

# *Theosophy* IN AUSTRALIA

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**INSIDE** Reincarnation in Judaism and Christianity  
National President's Annual Report  
2022 Australian Convention Business Meeting  
Vale - Dawn Kagan  
Education Report

## **INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS:**

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**The Theosophical Society** welcomes students or seekers from all walks of life, belonging to any religion or to none and who are in sympathy with its Objects. It was formed to assist in showing to people that Theosophy exists, and 'to ascend towards it by studying and assimilating its eternal verities'. Wisdom is known by a mind that is completely open. Therefore freedom of thought and open enquiry are given special emphasis in the Society. **Theosophy** essentially refers to 'Divine Wisdom', Sacred Knowledge, which is a transcendent state of consciousness. In a secondary sense, Theosophy is an ancient yet distinct stream of enquiry, exploring and interpreting the truths of existence in terms suited to particular ages, e.g. in the teachings of ancient India, ancient China, Platonism, Neoplatonism, and, since 1875, through the contribution of the TS. At the core of Theosophy is the principle of indivisible Unity underlying the diversity of forms.

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### Mission Statement of the Theosophical Society

To serve humanity by cultivating an ever-deepening understanding and realisation of the Ageless Wisdom, spiritual self-transformation, and the Unity of all Life.

## From the National President

Stephen McDonald



In the minds of most people, reincarnation is a concept derived from Eastern religion. In his well-researched article, Ian Ellis-Jones presents evidence to support the idea that reincarnation was, at one time, just as well known in the Judeo-Christian world. After this thought-provoking article, the remainder of this issue of the T in A is predominantly devoted to my annual report and various business items and notices, which have to be delivered to members.

The Australian Convention Business Meeting (ACBM) is an important meeting to attend. Many of us find business meetings tedious, however it is a requirement under our rules and an opportunity for service by each of us to keep the wheels of our organisation turning. This year the ACBM will be held online via Zoom. If we had held a full convention in 2022 the theme was going to be “The Vision and the Way”. After the business part of the meeting, and keeping with that theme, we have decided to offer two short talks and a group discussion about the direction in which the TS is heading. We would

like to listen to you, the members, about your ideas and views to help guide us in planning and direction over the next 1 – 3 years.

This ACBM will be one of the most important in many years. A vote will be taken to incorporate the TS in Australia and adopt a new constitution. This move, which will involve minimal changes to our rules, is a legal requirement for an organisation of our size. Your support by attending your Lodge/Branch Convention Business Meeting and voting to adopt the new constitution is vital. Your Lodge/Branch delegates will then be able to cast the votes at the ACBM.

One final reminder. This year the 146th International Convention of the Theosophical Society will be held online from 27 – 30 December. At a quiet time between Christmas and the New Year, you can feast on a myriad of talks and forums, which are centred on the theme “Living in the Now: Challenges of the Inner Life”. You can find more information about the key speakers and register for the convention at <https://tsconvention.com/>

## Reincarnation in Judaism and Christianity

Dr Ian Ellis-Jones

This article is a condensed version of an address delivered by the author in 2021 to both Blavatsky Lodge and the Northern Beaches Group of the Australian Section.

### Introduction

Contrary to the assertions made by many conventional Christians, the testimony of the Bible suggests a general belief in the doctrine of rebirth both before and at the time of Jesus. Reincarnation<sup>1</sup> was and remains to this day an open belief in Judaism.

### Reincarnation in Judaism

References to reincarnation can be found to reincarnation in the works of the great Jewish historian Josephus,<sup>2</sup> showing that belief in the doctrine was common among Palestinian Jews in the time of Jesus and otherwise.<sup>3</sup> The idea of reincarnation has been believed in, and even approved, by heads of the religion.<sup>4</sup> Philo Judaeus, a Jewish student of Plato, evolved a complete system of pre-existence and reincarnation and refers in various of his writings to re-embodiment in one or another form.<sup>5</sup> Porphyry, a Jewish

Neo-Platonist, believed in and wrote on reincarnation.<sup>6</sup>

Belief in reincarnation was common among Palestinian Jews at the time of Jesus, namely, the Essenes,<sup>7</sup> the Nazarenes<sup>8</sup> and the Pharisees,<sup>9</sup> and references to reincarnation abound in the classic Kabbalistic text, the Zohar (the Book of Splendour).



Title page of the first printed edition of the Zohar, Mantua, 1558.  
Library of Congress - Wikimedia Commons

Some of the more important references and allusions to reincarnation in the Jewish Bible – the Old Testament of the Christian Bible – shall be discussed below in the context of Christianity.

### **Reincarnation in Christianity**

At the very least, the ideas of reincarnation and pre-existence of the soul are alluded to or implicit, in several parts of the Bible<sup>10</sup> even though some of the verses in question are susceptible to more than one interpretation.

A dispassionate consideration of the Biblical texts makes three things clear: first, reincarnation was, at all material times, a current idea and belief; secondly, Jesus and his followers accepted or at least were aware of reincarnation; and, thirdly, nowhere in the Bible is the idea of reincarnation denied or criticised. Indeed, some statements and stories in the Bible only make sense if a reincarnationist approach to their interpretation is adopted.

Jesus never repudiated, condemned or denied the concept of reincarnation. He never taught that the concept was false, despite having had the opportunity to do so on several occasions. Indeed, Jesus's unequivocal statement attesting to the absolute identity between Elijah and John the Baptist<sup>11</sup> (discussed below) is seen by many

as inescapable evidence of belief by Jesus in, and acceptance and even teaching of, the idea of reincarnation.<sup>12</sup>

Many early Christians believed in reincarnation, and reincarnation has never been declared heretical by any general or universal council of the Church<sup>13</sup> nor condemned in any creed accepted by any such council. Indeed, the early Church generally accepted reincarnation until the 2nd Council of Constantinople.

At the Synod of Constantinople in 543 AD there was an Edict of Justinian against Origen's distinctive view of pre-existence.<sup>14</sup> Origen believed there were not just different 'stages' of the soul's existence but also a potentially infinite or near-infinite succession of ages before and after this one (a 'multi-age' reincarnation theory). The condemnation of Origen's views referred only to a very peculiar form of the doctrine of pre-existence, implying the fall of perfect spirits who had already reached heaven.

The Edict of Justinian against Origen's distinctive view of pre-existence was later confirmed by Pope Vigilius.<sup>15</sup> At the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 AD,<sup>16</sup> which was only a local church council<sup>17</sup> attended mostly by Eastern bishops, the condemnation of Origen's view of pre-existence is said to have been reconfirmed.<sup>18</sup> However,

the original Greek acts of the Second Council are lost. The records that do exist make no mention of the debate over Origen. In any event, the Council of Constantinople didn't actually condemn the concept of reincarnation or rebirth per se.<sup>19</sup> Its concern was to proclaim the doctrine of special creation.



Dutch illustration by Jan Luyken (1700), showing Origen teaching his students - Wikimedia Commons

On the subject of reincarnation itself, Origen (185-254 AD) says in *De Principis* that in the body each soul enjoys that lot which is most exactly suited to his previous habits. In *Contra Celsum* Origen asks, 'Is it not more in conformity with reason that every Soul ... is introduced into a body ... according to its deserts and former actions?' He also affirms the soul's migration from one body to the next.<sup>20</sup> Justin Martyr (100-167 AD), who

was the greatest authority on Church history up to the middle of the second century, expressly speaks of the Soul's inhabiting more than one human body.

Saint Gregory of Nyssa (329-389) also embraced reincarnation, writing, 'It is absolutely necessary that the Soul should be healed and purified, and if this does not take place during its life on Earth, it must be accomplished in future lives.'<sup>21</sup>

Saint Jerome (340-420 AD), in his *Epistle to Avitus*, wrote that 'the doctrine of transmigration has been secretly taught from ancient times to small numbers of people, as a traditional truth which was not to be divulged'.<sup>22</sup>

Arnobius Rufinus (345-410 AD), a Numidian apologist of Christianity wrote that Saint Clement of Alexandria (150-215 AD), who brought the culture and philosophy of the Greeks to the Christian Church and was the teacher of Origen, had written a most important account of metempsychosis.<sup>23</sup> Clement apparently taught that reincarnation was 'a truth transmitted by tradition and authorized by St Paul himself'.<sup>24</sup>

Saint Augustine (354-430 AD), in his *Confessions*, asks: 'Did I not live in another body, or somewhere else, before entering my mother's womb?'<sup>25</sup>

## Elijah and John the Baptist

In the Old Testament the prophets foretell the reappearance of one of themselves.<sup>26</sup> More specifically, the Jewish people were expecting Elijah to reincarnate ‘before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.’<sup>27</sup> This prophecy is fulfilled in the New Testament.

Saint Luke tells of the conception of John the Baptist as promised by the angel to the future father, Zacharias. Elizabeth, his wife, he was told, would conceive and bear a son.<sup>28</sup> Although advanced in years, Elizabeth conceived and according to ancient prophecy John was born, as a forerunner of the Lord, sent in the spirit and power of Elijah.

In the midst of his ministry, as Matthew’s gospel records, Jesus, speaking of John the Baptist, said, ‘And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah, who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.’<sup>29</sup> Jesus thus makes a clear and unequivocal statement that John the Baptist was the reincarnation of Elijah.

Mark, in his gospel, states:

**And they asked Him, ‘Why do the scribes say that Elijah must first come?’**

**He answered, ‘Elijah indeed comes first to restore all things. Yet how**

**is it written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come, and they have done to him whatever they wished, as it is written of him.’<sup>30</sup>**

Again, the language is unequivocal. Elijah, who had been translated to heaven many centuries before, has returned to earth as John the Baptist, assuming a new physical body displaying certain characteristics of his previous incarnation, particularly ruggedness of appearance and ‘a girdle of leather about his loins.’<sup>31</sup>

## Jesus as a reincarnation of John the Baptist, Elijah or Jeremiah

Jesus himself was seen by some to be a reincarnation of John the Baptist, or the prophet Elijah, or the prophet Jeremiah.<sup>32</sup> Herod himself thought that Jesus was John the Baptist reincarnated.<sup>33</sup> This is a further indication of just how widespread was the idea of reincarnation and the expectation that Elijah would reincarnate. The writer of Luke’s gospel similarly reports that people thought that Jesus was John the Baptist resurrected, or a reincarnation of Elijah or one of the old prophets.<sup>34</sup>

## The man born blind

This is also made obvious in the instance of the man born blind:



As Jesus passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked Him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'

Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned. But it happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.'<sup>35</sup>



Healing of the Blind Man by Jesus Christ  
Carl Bloch - Wikimedia Commons

The question as to whether the man himself had sinned and in consequence had been born sightless shows the clear thought that justice demanded that the transgression should have occurred in a physical body. As this could only have happened in a former life on earth, belief in reincarnation is implicit in the question. Jesus's answer appears to deny rebirth, but the passage is susceptible to more than one interpretation.

