



2019 - 2020
ANNUAL REPORT

*Brisbane Chapter
Vedanta Centre of Sydney*



Our Mission

The Vedanta Centre is a branch of the Ramakrishna Order of India.

The **Ramakrishna Math** and **Ramakrishna Mission** are worldwide, non-political, non-sectarian spiritual organisations which have been engaged in various forms of humanitarian, social service activities for more than a century. The **Motto** of the twin organisations is:

“For one’s own liberation and for the welfare of the world”



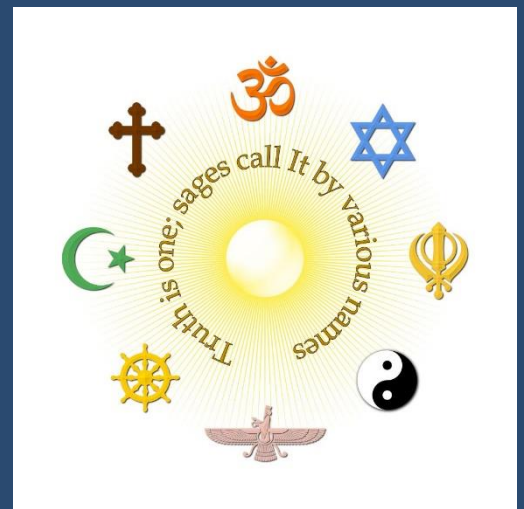
Ideals: *Work as service, potential possibilities of the individual and harmony of religions* are three of the noteworthy ideals on which our organisation is based. It is this ideal of service to man as service to God that sustains all our social service activities.

Our Vision - Harmony of Religions

We believe in the unity of existence and harmony of religions. All religions teach man to fill his being with the glory of God and to transcend selfishness. All people, of whatever nation or faith, are children of God. If we look upon life from the Divine point of view, then all outer differences and misunderstandings recede and perfect peace resides. True spiritual growth consists in expansion not in contraction; it is inclusive not exclusive - for True Love always unites and never divides.

Our History

The Vedanta Centre of Sydney, Brisbane Chapter commenced its activities in the new Ashram building at Vedanta Drive, Springfield Lakes on 30th June 2018. This was a great milestone achieved by the Vedanta Movement in Australia, which traces its history back to 1898 and the founding of the Ramakrishna Mission in India on 1st May 1897 by Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramakrishna's foremost disciple.



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*"I tell you one thing -
if you want peace, do
not find fault with
others. Rather see
your own faults."*



Holy Mother Sarada Devi



Section 1 Overview of Vedanta Centre

Our People

<i>Management Committee</i>	
Swami Sridharananda	President
Dr Maha Sinnathamby & Mrs Yoga Sinnathamby	Patrons
Dr Ashim Majumdar	Senior Vice President
Swami Atmeshananda	Vice President
Prof Prasad Yarlagadda	Vice President
Mr Shyam Das	Hon Secretary
Mr Unni Nair	Assistant Secretary
Jayshree Kapadia	Treasurer
Monica Gupte	Assistant Treasurer
Raynuha Sinnathamby	Public Officer

<i>Committee Members</i>	
Mr Biswadeep Basu	Mr Shankar Kotha
Dr Bodapati Naidu	Mr Suresh Radhakrishnan
Dr Bram Singh	Prof Tapan Saha
Mr Gaurang Naik	Dr Tapas Das
Dr Gopal Krishna Bose	Mrs Usha Gokul
Mrs Menaka Thomas	Miss Sally Kinnaid
Mr Nahendran Subramaniam	
Mrs Parames Navaneethan	
Dr Preethi Suraj	



Section 2 Governance

The Vedanta Centre of Sydney, Brisbane Chapter is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).



ACNC Charity Register Summary

Vedanta Centre Of Sydney

Charity Details	
Name	Vedanta Centre Of Sydney
Other Name	
Charity ABN	26745853272
Charity Address for Service	vedasydney@gmail.com
Charity Street Address	2 Stewart Street Ermington NSW 2131 AUSTRALIA
Website	www.vedantasydney.org
E-Mail	vedasydney@gmail.com
Phone	02 81977351

About the Charity	
Date Established	01/01/1989
Who the Charity Benefits	Aged persons Children Communities overseas Ethnic groups General community in Australia Women Youth
Size of Charity	Large
Financial Year End	30/06

Using the information on the Register

Information on this Register has been provided to the ACNC by the charity or transferred from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) and the Australian Business Register (ABR). If information is not shown, this may be because the charity has not yet provided the information or because the ACNC is progressively confirming and uploading information received. The ACNC may also approve information be [withheld from the Register](#) in certain circumstances. The Register will be updated over time as we work through the information received and any applications for information to be withheld. Read more about [information on the Register](#).

