



Engaged Buddhists Foundation

Engaged Buddhists Foundation Incorporated - Annual Report 2026

President's Report and Executive Summary

The 2025–2026 financial and operational year marks an important structural transition for the organisation. Faced with systemic long-term challenges, including a shrinking active membership base, a heavy operational burden borne by a very small group of volunteers, persistent structural operating deficits, and the ongoing health constraints of Spiritual Director Venerable Tejadhammo (Bhante) the Management Committee initiated a formal legal restructure. On 28 June 2026, at a Special General Meeting (SGM) held in Lewisham, financial members voted overwhelmingly (19 in favour out of 20 present) to adopt Special Resolution 1, repealing the 2001 constitution and formally transitioning the Association of Engaged Buddhists Incorporated into a modern, capital-funded foundation model: The Engaged Buddhists Foundation Incorporated.

This governance evolution scales down daily administrative requirements to a lean, three-member executive committee while preserving vital democratic oversight through a dedicated body of Foundation Guardians. The focus of the Foundation has pivoted toward securing permanent financial stability to ensure ongoing care and support for Bhante Tejadhammo, while establishing a perpetual endowment capable of funding Buddhist monastics, lay teachers, and community outreach programs across Australia.

Key Accomplishments Summary

- **Constitutional Transition:** Successfully drafted, passed, and submitted a modernised constitution under the *Associations Incorporation Act 2009* (NSW), establishing a Guardian-led governance model and a streamlined three-member executive.
- **Real Property Valuation:** Commissioned an independent professional market valuation of the foundation's retreat centre, Vejjasala, located in Wingello, NSW, which assessed the property at \$1,900,000 (exclusive of GST) as of March 2026.
- **Proposed Asset Realisation:** Prepared Special Resolution 2 for the upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 25 October 2026, seeking Guardian

authorisation for the open-market sale of Vejjasala to establish a perpetual capital endowment.

- **Spiritual Director Care:** Provided ongoing medical, dental, and transportation support for Bhante Tejadhammo while continuing well-attended monthly Dana Days in Lewisham.

Governance Modernisation and Structural Restructure

The transition from a traditional public-membership association to a capital-funded foundation model reflects a strategic response to changing community demographics and volunteer availability. Over the past decade, active financial membership declined from approximately 200 members to 60 in 2025, and further to around 50 in 2026. Daily administrative overhead, financial accounting, property maintenance, and event coordination were increasingly concentrated among three to four individuals, creating an unsustainable operational model. Under legal guidance from Jefferson & Shea Legal, the Management Committee designed a new governance framework that minimises administrative friction while upholding rigorous regulatory standards.

Structure of the Guardian Model

- **Foundation Guardians:** The voting membership of the Foundation is capped at a statutory minimum of 5. The final 28 Guardians were drawn from current active members who annually affirm their written commitment to the charitable objects of the Foundation.
- **Guardian Oversight Powers:** Guardians hold exclusive voting rights over Special Resolutions requiring a 75% majority, including amendments to the Constitution, elections of the Management Committee, approval for the sale or mortgage of real property, and voluntary winding up.
- **Executive Committee:** Management of the Foundation is vested in a three-member Committee comprising the President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

Executive Appointments and Committee Composition

Following the passage of Special Resolution 1 at the 28 June 2026 SGM, the existing committee offices were vacated and elections were conducted immediately:

- **President:** Chris Burgess
- **Treasurer:** David Wilson
- **Secretary / Public Officer:** Dr. Kahren White
- **Key Volunteer Support:** Marie Delaney continues to assist the executive committee.
- Robert Ljubicic stepped down from the formal committee at the end of 2025 but continues to provide voluntary property maintenance support at Vejjasala.

Financial Position

The Foundation remains solvent with cash reserves held across general operational accounts and term deposits. However, the cessation of major fundraising events, such as historical Food Fairs, combined with declining membership subscriptions, resulted in continuous annual operating deficits. For more detail please refer to the Treasurer's report

Spiritual Director and Sangha Report

Despite ongoing serious health issues, Spiritual Director Venerable Tejadhammo (Bhante) continues to provide spiritual leadership, moral guidance, and pastoral care to the community.