The question asked of Jesus implies belief in, or at least knowledge of, reincarnation on the part of the questioners, and the answer given by Jesus by no means implies denial of the truth of that doctrine. Indeed, it seems to concede the point, for the disciples weren't rebuked nor was the implication denied. Jesus' response made it clear that in this particular case the man's blindness was not the result of prenatal sin<sup>36</sup> but rather the blind man's soul which is undergoing a pilgrimage toward perfection in order, as Jesus said, that 'the works of God might be displayed [made manifest (KJV)] in him.'

### The sins of the father

In the second commandment, God is made to say that he visits 'the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.'<sup>37</sup> Those who hold the doctrine of reincarnation sometimes speak of the personalities of previous lives as the 'parents' of those which follow, somewhat in the same sense in which a proverb states, 'The boy is father to the man.'

### The attainment of perfection

Jesus said to his followers, 'Therefore be perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.'<sup>38</sup> To attain perfection in but one human lifetime is beyond most, if not all, of us. In the original Greek and in the Revised

Version of the Bible, we read, ‘Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.’ Then there is this verse:

‘Truly I say to you, you will by no means come out of there until you have paid the last penny.’<sup>39</sup>

There are many more verses and passages in the Bible that are suggestive of reincarnation.<sup>40</sup> I will finish with this verse from the Book of Revelation.

The verse provides very strong support for the view that reincarnation is taught in the Bible:

He who overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My own new name.<sup>41</sup>

## References

1. Gilgul ha'neshamot, in Hebrew (literally, the recycling or transmigration of souls, also known as metempsychosis).
2. Titus Flavius Josephus (37-c100).
3. See *Antiquitates Iudaicae* 18:1:2-4; *De Bello Judaico* 2:8:14, 3:8:5.
4. See Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel, *Nishmath Hayem*, cited in M P Hall, *Reincarnation: The Cycle of Necessity* (Los Angeles: The Philosophical Research Society, 1956), 80-81.
5. See M P Hall, *Reincarnation: The Cycle of Necessity*, 82.
6. *Ibid.*
7. A few scholars (in particular, Barbara Thiering) have claimed that Jesus was an Essene. The Essenes were a mystical community who lived by the Dead Sea. They preserved the Dead Sea Scrolls.
8. A mystical sect in Syria. Other such sects in Syria, namely, the Therapeutae, the Gebers and the Johnanites, accepted various forms of the doctrine of rebirth.
9. ‘The idea of pre-existence, as well as former lives on earth, was a common belief among the Pharisees at the time of Jesus.’ C Hampton, *Reincarnation: A Christian Doctrine* (Los Angeles CA: The St Alban Press, 1925), 17. According to some Jewish theologians and rabbis (for example, Sydney’s Rabbi Raymond Apple) Jesus was a Pharisee. The Pharisees were the largest Jewish group at the time of Jesus.
10. See, eg, Gn 28:12 (‘Jacob’s ladder’); Ex 20:5; Dt 33:6; Jb 1:21, 9:21, 14:14; Is 22:14, 53:9, 65:6; Ps 90:3, 121:8, 126:6; Pr 8:22-31; Ec 1:4, 6:6, 41:8-9; Ws 8:19-20; Si 41:11-12; Je 30:9; Mt 5:26 (cf Lk 12:59), 11:7-15, 16:13 ff (cf Lk 9:18 ff), 17:1-13; Mk 9:11-13 (cf Mt 17:12); Lk 9:7-8; Jn 3:3, 8:58, 9:1 ff; Ro 1:3-4, 9:10-13; Ga 4:18-20, 6:7; Ep 4:13; 2 Ti 2:8; Hb 12:23; Re 3:12.
11. See Mt 11:14; cf Mk 9:13.
12. See also Mt 17:11-12.
13. G Nevin Drinkwater, a Liberal Catholic priest, writing in the journal *The Liberal Catholic*, cited in L D Weatherhead, *The Case for Reincarnation* (Tadworth, Surrey,

England: M C Peto, 1958), 4-5, fn 1.

14. See W Lutoslawski, *Pre-existence and Reincarnation* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1928).

15. W Lutoslawski, *Pre-existence and Reincarnation*, cited in M P Hall, *Reincarnation: The Cycle of Necessity*, 93.

16. The 5th Ecumenical Council.

17. This means that its decisions were not universally binding.

18. By a vote of 3 to 2.

19. See Robertson, *Church History I:157*; Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church IV:223 ff*.

20. See *De principiis III:5:4* and *Contra Celsus I:32*.

21. See M P Hall, *Reincarnation: The Cycle of Necessity*, 91.

22. Cf Letter CXXX, to Demetrius, 16. Jerome declared that reincarnation was taught as an esoteric mystery in the early church, being communicated only to a few specially selected members of the congregation: see Hieronim, *Epistola ad Demetr*. See also J Head and S L Cranston (eds), *Reincarnation: An East-West Anthology* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1968), 38.

23. See M P Hall, *Reincarnation: The Cycle of Necessity*, 91.

24. *Ibid*.

25. *Confessions I:6*.

26. See *Is 40:3* and *Ma 4:5*. Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible passages quoted are from *The Holy Bible, Modern English Version*.

27. See *Jl 2:31*, cited in *Ac 2:20*.

28. *Lk 1:17*.

29. *Mt 11:14*. See also *Mt 17:12* and *Mk 9:11-13*.

30. *Mk 9:11-13*.

31. *2 Ki 1:8* and *Mt 3:4*.

32. *Mt 16:13-14*. There is also a Kabbalistic tradition that Jesus was the reincarnation of King Solomon: see M P Hall, *Reincarnation: The Cycle of Necessity*, 85.

33. *Mt 14:2*.

34. *Lk 9:7-9*.

35. *Jn 9:1-3*.

36. This is the view of Laurence W Burt, a former regionary bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church. See L W Burt, *Do the Dead Suffer?* (Adyar, Chennai, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1954), 116.

37. *Ex 20:5*.

38. *Mt 5:48*. See also *He 12:23* ('and to the spirits of just men made perfect').

39. *Mt 5:26*.

40. See, eg, *Wi 8:19-20*, *Ec 1:4*, 6:6.

41. *Re 3:12*.



Dr Ian Ellis-Jones is a retired lawyer and academic and the author or co-author of several books on the law. He is a member of Blavatsky Lodge in Sydney as well as the Northern Beaches Group. His interests and lecture topics include the mystery religions, mythology and the inner meaning of fairy tales.

# The National President's Annual Report

1 JULY 2020 TO 30 JUNE 2021

## **Preamble**

Presented in the pages that follow is my Annual Report to the members of the Australian Section. As you are aware, my first term as National President commenced in January 2021 and this report reflects part of the work achieved by our former National President, Linda Oliveira in the second half of 2020. I would like to express my gratitude for the encouraging words of support that I have received since starting my three-year term of office. In the face of all the challenges that the Covid restrictions have placed on the activities of our Section, the Lodges, Branches and Groups have continued to work in innovative ways to create solutions for communicating the messages that the Theosophical Society brings to the world. This report will summarise some of those activities, which have varied depending on the conditions experienced in different parts of this country.

## **NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

### **National President**

In the second half of 2020, former National President, Linda Oliveira,

undertook a range of duties, which included: presenting a talk at the online International Convention; attending the online meeting of the General Council in December; organising (with the National Secretary) the 2021 Australian Convention Business Meeting at the Women's College at Sydney University, including the inauguration of the new National President; arranging the venue for the 2023 Convention in Adelaide; editing two editions of *Theosophy in Australia* magazine in September and November; preparation of comprehensive guidelines and handover for the new National President; and numerous other administrative and representative tasks, including participating on the National Council and chairing meetings of the National Executive Committee.

My term of office started at the end of January, 2021. My induction was greatly facilitated by the excellent guidelines and electronic files supplied to me by the former National President and by the ongoing mentorship of the National Secretary. Much of the work

of the National President was quieter than usual because of various Covid restrictions that have been in place in the different states. It was not possible to organise a School of Theosophy at Springbrook in April or any events at Canyonleigh during the reporting year. Planning for the National Convention in Perth in 2022 was aborted after the lockdown commenced in NSW in late June. Work on the National Lecturer Program was also truncated.

Opportunities for travel during this reporting year have been greatly restricted by the conditions of the Covid 19 pandemic. In early 2021, I was able to give talks at Blavatsky Lodge and at Newcastle Lodge. During a short window in May 2021, the National Secretary, Dara Tattray and I were able to visit Melbourne Lodge for the opening of their new premises in Flinders Lane. At a well-attended celebration on White Lotus Day, we gave short talks and were able to meet with members and their committee to discuss the way forward. In June, Sydney went into lockdown, which prevented further travel to be undertaken, including within NSW. Despite difficult international circumstances, our former National President, Linda Oliveira was able to represent the TS in Australia at the meeting of the General Council in December 2020, which was held by

Zoom. I was also able to attend the General Council meeting by Zoom in June 2021.

The following is a summary of my main additional duties within this Section during the reporting period:

Preliminary work on a draft program for the National Convention to be held in Perth in 2022. Providing input into the development of the new draft company constitution. Planning and preliminary organising for National Lecturer tours. Editing and production of two issues of *Theosophy in Australia* (T in A), in consultation with the Editorial Committee. Input into an update of the Orientation Toolkit for use by Lodge/Branch and Group committees. Member of the National Council. Member and Chair of the National Executive Committee. Director and Chair of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust. Membership of several working committees. Ongoing liaison with TS centres around the Section, as well as dealing with a significant amount of correspondence.

### **National Council**

The National Council met in January and June 2021 via an online platform. As at 30 June 2021 the National Council comprised the three ex officio members (the National President, the National Secretary and the National Treasurer), along with six elected State

Representatives, each of whom may serve up to three two-year terms:

Helen Steven – Tasmania

Susan Lee – Western Australia

Barry Bowden – Queensland

Gaynor Fraser – South Australia/  
Northern Territory

Edward Sinclair – Victoria

Gerard Brennan – New South Wales/  
Australian Capital Territory

Special appreciation is extended to the State Representatives for their voluntary service to the Council which included, among other things, online meetings of the National Council, and correspondence in between meetings on matters of importance. Beside consulting with the members and committees of the Lodges/Branches and Certified Groups within their state, an important function of members of the National Council is to regularly review the National Policies Document and the National Rules.

The following appointments were made by the National Council for a 12-month period in January 2021:

- Chair of the National Council and Vice-President until January 2022 – Gaynor Fraser.

