



Association of Engaged Buddhists

ASSOCIATION OF ENGAGED BUDDHISTS

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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From the President

Current State of the Association of Engaged Buddhists

2025 has seen some improvements in engagement and activities of the Association, responding to the detailed member survey conducted in 2024. This has included regular and well-attended Dana Days, retreats at Vejjasala (both by AEB and other organisations) and fortnightly meditation sessions in Lewisham, usually attended by 10-15 people. Membership has stabilised at about 60 members.

Challenges

Despite these improvements, AEB still faces some significant challenges:

- Member involvement
 - Over the last few years only a **very** small group of members have volunteered for positions on the committee or other activities, resulting in the same people taking on more and more responsibility and workload on behalf of the Association
 - This has the potential to result in burnout from committee members and, when combined with the natural attrition of people moving, having other responsibilities and priorities, means the work of maintaining the Association continues to fall on a relatively small group.
 - To a certain degree this also limits the activities of the Association such as running the Food Fair, picnics or other social gatherings which have relied on volunteers outside of the formal committee to organise.
 - Vejjasala also relies on a very small number of active volunteers for its ongoing maintenance
- Finances:
 - While we can, and may even actively choose to keep operating at the current small loss for some years, some consideration should be given to the future, both in terms of making sure Bhante is appropriately provided for, and that Vejjasala continues to be used for Buddhist retreats.
- Bhante's health
 - Bhante continues to suffer from severe rheumatoid arthritis and several other chronic conditions, many as a result of medication he has had to take to manage his rheumatoid symptoms. His mobility and energy levels are, as a result, severely impaired.
 - While he has made every effort to continue to teach fortnightly meditation, a number of Wednesday evenings have had to be cancelled as he has been unable to overcome these challenges. Meditation is currently on hiatus due to the recent severity of his symptoms.

Priorities and suggested activities for 2026

- Dana Day
 - As this is well attended and appreciated by the community, it is proposed to **continue with monthly Dana Days** at the current venue in Lewisham
- Wednesday night fortnightly meditation
 - Unfortunately this is not proving possible for Bhante and only attracts a relatively small number of attendees, so it is proposed to **discontinue this activity**
- Retreats
 - Bhante has expressed a desire to continue offering retreats at Vejjasala so it is proposed that we **continue with the current schedule of AEB retreats** over Easter, June & October long weekends in 2026.
 - If Bhante's health permits and there is member interest, optionally we could look to run 3-4 'informal' weekend retreats throughout the year
 - Vejjasala continues to be used by a small number of other groups including Kookaburra Sangha, Metta Centre and Kynan Tan. This could be increased with more member involvement.
- Vejjasla maintenance
 - Regular maintenance tasks such as lawn mowing be treated as a capital maintenance expense and paid for from the building fund to reduce reliance on small volunteer workforce
 - Attempt to organise 3 x working bee weekends per year for larger tasks
- Committee
 - We are in **great need** of wider involvement from members to bring fresh energy and spread the load.
 - Members are needed in particular to fill or assist with the following roles:
 - Social activity coordinator - to organise informal activities for members
 - Website updates, social media posts, promotional material creation
 - Vejjasala
 - Retreat coordinators
 - Volunteer cooks for retreats
 - External hire promotion and administration (promoting to other Buddhist or related groups who wish to hire VJ)
- Support for Bhante
 - Continue to provide financial support for any major expenses (e.g. car, necessary dental work in 2025)
 - Ensure in the event that AEB is ever wound up that Bhante is provided for

These suggestions are based on current levels of involvement and participation from members. Should these increase, of course more activities could be planned such as:

- Quarterly social events - picnics etc.
- Guest teachers at Dana Days/retreats
- Food Fair - would provide much-needed finances
- Vejjasala open day/food fair

Feedback and Discussion

Please come to the AGM with ideas and energy to contribute to the Association. With a reduced schedule of activities, joining the committee will be a reduced commitment. Please consider volunteering for some of the activities outlined above, even if you do not wish to join the committee.

Best wishes,
Chris Burgess
President

From the Spiritual Director

Sangha Report for 2025

This year has been a very challenging one. With the help of the Committee and especially David Wilson our Treasurer we established Wednesday night teaching at a new site in Lewisham only minutes from the old Sangha Lodge. Dana Days were revived on the last Sunday of each month at the same venue.

We had a number of visiting teachers for the Wednesday evenings but Bhante Teja took most evenings. Dana Days have been well attended and people are enjoying the chance to be together again, listen to some Dhamma, do some meditation and share a meal.

