



Benevolent Organisation for Development, Health & Insight

Founding Patron: His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama
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AGENDA AND REPORTS FOR BODHI AUSTRALIA AGM SATURDAY 20 MAY 2023

Online meeting via zoom: 11.00am Australian Eastern Standard Time

1. Present.
2. Apologies: Dr Devin Bowles, Mr Kulottam Chakma, Dr Tony Edwards
3. Ordinary business.
 - 3.1 To confirm the minutes (link to 2022 minutes <https://www.bodhi-australia.com/2022.html>) of the last preceding annual general meeting and of any general meeting held since that meeting.
 - 3.2 To receive from the committee, auditor and servants of the Organisation reports on the operations and transactions of the Organisation during the last preceding financial year of the Organisation; (i.e. reports from the President, Treasurer and Secretary for calendar year 2022);
 - 3.3 To elect the officers of the Organisation and the ordinary committee members;
 - 3.4 To appoint the auditor and determine his or her remuneration;
 - 3.5 To appoint a Public Officer;
 - 3.6 To determine the remuneration of servants of the Organisation.
4. Business Arising (if any)
5. Special Business
 - 5.1 Signatories to ANZ accounts. To pass a motion removing Dr Devin Bowles as a co-signatory from the ANZ accounts and to replace him with at least two committee members. The request for removal is at Dr Bowles' request, and is documented in correspondence sent to all committee members (see screenshot in treasurer's report, of email dated March 16, 2023). The ANZ bank requires minuted evidence of this.
6. Date and place of 2024 A.G.M.
7. Meeting closed

BODHI AUSTRALIA PRESIDENT'S REPORT for calendar year 2022

Lucia Arman: 17 May 2023

1. Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sahayaka Gana (TBMSG); Bahujan Hitay Pune Project and loss of Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) Status: UPDATE

The Bahujan Hitay Pune Project (BHPP), previously managed by Karunadeepa Wankhade, is a subsidiary of an Indian non-government organisation Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sahayaka Gana (TBMSG) (see <http://www.tbmsg.org/>).

In 2021, TBMSG's Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) status was revoked, making it impossible for BODHI Australia to legally provide funds to BHPP for projects such as the balwadi (kindergarten), creche and its health service.

The loss of FCRA status had a profound impact on the BHPP, not only because of the loss of social, health and economic support services to those living in the slums of Pune but also for those employed by the BHPP.

Five very key workers and including Karunadeepa Wankhade all lost their jobs. Under such circumstances it is our understanding (including from one of the senior staff in the Karuna Trust) that workers are entitled to a form of redundancy, the purpose of which is to tide people over (for a period of time) while they find alternative employment.

To date TBMSG have not honoured the payment of those redundancies – at least to Karunadeepa and some (possibly all) of her colleagues. We are unsure of the reasons. One reason that came to our attention was that the Indian Government had frozen TBMSG's assets due to their loss of FCRA status thus making it impossible for the TBMSG to sell a parcel of land that would allow them to pay BHPP workers their redundancies.

In response Professor Butler and I wrote a formal letter to the TBMSG on 29 December 2022 urging them to honour their commitment to the workers at the BHPP and including those who had since left BHPP. As there was no reply to our correspondence, we wrote again to TBMSG on 1 May 2023 asking for an update and if they had not already done so, we urged them to once again, meet their commitment to those employees once they had the opportunity to do so. Our correspondence remains unanswered.

It is hoped that when and if TBMSG has its FCRA status reinstated that BODHI Australia might once again consider funding BHPP to deliver the much needed development work for those living in the slums of Pune, and especially for women and children considered amongst the most vulnerable in those communities.

2. Karunadeepa Wankhade, Manager BHPP, Retirement

After losing her job at the BHPP Karunadeepa Wankhade decided, after 37 years of dedication to the people living in the slums of Pune (and especially to women and children), that it was time to retire.

Since 2005 and under Karunadeepa's leadership BODHI Australia enjoyed a long, honest, and productive working partnership with the BHPP.

In recognition of Karunadeepa's dedication and commitment to BODHI Australia's donor funded projects, BODHI Australia and three anonymous donors gave Karunadeepa a retirement gift of \$650 AUS (\$500 from BODHI Australia non-tax-deductible funds and \$150 from three anonymous donors). This

gift, transferred in 2023, was accompanied by BODHI Australia's thanks and appreciation for her and her staff's years of service to the most vulnerable and most disadvantaged.

Karunadeepa retired officially on 30 December 2022 but remains connected to the BHPP on a voluntary capacity. In recent email correspondence she has advised that the BHPP sewing classes, fashion design classes and creche remain operational but are now fee for service; with teachers being paid from the fees collected. The remaining four staff involved with the BHPP work in a voluntary capacity. Karunadeepa advises that from June 2023 four doctors will attend at the BHPP; each will provide two hours health and medical services pro-bono.

