

BUDDHIST COUNCIL OF QUEENSLAND INC. (IA29696)

*An Umbrella Organization Representing Buddhists and
Buddhist Groups And Institutions In Queensland* ABN 69 825 774 318

-- Affiliated Member of the Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils Inc. --

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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE 2007 BUDDHIST EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND PROGRAM'S FIRST WORKSHOP – Held on Sunday, December 17, 2006 at Chung Tian Temple, Underwood.

A well attended gathering of several dharma centres and temples was held, thanks to the kindness of the Buddha's Light International Association of Queensland at Chung Tian Temple at Underwood.

Representatives from all the traditions of Buddhism in Queensland were present and an open and meaningful discussion of subjects relating to the provision of Buddhist education in Queensland schools was achieved.

Initiated by Ms Kwee Choo some weeks ago, the movement to establish a formalised structure of a unified syllabus, accredited training and certification for volunteer teachers and aides has been gaining momentum.

The workshop commenced with an introduction to the day's program by Brother John Cartwright (*Director of BLIAQ and high school teacher*) who also later provided an explanation of the education system that applies in Queensland – a plan of that is included herein.

Jim Ferguson (*President of the Buddhist Council of Queensland*) then gave a brief explanation of the Qld. government's legislation and how it affects Religious Instruction in schools, and therefore its impact on Buddhist education. Aside from the legal issues, including that non-teachers must have a Blue Card as well as a formal Letter of Authority and an Issued Right-of-Entry, he also highlighted the need that we must have the parent's formal desire for Buddhist education to be given to each school's Principal, who must then provide it.

The workshop then heard from Ven. Ani Lozang Chopel, who has helped collate the course materials and teaching manuals, who then gave a summary of the focus of the program – that it must be non-sectarian, uniform across the state and in a graded form that can be applied year by year to students as they progress through primary school and into high school. She also stressed the need for centres and temples to urgently encourage their own members to become volunteer teachers and to apply for Blue Cards as soon as possible – free for volunteers through an established group such as ours!

The first part of the day concluded with a chance for networking, reviewing the course materials and the opportunity to discuss issues informally. Lunch was then generously donated by Chung Tian for all participants.

After lunch, the focus shifted to that of structure for the B.E.Q. program. Jim Ferguson gave a presentation that proposed a structure giving sangha the ultimate say about content, with effective management of all functions to be delivered at and by centre/temple-level, due to their pre-existing strong foundations, and for the *Buddhist Council of Qld Inc.* to contribute liaison, communication and promotion resources. His PowerPoint presentation is included herewith and available for downloading and viewing from the Council's website. Brother John added that the *Qld Education Dept.* had already indicated that they would only liaise with the Council as the state's Buddhist representative body.

Following a well supported Question & Answer period, the workshop moved on to appointing the people to guide the teaching program, the training program outline and venues (with the intention of both sharing the

load and opening the doors of fellowship to all groups simultaneously) and re-affirming the commitment of everyone to making this auspicious venture a successful one and that it will grow through the coming years.

To summarise these outcomes, please note the following important details:

1. The Training Program to be offered to all dharma students prepared to volunteer as Teachers and/or Aides:
(Please note that all prospective teachers are expected to have a sound knowledge of the dharma)

Session 1 of 3: Saturday - January 13 - 9:30am to 4:00pm

Phat Da Monastery – 36 Deodar Street, Inala 4077 (UBD page 218 G3)

Introduction to B.E.Q. Syllabus and Introduction to Pedagogy (the HOW of Teaching)

Session 2 of 3: Sunday - January 21 - 9:30am to 4:00pm

Karuna Hospice Service – 27 Cartwright St, Windsor 4030 (UBD page 140 A17)

Qld, Education Dept Pedagogy Tuition and very brief Role Plays and Group Work

Session 3 of 3: Sunday - January 28 - 9:30am to 4:00pm

Sri Lanka Monastery – 114 Considine St, Ellen Grove 4077 (UBD page 217 P17)

Extended Role Plays and Group Work – getting used to the classroom and Lesson Planning etc.

The above venues are still subject to confirmation but are highly probable and changes will be notified to all people registering for the course. A certificate of completion will be awarded at the end of the course.

2. **Mr Rahu Sarath-Chandra** has been appointed as the *Teaching Co-ordinator* for the Program.

3. The following people have been nominated as the *Program Teaching Representatives* for these traditions:

Japanese Zen	..	..	Minister James Wilson
Korean Zen	..	..	Master Sen Shin
PureLand	..	..	Ven. Wu Chin
PureLand Ch'an	..	..	Brother John Cartwright
Theravada	..	..	Mr Jaya Dharmasiri
Tibetan Mahayana	..	..	Dr Anne Nguyen
Vietnamese Mahayana	..	..	Mr. Linh Bui
Vietnamese Zen	..	..	Ms Thanh Le

4. An inaugural meeting of these representatives is to be held at the home of Ven. Lozang Chopel at 66 Poinsettia Street, Inala (UBD page 218 F8) at 7:00pm – phone 3879 1998, when the syllabus will be discussed in more detail and other relevant issues open to a forum discussion. Please support this meeting.

5. To propose and elect the membership of the Administration Team it is proposed to hold the **Inaugural General Meeting** of the **Buddhist Education Team** on Monday, January 15 at 7:00pm at the *Amitabha Buddhist Association of Queensland* at 11 Toona Place, Calamvale 4116 (UBD page 220 H19).

All dharma centres, temples, groups and interested people who are dedicated to the establishment and promotion of this Program are invited to attend, register their support and participate in the election of the positions of *Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Vice Chair, Training Officer, Community Relations Officer, Member/s* and any others that may be deemed necessary. Not all positions may be filled or needed in the early stages, but consideration shall be given to all proposals. Consideration of a *Constitution* or *Charter* shall also be examined and the final organization structure confirmed.

This is a state-wide initiative and accordingly all centres and temples are invited to both contribute ideas, nominate representatives, and/or persons to fill the above positions and to attend in person these training sessions and the General Meeting. If you wish to propose a person for a position and/or vote on such matters, you are asked to provide your preferences in writing on your group's official letterhead, together your affirmation of commitment to the advancement of this Program, no later than Friday, January 12, 2007 to any of the centres/temples mentioned above, the *Council's* Post Office or other groups that you are aware will be attending in person. Such third party will be deemed to be your proxy if all these requirements have been met for the purpose of the **Inaugural General Meeting**.

In closing, it was suggested that participating members use the free internet communications program – Skype – as the preferred means of voice contact since it is effectively free for unlimited voice calls.

For those who were unable to attend this very productive workshop, you can see from the above that much was achieved. There is still much more that needs to be done and in such a very limited timeframe. If you have the enthusiasm and time to become involved, you will be most welcomed, and especially if you are, or know someone who will be, available to become one of our Program’s teachers in the state school system, we want to hear from you urgently and to assist you/them in obtaining a **Blue Card** quickly and become a part of this wonderful initiative that will help promote the dharma to the future generations of Queenslanders.

With Metta and O Mi To Fo

Jim Ferguson
President – Buddhist Council of Queensland Inc.

Brother John’s Explanation of Education Qld’s System:

