



Friends of Avatar's Abode

Avatar's Abode Friends Report 2012

PO Box 184, WOOMBYE Qld 4559.

Ph. (61 7) 5442 1544

www.avatarsabode.com.au

Dear Friends in Beloved Baba,

Another year has gone by, and it's time for a community update of the activities at Avatar's Abode. Perhaps you have heard of the Strategic Plan that was written seven years ago for Avatar's Abode by the Board of directors at that time. If you have not already read it, you can find it on the Avatar's Abode website. While reflecting over work that has taken place in the past seven years since the plan was developed, the Board was able to see from different angles how Avatar's Abode has developed, been maintained, and where there are specific areas open for future improvements. As a method of communicating some of what that work has been, and of illustrating how the Strategic Plan has been effective in a practical sense, this Friends Report will expand upon several points that the Trust feels are particularly relevant at this time.

Goal 1: To develop Avatar's Abode as one of the great places of spiritual pilgrimage.

1.2 To strategically plan the future development of Avatar's Abode in the light of its evolution as one of His centres of world pilgrimage, which include Meherabad/Meherazad in India and Meher Spiritual Centre in South Carolina.

Reflecting on the Strategic Plan aims at working toward this goal, and future reviews of the Strategic Plan will be held in order to ensure that progress is being made at working towards the development of Avatar's Abode as a place of world pilgrimage. The board of Directors has recently begun holding informal gatherings between official meetings where "big picture" ideas and goals can be discussed. Topics such as a "Master Plan" for Avatar's Abode are critical, however it can be difficult to fit such lengthy topics into the constraints of a Board meeting, as the goal of these meetings is to tackle more immediate issues and tasks efficiently. Informal gatherings allow time for free flowing discussions and questions and will create a venue for lines of communication between Board members and community members to remain open.

Decisions regarding the locations of new buildings on Avatar's Abode, such as the new Kitchen Storage Building, are made with the intention of keeping options open for future development. Beyond the large amount of labour and money that go into these sorts of projects, a great amount of thought goes into how these structures will fit in with goals for future development.

1.5 To facilitate pilgrim and community experience of Meher Baba's loving and welcoming presence.

Over the past few years there has been a great increase in the number of volunteer cleaners for the accommodation, so that there is now either an individual or a team in charge of each building. It is a basic priority of the Trust that pilgrims have clean and comfortable accommodation while on pilgrimage; however, providing this within a limited budget and with volunteer labour can prove a challenge. The Management Committee which looks after building maintenance on the Abode has begun to address this challenge by developing feedback sheets which are now being provided to all overnight guests in order to ensure that attention is brought to maintenance and supply issues. So far feedback from pilgrims has been positive, and very helpful for those who volunteer to clean and maintain the cabins and pilgrims quarters.

It is the goal of the Trust that men and women not of the same family who stay at Avatar's Abode be accommodated separately. This has been achieved by moving pilgrims from the Pilgrim's

Quarters to one of the cabins if necessary. The Trust is currently considering a possible renovation of the Pilgrim's Quarters that would allow men and women to be accommodated separately in that facility. However, at present, the flow of visitors is generally accommodated without issue.

1.6 To develop and maintain the property, infrastructure, facilities and utilities.

As most of you are aware, since the development of the Strategic Plan in 2005 there have been many developments to the property. An extra toilet block was erected near the shed that is used for entertainment. The damaged bookstore has been completely rebuilt. The Pilgrim's Quarters have been revamped with tiling in the main living areas and bathrooms, a new shower, and paint inside and out. Baba's House has been re-stumped and re-roofed, as well as painted inside and out (more on this renovation later in the report). The toilet block adjoining Baba's House has been tiled. The trusses in the Meeting Hall have been treated for rust and repainted and also beautiful new handmade timber bench seats have been added. A new storage building has been built that houses the kitchen during event times. All drinking water is now tank water, with dam water being used in all toilets, reducing the need for filters. And under Geoff Gunther's care, the books in the Francis Brabazon library are being looked after and maintained to ensure their availability for years to come.

