



Association of Engaged Buddhists

## **ASSOCIATION OF ENGAGED BUDDHISTS**

### **ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

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## From the President

It has been a great privilege to be the President of the AEB over the past two years.

The AEB has a small but committed band of hard-working individuals who have kept the cogs turning on the committee through somewhat challenging times in the past twelve months. A big shout out to committee members Chris Burgess, David Wilson, Robert Ljubicic, Jeff Newton and Bill Shepherd for continuing to show up to committee meetings and to make decisions, always with the best interests of the AEB at heart. To the membership of the association and the wider community, I thank you for placing your trust in the committee to oversee the future direction of the AEB.

As you are no doubt aware, the association exists to support Bhante Tejadhammo in his endeavours to provide the teachings of the Buddha in an accessible way to the AEB and the broader community, and to support his passion for helping those who are ill and facing the end of their lives. Bhante Tejadhammo has continued to be challenged by major health issues but believes he is now turning a corner and is hopeful for greater opportunities for teaching and retreats in 2025. Ongoing gratitude to Bhante for guiding the committee and the association with his wisdom and his practical sense of what is appropriate.

Several Dana Days were held this year- a testament to Bhante's improving health. Many thanks to the generosity of Kerrie Kiem from the Buddhist Library for always making us feel so welcome.

Some retreats have been held at Vejjasala in the past year – thanks to Kynan Tan for his retreats and dedication to the care of Vejjasala. Thanks to the ongoing work of David Wilson and Robert Ljubicic who continue to oversee the work at our retreat centre, and our garden maintenance volunteers. Thanks also to David Denton and Pip Gallagher who are taking a break from Vejjasala, and presently spending some months in Thailand.

To those of you who responded to the recent survey about AEB activities, a deep bow for taking the time to consider what you would like to see happening with the association. The results were sent out in the last newsletter and due consideration is being given to ways in which the association can realise these aspirations. It is necessary for the ongoing viability of the association that you, members and friends, actively contribute to the well-being of the AEB through your involvement. Without active involvement we cannot offer retreats, teachings and community events that we have been able to offer in the past.

If you feel you can contribute in any way to the ongoing life of the AEB, please send an email to [office@engagedbuddhists.org.au](mailto:office@engagedbuddhists.org.au) and let us know of your ideas and your ability to be involved.

This is my last term as President. In 2025 I am moving to Western Australia to explore new horizons. The friendships I have made at the AEB will help to sustain me in what lies ahead, and I am grateful to have been able to contribute to the association in some small way.

Enormous thanks to all of you who have contributed over the past year, and for many of you, much, much longer.

May the fruits of your Dhamma practice stay with you and guide your thoughts, words and deeds.

With metta,

Megan Thorpe  
President

## **From the Spiritual Director**

I am happy to report that things are looking much better & that next year 2025 should be one of fruitful activity for the Association.

I have undergone four major spinal surgeries of some 6, 3.5 and 8 hours duration. The rheumatoid arthritis is slowly settling down thanks to a wonderful specialist at RPA.. In addition to this I have been diagnosed with osteoporosis. I had a colonoscopy and gastroscopy again & the doctor, a lovely Sri Lankan gentleman who is a close friend of Venerable Dhammagavesi of Lankarama. I had a few days in hospital with a very painful gallstone. However things are looking much better. Apart from just recovering from COVID I am feeling stronger & better. I am very keen to get back to teaching, Dana Day gatherings & giving retreats again. I am so happy to have the results of the survey sent to all of you & to have a clearer picture of what you would like early next year. I am also very pleased that we can start holding regular teachings & Dana in Sydney again. I hope you will join me in this.

So, all I can do is recall the words of my beloved teacher: "If you have a body, what do you expect?"

I am glad to be up and running again for the start of the New Year ahead. I want to thank the committee, both those departing and those continuing. Megan has been wonderful. Chris & David have put in immense effort in order to get our little group up & running again. Robert has done a splendid job with Vejjasala. We bid farewell to Bill & Jeff, they have been so kind but life moves on. Jeff is boarding a Navy vessel & Bill settling into a quieter life. They have been truly splendid. David Denton & Pip Galagher also deserve special thanks for their generous & wonderful contributions at Vejjasala. They are now enjoying a well deserved break in my beloved Thailand. I also want to thank the various members and friends for your support and wonderful efforts to keep teaching and retreats running in my absence. It certainly shows that all is anicca and that none of us is irreplaceable. So, a huge bow of gratitude to all of you and a hope that next year will be a better one and that I can get back to work.

With every blessing

Yours in the Dhamma

Tejadhammo Bhikku

## Treasurer's Report

### Income

In the last financial year 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, AEB received donations of \$24K (this compares with \$50K in 2023 and \$124K in 2002 [there was a large one off that year]).