Karunadeepa remains hopeful that the BHPP will in the future regain its FCRA status. In the interim she advises that raising funds in India is nigh near impossible but remains hopeful at the same.

3. Nishtha: A New Project in the Sundarbans (West Bengal, India)

BODHI Australia's new partner NGO is called Nishtha - working in West Bengal, south of Kolkata. Our search for a new partner was made necessary by the loss of FCRA status for the BHPP at the end of 2021.

BODHI Australia was helped in this search by the Karuna Trust, based in London, who have supported this NGO for a number of years. A representative of the Karuna Trust (Akashamitra) visits Nishtha several times each year; we have direct contact with him.

Nishtha is a word in Bengali that means "dedication". Several Indian NGOs have this name but only one is based in West Bengal (as far as we know). Their website is at <http://www.nishtha.org.in/>.

Nishtha was founded in 1975, by the mother of Ms Mina Das, who is a dynamic person and who currently leads this organisation.

Nishtha is the largest of partner NGO with which BODHI has worked in India. BODHI's funds (approximately A\$25,000 per annum) will almost exclusively be used to improve the education of girls in high school, who otherwise risk early marriage and a vulnerable, precarious existence. Subject to satisfactory performance (including a planned visit by at least two BODHI committee members in early 2025) BODHI Australia plans to support this project for five years.

Nishtha is not a Dalit-led NGO, nor is it Buddhist. It is, however, as far as we can tell, ethical, legal, diligent, courageous and working hard to reduce poverty and social injustice in India.

Alokita (Enlightened) – More about the BODHI Australia and Nishtha Partnership Project

Supported by BODHI Australia, Nishtha proposes to provide educational support to 200 girls and young women living in 14 very remote villages, across two blocks (7 villages in each block) of the South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, Bishnupur.

Due to the remoteness of these towns ("villages" by Indian standards) and a lack of resources, Nishtha has, until now, been unable to do any out reach work there. Nishtha Secretary Ms Mina Das has named the BODHI Australia supported project '**Alokita**' meaning "enlightened".

As part of the programme Nishtha will provide support to the mothers of the school-aged girls and young women so that they can support their daughters to stay at school and complete their education. The girls and young women, and the girls and young women's mothers are supported to attend meetings at Nishtha head office or Nishtha sister office (whichever is closer).

To support their school attendance the girls and young women will over the course of 12 months each receive a monthly hygiene kit. These kits contain shampoo, toothpaste, soap and sanitary napkins; all considered important for continuity of education, establishing constructive peer relationships, building self esteem and retaining dignity.

The girls and young women participating in the programmes are each given their own bank account with a small monthly allowance. This helps to teach the girls and young women about money, money management and fiscal responsibility. The money needs to be accounted for and is to be used to support their education. No one other than the girls and young women themselves can access that account.

Nishtha employs five “lay” social workers, each of whom visits the communities and trouble shoots issues with families and the community, seeking to identify and solve any aspects that might prevent a girl or young woman from attending school.

BODHI Australia funds have been allocated for 5 social workers to receive “Exposure Training”. This training is so Nishtha’s social workers who are not completely qualified in social work (but have undergraduate degrees we think) can link in with other experienced social workers to gain additional knowledge and skills.

BODHI Australia funds have also been allocated to allow Nishtha to train 30 people to be leaders for the girls and young women and who can then act to further support them to complete their education. Nishtha will also train 30 mothers’ group leaders who will also provide support to the mothers of the school aged girls and young women.

Nishtha representatives have regular meetings with community stakeholders (quarterly or half yearly) in the towns where the girls and young women live and are educated. These stakeholders include school teachers, community leaders, and community decision makers. These meetings are facilitated to exchange information, provide updates, troubleshoot presenting issues, problem solve issues of concern and to educate about the need to and benefits of empowering and educating girls and young women.

The Indian Government mandates Nishtha to provide quarterly, half yearly and yearly demographic and attendance data on all the young women and girls and including their families who participate in a Nishtha programme.

4. Aryaloka Computer Education (ACE): Nagpur, India

The Aryaloka Computer Education (ACE) program continues to retain its FCRA status.

In 2022 BODHI Australia provided ACE with A\$13,636, to support scholarships for 50 very disadvantaged students to attain basic computer skills, greatly enhancing their chance of reasonable employment and the start of a path out of poverty.

In practical terms the ACE program is a six month computer and IT skills training programme, based in Nagpur and administered by Arayaloka Education Society (AES) (ACE is a programme of the AES). The course includes tuition in hardware networking, information technology, graphic design, Tally accounting, career guidance (e.g. interview skills and job applications), and 3 months of English language tuition.

It is anticipated that 25% of students who complete this course will quickly gain employment in the IT industry, and a further 70% will undertake additional IT studies. This proposal is consistent with several others, administered by ACE, funded by BODHI, in the last few years.

BODHI Australia plans to fund ACE for a similar sized programme in 2023.

5. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer (LGBTIQ+)

At the beginning of 2020 BODHI Australia began looking into a potential project that looked to support women who identify as LGBTIQ+ in Nepal. In brief, the program sought to provide mental health services to LGBTIQ+ women in Nepal by training counsellors in how to appropriately respond to a disclosure of sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The proposal sought to work in partnership with the Green Tara Trust and an organisation in Nepal that currently provides support to LGBTIQ+ women. This project proposal was put on hold due to COVID19 pandemic. At the BODHI Australia 2022 AGM the Executive Committee agreed to return to this project and to continue to explore its viability as a potential BODHI Australia funded project.

Since then contact has been made with Dr Jane Stephens of the Green Tara Trust to express our continued interest in the project and to discuss a potential way forward. Due to a number of presenting circumstances it has not to date been possible to connect with Dr Stephens to discuss. As BODHI Australia President I will continue to progress this project in 2023 and will provide the Executive Committee with updates as they arise.

BODHI Times 59: Newsletter for 2023

BODHI Australia distributed its annual newsletter (electronically) in April 2023 to all BODHI Australia members and to others on the mailing list. Details of BODHI Australia's AGM (Saturday 20 May 2023) were also included, with an invitation for all BODHI members to attend if they wish to do so (by Zoom).

BODHI AUSTRALIA FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2022 CALENDAR YEAR

Prof Colin Butler (treasurer) May 17, 2023

This supplements the auditor's report (Camerons Accountants, Launceston Tas, dated April 12, 2023), and the numerical table on page 8 (below). I will read a summary of this at the AGM to be held May 20, 2022.

1. **Total income** for 2022, compared to 2021, was very similar, but less than half of the 2020 income. It was \$22,554 (compared to \$21,490). The earlier decline was substantially due to loss of advertising income (thankyou again, Fortress Learning!), and also (in 2019) the retirement of our most generous individual donor (initials GC). A very generous donation from a committee member in 2022 kept donations relatively constant, but without this, total income would have again declined by another 50%.

In 2022, donations, other than from committee members and advertisers), was \$9,868 compared to slightly over \$18,000 in 2021; i.e. a very substantial increase, of about 45%.

I believe the most important reason for this is the loss of FCRA status of TBMSG, and the extreme difficulty of finding a similar, Buddhist influenced, dalit involved NGO with FCRA status reliably functioning in India. This reduces my own motivation, and means that our recent trajectory of only one newsletter per annum continues. I believe some donors and potential donors sense our difficulty, and are more reluctant to give. Another factor is that in 2022 we only had one active project; some donors would recognise that and realise that we had no strong need for additional funds. However, this trend has continued – perhaps deepened – in response to the 2023 newsletter. I will discuss these issues more at the AGM. I very much hope Nishtha will prove a valuable and ethical partner, but even if it does I don't believe it will inspire some of our donors in the way that many of our earlier projects did.

2. Bank **interest** fell again, this time by almost 80% (to only \$315). However, this trend is now reversing.
3. **Dividends**: We received \$372, compared to \$395 in 2021. The statement from the last treasurer's report (of \$221) is an error, for which I apologise. These dividends accrue because we have two accounts with My State Bank, of which BODHI is a member.
4. We sold one **poster** in 2022, incurring a nominal loss of \$5 (plus post office costs, which, in this case, were borne by Scott Trimmingham, in the U.S.). We still have 37 in stock. See 2022 treasurer's report for more on their history.
5. **Travel** expenses were again zero in 2022, as in 2021.
6. Total funds in this "discretionary" account rose to \$11,847 in 2022 compared to \$9,626 in 2021. This largely occurred from a payment by our one surviving advertiser, Biodistributors. We also received a donation from the US, sent to BODHI Australia and an anonymous donation; the combined value of these was \$110 (before the paypal charge). Should we go to India in 2025 I propose we draw from this account (assuming the funds are not used for "welfare" projects, in the meantime.)
6. **Project** expenses in 2022 were 13,636 (rounded) compared to \$19,218. The sole recipient was the Aryaloka Education Society (in Nagpur), whose work is returning to normal after the pandemic.
7. The audit cost rose to \$975 from \$770, which is 26% higher. For the first time (ie in 2023), I used the electronically linked records (using MYOB software) that our auditor (Greg Harper, at Camerons) had previously suggested. This makes it easier for the accountants. There is an additional charge for us, which was \$75 for the audit completed in 2023. The recently completed audit cost \$974, including this software charge; i.e. the audit cost stabilised in 2023.