- National Executive Committee (see next item).

### **National Executive Committee**

The National Executive Committee deals with the ongoing administration of the Section. It met several times during the year. As at 30 June it comprised the usual three ex officio members, the National President, National Secretary and National Treasurer, as well as the following members who were appointed by the National Council in January: Cassandra Au (Sydney), Berry Dunston (Hobart), Denise Frost (Devonport), and Edward Sinclair (Melbourne). These meetings were conducted online apart from one meeting that had some participants at the headquarters in Surry Hills.

The members of the National Executive Committee are also required to be Directors of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust, which is responsible for the Section's properties.

Stephen McDonald was appointed as the Editor of *Theosophy in Australia* in January 2021. In February 2021, the National Executive Committee appointed the following working committees: Education & Training, Rules, Finance, and Electronic Media & Marketing.

### **Headquarters Staff and Volunteers**

The National Headquarters is staffed by a small, dedicated group of people who undertake a large range of tasks necessary to support the overall work

of the Australian Section. There are also several volunteers who gave their time working on committees of the Section and carrying out a number of projects within the headquarters. The broad range of duties undertaken in the difficult circumstances imposed on the staff and volunteers by the pandemic is a testimony to their dedication to service of the Society in Australia. The main tasks performed by all concerned during the year are listed here:

**Dara Tatray:**

National Secretary.

Following the successful bid in the Biodiversity Conservation Trust Koala Tender, ensuring that the required management actions commence in a timely manner. Overseeing the restoration of the garden at Canyonleigh, which was severely affected in the 2019-2020 drought. Running the Australian election of the International President; calling for State Representative nominations in Queensland, Tasmania and South Australia. Reporting to the National Executive Committee and the National Council and arranging all their meetings online. Taking care of all routine business for these entities; writing and distributing their Minutes and Agendas; ensuring that their statutory requirements are met. Reporting to the ACNC. Assistance with *Theosophy in Australia*. Maintaining appropriate

workers compensation cover for the National Headquarters, and maintaining appropriate Public Liability, Building/Contents, Association Liability and other cover for all Lodges/Branches in the Australian Section. Overseeing the work of the Section's bookkeeper. Advising Lodges/Branches on their rules. Producing and distributing quarterly investment trust reports to seven investment partners with a beneficial interest in the Section's Maple-Brown Abbott portfolio. Migrating the Section's website to a new developer and new server. Providing content for the website and the Section's Facebook page. Liaising with HWL Ebsworth Lawyers regarding the formation of a new company structure for the TS in Australia, and extensive work on the draft company constitution. Overseeing arrangements for holding the Australian Convention Business Meeting and Inauguration at The Women's College in Sydney rather than in Perth, as had originally been planned. Administration of the Springbrook Theosophical Education and Retreat Centre. Planning for a smooth handover to the new National President in January 2021 and providing assistance to the National President as and when required.

**Jennifer Hissey:**

Librarian, Campbell Theosophical Research Library.  
Cataloguing collections of TS

libraries around the Section. Updating and maintaining the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). Providing material to external researchers from the Campbell Library. Accumulating resources for archival and website use. Convention Secretary. Assisting with T in A mail-outs as required.

**Gil Murdoch:**

Webmaster for the Australian Section's website.

Substantial work on adding and maintaining material on the website and web pages of Lodges, Branches and Certified Groups. Helping train and advise designated Lodge members in adding events and programme material for their Lodges. Maintaining AV, sound equipment and data projectors. Updating the Union Index of Theosophical Periodicals and maintaining its search facilities, including adding new index items from important theosophical periodicals. Maintaining the index of the *Brahmavidya* journal and its search facility. Continuing work on a new index of *The Theosophist*. Maintaining Links to Theosophical Texts Online, a resource for those seeking to find theosophical writings online. Assisting in the Campbell Theosophical Research Library and Archives. Exploring the rendering of some theosophical writings into web format compatible with computers, tablets and smart phones. Assisting with T in A mail-

outs as required. A major addition of article titles and authors has been made to the index of *The Canadian Theosophist*, and a major revision with many additions, etc, to a new index of *The Theosophist* Volumes 1-3. (this is an ongoing project). An index to the extensive collection of Theosophical Pamphlets, Handbills and Booklets held in the Campbell Library has been added.

**Richard Larkin:**

Membership Secretary - Preparing membership reports.

Maintaining the membership database. Banking. General office duties. Assistance to the National President, the National Secretary and the Education Coordinator. Editorial assistance with articles for publication. OPAC data entry. Cataloguing, downloading and editing material from other Libraries. Creating new book items on OPAC. Editing and uploading OPAC items to Libraries Australia. Assisting with T in A mail-outs.

**Rosanna Sheridan:**

Assistance to the National President, the National Secretary and the Education Co-ordinator as required. Assistance with arranging lecture tours. Extensive typing and proofreading of articles from *The Theosophist* for uploading onto the website and the compilation of Dr Hugh Murdoch's anthology - *Science and Theosophy*. Use of InDesign to create



layout for the *Theosophy in Australia* magazine. Assisting with T in A mail-outs. Research for contributions to TS website and T in A.

**Kay Schiefelbein:**

Caretaker, Springbrook Centre.

**Tinh Van Vo-Nguyen:**

Volunteer - National Headquarters.

**Gloria Yiangou:**

Volunteer - National Headquarters.

**Beatrice Malka:**

Volunteer - National Treasurer. Member of the National Executive Committee. Director of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust. Chair of The Theosophical Foundation Pty Ltd.

**Cassandra Au:**

Volunteer - member of the National Executive Committee. Director of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust

**Berry Dunston:**

Volunteer - member of the National Executive Committee and Director of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust from February 2021.

**Denise Frost:**

Volunteer - member of the National Executive Committee. Director of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust.

**Edward Sinclair:**

Volunteer - member of the National Executive Committee. Director of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust. State Representative Vic.

**Barry Bowden:**

Volunteer - State Representative Qld. National Lecturer.

**Susan Lee:**

Volunteer - State Representative WA. National Vice President until December 2020.

**Helen Steven:**

Volunteer - State Representative Tas. National Lecturer from January 2021.

**Gaynor Fraser:**

Volunteer - State Representative SA/NT. National Vice-President from January 2021.

**Gerard Brennan:**

Volunteer - State Representative NSW. President of the Indo-Pacific Federation.

**Simon O'Rourke:**

Volunteer – National Lecturer.

**Janice Scarabottolo, Dr Olga Gostin,**

**Patricia Ossenberg and Ruth Holt:**

Volunteers – members of Editorial Committee.

**GENERAL COUNCIL**

During the reporting period, meetings of the General Council of the Theosophical Society were held online because of the pandemic. Linda Oliveira attended the General Council meeting held in December 2020. Apart from administrative matters, reports were given by the International President and by the General Manager at Adyar,

about the estate, including the impact that Covid-19 had had on the many renovation projects being undertaken, such as the works on Leadbeater Chambers. Reports were also given about progress on negotiations of a lease of the Damodar Gardens part of the estate and about numerous projects being carried out around the world.

In June 2021, I attended the General Council meeting online. Items discussed included: the likely lease of Damodar Gardens (a 14-acre part of the TS estate) to an educational trust; a proposal from Canada to host the World Congress in 2025; a proposal to hold the next International Convention online from 28 – 31 December 2021, in a similar way to the last one, which had been expertly run by a team who agreed to volunteer for the task again; a proposal from the English Section for official accreditation of online events that carry the TS name; and the settlement of a long-standing legal issue (dating back to 1981) involving some workers at Adyar.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

### **Statistics**

As at 30 June 2021 the Section had 700 members, a loss of 60 members over the 12 month period concerned. The main losses and gains in numbers occurred in several larger TS centres. See also the annual membership analysis at the end of this report.

### **National Members**

As at 30 June, the Section gained 36 National Members. Our National Members receive some communications from the Education Coordinator, as well as T in A.

### **Letters to New Members**

Newly joined members have online access to 22 Letters to New Members from the National President. This set of letters is currently being revised and will be sent by post again every month to all new members.

### **Exit Surveys**

A few former members who had either resigned or been lapsed completed and returned the optional exit surveys which were sent to them by the National Headquarters. Reasons cited were usually of a routine nature, but sometimes issues with a local TS centre were mentioned, in which case centres concerned were subsequently notified for any action as required.

### **Theosophy in Australia**

Four issues of the national magazine were printed in September, November, March and June during the year under review, its contents continuing to reflect our diverse membership. The magazine commenced in May 1921 as a continuation of *Theosophy in Australasia* which began in 1895. As a centenary issue, the June edition of *Theosophy in Australia* was devoted to articles related to the history of the

TS in Australia. My thanks go to the members of the Editorial Committee who volunteer their services by assisting me to review and appraise articles before they go to print.

## **CONVENTIONS**

### **2021 Convention**

The 2021 Convention, which was to be held in Perth, was cancelled due to the restrictions caused by the pandemic. The mandatory Australian Convention Business Meeting (ACBM) was held at The Sybil Centre, which is part of the Women's College, University of Sydney on 25 January 2021. Following the business meeting, there was an inauguration ceremony for the new National President by Linda Oliveira.

### **Looking Ahead**

Although the National Council made the decision to hold the next convention in January 2022 in Perth, this has been cancelled again due to the unpredictability caused by the pandemic. The ACBM will be held online or at a venue similar to that held in 2021. Hopefully, the 2023 convention to be held in Adelaide will go ahead as planned.

## **EDUCATION**

### **Education and Training Committee /Educational Resources**

The Education and Training Committee comprises the National President, the Education Coordinator and the National Secretary, and an additional

member. The National Executive appointed Berry Dunston (who has a sound background in education at the tertiary level) as an additional member in January 2021.

After many years of dedicated service to the Australian Section, Pedro Oliveira retired as National Education Coordinator in January 2021. During the second half of 2020, Pedro completed work on a paper entitled 'Introduction to Theosophy – Online and Printed Sources'. In November 2020, the new video introducing the TS in Australia was uploaded to the section's website. A new study course, 'The Science of Yoga: an introduction to the Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali' was produced. Pedro also supervised work in the Campbell Research Library, assisted with the national website and was administrator of the national Facebook page. During the year the National Council approved an advertisement for a new Education Coordinator. This position has now been filled by Simon O'Rourke who is a long-standing TS member and national lecturer.

### **Campbell Theosophical Research Library and Archives**

A number of new books were acquired for the library. Nineteen new titles were catalogued including a recent publication about the life of Annie Besant during her time in India

by Pedro Oliveira; two exhibition catalogues about the paintings of Theosophical artists, Clarice Beckett and Hilma af Klint; and an accessible, modern version of *Isis Unveiled* called *Blavatsky Unveiled* by Laramie Moon.