Although at times Avatars Abode may not appear rife with activity, Baba clearly has many willing hands tending to the physical needs of His Abode. These updates I have listed don't include the seemingly endless list of maintenance jobs tended to on a daily basis- from mowing, weeding and watering, to fixing cracked glass and broken locks. Perhaps it is Baba's gift to us that there is so much work to be done; no volunteer who raises their hand will be left with nothing to do. Please see the contact information at the bottom of each page to get in touch if you would like to lend a hand!

1.7 To promote awareness of Avatar's Abode as a place of spiritual pilgrimage to the Meher Baba community and to the broader community.

The Spring and Youth Sahavases are additions to the traditional events held at the Abode, and have been very successful in embracing people new to Baba and providing avenues for learning about His life and message. At the most recent Youth Sahavas there were at least eight new young ones participating. With a dedicated crew of workers who have all been involved at previous Sahavases, an environment is created where people feel free and comfortable to ask questions about Baba, explore the Abode, or simply absorb His atmosphere.

The Avatar's Abode website has also been a wonderful tool for keeping people informed about what is happening at the Abode, and it is currently undergoing a reinvention and will include more information and access to Baba material.

1.8 To develop and maintain a responsible fiscal policy and strategy to achieve these goals and objectives.

The treasurers of the Board have adopted the MYOB computer program to assist in keeping detailed and accurate financial records. Through the program they are able to provide the Trust with bimonthly profit and loss statements and a balance sheet. Receipts are being issued for donations made, with the goal being that receipts are issued for all money received in the name of the Trust.

Friends Reports and project-specific appeals for funds are some of the ways that the Trust is reaching out to the community to ensure that the ongoing needs of Avatar's Abode will be met. Additionally, practical measures are being taken to save money where possible, such as turning off hot water systems when pilgrim accommodation is not in use, turning off refrigerators, and using only energy efficient light bulbs.

Goal Two: To participate in the flowering of Meher Baba's message of love and truth

To achieve this goal the following objectives (not prioritised) are considered essential

2.2 To ensure that all people coming to Avatar's Abode have access to information about Meher Baba.

Work is underway on an information board at the entrance gates near the Reception Centre. Greg Rimmelzwaan, along with a team of young helpers at the most recent Youth Sahavas, erected the structure that will shelter a sign with an introduction to the property, highlighting its spiritual significance, along with contact phone numbers, a simple map, and an events schedule. While ideally someone from the local Baba community would be able to assist first time visitors, hopefully this sign will assist in those times that visitors are unannounced and may not be aware of the location of the Meeting Hall or Baba's House where other information is located.

It is current practice that at the Anniversary and other major events such as the Spring Sahavas there is an organised welcoming and registration station to assist people in settling in and accessing any information they need or to answer questions they may have. There are also binders in all accommodation buildings with information about Baba, Avatar's Abode, emergency procedures, and contact telephone numbers.

Please feel free to be in contact with the Board if you have questions or comments. Contact information is listed at the bottom of each page.

Baba's House Renovation:

Included in a previous Friends Report was an appeal for funds that would go toward the re-roofing of Baba's House. This project turned out to be somewhat larger than anticipated, but has been well worth the money and effort. Jethro Hitchens headed up the project along with Amir Naderi, Greg Rimmelzwaan, and Quentin Oakhill. The new Colorbond roof has two layers with insulation in between. The top layer is of particularly high quality and the bottom layer is viewed as a ceiling from inside Baba's house. Before the new roof was installed, the roof frame was treated for rust and repainted. Additionally, the original timber stumps beneath the house had begun to deteriorate so they were shortened to remove any rot and individually placed back on raised concrete footings to protect them from moisture and termites. The paintings inside were taken down so that a team led by David Hobson could painstakingly clean the walls and repaint them. What has come out of this project is a cleaner, fresher, more secure, stable, cool and quiet space for pilgrims to come and visit their Beloved.

It is worth noting also that four comfortable, good quality club chairs with cushions have been placed in Baba's House.

Work on Culverts progressing:

Extensive restoration work on the drains and culverts on Avatar's Abode driveways became a high priority after two very wet seasons. Drawing on his past experience and work skills Joe Harloff assessed the culverts, their inflows and outflows, and with the assistance of a small band of willing helpers began work in April 2012.

