4 of 4	17 of 17	100
C/Tee Member	Tanuja Sarath-Chandra	Tan	4 of 13	1 of 2	5 of 15	33
C/Tee Member	Jay Maharage	Jay	7 of 13	1 of 2	8 of 15	53
C/Tee Member	Peter Lester	Peter	6 of 19	0 of 2	6 of 21	29
C/Tee Member	Chee W Wong	Chee	7 of 19	4 of 4	11 of 23	48
C/Tee Member	Rachel Hannam	Rachel	8 of 15	1 of 2	9 of 17	53

This year, the aims and objectives of the Council were reviewed extensively by the committee and as a result of that study, some significant changes were proposed and ratified by the general membership, including an updating of the Council's constitution to the current Model Rules of the Office of Fair Trading and a clarification of the membership structure that had been somewhat contradictory since the formation of the incorporated association in 2000.

At the recent Extraordinary General Meeting, the membership of the Council was amended to permit individuals to join and be more directly represented than was previously the case. This also permitted the many smaller study groups to also join whereas they had been ineligible previously.

So today, the Council is truly representative of all dharma students and their affiliated centres and study groups and we encourage all practitioners of the dharma to support the Council so we can help ensure that Buddhism is appropriately represented in the community generally and so the Council can assist in the promotion of dharma activities throughout this state, thereby extending the reach of such opportunities to as wide an audience as possible.

Reflecting on the Council's activities during this past year, it is pleasing to be able to report on how the Council has been able to work with various Centre's to spread the dharma in practical ways and it is with special thanks that we acknowledge the support of the Pure Land College in Toowoomba for their significant contribution to the Council's stand at the Qld. Multi-cultural Festival held in October in the Roma Street Parklands. This was acknowledged by the organiser's as being, at one period of that day, the most popular stand in the parklands – thanks to the volume of material provided by Pure Land College for free distribution.

Similarly, our thanks go also to other Centre's including Chenrezig Institute at Eudlo, Rongton Buddhist Centre at Wilston, Dharma Metta Garden on the Gold Coast, Wat Thai Buddharam at Forestdale and the Khmer Buddhist Society of Qld. at Marsden for their various support for Council activities.

A special note of appreciation is also extended to Karuna Hospice Services at Windsor who have generously provided the venue for all Council meetings throughout this year.

Your Council has been very active this year, with formal representations at a number of multi-cultural and inter-faith events as well as dharma-related and centre activities generally. These include

- ❖ Formal attendance at the Buddhist Relics Tour of artefacts at the Phat Da Temple at Inala;
- ❖ Formal attendance during Sogyal Rinpoche's visit in Brisbane;
- ❖ Formal attendance at the opening of the Sri Lankan Buddhist Monastery at Ellen Grove;
- ❖ Formal attendance of the Namgyal Monks Tour at the Judith Wright Centre;
- ❖ Sourcing of teachers of dharma for Brisbane State High School's religious education program;
- ❖ Attendance at the Thai New Year (Song Kran) Celebrations in China Town;
- ❖ Formal attendance at the opening of the new Wat Thai Buddharam temple at Forestdale;
- ❖ Official stall-holder at the Qld Multi-Cultural festival in the Roma Street Parklands;
- ❖ and participation in inter-faith forums on the Gold Coast, Brisbane and in the Pine Rivers shire.

Further, in keeping with delivering the best possible outcomes for dharma, its practitioners and the Council itself, the Council has been moving forward on matters of due diligence and governance, with all present members having applied for Blue Cards (*as now required under the Commission for Children, Young People and the Child Guardian's legislation*), and also having attended free seminars provided by the Gold Coast City Council and the Australian Institute of Management on Leadership, Governance and Funding topics.

Where to from here? 2006 and 2007 are poised for continued growth in the Council's role, community involvement and representative of Queensland dharma generally. With limited funds but with ample physical resources available, the Council has endorsed further participation in this year's Qld. Multi-Cultural Festival in Roma Street Parklands – this time (*subject to confirmation*) including the provision of food! Greater participation in various Centre's activities and, through a revamping of the Council's website, a far more interactive and valuable means of promoting dharma activities across Queensland.

This committee has laid the foundation for a much stronger and more visible Council that can help promote Buddhism and foster closer relations with other dharma centres and other faiths throughout Queensland, and to ensure that Queensland's Buddhist practitioners are properly represented at all levels of local, state and federal government.

I invite all students of the dharma to join the Council either individually, as a family, or as a centre and thereby strengthening this foundation and giving the Council the impetus to reach out and foster the growth of dharma in this State.

On behalf of the management committee, thank you all for your past and continuing support for the Council's activities.

Jim Ferguson - President