Jennifer Hissey, our librarian, continued to research TS history in Australia and the influence of theosophists on world thought and philosophical movements, such as feminism. Jennifer also assisted with research for the centenary edition of *Theosophy in Australia*, which focussed on historical articles.

The Section's Archives also provides material for research on the Society's history, and biographical information on members who have made substantial contributions in various fields.

### **National Speakers' Schedule**

As well as the administrative assistance provided to TS centres, the National Headquarters also coordinates a National Speakers' Schedule. The schedule includes National Lecturers, the National President and the Education Coordinator, as well as International Lecturers. Unfortunately, during this reporting period, the ability for international and interstate travel has been curtailed by the global pandemic.

In January 2021, the National Council appointed (or reappointed) the following members as National

Lecturers for 2021: Simon O'Rourke (Sydney), Helen Steven (Hobart) and Barry Bowden (Toowoomba).

### **International Lecturer**

Once again, due to Covid-19, the first tour of our Section by Juliana Cesano from the USA had to be cancelled. It is hoped that a new plan for her to tour Australia in 2022 may be possible.

### **Book Depot, National Headquarters**

Book sales from our special selection at the National Headquarters continued during the year in question, at cost recovery prices, mostly because of information on the website.

## **UNIVERSITIES**

### **University of Sydney**

The Theosophical Society in Australia continued to award the John Cooper Memorial prize to Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney, for work on the Perennial Philosophy in its Eastern and Western traditions, a prize which commenced in 2000. The Department of Studies in Religion submitted three undergraduate essays as potential candidates for the John Cooper Memorial Prize. Unfortunately, none appeared to be related to the Perennial Philosophy as a tradition and were rejected as potential recipients of the prize. An encouraging email was received from a previous recipient of the John Cooper prize describing how

it had inspired her to continue her studies, and that she went on to gain the University Medal and to enrol as a PhD candidate.

### **University of Queensland**

Since 2014 the TS in Australia has made available a prize for research into the Perennial Philosophy in its Eastern and Western traditions to Studies in Religion at the University of Queensland, with parameters identical to the University of Sydney prize. At the end of the reporting period, no submissions had been received.

### **University of Western Australia**

The Theosophical Society Perennial Philosophy Prize is awarded to selected students of an undergraduate course on 'Philosophy East and West' at the University of Western Australia. At the beginning of June 2021, an undergraduate essay had been forwarded to the headquarters and it was deemed to be of a suitable standard for the prize to be awarded.

## **NATIONAL EVENTS**

### **Springbrook Centre**

Unfortunately, due to the Covid 19 restrictions, the headquarters were unable to run any of the usual activities at Springbrook, including the annual School of Theosophy. There were some private hirings and

a meditation retreat coordinated by Barry Bowden.

### **Canyonleigh Centre**

No national events could be held at the centre during the reporting year because of the Covid restrictions. The National Secretary has taken advantage of this period to undertake some important works in the garden and house. Priority has also been given to implementing the Biodiversity Conservation Trust agreement.

## **PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION**

### **Facebook Page**

Aside from highlighting items from the website, and events run by the TS around the country, posts commemorated Wesak, the International Day of Living Together in Peace, International Women's Day, and the official opening of the new premises of Melbourne Theosophical Society. Our page drew attention to a number of core teachings, illustrated with works of art and historic images. From late January 2021, the National Secretary updated the Section's Facebook page as often as possible, awaiting the appointment of the new Education Coordinator.

Members are encouraged to look at our Facebook page. You do not need to be a member of Facebook in order to browse our many and varied posts. Go to: <https://www.facebook.com/austheos>.

### **e-Bulletin**

With a lack of activities to promote, there have been few e-Bulletins during the reporting period. These communications are a convenient way to remind members about significant events and we will continue issuing them on a need's basis. Any members who do not receive e-Bulletins, and who would like to do so, can contact Gil Murdoch at the National Headquarters: [web@theosophicalsociety.org.au](mailto:web@theosophicalsociety.org.au)

### **OPAC**

Electronic publicity for the holdings of TS libraries around the country continued during the year through the Section's Online Public Access Catalogue at: <https://austheos.softlinkhosting.com.au>

Resource lists of the most requested subjects are available from the search page under 'Other searches'. Jennifer Hissey welcomes suggestions for further lists and can be contacted at: [catalogue@theosophicalsociety.org.au](mailto:catalogue@theosophicalsociety.org.au) This unique catalogue is an important contribution for researchers from Australia and from around the world.

### **Marketing/Business Plan**

Our website and Facebook page (see information above) are the two main electronic methods of outreach by the TS in Australia. It is intended that a consultant with relevant experience in the not-for-profit sector will be

engaged to develop a Business Plan out of the existing business model in the near future.

### **Website**

The programmes of Lodges, Branches and Certified Groups were included on the site on a regular basis. The largest usage by country has come from Australia, the United States, India, China and the United Kingdom. The Union Index of Theosophical Periodicals, which is appreciated internationally, had a large number of hits. As in previous years, other items popular on the website were Brahmavidyā – the electronic index of Adyar Library and Research Centre Bulletin and the magazine *Theosophy in Australia*.

Gil Murdoch, our Webmaster, besides his ongoing work on the Section's website, has uploaded the regular issues of T in A and any e-Bulletins. Gil has also produced regular updates of the Union Index which now has 228,399 entries.

### **SUPPORT**

#### **Annual Fund**

Since the early 1990s members of the Australian Section have provided donations to help finance various new educational and promotional initiatives. This money is not for administrative purposes; it is used for special projects. My thanks goes to all those who have

donated to the Annual Fund, no matter how small the contribution.

### **Lodges/Branches and Groups**

An ongoing part of the work of the National Headquarters involves providing assistance in a variety of ways for Lodges/Branches and Groups from around Australia. This involves help for the larger Lodges and Branches, and especially for smaller, less resourced centres.

The following items, most of which are dealt with elsewhere in this report, are additional forms of support from the National Society for our TS centres: the provision of a shared platform on the website helping to enable the promotion of our centres, the material produced from the Education and Training Committee, the National Speakers' Schedule, International Lecturers, OPAC and Marketing. Also, regular advice provided by the National Secretary related to administrative matters.

### **OUR INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY Adyar**

The global pandemic has impacted international travel and curtailed the ability for members to attend the usual activities in India, such as the annual International Convention and the School of the Wisdom at Adyar. In order to bridge the gap, an innovative and highly successful convention was

held online in December 2020. An online convention will be organised for December 2021, as well as online presentations for the School of the Wisdom. Information about the convention and registration will be available from the following website: <https://tsconvention.com/>

### **Indo-Pacific Federation**

Since 2016 Gerard Brennan has been President of the Indo-Pacific Federation, of which our Section is a member, and is currently serving in his second term of office in this capacity. Due to the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic it has not been possible to travel around the Indo-Pacific region during the President's current term of office. This has hampered the work of the Federation at this time. It is proposed that the next Indo-Pacific Conference be held in Malaysia in November, 2022. However, due to the ongoing nature of the pandemic and its ramifications, it has been suggested that the conference be conducted online.

### **RULES**

#### **Election for International President**

The term of office for the International President is for seven years. As his term had expired, Tim Boyd stood for office again. He was re-elected unopposed for a second term of office from 27 April, 2021. On behalf of the Australian Section, I sent Tim our

sincere congratulations for being re-elected to this important post.

### **Elections for State Representatives**

Elections for State Representatives were carried out in 2020. As there was only one candidate for each of the Electoral States, a yes/no vote was held and the following were elected or re-elected unopposed: New South Wales/ACT (Gerard Brennan); Western Australia (Susan Lee); Victoria (Edward Sinclair).

At the end of the current reporting period nominations were called for the 2021 election of State Representatives for Queensland, Tasmania and South Australia/Northern Territory. The role of our State Representatives is an important one, constituting two thirds of the membership of the National Council and representing every member in their Electoral State at the Council's six-monthly meetings.

### **Lodge/Branch Rules**

Routine amendments to the Rules of TS centres around the Section were reviewed by the Section's Rules Committee during the year, for a decision by the National Executive Committee.

### **Notices of Motion**

There were no Notices of Motion to amend the Section's Rules put at the 2021 Australian Convention Business Meeting.

## **LODGES/BRANCHES AND CERTIFIED GROUPS**

The work of the TS in Australia is largely undertaken by dedicated volunteers; dedicated not only to the daily tasks of running the organisation, but to the spirit and inner purpose of our Society. It is mostly due to those volunteers in the Lodges, Branches and Groups that the wheels keep turning.

The following is a summary of each Annual Report received from our Lodges/Branches and Certified Groups, this year reflecting the general restrictions around this country associated with Covid-19:

### **Hobart Branch, TAS (chartered 1889)**

The Branch has continued to hold regular meetings throughout the year in review, although there have been no visiting speakers because of the difficulties of interstate travel. Talk topics included an exploration of some fundamental Theosophical concepts through the medium of visual arts. Also, a study group on Kabbalah, entitled 'The Tree of Life'. The Branch's entire library collection has been re-catalogued and the Hobart Branch Committee have agreed to be custodians for library books and some items of furniture from Launceston Lodge. A TOS tea party was held as well as several TOS discussion groups.



### **Melbourne Lodge, VIC (chartered 1890)**

Much of the period in review has been dominated by a move to new premises, which was greatly impacted by the very long period of lockdown in Melbourne. Finally, in May 2021, during a window of opportunity between lockdowns, Melbourne Lodge was able to host an official opening of their new premises in Flinders Lane. This was done at a well-attended celebration on White Lotus Day, which the National Secretary and I were able to attend.

### **Adelaide Lodge, SA (chartered 1891)**

Regular monthly meetings have been held at Adelaide Lodge. Talks included titles, such as ‘Claiming the Power of the Soul’; ‘Getting More from the Life you’ve Got’; ‘Exploring the Astral Plane’; and ‘Intuition’. Several study groups were also conducted: ‘Foundations of Theosophy’; ‘Key to Theosophy’; ‘Yoga Sutras’; ‘Power of Thought’; and ‘The Secret Gateway’. On Saturday mornings, video screenings of Pablo Sender’s courses were popular, followed by various talks in the afternoon. The Theosophy-Science Group also conducted several sessions throughout the year. The Lodge bookshop continued trading seven days a week except for public holidays and the library hours were from Tuesday to Friday. The TOS activities are currently suspended.