Secretary's Report for 2019-2020

Respected Swamiji, Dr Majumdar and friends, is with joy that we place before you the activities of the Brisbane chapter of the Vedanta Centre of Sydney for the year 2019-2020. It has been a challenging year for everyone including the Centre. The daily activities continued, which are almost fixed as it were, such as the morning puja and evening vesper services and devotional activities, but since April most of the programmes are conducted online or in person in limited numbers (due to COVID-19).



The following classes and activities were conducted by Swami Atmeshananda at the Vedanta Centre. Occasional satsangs at residence of devotees were also held.

Daily

- *Prayer and meditation 6.15 to 7.15am*
- *Vesper prayers 6.00 to 7.30pm*

Weekly

- *Bhagavad Gita Lecture*
- *Yoga Class*
- *Bala Sangha- classes for children*
- *Yuva Sangha – classes for youth*

Fortnightly

- *Scripture Classes – Meditation and Spiritual Life, Ashtavakra Samhita*
- *Ramanam Sankirtan on Ekadashi days*

Monthly

- *On Viveka Chudamani at Toowoomba.*
- *Bhagavad Gita class at Gold Coast.*
- *Spiritual discussion at Sunnybank Hills*

In addition to the regular classes and activities, the following special celebrations were organised at the Centre:

<i>Celebration</i>	<i>Date</i>
Guru Purnima	16 th July 2019
Sri Krishna Janmashtami	24 th Aug 2019
Sri Sri Durga Puja	6 th Oct 2019
Birthday of Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi	18 th Dec 2019
Kalpataru day	1 st Jan 2020
Birthday of Swami Vivekananda	17 th Jan 2020
Sri Mahashivaratri	21 st Feb 2020
Tithipuja of Sri Ramakrishna	25 th Feb 2020
Multifaith Day	1 st March 2020
Sri Rama Navami	2 nd April 2020
Sri Shankaracharya Jayanti	28 th April 2020
Buddha Purnima	7 th May 2020



Food Assistance Programs



Vedanta Soup Kitchen & Vedanta Springfield Foodbank

With the new Maa Sarada's Kitchen completed in June 2020, volunteers of the Centre started two initiatives to provide food relief in the community in response to the COVID-10 crisis – Vedanta Soup Kitchen and Vedanta Springfield Foodbank.

The Vedanta Soup Kitchen cooked healthy vegetarian meals consisting of rice and curry every fortnight. The meals are frozen and distributed to those in need. Meals were delivered every fortnight to the following community groups to assist their food relief services:

Westside Community Care, Goodna Street Life, Queensland Youth and Community Services, The Base Support Services

A Foodbank service was held weekly on Fridays from 10am to 11am at the Vedanta Centre Lower Ground Hall. Anyone needing food/grocery help could walk-in to receive free frozen meals, free bread, free women's sanitary products and \$5 grocery hampers.

We are thankful for the support of Foodbank Australia, Bakers Delight Orion and Share the Dignity for providing goods at nominal or no cost.

Meals distribution Volunteers of the Centres community kitchen - Maa Sarada's Kitchen - cooked and served free hot meals at all special events. The meals consisted of nutritious vegetarian food; typically rice, 3-4 vegetable dishes, 2-3 curries/dhal, roti/naan, sweet and fresh fruit.

1,100 hot meals served at special events





150 free frozen meals every fortnight,



*10- 20 grocery hampers a week...
and lots of bread!*



Maa Sarada's Kitchen



With the new Maa Sarada's Kitchen extension and terrace completed in June 2020, volunteers of the Centre initiated a community café which would run every Saturday. The café serves freshly prepared traditional Indian specialties at nominal prices with the aim of:

- *Providing affordable and nutritious wholesome food,*
- *Creating community connection &*
- *Elevation of the mind*

Maa Sarada's Kitchen Café was inaugurated on 1st June by Swami Atmeshananda. Swami Tadananda from New Zealand was also present. The soft opening was on Saturday 20th June 2020. The Cafe has run weekly since.

The Café kitchen is run by a community of volunteers who work together in all aspects of operations including menu plan, ordering groceries, cooking, serving, cleaning and promotion. All proceeds raised by the Cafe support the benevolent activities of the Vedanta Centre. Funds from Café sales support the Vedanta Foodbank and Vedanta Soup Kitchen services which provide free meals and grocery hampers to people in need.

As well as providing amazing quality food to the public at very nominal price, the Café is an important meeting place. The Café provides a space for people of all ages to interact socially, to volunteer, learn new skills, to form new friendships and to have a sense of belonging.