Health Updates and Monastic Support

Bhante's physical capacity remains constrained by severe rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, polymyalgia rheumatica, and osteoporosis.

- **Medical Care and Procedures:** Over the reporting period, Bhante underwent lower jaw dental surgery and denture fitting, ongoing specialist rheumatology management, PET scans, and successful cataract surgery in February 2026.
- **Financial and Transport Provision:** The Foundation covers all of Bhante's medical, pharmaceutical, and surgical expenses. To ensure safe and reliable transport, the Foundation acquired a second-hand Toyota Yaris to replace his aging vehicle.

Community Programs and Teaching Schedule

- **Monthly Dana Days:** Dana Days continue on the final Sunday of each month at the Yanada Room in Lewisham. The events remain well-attended and serve as the main social and spiritual gathering point for the community.
- **Midweek Meditation Discontinuation:** Fortnightly Wednesday evening meditation classes in Lewisham were formally discontinued in late 2025 due to low attendance and Bhante's physical inability to maintain the teaching schedule.

Retreat Centre Operations: Vejjasala (Wingello, NSW)

Vejjasala is a residential retreat centre located on 14.87 hectares at 219 Forest Road, Wingello, NSW. Zoned C3 Environmental Management under the *Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan 2010*, the property comprises a large dwelling with multiple living areas, accommodation facilities, two kitchens, and supporting shedding.

Independent Market Valuation

In March 2026 the committee commissioned Knight Fram NSW Valuations & Advisory Pty Ltd to complete an independent valuation for internal asset reporting.

Table 1: Vejjasala Asset and Valuation

Property Attribute	Asset Specification and Details
Legal description	Lot 1 DP 850272 (14.19 Ha) & Lot 1 DP 1266114 (0.68 Ha)
Total land area	14.8723 Hectares (approx. 36.7 acres)
Independent valuation	\$1,900,000 (Exclusive of GST, Market Value 'As Is')
Valuation date and Author	11 March 2026; Paul Williams AAPI & Al Carpenter AAPI MRICS
Property inclusions	Fully furnished residence, appliances, ride-on mowers, and shed machinery

Proposed Property Sale

Special Resolution 2 for AGM: Recognising that ongoing property maintenance, rates, and insurance (\$12K annually) represent an unsustainable drain on limited volunteer and financial resources, the committee resolved to present Special Resolution 2 at the 25 October 2026 AGM. This resolution seeks Guardian authorisation for the open-market sale of Vejjasala.

Retreat Bookings and Facility Usage

Vejjasala continued to support internal and external retreat programs throughout 2025 and 2026:

- **Foundation Retreats:** October long-weekend retreat led by Grahame White.
- **External Community Hire:** Regular hire by external organisations, including Kookaburra Sangha, Metta Centre (Ajahn Liu), Kynan Tan (10-day and weekend silent retreats), and Sydney Jongbopsa (one-day mindfulness programmes).
- **Hire Rates:** Tariff structures were maintained at \$30/person/day for day visits and \$200 facility hire plus \$60/person/night for overnight residential bookings.

Facility Maintenance and Capital Upkeep

Ongoing physical maintenance at Wingello was coordinated primarily by David Wilson and Robert Ljubicic:

- **Fire Safety Inspections:** Annual fire safety inspection completed and fire extinguishers replaced.
- **Grounds Maintenance:** Servicing of ride-on mowers, clearing of storm-damaged trees, blackberry control, and hazard-reduction burn-offs arranged with the local Rural Fire Service (RFS).

- **Building Repairs:** Plumbing overhaul, servicing of wood-fire flues, and installation of blinds in the main kitchen.