### **Brisbane Lodge, QLD (chartered 1895)**

Despite periods that were restricted because of the Covid circumstances, Brisbane Lodge has continued to hold a regular programme of events. Talks included titles, such as ‘Man – Visible & Invisible’; ‘Inner Alchemy’; ‘The Spiritual Roots of Tarot’; ‘Elements & Elementals’; and ‘The Great Pyramids’. There was a popular study group on ‘Raja Yoga’ and two well-attended meditation retreats held at Springbrook Centre in November and February. The Bookshop and Library have been open on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday each week. The TOS has met periodically on a Saturday morning. Some upgrading of facilities was undertaken to aid disabled members and other people visiting the Lodge.

### **Perth Branch, WA (chartered 1897)**

During the first part of the reporting year, there were few activities, mostly because of Covid uncertainties. From November 2020, the Branch has been open on Saturdays only, however the hours have gradually been increasing since then, interspersed with intermittent Covid lockdowns. In order to get the programme of activities started again, a Welcome Back Seminar was held at the Mt Helena Centre, which was very well attended. It is expected that more of these events will be held in future. TOS activities have been suspended for the moment.

It is anticipated that more meetings and study groups will be conducted as things get back to normal.

### **Launceston Lodge, TAS (chartered 1901)**

Covid restrictions meant that Lodge meetings were suspended until September 2020, after which regular fortnightly meetings resumed. Two seminars were held entitled: 'We Make Our Own Future now'; and 'Safe Healing Practices for Ourselves and Others'. Other presentations included: 'Symbols: What Does That Mean'; 'The Hero Within'; 'What Actually Reincarnates'; 'Meister Eckhardt'; and 'Human Impacts on Planet Earth'. Some well-received study groups included: 'Understanding the Psychic World'; 'Discovering the Tao Te Ching'; and 'Chant'. Due to storage problems, a decision was made to move the Lodge's library collection and some items of furniture to Hobart Lodge for the moment.

### **Blavatsky Lodge, NSW (chartered 1922)**

Until the NSW lockdown in late June 2021, Blavatsky Lodge continued to hold a regular programme of events with weekly talks and occasional special events. A successful Lodge Open Day and Second-Hand Book Sale was conducted in March 2021. The following study groups were also

held: 'Sharing Spiritual Awareness'; 'The Mahatma Letters'; 'Krishnamurti Videos and Dialogues'; 'Introduction to Theosophy'; and regular meditations. Under the guidance of a new Library Assistant, a major re-organisation of the Adyar Library has been undertaken. The TOS has continued to hold an open circle presentation monthly presented by TS members and by representatives of charitable organisations. Member's Meetings were also held monthly, with good attendances.

### **Newcastle Lodge, NSW (chartered 1941)**

The Covid restrictions have impacted Newcastle Lodge, along with the death of one of their treasured members, Dianne Kynaston. They had been restoring regular monthly meetings at a new venue until the latest lockdown occurred in late June, 2021. A small, but dedicated committee is striving to reinvigorate the Lodge and return to a regular programme of events in the near future.

### **Atherton Lodge, QLD (chartered 1950)**

Sadly, after over 70 years, Atherton Lodge was forced to shut its doors in October, 2020. A diminishing membership and lack of volunteers to form a working committee made the decision inevitable. Its charter will, however, be held by the Section

until October 2025, in the event that members wish to revive the Lodge.

### **Sunshine Coast Lodge, QLD (chartered 2004)**

Weekly talks and study groups were held during the year under review. Some presentations included: ‘Exploring the Mysteries of Existence’; ‘An Evening with Krishnamurti’; ‘The Spiritual Path & Initiations’; ‘Fundamentalism, the Great Impediment to Science, Wisdom and Creativity’; and ‘Fragments of Thought’. A regular study group was also held on John Algeo’s ‘Introduction to Theosophy’ and on ‘Esoteric Philosophy’. In 2021, a decision was made to hold one meeting a month at a new venue on a Sunday. This was meant to lift the Lodge’s profile in a different area with a different demographic. So far, in the year under review, this has been a successful venture.

The TOS has continued to hold regular meetings. An excellent Facebook Page has been maintained by a member of the Lodge and you are urged to visit the site and make a comment at:

<https://www.facebook.com/theosophysunshinecoast/>

### **REPORTS FROM CERTIFIED GROUPS**

Our various Certified Groups have been in existence for up to twenty-five years, and once again helped make the TS better known in their areas.

### **Blue Mountains Group, NSW (certified 1997)**

The Blue Mountains Group has been struggling to re-establish its regular weekly meetings since the onset of the pandemic. Just as they were preparing to recommence their meetings, the NSW lockdown started in late June. They are hoping to get back on track after the restrictions have eased.

### **Canberra Group, ACT (certified 2019)**

The Covid-19 restrictions curtailed public events in Canberra during the first half of the year under review, however a book study group continued entitled, ‘Glamour: A World Problem’. Monthly meetings recommenced from March 2021. Titles of talks included: ‘Significance of Divine Wisdom in the Living of Our Lives’; ‘Apocalypse: Myth & Present Day’; ‘White Flame of the Heart: The Mystic’s Inner Journey’; and ‘The Power of the Intuitive Self’.

### **Gosford Group, NSW (certified 1997)**

Regular monthly meetings were held until the NSW lockdown in late June 2021. Topics of talks included a varied programme. Some notable titles were: ‘Crop Circles: ET or man-made?’; ‘Myths, their Origin, Role & Significance’; ‘Near-death Experience; Echoes of the Divine Wisdom’; ‘Seeing Other Dimensions’; ‘Beauty and

Beyond: The Life & Art of Sulamith Wuelfing'. A book study group was also held monthly at a member's home.

### **Logan Group, Qld (certified 2019)**

During the year in review, occasional guest speakers have given some well-received monthly talks. There have also been some ongoing study groups, including John Algeo's 'Introduction to Theosophy' and 'As a Man Thinketh' by James Allen. Discussions over morning coffee have provided opportunities for fellowship.

### **Mornington Peninsula Group, VIC (certified 2000)**

A number of speaker's had to be cancelled during the lockdowns in Victoria. Nevertheless, meetings were held in February, March and May, 2021. Like many of the smaller groups, Mornington is treading water until the Covid restrictions have eased and a normal programme of activities can be established. The TOS has managed to continue to raise funds for various good causes, including holding a function at a member's home in December 2020.

### **Northern Beaches Group, NSW (certified 1996)**

The Northern Beaches Group, located in Sydney, has continued to hold regular monthly meetings, Covid restrictions permitting. Some of the interesting titles on their programme

included: 'Padre Pio: a case study in the laws of nature and the powers latent in man'; 'The Bhagavad-Gita and the Yoga of Liberation'; 'Reincarnation in Christianity'; 'A Lamp in a Windless Place: the Play of the Gunas'; and 'Native Wisdom and the Power of Stones and Crystals'. A meditation is also held before the meetings.

### **Toowoomba Group, QLD (certified 2007)**

The pandemic situation contributed to a period of less activity for the Toowoomba group during the year under review. There continued to be a meeting once per fortnight for discussions and social meet-ups for coffee and fellowship.

### **Wodonga-Albury Group, VIC (certified 1996)**

The Wodonga-Albury Group has been badly affected by the pandemic crisis. The members are currently assessing their ongoing viability. It is hoped that after the situation in NSW and Victoria normalises the way forward will be clearer.

## **THE THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE**

### **The National Coordinator reports:**

2021 has again been a challenging year around the world and this has also been the case for the local Australian TOS groups. Even with the impact of the Covid-19 lockdowns significant funds

in support of the national projects has been raised. This year TOS Australia contributed a total of AUD \$22,850 to the following international projects:

Pakistan Home Schools	\$6,000
Pakistan student sponsorships	\$4,650
Syrian Refugees (via TOS-Italy)	\$6,000
Golden Link College Philippines	\$3,000
India - Adyar:	
Olcott Memorial School	\$2,000
Animal Dispensary	\$200
Women's Welfare Centre	\$500
HPB Hostel	\$200
TS Adyar Academy	\$300

Sadly a few of our wonderful TOS members passed to higher service this year. Geoff Harrod our TOS National Secretary left us in December and in May, Henny Fokker from Canberra passed on. Their wonderful presence will be missed by us all.

With Geoff's passing a new National Secretary for the TOS was sought. A volunteer was found in Queensland. Min Chen has been a member of the Brisbane TS for several years and is also the secretary for TOS Brisbane. Welcome Min.

A very heartfelt thanks is given to all the national officers. Dianne Manning has continued to diligently execute

the role of National Treasurer and we are again very grateful for her most excellent service and Min has been a new blessing. I also extend a very hearty thanks to Jean Carroll who has continued as the National committee mentor.

Last year as part of the TS International convention we prepared a 3-minute video presentation on the TOS in Australia. We have again been asked to prepare a similar presentation this year.

My final thank you goes to all the TOS members around Australia for your ongoing support in all this valuable work. Your efforts and loving participation at the local level makes it all possible.

George Wester  
National Coordinator  
TOS Australia

## CONCLUSION

This concludes my Annual Report to the Australian Section which summarises and highlights the diligent work of so many individuals around our Section. The impact of the Covid-19 crisis has once again had a significant impact on our activities, although most of the TS centres have managed to weather the storm quite well. As much of Australia emerges from the global pandemic, the outlook for our Society in the coming year is a positive one.

Stephen McDonald

### Annual Membership Analysis of Lodge/Branch Membership as at 30/06/2021

Lodge/Branch	Members 30-Jun-20	Trans In	New	Rejoin	<b>Total In</b>	Resign	Lapse	Dec Trans out	<b>Total Out</b>	Members 30-Jun-21	Diff
Adelaide	64	0	3	3	6	2	14	0	16	54	-10
Atherton	13	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	12	0	-13
Blavatsky	155	1	19	4	24	2	34	1	3	139	-16
Brisbane	75	1	13	2	16	0	8	1	9	82	7
Hobart	17	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	17	0
Launceston	10	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	11	1
Melbourne	116	0	4	0	4	1	32	1	1	83	-33
Newcastle	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	13	-1
Perth	163	1	9	0	10	8	10	0	0	155	-8
Sunshine Coast	28	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	3	25	-3
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>-76</b>
National	105	14	18	4	36	5	13	1	1	121	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>-60</b>

## Education

Simon O'Rourke

There is a saying attributed to Heraclitus, through fragments of his writing, that the one constant is change, all things are in motion and nothing at rest; and he compares them to the stream of a river, that one cannot go into the same water twice (Plato: *Cratylus*). Plato wrote of causation that allows for the flow of change, that nothing can be created without a cause (Plato: *Timaeus*). And the pattern for that creation may be an ideal, and the best patterns exist in the eternal, but the copy is created in the material and is subject to the qualities of matter, to change and causation.