Bala Sangha & Yuva Sangha (classes for children & youth)

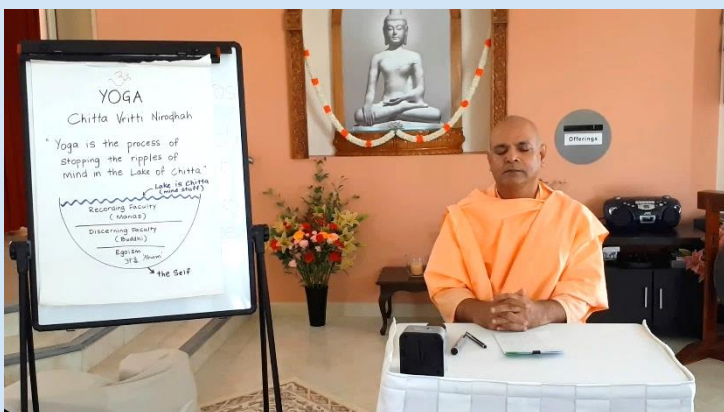
Menaka Thomas and Atul Deshpande conducted Sunday classes regularly during school terms for primary school children and youth. The children are taught yoga, hymns, devotional songs, and significance of religion, play enacting and allied subjects. The Centre acknowledges the significant contribution of the devotees towards this activity.



Yoga

Yoga classes were taught by experienced volunteer teachers combining hatha yoga asanas, pranayama & yoga nidra to rejuvenate the body and calm the mind. From March'20 the classes were offered free via livestream due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Centre wishes to thank the volunteer yoga teachers for their dedication: Jyotiba, Sumathy, Shashi & Stacey.

A day-long Yoga retreat was held on 22 September 2019 with physical yoga lessons, a talk on mind control by Swamiji followed by Q&A.



Special Talks & Official Engagements

Swami Atmeshananda was invited to give talks and attend festivals and events by different community groups throughout the year:

- Swamiji gave a Lecture on 'Practical Spirituality According to Ramakrishna-Vivekananda' at the Theosophical Society, Brisbane Lodge on 16 October 2019.
- BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha invited Swamiji to participate in the annual Annakut ceremony on Diwali at the Queensland Parliament on 21 October 2019.
- Swamiji participated at the Queensland Faith Communities Council's Annual General Meeting on invitation, on 21 October 2019.
- Swamiji was invited to participate at the Queensland Premier's reception for organization leaders in Brisbane on 28 October 2019 at the Queensland Parliament.
- On the occasion of Guru Nanak's 550th birthday celebrations, Swami Atmeshananda was invited by the Brisbane Sikh Temple, Eight Mile Plains to visit and participate in their prayers on 14 November 2019.
- Bala Sanskar Kendra invited Swamiji as guest of honour to participate in its Annual Concert programme on 30 November 2019.

Library and Bookstall

A permanent book stall and a reading library is located at the Centre. The Centre also set up a book stall at the Federation of Indian Communities Queensland's Diwali celebration on 25 October 2019.

Ganesha Temple Prayer and Image Care

Members and devotees of the Centre took turns regularly to conduct daily evening prayers at the Centre. They also helped maintain the statue of Sri Ramakrishna at the Sri Selva Vinayakar Koyil (Ganesha Temple) at South Maclean by cleaning, dressing and offering worship. We are grateful to all of them for their service.

Cultural Programs

Nadananjali School of Dance staged a classical dance programme "Narthana Mala" on 31 August 2019 at the St. John's School of Performing Arts, Forest Lakes, Qld. The event was organised to raised funds for the Vedanta Centre. Over \$9,000 was donated by the school to the Centre from this event.

Mrs. Malathi Nagarajan conducted a Veena recital at the Centre on 29 September 2019. A music concert was held on 8 October 2019 at the Centre. Sri Dhananjay Hegde, a renowned classical music expert from Mumbai, India, presented devotional songs on the Divine Mother.



Multifaith Event

The public celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday was conducted on 1st March 2020. After worship, a multifaith programme was held on the theme 'How can my Religion Enhance Cohesiveness'. Speakers from the Bahai, Buddhist, Christian (evangelical and liberal), Islamic, Sikh and Sufi faiths spoke on the subject. Swami Atmeshananda spoke on the subject based on Sri Ramakrishna's personal realizations. Federal Senator for Queensland - Hon. Paul Scarr and the candidate for Ipswich Mayorship - Teresa Harding participated in the event.

Benevolent Activities and AGM

The Minister for Multicultural affairs, Queensland government - Stirling Hinchliffe, accompanied by Charis Mullen, MP for Jordon visited our Centre on the 3rd of March. A cheque for \$5000 was donated towards bushfire victim relief to the Minister being the amount contributed by members of the Vedanta Centre.

'Pray for Australia' - an event praying for the welfare of the bushfire victims was conducted by Global Persons of Indian Origin (GPIO) on 11 January 2020 in South Brisbane. Swami Atmeshananda participated in the programme and spoke on the occasion.