Bhante's health has been very troublesome this year and we have had to give up the Wednesday evening teaching. However we are continuing with our Dana Days. Our Retreat Centre Vejjasala continues to be used and offers retreats to our members and other groups who book the centre. The renovations organised by David Wilson have made Vejjasala even more attractive as a place to rest and practice. The Association held an Easter long weekend retreat with Bhante and another taught by Grahame White on the October long weekend. Vejjasala is increasingly popular as a retreat venue but we need friends and members to step up to help in many ways. At present a very small number of people are doing all the helping. Please consider lending your time and energy.

We had to purchase a "new" second hand car for Bhante because the old Hyundai was becoming dangerous. The Association purchased an excellent little Toyota Yaris. So far so good.

Bhante has had long periods of immobility & considerable pain due to rheumatoid arthritis this year and a range of other problems associated with medications causing numerous other problems. All the teeth in his lower jaw were removed in January and are finally going to be replaced with a denture soon.

However he is determined to keep moving forward and teaching and sharing the Dhamma as much as is humanly possible. Bhante cannot do any of this without your help and support and is very grateful for everything members and friends have done and are doing.

Wishing all our members and friends a blessed peace filled Christmas and New Year of the Fire Horse on February 17th 2026!!!

With great gratitude and every blessing

Bhante Tejadhammo

Treasurer's Report

Financial Position

The Association is solvent and currently has the following amounts at bank:

- Cash \$82,277 (for general use)
- Cash \$4404 (for building related purposes)
- Term deposit \$104,773 (for building related purposes). The Term Deposit has a current interest rate of 3.55% and matures on 29/7/26.

This year we have had some significant expenditure:

- New second-hand vehicle and various medical expenses for Bhante
- Replacement of major appliances at Vejjasala
- Vejjasala property insurance.

Ongoing expenses principally relate to the maintenance of Vejjasala and the support of Bhante. Our retreat income is increasing as we have accepted greater involvement by other groups, and it is becoming more popular.

Membership and fee income has stabilised.

Our general situation is one of 'genteel decline'! But we can continue along this path for quite a few years...

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

David Wilson, AEB Treasurer

Vejjasala

Vejjasala is in great condition, is very popular with retreat users, and we are continuing to be able to maintain it, although rather stretched for human resources. The recent 'Good Kamma' working weekend was a great success and should be undertaken more frequently.

On-going maintenance tasks are:

- Grass cutting (thanks Robert)
- Roof, gutter, etc regular cleaning (completed at working bee)
- Blackberry removal
- Removal of fallen trees (an ongoing issue after the fires)
- Burning off tree waste piles... to be scheduled for after Summer.
- General cleaning and keeping an eye on things...

Outstanding tasks for 2026

- Sort out the shed
- Flue cleaning and new seals to the fire box
- Check septic system
- New blinds to big kitchen (nearly complete)
- Get locksmith to check locks

We upgraded a number of items over the past year including:

- New ride-on mower (2nd hand)
- New washing machine, dryer and dishwasher
- New blinds in kitchen

A special thanks for the effort put into maintenance of the property, in particular David Wilson & Robert Ljubicic who have done the lion's share!

Retreats and Working Bees were held throughout the year, thank you to all participants and teachers, particularly Bhante Tejadhammo and Grahame White who led the AEB retreats

January

- 4-day retreat led by Kynan Tan

April

- AEB Easter long-weekend retreat led by Bhante Tejadhammo
- 4-day retreat led by Kynan Tan

May

- Working Bee led by Robert Ljubicic
- Metta Centre retreat with Ajahn Liu

September

- 4-day retreat led by Kynan Tan

October

- AEB October long-weekend retreat led by Grahame White
- 10-day retreat led by Kynan Tan

November

- Weekend retreat - Kookaburra Sangha
- 'Good Karma' Working Bee weekend

Publications

Website/IT

Chris Burgess maintained the website throughout 2025

Newsletter

The email newsletter moved to a new simpler format this year focusing on upcoming events and teachings and being sent on a regular basis by whether Secretary Kahren White or President Chris Burgess

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 October 2024 AGM, a new committee was elected that comprised Chris Burgess (President), Kahren White (Secretary), David Wilson (Treasurer) and Robert Ljubicic.

This year Robert Ljubicic has signalled his intention to step down from the committee in 2025-6 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 2025 Management Committee

28/11/2025