

## 2017 Nzbc Chairperson's AGM Report

*Ven. Amala Wrightson*

The NZBC's purpose is to act as an umbrella group for Buddhist organisations in New Zealand, so we can work together on issues we have in common and help each other out where possible. To do this we need to respond to the needs of our members, communicate effectively, and run the Council efficiently.

In the past year our activities have included:

- Responding to inquiries from members for assistance (eg. legal matters), the general public, governmental and non-governmental bodies.
- Informing our members about issues of interest to Buddhist communities (e.g. rates relief for properties used for religious purposes, new charities reporting standards, new health and safety laws)
- 5 Executive Committee meetings
- Working to make the functioning of the Executive Committee more efficient, including getting all our data into one place -- a difficult year with responsibilities too dispersed -- but now consolidated. Fern has spent many hours learning our new CRM programme and the database is in much better shape.
- Providing speakers and or participants for interfaith activities e.g. Ecie attended and made a presentation at an Interfaith Chaplaincy Conference in Dunedin last December. Amala joined an Advisory Panel to Auckland Interfaith Council.
- Upgrading the platform of the NZBC website now completed, with inclusion of the Council's aims in the main languages spoken by Buddhists in New Zealand -- live now with 8 languages besides English (Korean, Thai, Mandarin, Simplified Chinese, Sinhala, Cambodian, Burmese and Vietnamese).
- Surveying the needs of NZ Buddhist organisations has not advanced in the past year due to shortage of volunteers. We aim to revive this project in the coming year.
- Simon made a submission to the IRD on rules for Donee Organisations receiving funds and donating overseas. The results not yet published.
- Offering a level one Chaplaincy Course in conjunction with Amitabha Hospice for 19 participants last weekend. Ecie reports it was very well received. Critical mass has not yet been reached for people ready to proceed to level two. Derek Le Dayne from the Diamond Sangha in Wellington looked into NZQA certification for us but it has onerous

compliance standards that are very expensive to implement. It does not see like a viable option for us at this stage -- better to continue to offer frontline services.

- Vesak at Parliament did not happen in 2017 -- lead person in Wellington, Gamini Settinayake, withdrew because of a family health crisis. Amala was also in retreat for 3 months last year, so unavailable at a time critical for organising the event. We will discuss at next Exec meeting -- have to focus our energies and be realistic about our ability to organise events at a distance.

In the upcoming year, we aim to continue with all of the above. Next year will be our 10th anniversary. We will explore how we can celebrate this milestone. Interested to hear from our members. Biggest single issue for the Council is communication -- getting our message out to the right people and getting responses back. Relationships are forged slowly and one at a time.

Thank you to all those who have helped out this year and especially to:

- Rukman (Vice Chairperson) also and a leader in many fields including championing mindfulness in schools, organising English classes for monks, Sunday School teacher education, and coming up soon, a first aid course for ordained Sangha and practice leaders.
- Simon -- our conscientious Treasurer and provider of long-distance communication at meetings.
- Fern -- Coordinating Secretary, has taken on multiple secretarial duties and put in many hours to organise meetings, send out notices and create a useable database.
- Sally -- creates Updates and makes changes to website -- many thanks for her years as Coordinating Secretary, now passed on to Fern.
- Ecie -- much work put into the Buddhist Chaplaincy programme.
- Ven. Gyalten -- thanks for generously hosting most of our meetings at DCI.
- Peter -- networking in Dunedin and now helping with the website.
- Dhanika -- thanks for continuing with Membership Secretary duties in challenging circumstances after moving to Australia.
- Gamini -- sending metta to him and wishing for his wife's speedy recovery from surgery.
- Chris -- not continuing -- many thanks for supporting the Council, farewell and best wishes for the major mindfulness conference he is organising at AUT for 2019
- Robert Hunt and Pimmy Takdhada in Christchurch, no longer on committee but continuing to support us with IT work

Thank you also to our members for supporting the Council through subscriptions, and a special thank you to Abbot Young San Sunim, Jun, and Namkook Temple members for graciously hosting our meeting today.

1 July 2017