The Annual General Meeting of the Centre was held on 10 November 2019.

Donation for bushfire victims received by Hon Stirling Hinchliffe



Vedanta Centre



Attendees of Multifaith Program, March 2020

Landcare

Over the past two years volunteers of the Centre have taken up the challenge of trying to control erosion on the cleared slope beside and behind the Centre. The present efforts were to stop erosion, build check dams and spread green waste on the exposed part of the slope. Some areas of the slope are very steep, and all soil was lost, especially after rain. The effort to build check dams and deposit green waste will help capture sediment, prevent soil loss and eventually help to build soil. The Centre appreciates the work and commitment of the volunteers who have taken up this task which will benefit Mother Nature.



September 2018



April 2020

Community Garden

The gardens of the Vedanta Centre were maintained by volunteers. Significant developments in the garden include: construction of raised garden beds, planting of herbs and vegetables to supply the Maa Sarada's Kitchen and set up of greenhouse for cultivation of seedlings. The Centre appreciates all volunteers who have helped in the garden.



Guest house at the Ashram

Devotees from Australia and overseas visited and stayed at the guest house during the year. They also made use of the extensive land for their spiritual practices. Swamis from overseas and from Australia also visited.



Addition to the building

A Community Kitchen was added to the terrace at the lower ground floor. A sum of approximately \$24,000 was spent towards this purpose including the patio. The kitchen is fully equipped and licenced as a commercial kitchen by the Ipswich City Council. It was inaugurated in July 2020. Volunteers of the Centre will use the kitchen to cook meals for the needy and also to run a weekly community café on Saturdays.

The Centre is lucky to have very committed volunteers. Regular maintenance and upkeep of the building is carried out by the volunteers. Their selfless and untiring work helps the centre to carry on its activities with ease. The management of the Vedanta centre express its indebtedness to all the donors, supporters and volunteers for their selfless service.

Shyam Das, Secretary

Unnikrishnan Nair, Asst. Secretary



Section 3

Our Finances

Prepared by:
Suresh Lakshmanan, CA
Registered Tax Agent

Brisbane Chapter Of The Vedanta Centre Of Sydney
A.B.N. 26 745 853 272

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

	Note	2020	2019
Revenue from Ordinary Activities	2	350,535	306,520
Administration Expenses	3	(228,468)	(365,250)
Profit/(Loss) from Ordinary Activities		122,067	(58,730)
TOTAL CHANGES IN MEMBERS FUND		122,067	(58,730)

Prepared by:
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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	60,905	145,776
Trade and other receivables	5	146,340	19,763
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		207,245	165,539
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	6	65,939	65,939
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		65,939	65,939
TOTAL ASSETS		273,184	231,478
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade Creditors and other payables	7	79,948	160,309
TOTAL LIABILITIES		79,948	160,309
NET ASSETS		193,236	71,169
MEMBERS' FUNDS			
Retained Profits	8	193,236	71,169
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS		193,236	71,169

Grants received

- \$5,000 from Queensland Government for the Annual Vedanta Multicultural Festival
- \$17,000 from Gambling Community Benefit Fund for the purchase of kitchen equipment

Thank you

Section 4 Other Important Information

Acknowledgments & Thankyou

The management of the Vedanta Centre express its indebtedness to all the donors, supporters, and volunteers for their selfless service. We acknowledge the generous donation of all the members of the community to ensure that our activities are conducted in a befitting manner.

Our organisation values the commitment of volunteers who contribute their time, energy and resources towards the smooth running of the Centre.

How you can help

Become a Member Annual membership is open to anyone who appreciates the concept of Universal Religion as embodied in the Vedanta Philosophy, the theme of India's Spiritual Culture.

Volunteer Your Time The Centre is run by volunteers who support all facets of its operations. New volunteers are welcome. We particularly need help in our Community Kitchen, Foodbank, garden and cleaning/maintenance.

Make a Donation Your financial support is indispensable to the successful running of the Centre. There are various ways of contributing:

- A donation
- A pledged monthly contribution via direct debit request (DDR)
- An interest free loan to the Centre for 1-5 years

Leave a Bequest A bequest is a gift left in a will. The Ramakrishna Mission was built on the charity and strength of generations before us. Please prayerfully consider including a gift in your Will to carry forward the mission of the Vedanta Centre so that others may benefit in knowledge and spiritual strength. For more information please contact us.

Looking to the Future - Vedanta Precinct



Proposed Master Plan for the Vedanta Precinct, Springfield Lakes, Queensland



Contact Us

The Vedanta Centre, Brisbane Chapter

96 Vedanta Drive, Springfield Lakes (behind 2 Poppy Crescent)

4300 QLD, Australia

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