Plato, in the same work, notes that intelligence could not be present in anything which was devoid of soul. When Heraclitus dips his toe in the river a second time, he has also changed along with the river. The experience and knowledge has changed him. With the benefit of Causation, he has grown and is becoming, even if only imperceptibly to himself and others. Plato wrote "As being is to becoming, so is truth to belief." Through his inner intelligence he is creating, and learning about, himself, though the work is an unfinished reflection.

We see this constant change all around us and we know that everything we hold on to, wanting those things to remain the same, unchanged and static, how that resistance to change often initiates a conflict between ourselves and the natural flow of life, of the river. HPB, in the Summing Up to volume 1 of *The Secret Doctrine*, writes: "The Universe is worked and guided from within outwards. ... The whole Kosmos is guided, controlled, and animated by almost endless series of Hierarchies of sentient Beings, each having a mission to perform, and who—whether we give to them one name or another, and call them Dhyan-Chohans or Angels—are "messengers" in the sense only that they are the agents of Karmic and Cosmic Laws."

But we are 'becoming' according to the ever-expanding inner intelligence of the soul, and we learn from our mistakes by the law of causation which gives the opportunity for growth. This is something to remember in considering the first of the three great truths; that "The soul of man [the human being] is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour has no limit."

## National Calendar of Events

### 2022 ANNUAL CONVENTION BUSINESS MEETING of the TS in Australia – Saturday 22 January 2022

Due to Covid-19, the intended National Convention has been cancelled. The 2022 Annual Convention Business Meeting (ACBM) will be held online via Zoom, followed by two short talks and a workshop via Zoom.

#### PROGRAMME (MEMBERS ONLY)

- 10:30 am: Convention Business Meeting  
 12:30 pm: Lunch break  
 2:00 pm: Short talks by Stephen McDonald and Dara Tatray:  
 ‘The TS in Australia – The Vision and the Way’  
 2:40 pm: Discussion Workshop  
 3:30 pm: Close

As Australia emerges from an unprecedented period in its history, ‘The Vision and the Way’ is an opportunity for members to have an input into planning for the TS in Australia in the next 1 – 3 years. What do you think we should be doing and where should we be in 3 years’ time?

Registration: Any members wishing to attend the ACBM and/or the subsequent talks and workshop should email the National Secretary who will send you a Zoom link. This should be done no later than Thursday 20 January. Email: [natsec@theosophicalsociety.org.au](mailto:natsec@theosophicalsociety.org.au)

Please note: The ACBM will be endorsing the vote on the incorporation of the TS in Australia, and adoption of the new company constitution. Attendance by the voting delegates will be especially important at this meeting. Lodges/Branches should only appoint delegates who are able to attend the meeting on Zoom.

#### ADVANCE NOTICE – SCHOOL OF THEOSOPHY 2022

- Venue: Springbrook Retreat Centre, Queensland  
 Dates: Thursday 21 – Tuesday 26 April 2022  
 Speakers/Programme: TBA

Please note: Details about the event and registrations will be called for by e-Bulletin in January 2022. The School of Theosophy is for TS members only and priority will be given to members who have not attended previous Schools.



## MINUTES - 2021 Convention Business Meeting

Minutes of the Convention Business Meeting of The Theosophical Society in Australia held on Monday 25 January at the Sibyl Centre, The Women's College, 15 Carillon Ave Newtown. Notification had been provided in Theosophy in Australia in accordance with Rules 13 and 14 of the Rules of The Theosophical Society in Australia. The meeting was opened at 11 am.

### CONVENTION CHAIR

The Meeting was chaired by the National President, Linda Oliveira.

The Chair requested a show of hands when anyone wished to speak, requested that courtesy and consideration be observed, and pointed out that there would be time for discussion during the information session at the close of the Meeting.

### 1. ROLL-CALL OF VOTING DELEGATES AND PROXIES

In accordance with Rule 17(2) of the National Rules, the names of the voting delegates and proxies must have reached the National Secretary on Form 4 by 10 January 2021 at the latest. Only those delegates identified

on Form 4 by the due date were eligible to vote at the present meeting. They were noted as follows (Covid-19 travel restrictions led to the predominance of members residing in Sydney):

- Linda Oliveira, or failing her, Dara Tatray, for Adelaide Lodge
- Phillipa Rooke, or failing her, Linda Oliveira, for Brisbane Lodge
- Rosanna Sheridan, or failing her, Lucille Crocker, for Blavatsky Lodge
- Linda Oliveira, or failing her Dara Tatray, for Hobart Branch
- Dara Tatray, or failing her, Linda Oliveira, for Launceston Lodge

It is a requirement under Appendix 1A of the Sections Rules for every Lodge/Branch to hold a convention business meeting each year, in order to vote on notices of motion.

The Theosophical Society in Australia is a membership association, and the ACBM is in effect our stakeholder meeting, drawing together the outcomes of the individual Lodge/Branch convention business meetings at which voting takes place. At the ACBM, delegates may only vote on

minor amendments to any notices of motion previously distributed to the members.

### Vote Allocation 2021

The National Secretary pointed out that in accordance with Rule 16 Voting at Convention, each Lodge is entitled to one vote irrespective of the size of its membership, and in addition to this, each Lodge is entitled to one vote for every 50 members in Good Standing at the end of the previous financial year (30 June 2020). The following Lodges voted at a convention business meeting in 2020. It was noted that the rather low number of Lodge/Branch convention business meetings was almost certainly due to disruptions caused by various Covid-19 lockdowns, and would be overlooked. Nor was it possible to meet the required quorum for the present meeting.

<b>Lodge Members in Good Standing</b>	<b>Votes</b>
Adelaide.....49	1
Blavatsky.....115	3
Brisbane.....47	1
Hobart.....15	1
Launceston.....10	1
<b>Sub-total.....236</b>	<b>7</b>
National.....75	2
<b>Total.....311</b>	<b>9</b>

## 2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE 2020 CONVENTION BUSINESS MEETING

The Minutes of the Convention Business Meeting held on Sunday 19 January at St Mary's College, 871 Swanston St, Parkville, Victoria were published in the November issue of Theosophy in Australia. The National Secretary reported that all Lodges/Branches voted FOR the Minutes of the 2020 Convention Business Meeting.

Peter Brereton had three questions about the minutes.

First: 'Where it says, "The National Secretary stated that if directed to do so by the Section's accountants or auditors, the unrealised gains and losses will not be included in future profit and loss statements" I take this to mean that Section has now agreed to my view of the treatment of this item in the annual report.' The National Secretary stated that the minutes are meant to be a record of what took place at the meeting, and that she did not have an opinion on the subject. The National Treasurer stated that in the Income and Expenditure Statement prepared by the national headquarters, the unrealised gains or losses were noted as separate from investment trust income. In the Profit and Loss Statement prepared by independent accountants (p. 3 of the

financial statements) the movement in market value is to be found under Expenses.

The second question about the minutes was a clarification of something put incorrectly in the minutes. The minutes recorded that Peter asked a question about the 10-month reporting period, and Peter wished it to be known that it wasn't a question; he was merely pointing out that the different reporting periods for the two years 2018 and 2019 should have been noted at the top of the column. His comment was noted.

Third, where the minutes noted that Peter Brereton suggested it was time to review the Section's business plan, Peter stated that he had made the comment that about two years ago there was talk of a business plan and he had asked where that project was up to. The National Secretary replied that the Section's business plan was formulated in 2017, and presented to a workshop of the National Council in June of that year. She added that a review of the business plan with the new National President would be a priority in 2021, as would finding an appropriate consultant to help develop a costed plan. She added that from the end of 2018 to just over half way through 2020 other work had to be given precedence.

### **3. NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020**

It was noted that the National President's Annual Report for the Year ended 30 June 2020 had been sent to every member of the Section in November. The National Secretary reported that all Lodges/Branches voted FOR the Annual Report. There was no discussion on the Report.

### **4. NATIONAL TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020**

The National Treasurer's Report for the Year ended 30 June 2020 had been sent to every member of the Section in November. The National Secretary reported that all Lodges/Branches voted FOR the National Treasurer's Report.

### **5. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020 AND AUDITOR'S REPORT THEREON**

The Financial Statements and Balance Sheet for the year ended 30 June 2020 along with the auditor's report had been sent to every member of the Section in November. The National Secretary reported that all Lodges/Branches had voted FOR the Financial Statements, the Balance Sheet and the Auditor's Report. The Chair called for questions.

Peter Brereton asked a question with notice about the cash flow statement: “I note the receipts from Members & Others shows \$916,498 but the detailed P&L shows equivalent income receipts of only \$169,748 (652,193 – 413,631(MBA income) – 293 (interest) – 68,485 (govt) = 169,784)? \$169,784 is more in line with the previous year’s receipts”. The National Treasurer offered to speak with Peter about this later. Peter also asked about the investment management fees. Income from investments are noted as net of management fees: so shouldn’t there be an expense for management fees in the Profit & Loss? The National Secretary and National Treasurer both agreed that there should and stated that the accountant working on the investment trust would be asked to provide for this. Peter Brereton noted an inconsistency in wording between Plant, Furniture, Equipment on one page of the accounts statements, and Property, Furniture, Equipment on another page.

## **6. BUDGET FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2021**

The Budget had been sent to every member of the Section in November. A motion that the budget be received was carried(moved; seconded). It was noted that the National Council had approved the Budget at its meeting in July 2020. The National Secretary reported that all Lodges/Branches had voted FOR the

Budget. The National Secretary drew attention to a few items in the budget, especially the projected income from the Biodiversity Conservation Trust agreement pertaining to the property at Canyonleigh. There was some discussion on the agreement, with the meeting expressing its approval.

## **7. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR**

It was noted that the National Council had appointed National Audits Group Pty Ltd as Auditor for 2021, under Section Rule 25(4): ‘The National Council shall appoint an Auditor at its meeting in June. If the majority of Lodges (Branches) vote against this appointment on Form 4, then the Convention shall direct the National Council to appoint an alternative Auditor.’

## **8. ANNOUNCEMENT OF APPOINTED OFFICERS**

The Chair reported that the following national appointments had been made:

Vice-President: (NC) Gaynor Fraser

Treasurer: (NC) Beatrice Malka

Assistant Treasurer: (EC) Dara Tattray

Executive Committee (appointed by the National Council): the National President, National Treasurer and National Secretary as well as Denise Frost (Launceston Lodge); Edward Sinclair (Melbourne Lodge); Cassandra Au (Blavatsky Lodge); Berry Dunston (Hobart Branch).

## **9. ANNOUNCEMENT OF BALLOT RESULTS**

### **National President**

The National Secretary reported that the results for the election of Stephen McDonald as the new National President were declared on 29 September, with the term of office being from 25 January 2021 to the Convention Business Meeting in January 2024.