Interest income was \$7.5K, \$3.5K more than the previous year.

Retreat income was \$16K compared with \$15K and \$5K in the previous two years..

Membership income was \$3K compared with \$5K in each of the previous two years.

Income from Fundraising Events was Zero, compared with \$4K the previous year.

### Expenses

The total expenses for last financial year were \$86K, compared to \$73K the previous year, and \$525K the year before (when the renovation was being completed).

Completing the renovation, significant repairs and maintenance cost for Vejjasala totalled \$39.5K, comprising:

Replace disabled bathroom floor	\$14K
Resolve kitchen door trip points	\$7K
Covered area trip points and seat	\$11K
Retractable blind to back deck	\$7.5K (donation)

Property Insurance, other required policies and inspections total approximately \$11K annually. Our increase in insurance costs has been moderated by increasing the excess amount.

Other costs, etc are more or less in line with the previous years.

### Financial Position

AEB had an operating loss of \$25K. This roughly corresponds to the lower level of membership and donations (\$28K).

The AEB currently has a sound financial position, but loss of memberships and donations is an ongoing issue. However, retreat income has increased after the renovation.

The Building Fund has \$7.5K in general savings accounts and \$100K in fixed deposits. It should be noted that the BF cannot be used for general expenditure.

The General fund has \$81K in general saving accounts and \$25K in fixed deposits.

P+L and Balance Sheets will be available for perusal at the AGM.

### Current and completed Projects

1	Reconcile bank accounts and accounting software	completed
2	Simplify Chart of Accounts and document procedures	simplify completed
3	Update Bank Rules and watchlists	to be started
4	Analyse membership data and improve receipting, etc.	underway
5	Prepare draft budget for Committee consideration	underway

*David Wilson, AEB Treasurer*

## **Vejjasala**

Completing the 2023 renovation, significant repairs and maintenance cost for Vejjasala totalled \$39.5K:

- The floor tiling and waterproofing in the bathroom with disability access was upgraded to prevent pooling of water.
- The trip points outside the kitchen sliding doors were removed to prevent accidents, and a level route gained past the kitchen to the grassed clearing.
- The Fire Safety Certificate was successfully renewed (an annual requirement).
- A retractable awning to part of the back deck was installed prior to last Christmas. This provides a shaded area in summer. It has been funded by donation.
- A small awning over the window and glass door of the Teacher's Room to cut down summer heat.
- Minor work to remove the remaining trip hazard and a new seat adjacent to the front door and improve the entrance.

Working Bees occurred under the watchful eye of Robert Ljubicic and we were grateful for Ken and Michelle Ljubicic for also assisting.

It has been very pleasing to see the effort put into maintenance of the property by the volunteers since the completion of the major renovation. Visitors praise the facilities and their condition -well done all, and a big thank you to David Wilson, Robert Ljubicic, and David Denton and Pip Gallagher!

**Retreats and Working Bees** were held throughout the year:

January	-Retreat led by Kynan Tan
February	-Weekend of Practice led by Megan Thorpe
March	-Working Bee led by Robert Ljubicic
April	-Retreat led by Bhante Akaliko
May	-Retreat led by Kynan Tan
May	-Weekend of Practice led by Megan Thorpe
July	-Working Bee led by Robert Ljubicic
September	-Retreat led by Kynan Tan; Day of practice led by Alise Kha
October	-Retreat led by Megan Thorpe
	-Retreat led by Venerable Bom Hyon Sunim for defence chaplains
	- Retreat run by Kookaburra Sangha group
November	-Working Bee led by Robert Ljubicic

## **Publications**

### Website/IT

Chris Burgess took back maintenance of the website following Kynan Tan leaving the Committee

Thanks to Meredith Tan for keeping activities updated on Facebook and WhatsApp.

### Newsletter

The email newsletter moved to a new simpler format this year focusing on upcoming events and teachings and being sent on a fortnightly basis. Many thanks to Bronwyn Sweeney for attending to this task. Chris Burgess has now also taken this over with Bronwyn's unavailability.

## **Administration**

### Spiritual Director

Bhante Tejadhammo has been Spiritual Director of the Association since its inception and continues to provide needed guidance for the community. When able to he continues to assist community members with advice, blessings, counselling and direction.

### Management Committee

At the December 2023 AGM, a new committee was elected that comprised Chris Burgess (Immediate Past President, Vice President), Megan Thorpe (President), David Wilson (Treasurer), Jeff Newton, Bill Shepherd and Robert Ljubicic.

This year Megan Thorpe, Jeff Newton and Bill Shepherd have signalled their intention to step down from the committee in 2023–24 so we will be seeking new committee members at the AGM.

*Again, heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed to our small sangha over the past twelve months.*

*With metta and every blessing,*

***The AEB 2024 Management Committee***

***21/10/24***