

Buddhist Education Services for Schools Inc. (BESS)
**Promoting universal values for living together in peace and
harmony for the happiness, health, and prosperity of all**



President's Message

The first term of the 2023 school year seems to have flown by and there are only 4 four weeks left now. The Lesson Development Team's (LDT) work is flying off the computers, and so, we are launching the first year of the planned four-year cycle of lessons. This is a significant moment in the history of BESS, and the team has put in many hours of work.

We are grateful to be able to trial this first cycle of lessons in Ironside State School. Ironside is in the unique position where we can offer our full program of foundational lessons -- *Who Was the Buddha*, and *What is Buddhism* -- to all year groups simultaneously. This is simply because ALL the students at Ironside are new to our program as the school has only recently re-introduced RI. All other schools are at various stages, making it impossible to introduce a completely new program concurrently. The revised program also lays the groundwork for understanding and practicing meditation, axial to Buddhism.

To hear more about all of this, I encourage you all to join us at the **AGM on April 1 at Langri Tangpa Dharma Center, starting at 11am start**, followed by lunch at the Antique Center.

With much regret, I believe most of you will be aware of the recent newspaper headlines and media articles regarding RI, and questioning whether it should remain in schools in its present format. BESS is a member of the Multi Faith Network (MFN) in Queensland that was founded a few years ago to encourage the Government to keep RI in schools, and during curriculum time. This is now an extremely divisive issue that is pushing the MFN to its limits.

As co-chair of the network together with David Baker of the Uniting Church, I have seen how all the efforts to present the positive power of the presence of faith groups in schools have been ignored by the media. They are only focused on salacious and ugly news to sell their paper, to all our detriment.

I must assure you all that I have distanced BESS from these arguments. Our teachers have been exemplary in delivering our lesson content and are enjoying strong support and positive feedback from the school community. Sadly, I'm sure the RI saga in Queensland will continue for a while and may even escalate.

The outcome is far from clear. But we will continue to share the wisdom of the Buddha with the children for the benefit of all sentient beings, in the hope that some of that wisdom will benefit those who sorely need it.

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With metta.
Venerable Tseten
President

TEACHERS' NEWS

New Teachers

Our new teachers, Sue Sim and Liam Howells, are settling well into the mentorship program at Ironside State School. Jeff Brunne has his own class and is enjoying teaching Year 3 at West End State School.

Lesson Planning Committee

As mentioned above, the LPC has raced ahead restructuring/rewriting existing lessons into our new format, as well as adding new lessons and books to complement the teachings. Since we first started formally writing lessons, our experiential learning and observations/feedback from our teachers, have helped us to fine-tune and tailor the lessons to our students' intellect and capability levels.

We have found the teachers' connection and engagement with their class are invaluable in the transmission and understanding of the Dharma. It is perhaps fair to say that our lessons are relevant and relatable to our young students, and hopefully make a difference in their lives.

Social Events



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The LPC enjoyed a sumptuous lunch at Sirromet Winery at Mt Cotton, courtesy of Lyna Chen. The venue’s ambience so inspired us that we have decided to hold our late spring teachers’ get-together at the Winery.

The date is set for Saturday, May 6, when the weather will hopefully be milder and more stable. It will give us a chance to kick back and enjoy each other’s company in convivial surroundings and silver service. The menu will be preset, with an opportunity to nominate dietary requirements. Partners are invited and BESS will ‘shout’ our teachers.

As the AGM approaches, it is timely to remind that subscriptions are now due, so that you will be financial members and can cast your vote or support the election of committee members and office bearers.

Other dates to note:

Meeting	Date	Time	Venue
Teachers Meeting	18 th March	10.00am – 4.00pm	Garden Room Tri Care
Term 2 Teachers Meeting	15 th April	10.00am – 4.00pm	Garden Room Tri Care
Busy Bee Bodhi Leaves	29 th April	10.00am – Finish	Garden Room Tri Care
Spring Lunch	6 th May	11.00am-2.00pm	Sirromet Winery

In previous years, Petra Depalo prepared the bodhi leaves that were used as during the Bathing the Baby Buddha ceremonies with the various schools. However, this year, we will conduct a Working Busy Bee so our teachers participate as well.

Please bring a lunch to share and any equipment that might be helpful, e.g. laminator, scissors, hole punch.

At this point, we do not have any dates from the schools but we will be well-prepared.

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Finally, we have saved the best for last – **Film Night**...! BESS has organised to show the movie *Luana: A Yak in the Classroom*. The film is an Oscar-nominated movie set in a remote school in Bhutan – a country that has introduced the term “Gross National Happiness” declaring it more important than Gross Domestic Product, as “GDP can’t deliver happiness and well-being.”

We have booked the New Farm Cinemas for 8 June @7pm. Details will be up shortly on our Facebook page and tickets can be booked through Eventbrite.

We are tremendously excited about this, and trust that in addition to raising funds for BESS, the event will raise our profile and interest in our programme.

2023 promises to be an eventful and interesting year – we thank you for your support and enthusiasm in sharing the Dharma in the community.

May you have the causes and conditions for a successful and rewarding year!

With metta

Tracey Chin

Editor