Summary of Committee Decisions Taken

A consolidated summary of major formal decisions enacted by the Management Committee during the 2025–2026 operating year includes:

- **Constitutional Restructure:** Convened SGM on 28 June 2026 to repeal the 2001 Constitution, adopt the 2026 Foundation Constitution, and enact the name change to The Engaged Buddhists Foundation Incorporated.
- **Executive Election:** Confirmed election of Chris Burgess (President), David Wilson (Treasurer), and Dr. Kahren White (Secretary/Public Officer) as the three-member Management Committee.
- **Term Deposit Consolidation:** Approved the maturation and non-renewal of the \$104,733 building term deposit in July 2026,
- **Property Disposal Strategy:** Commissioned Knight Frank independent valuation (\$1.9M); ended off-market negotiations with Jongbopsa; and resolved to submit Special Resolution 2 for open-market sale of Vejjasala at the October 2026 AGM.
- **Regulatory Designations:** Resolved to submit Ordinary Resolution 1 at the October 2026 AGM to formally confirm ATO Public Officer and Primary Office Bearer roles.

Strategic Outlook and Conclusion

The restructuring of the Association of Engaged Buddhists into the Engaged Buddhists Foundation Incorporated establishes a clear path forward. By transitioning from a maintenance-heavy property model to a capital-funded endowment model, the Foundation addresses volunteer depletion and financial deficits.

This structure guarantees that Spiritual Director Venerable Tejadhammo remains fully supported throughout his retirement and medical treatment. Furthermore, it positions the Foundation to operate as an active grant-making charity, capable of funding monastics, lay teachers, chaplaincy initiatives, and Buddhist education for decades to come. **To achieve this outcome, the sale of our property Vejjasala needs to be the most important priority for the coming year.**

The Management Committee expresses its sincere appreciation to all Foundation Guardians, members, and volunteers for their ongoing support.

I would like to acknowledge the selfless and detailed work undertaken by the other Committee members, it is deeply appreciated:

- David Wilson as our Treasurer has simplified and structured our finances to simplify and streamline our operations, involving resolving many difficult and

time-consuming issues. He also continues to take primary responsibility for general maintenance and council compliance issues at Vejjasala.

- Dr Kahren White has devoted much time and effort, in particular after our constitutional change, to working through the various processes involved in transitioning from an Association to a Foundation, balancing this with a very busy workload of their own.
- Marie Delaney has spent significant periods at Vejjasala, helping to keep the property in peak condition, especially in regard to the cooking facilities and internal spaces.

Chris Burgess

President

Engaged Buddhists Foundation Inc.

Treasurer's Report

In the Financial Year 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026, Total Trading Income was \$38,441.98 and our Operating expenses were \$95,100.10, giving a loss of \$56,658.12.

Major costs were:

- Living expenses, \$43,821.51
- Medical expenses \$20,638.55
- Insurances \$11,095.46

In the Financial Year to date (1 July 2026 - present), our Trading Income has been \$114,652.25 (about \$105K due to the closing and transfer of the Term Deposit into the General account).

Operating expenses have been \$11,935.88, giving a net 'profit' of \$102,716.37, which is actually a small loss as it is less than the Term deposit transfer.

Major costs have been Living expenses, \$5,089.43, Medical expenses \$2,767.08, and repairs and maintenance \$1,374.71.

Retreats income (our major income) was \$18,287.28 last financial year (FY25-26), and \$3,800.00 so far this financial year (FY26-27).

Our situation continues to be one of gradual decline, mirroring the reduction of member numbers and associated reduced activity, despite the extensive efforts of the Committee to revitalise the organisation following the loss of Sangha Lodge.

The continued support of our regular donors is very appreciated, but there is an old saying...."how did you go bankrupt? First gradually then suddenly!"

The Foundation is now in a situation where we are required to transfer funds from the General account in order to pay the monthly Visa account which covers most Living and Medical expenses.

In order to continue the desired activities of the Foundation it is necessary to achieve the sale of our Retreat Centre Vejjasala, as difficult as this might be.

Profit & Loss Statements, etc will be available for viewing at the Annual General Meeting, and I will be available to take questions.

David Wilson FRAIA

Treasurer

Engaged Buddhist Foundation Inc.