8. Our **ratio of non-project expenses** to total income increased to 14.6% in 2022. In 2021 it was 12.6%, higher than I reported a year ago, due to a miscalculation. These expenses are itemised in the table, the most significant being the **administration** fee (\$2,254). This fee was calculated as a percentage (10%) of all income.
9. **Closing balance**, for all accounts in 2022 was \$181,435, compared to \$177,395 in 2021.
10. Thanks to our **auditor**, Greg Harper and staff, at Camerons, Launceston. The current audited report lists your addresses. **As this report will be posted on the internet would you prefer your addresses to be removed from it?**
11. All international transfers continued to be done electronically, using ANZ. There were no difficulties in 2022.
12. Bendigo Bank: As reported previously the ordinary account with Bendigo Bank remains useful (it is free of regular charges, as are all of our bank accounts) as this is where interest from one of term deposits is transferred to it (the interest in the other term deposit rolls over).
13. In 2022 we withdrew \$10,000 from the smaller term deposit with Bendigo Bank. We also successfully enrolled Lucia Arman, Dr Gilles Rohan and Melinda Mayne as signatories for the two term deposits we hold with this bank (a process that took many months due to bank errors – thank you Gilles and Melinda for your patience). We have also changed the rule so that either of the two term deposits requires any two of these four signatories. This gives additional security for BODHI, and also means, if Colin and Lucia are jointly incapacitated, that funds can still be accessed by the committee, if necessary, without extraordinary difficulty. The funds in our combined term deposits at the end of 2022 were \$131,453.
14. Colin received \$2,256 for his work in helping to administer BODHI in 2022; this reflects the higher percentage of total income agreed at the 2022 AGM (10%). In 2021 he received \$1,612 for the same duties. However, those funds were not actually transferred to Colin until 2022. This explains the removal of the “trade creditor” sum on page 5 of the audited report.
15. BAORF = BODHI Australia Overseas Relief Fund; non-TDS = non tax deductible status– i.e. the account where tax deductible donations are kept. At the moment it is assumed that all the funds in the other accounts (other than BODHI Non-TDS) were originally from tax deductible donations, so should be used for development projects (or running costs).

★  **Devin Bowles** 6 March 2023 at 9:30 am
 RE: Removing Devin from ANZ accounts as a signatory.
 To: Colin Butler, Lucia Arman, Cc: Melinda, b r, Gilles Rohan & 2 more [Details](#)

Hi all, and Colin,

Just a quick note to confirm my desire to be removed from the account.

Thank you
 Devin

	2022	2021
Opening Bank Balance (all accounts, plus stock) (Jan 1)	176,734	177,176
INCOME		
Advertising (non-TDS)	2,000	1,515
Dividends (both accounts)	372	395
Donations to BAORF – general	19,758	17,050
Donations (non-TDS)	110	1,015
Interest (BAORF)	315	1,515
posters (non-TDS)	20	0
Gross Income BODHI (incl posters)	22,575	21,490
Net Income BODHI	22,549	21,490


EXPENDITURE		
Admin Fee (Colin)	2,256	1,612
Auditor	975	770
Bank charges (excluding paypal, stripe)	15	98
Development Projects	13,636	19,218
Website fee	41	235
Total	16,923	21,932

Closing BANK BALANCES (31/12) (including petty cash)		
My State (BAORF)	30,259	17,008
My State (non-TDS)	11,847	9,626
Bendigo Bank	6,184	798
Bendigo Bank Term Deposit 1 (shorter term)	40,916	50,916
Bendigo Bank Term Deposit 2 (longer term)	90,537	90,312
ANZ savings	929	5,043
ANZ working	648	3,578
Cash on hand	114	114
TOTAL	181,435	177,395

Posters (nominal value)	925	950
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PROJECTS		
Aryaloka Education Society (development)	13,636	0
TBMSG/BHPP		11,005
TOTAL	13,636	19,450

kindest Regards,



Colin Butler,
Treasurer and co-founder

Secretary's report for 2022

Newsletter

BODHI Times 58: Newsletter for 2022

BODHI Australia distributed its annual newsletter (58) electronically, in April 2022 to all BODHI Australia members and to others on the mailing list.

The number on the mailchimp distribution list, for BODHI Australia, as of May 2023, is 194.

Some work updating the website

Registry of members was updated on Feb 27, 2023; it can be accessed at <https://www.bodhi-australia.com/register-of-members.html> (password protected). Currently 260 people are listed.