### **State Representatives for NSW/ACT, WA**

The National Secretary reported that on 18 August 2020 she declared the results in the election of the State Representative for NSW/ACT (Gerard Brennan elected unopposed), WA (Susan Lee elected unopposed), and Victoria (Edward Sinclair elected unopposed). Given the difficulties of running a YES/NO vote during a

pandemic, the National Secretary had obtained permission from the National Council to waive that requirement.

## **10. VOTE ON NOTICES OF MOTION**

There were no notices of motion.

## **11. PLACE AND TIME OF NEXT CONVENTION**

The Chair announced that the 2022 Convention would be held at St Catherine's College, Perth, from 18 to 25 January 2022 which, due to the pandemic, has been cancelled.

## **12. RESOLUTIONS OF GOODWILL**

Nothing to report.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at approximately 12 pm (time not noted).

## ***The Freedom and Responsibility of Lodges and Branches***

The freedom of Lodges and Branches is defined by the scope of the Society's Objects as well as its essential mandate to make Theosophy known as a practical living Wisdom, which can uplift human consciousness to a realisation of the Oneness of life. Therefore, although the Society has no official creed of its own and upholds freedom of thought, and while it is acceptable to invite some outside speakers who can contribute to the exploration of the Ageless Wisdom, it is not appropriate for our platform to be used by such speakers to actively promote other organisations or belief systems. Each Lodge and Branch was chartered by the International President to be a representative of the Society in its area. Its work and programme should reflect the character, altruistic ethos and spirit of the Theosophical Society.

*Resolution passed by the General Council of the Theosophical Society (2019)*

## **ANNUAL CONVENTION BUSINESS MEETING OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AUSTRALIA**

The 2022 Convention Business Meeting of The Theosophical Society in Australia will take place at 10.30 a.m. on Saturday 22 January, online via Zoom platform.

This notification is provided in accordance with Rules 13 and 14 of the Rules of The Theosophical Society in Australia.

### **AGENDA**

Roll Call of Voting Delegates and Proxies  
Confirmation of Minutes of 2021 Convention Business Meeting  
National President's Report for the Year Ended 30 June 2021  
National Treasurer's Report for the Year Ended 30 June 2021  
Financial Statements and Balance Sheet for the Year Ended  
30 June 2021, and Auditor's Report thereon  
Budget for the Year Ending 30 June 2022  
Appointment of Auditor  
Announcement of Newly Appointed Officers and National Council  
Members, and any Corresponding Retired Members  
Announcement of Ballot Results:  
Qld., S.A./N.T., and Tasmania  
Vote on Notices of Motion  
Place and Time of Next Convention  
Any Other Business

Note: a link will be emailed to members who have registered to attend the meeting.  
Please email [natsec@theosophicalsociety.org.au](mailto:natsec@theosophicalsociety.org.au)



## Theosophical Order of Service

*A Union of those who Love  
– in the Service of All that suffers.*



### Project Reports:

Funds disbursement commenced in August and all but TOS Pakistan has been completed. We have encountered significant obstacles with the banking system in Pakistan but are still working with our TOS colleagues there to get the funds transferred. In the current international environment these funds are even more necessary.

TOS Italy - sent a 2 minute video clip of the ongoing work there and a very warm thank you to all in Australia for the support we sent.

### Local Australian News:

This year a TOS Australian Summary Report has been included in the Theosophy in Australia magazine as a means of making the information available to all members.

Even with the creative fund raising that has been undertaken this year our donations have been lower, so some additional funds were drawn from our reserves in order to fulfil our basic commitments this year.

Cheers, George Wester  
National Coordinator  
Email: [tos.australia@gmail.com](mailto:tos.australia@gmail.com)

### Brisbane TOS activities in 2021

Through 2020 it has been difficult to hold fundraising activities. However, this year, we have revived.

Following an art workshop and a book sale in June, BTOS hosted an afternoon tea with music and poetry in September at our lodge.

Local musicians played ethnic music, and children joined in with their instruments. We encouraged the audience to share their poems on stage, and they responded with great enthusiasm. Door and raffle tickets were sold, and homemade afternoon tea was served. After the concert, people lingered around, chatting with each other, while enjoying refreshments. On this sunlit spring afternoon, everyone felt life was normal again.

And that is what we all hope for. Not only did we raise funds, introduce TOS to people, but we also uplifted the community spirit after a long winter.

We trust our successes in Qld will inspire other TOS groups.

Min Chen

## News and Notes



### The International Convention 2021

This event is online this year. It is a free four-day event with a jam-packed program of activities and talks by our International President, Tim Boyd, David Lorimer, Director of Scientific and Medical Network interviewed by Ravi Ravindra on the topic of “What does it mean to be human?”, and the prestigious Besant Lecture by Antonio A. Oposa Jr who is one of Asia’s leading voices in the global arena of Environmental Law. You can now take part from the comfort of your own home. Please go online to view the full program and to register at: <https://tsconvention.com/>

### The School of the Wisdom

The SOW has already commenced but you are not too late to register for the second school:

January 10-21, 2022

Prof. P. Krishna

Theme: Right Living in Modern Society

For information about this SOW session please visit this link:

<https://www.ts-adyar.org/content/school-wisdom>

### Tribute – Dawn Kagan

I came to know Dawn Kagan in Sydney in the early 1970s. She was born in Melbourne and came from a Theosophical family, first joining the TS on 21 March 1938 at the age of only twelve. As a child she was a member of the Lotus Circle, an organisation originally formed in New York in 1892 to instruct and entertain very young members of theosophical families. She was a committed Theosophist with a firm belief in reincarnation and karma, which never wavered. She also held that there was one Life Energy which permeates everything, and that the whole of life is evolving. Clearly the Theosophical Society meant a great deal to her. In February 2020, Dawn was made an Honorary Life member of Blavatsky Lodge, of which she was at one stage a committee member.

From 1970, for a number of years, she resided at the Manor in Mosman, Sydney, home to a community of theosophists. Closely involved with the work of the Manor, she was also a member of the Order of the Round Table



- a ceremonial activity for young people which largely took over the function of the Lotus Circle. Dawn continued to participate in these ceremonial meetings regularly at Christmas time at the Manor, undeterred by her advanced age.

Dawn knew some well-known theosophists during her long life. For a time, she gave secretarial assistance to a former International Vice-President of the TS, James Perkins, and typed up one of his books on reincarnation, a topic which keenly interested her.

After Dawn's passing on 29 September 2021, aged 95, and subsequently attending her moving two-hour funeral online, I reflected on the enormous positive influence one person can have not only on family, but also on many friends during a lifetime. Dawn possessed a particularly infectious warmth which made each person who was with her feel special, being her sole focus of attention at that moment. She enjoyed singing and music, wrote poetry and even took up painting very successfully much later in life.

The following saying of hers in many ways summed up the tremendously generous theosophist that Dawn Kagan was:

'It's really quite simple. Be kind and the rest takes care of itself. Never do anything that's not kind.'

Linda Oliveira

Linda was assisted in compiling this tribute by information supplied by Dawn's daughter, Catherine Atherton (Kagan).

A copy of Catherine's Eulogy has been stored in the archives at the Theosophical Society Headquarters and can be viewed upon request.



## The Mystery of Life

The mystery of life is not a problem to be solved; it is a reality to be experienced. Beware of the man who claims to have solved the problem of life, who would explain its complexities and, with deadly logic, build a system in which all the facts of our existence may be pigeon-holed and neatly stored away. He stands condemned by his own claim. The child which sees wonder in all the world around it, to whom the shells with which it plays on the beach are objects of breathless excitement and thrilled amazement, is nearer to divine truth than the intellectualist who would strip a world of its mystery and takes pride in showing us its anatomy in ruthless dissection. For a while it may satisfy evolving man to know that the splendours of a sunset are but the breaking of light-rays in a moist atmosphere; he will come to realize that he may have explained the method, but has not touched the mystery at all. Recovering from the sureness of youth, never doubting itself, awakened man returns to the wonder of childhood and once again sees a world which, as the years pass by, deepens in mystery and beauty, but is never exhausted or explained.

Many are the systems claiming to explain life, contradictory in their premises and consequently in their

conclusions. They may be clever, they may fit perfectly in all their details, but life itself never evades them; were it possible to contain life in a system it would no longer be life, but death. Life is ever changing, ever becoming, yet eternal in its abiding reality and the desire to grasp and hold it, to see it stretched out before us, as a butterfly in its glass case is destined ever to be disappointed. Our systems of theology and philosophy, yes, even science, are but as momentary glimpses of a rapid movement; they may show us an instant of that movement in frozen immobility, the movement itself can never be contained in them. And yet, even though the attempt to solve the problem of life and explain it logically is doomed to failure, still the yearning to understand more, to know our own meaning and purpose is so irresistible that even the thought of failure cannot hold it back.

The thirst for truth is a sacred aspiration, like water seeking to gain its true level its onward pressure is unending until its purpose is fulfilled, its object achieved. Such a fundamental desire cannot exist only to be frustrated; the very existence of the desire for truth is the promise of its fulfilment and prophecies achievement. Fundamental instincts are never wholly mistaken; if truth were not for man the desire for truth would not be as a burning unrest

in his heart, the eagle ever eating out Prometheus' liver which ever grows again. That man should desire truth above all things is right, that he should be willing to sacrifice himself, his years, yes, his very life, to achieve does but show the nobility of the desire. But when, in blindness of materialism, he wants to have truth, to grasp and hold her, to lock her between the pages of a book, to make an object, a thing of that which is the heart of things, then the nobility of his aspiration is lost and the hero of yesterday becomes an object of pity, at whom the great gods smile in compassion.

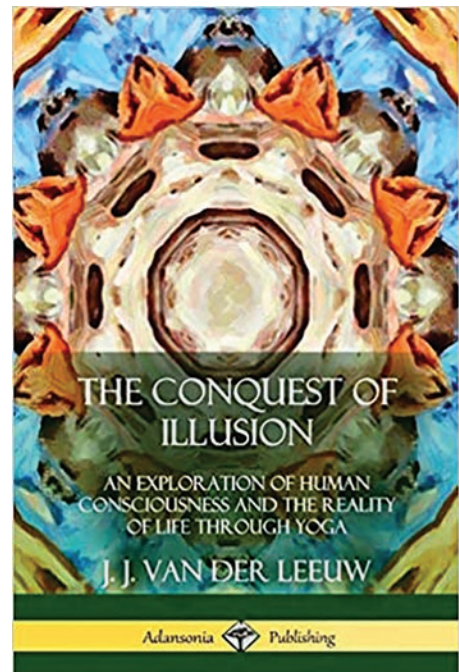
Though ever again men may claim to have found truth and to possess her, truth herself remains untouched; truth is the mystery of life which the hand of man can never reach. Truth never descends to our world of error, he who would know must ascend towards that world of Reality where he can see face to face and, for a while, becomes living truth. But it is ever man who must climb the mountain of reality, the Vision on the Mount does not descent into the valley. Thus it is possible for man to know the mystery of life; solve it he never can, still less contain it in an intellectual system, however logical. Life is not logical, though logic is the alphabet which we must learn if we would speak the language of life, which is truth. And yet no intelligible

language can tell of the vision to him who has not seen it; each must tread the weary path up the mountain-side by himself and reach the bare and lonely top where alone the vision can be seen. We may point out the path, tell of the hardships on the way, the dangers to be avoided and the obstacles to overcome, but none may tell the final mystery—its name is Experience.

The mystery of life is not a problem to be solved, it is a reality to be experienced.

J.J. van der Leeuw

Excerpt from *The Conquest of Illusion*



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## Section Directory

It is advisable to check in advance to confirm resumption of meetings.

### Australian Section National Headquarters

Level 2, 162 Goulburn Street,  
Surry Hills NSW 2010  
Ph: 02 9264 7056 / 9264 6404  
Fax: 02 9264 5857  
Email: [tshq@theosophicalsociety.org.au](mailto:tshq@theosophicalsociety.org.au)  
Web: [theosophicalsociety.org.au](http://theosophicalsociety.org.au)  
Campbell Theosophical Research Library:  
Email: [catalogue@theosophicalsociety.org.au](mailto:catalogue@theosophicalsociety.org.au)  
[www.facebook.com/Austheos/](http://www.facebook.com/Austheos/)

### Australian Capital Territory

*Canberra Group, Certified 16/11/2019*  
Meet: Friends Meeting House, Crn. Bent and  
Condamine Streets, Turner  
2- 4 pm, 3rd Saturday of the month  
Coordinator: Gordon Herbert  
Tel: 0466 464 064  
Email: [canberratheosophicalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:canberratheosophicalsociety@gmail.com)  
Secretary: Barbara Harrod  
Tel: 02 6254 1415

### New South Wales

*Blavatsky Lodge, Chartered 22/5/1922:*  
Postal Address: PO Box 319, St Leonards NSW 1590  
Meet: Suite 8, 599 Pacific Highway, St. Leonards  
NSW 2065 (entrance in Albany Street)  
1.00pm Wednesdays + many others activities (see  
website for full program)  
Telephone: Reception: 02 9267 6955  
Email: [contact@tssydney.org.au](mailto:contact@tssydney.org.au)  
Web: [sydney.theosophicalsociety.org.au/](http://sydney.theosophicalsociety.org.au/)  
President: Rosanna Sheridan  
Secretary: Pamela Peterson

*Newcastle Lodge, Chartered 3/12/1941:*  
Meet: Uniting Church Morrison Room, 29 Highfield  
Street, Mayfield NSW 2304  
7.30pm 2nd Friday of the month  
Please call before attending:  
President: Howard Gregg  
Secretary: Tony Buzek/Tel: 0452 633 132  
Email: [anthonybuzek61@bigpond.com](mailto:anthonybuzek61@bigpond.com)  
Web: [newcastle.theosophicalsociety.org.au/](http://newcastle.theosophicalsociety.org.au/)

*Blue Mountains Group, Certified 13/5/1997:*  
Meet: Members' Lounge, Blue Mountains  
Cultural Centre, 30 Parke Street (above Coles),  
Katoomba NSW 2780  
2.00 - 4.00 pm every Monday  
Acting Coordinator: Jessica Gemmell  
Email: [tsbluemountains@gmail.com](mailto:tsbluemountains@gmail.com)

*Gosford Group, Certified 11/11/1997*  
Meet: The Narara Community Centre,  
Pandala Road, Narara NSW 2250  
8.00pm 2nd Tuesday of the month  
Coordinator: Vivien Wareing  
Tel: 0429 088 995  
Email: [vivienwareing@hotmail.com](mailto:vivienwareing@hotmail.com)  
Secretary: Roni Ostergaard  
Telephone: 02 4358 1413

*Northern Beaches Group, Certified 2/4/1996:*  
Postal address and meeting address:  
c/- 31 Riviera Street, Avalon NSW 2107  
1.30 pm 1st Saturday of the month  
Please email to confirm meetings  
Coordinator: Nila Chambers  
Email: [nilachambers@bigpond.com](mailto:nilachambers@bigpond.com)

### Queensland

*Brisbane Lodge, Chartered 21/11/1895:*  
355 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane QLD 4000  
Tel: 07 3839 1453  
Email: [brisbanelodge@theosophyqld.org.au](mailto:brisbanelodge@theosophyqld.org.au)  
[brisbane.theosophicalsociety.org.au](http://brisbane.theosophicalsociety.org.au)  
Meet: 7.30 pm Wednesdays, bookshop  
and library open Monday and Friday 10.30 am - 2.30  
pm and Wednesdays 6 - 7.15 pm (see website for other  
events)  
President: Michael Morton  
Secretary: Dianne Manning

*Logan Group, Certified 9/4/2019:*  
Meet: Please contact Coordinator for venue  
Monthly 1st Friday 9.30-12 md + 1st Thursday  
5.30-7.30 pm  
Tel: 0418 755 496  
Coordinator: Christine Gwin  
Email: [logantheosophy@gmail.com](mailto:logantheosophy@gmail.com)

*Sunshine Coast Lodge, Chartered 14/10/2003:*

Meet: Buderim Croquet Club,  
 Syd Lingard Drive, Buderim QLD 4556  
 Meetings: 7.00 pm Thursdays except last Sunday of  
 the month at 2 pm there is a guest speaker (various  
 venues)  
 Email: theosophy.sunshinecoast@gmail.com  
 President Joyce Thompson/0417 873 481  
 Secretary: Jean Carroll/0402 805 127

*Toowoomba Group, Certified 10/7/2007:*

Meet: East Creek Community Centre, 43 Kitchener  
 Street, Toowoomba QLD 4350  
 Thursday 6.30 pm once a fortnight.  
 Annual Springbrook retreat each Spring  
 Coordinator: Barry Bowden  
 Tel: 0427 751 464  
 Email: nemesisbarry@gmail.com---

**South Australia**

*Adelaide Lodge, Chartered 26/5/1891:*  
 310 South Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000  
 Tel: 08 8223 1129  
 Email: president@tsadelaide.org.au  
 Web: adelaide.theosophicalociety.org.au/  
 Meet: 10.30am 4th Saturday. Science Group 7-9  
 pm every 2nd Thursday. (Please contact Lodge for  
 additional meeting dates.)  
 President: Kevin Davey

**Tasmania**

*Hobart Branch, Chartered 7/6/1889:*  
 13 Goulburn Street, Hobart TAS 7000  
 Tel. 03 6294 6195 (please leave message)  
 Email: helen\_steven@live.com  
 Web: hobart.theosophicalociety.org.au/  
 Meet: 7.30pm Mondays  
 President: Helen Steven  
 Secretary: Patrizia Bini

*Launceston Lodge, Chartered 12/1/1901:*

Meet: Salvation Army, 111 Elizabeth Street,  
 Launceston  
 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at 1.00pm  
 Postal address: 28 Teggs Road, Gravelly Beach,  
 TAS 7276  
 Email: rmholt@gmail.com  
 Web: launceston.theosophicalociety.org.au/  
 President/Secretary: Ruth Holt  
 Tel: 0448 397 246

**Victoria**

*Melbourne Lodge, Chartered 9/12/1890:*  
 Meet: 1st Flr., 234 Flinders' Lane,  
 Melbourne VIC 3000  
 Tel: 03 8638 9007  
 Email: info@melbournetheosophy.org  
 Web: melbourne.theosophicalociety.org.au/  
 Meetings: every Saturday from 1.30 pm  
 President: Edward Sinclair  
 Secretary: Robert Mullaney

*Mornington Peninsula Group, Certified 8/2/2000:*

Meet: Mount Eliza Neighbourhood House,  
 Canadian Bay Road, 1st Sunday  
 of the month, (12.00pm meditation + library - 1.30pm  
 presenter + questions and comments)  
 Coordinator: Georgina Fode  
 Tel: 0476 516 778  
 Secretary: Elizabeth Ramirez

**Western Australia**

*Perth Branch, Chartered 10/6/1897:*  
 21 Glendower Street, Perth WA 6000  
 Tel/Fax: 08 9328 8104  
 Email: tsp Perth@iinet.net.au  
 Web: tsp Perth.com.au  
 Meet: 7.30pm Tuesdays  
 Due to Covid please check before attending.  
 President: Tina Hentisz  
 Secretary: Sue Lee

*Mount Helena Retreat Centre:*

1540 Bunning Road, Mt Helena WA 6082  
 All enquiries to Perth Branch  
 Tel: 08 9328 8104

**Theosophical Education and  
 Retreat Centre, Springbrook, QLD**

2184 Springbrook Road,  
 Springbrook QLD 4213  
 Tel: Office/Hall 07 5533 5211  
 Email: info@tsretreat.com.au  
 Caretaker: Kay Schiefelbein

## *Freedom of Thought*

As the Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasise the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none of which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership. No teacher, or writer, from H.P. Blavatsky onwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to follow any school of thought, but has no right to force the choice on any other. Neither a candidate for any office nor any voter can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion held, or because of membership in any school of thought. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties.

The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member of the Theosophical Society to maintain, defend and act upon these fundamental principles of the Society, and also fearlessly to exercise the right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.

*Resolution passed by the General Council  
of the Theosophical Society (1924)*



## *Freedom of the Society*

The Theosophical Society, while cooperating with all other bodies whose aims and activities make such cooperation possible, is and must remain an organisation entirely independent of them, not committed to any objects save its own, and intent on developing its own work on the broadest and most inclusive lines, so as to move towards its own goal as indicated in and by the pursuit of those objects and that Divine Wisdom which in the abstract is implicit in the title, 'The Theosophical Society'.

Since Universal Brotherhood and the Wisdom are undefined and unlimited, and since there is complete freedom for each and every member of the Society in thought and action, the Society seeks ever to maintain its own distinctive and unique character by remaining free of affiliation or identification with any other organisation.

*Resolution passed by the General Council  
of the Theosophical Society (1949)*



## The Three Objects of the Theosophical Society

I. To form a nucleus of the **Universal Brotherhood of Humanity** without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.

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II. To encourage the study of **Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science.**

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III. To investigate unexplained laws of **Nature** and the powers latent in the human being.