Two outflows leading to the bottom driveway had developed into considerable washouts; one of them to a cavity of almost 2 cubic metres! To stop the inevitable ongoing erosion the cavities were back-filled with broken bricks, a soil-cement mix and wire mesh reinforcement. The top layer was done in natural rocks from the Abode to form a clearly defined run-off with integrated water falls. Some native planting helped beautify the worst affected area. Excited comments from regular visitors to the Abode regarding the pleasing aesthetics of the completed work provided welcome encouragement for the workers.

One inlet end on the upper main driveway was completely renewed. Using Besser blocks and reinforcing bars in combination with natural rocks the former unstable rock wall was stabilised. By re-shaping the inlet end the flow speed of rain water run-off could be increased which in return offers a "self-cleaning" effect for the culvert.

Most of the outflow ends on the bottom main driveway still require work to avoid slope instabilities and washouts and to channel the rain water run-off.

The original driveway Beloved Baba used during his visit to Avatar's Abode also requires attention. An evaluation of the present situation will soon be carried out and a plan developed.

Financial Report Year to 30 June 2012-

The accompanying report gives a summary of the cash movements for the year. For the second year running our regular donations have not covered our recurring and unavoidable expenses. Fortunately we were able to tap into our reserves to adequately get us through a relatively lean year. Like many other charitable trusts we have lost some donors but it is very pleasing that there are now more of the Baba Family making regular contributions. Particularly pleasing was the response for financing a new roof to Baba's House. However, once the job started last winter (after the date of the attached financial report) it became clear that it would be prudent to undertake some major maintenance work while access was not limited by the roof. Despite the need to dip into our reserves to undertake this, there was little need for discussion about how this was necessary to preserve our most valuable structure.

One thing not shown in the report is the very pleasing growth in the number of volunteer helpers who actively are involved in a very wide variety of jobs. This includes such things as helping organise and put on events such as the Spring Sahavas, Youth Sahavas and June Anniversary, running the library, cleaning and maintaining facilities for day and overnight visitors, regular banking, concreting road drains, maintaining gardens and many other tasks. Attached is a Financial Support Form which lists the different ways financial donations can be made. For most people and for the Trust the most convenient way to process donations is by way of regular automatic transfers through the banks.

If 50 new donors were to donate the cost of a weekly cup of coffee a wonderful sum approaching \$10000 a year would be received eliminating our serious concerns about covering our

basic annual expenditure.

If you are able and willing to assist financially please note the details below and see the included supporters donation form. The form can also be downloaded from the Trust's website www.avatarsabode.com.au

With Love in Him,

Kaelin Rimmelzwaan on behalf of the Avatar's Abode Trust
with contributions from Directors and Management committee members

Avatar's Abode Pty Ltd as Trustee of Avatar's Abode Trust
Receipts and Payments for the Year to 30 June 2012

	\$	\$	\$
Receipts			
Donations			
Regular			
General Donations	26673		
Accommodation Donations	<u>4830</u>	31503	
Special			
Estate Bequest	5600		
Building Fund Appeal for Baba's House Roof *	<u>20000</u>	25600	
		57103	
Spring Sahavas - Net Surplus		310	
ATO Net – GST Refunds less GST paid on purchases **		7387	
Bank Interest		<u>4416</u>	69216
Add			
Net Funds Received and Held for Meher Baba Australia			<u>2036</u>
			<u>71252</u>
Less Payments			
Recurring Expenses			
Accountancy and Company Fees	1922		
Bank Charges and Merchant Summary Fees	498		
Building & Property Maintenance	8413		
Insurances	11118		
Sundry Expenses	1394		
Casual Wages	3455		
Rates	5216		
Telephone	1103		
Gas	310		
Electricity	2307		
Fuel and Oil	1144		
Mower and Equipment Maintenance	<u>1712</u>	38593	
Other Expenses			
Anniversary 2012 - Net Deficit	175		
Legal Expenses - Company and Restructure Advice	<u>2577</u>	2752	
Purchase of Assets			
Books	1019		
New Kitchen Storage Shed - Final Payment	1670		
White Goods and Lighting	<u>1319</u>	4008	45353
Increase in Bank Accounts for the 12 Months *			<u><u>25899</u></u>

* Since the end date of this report a total of \$27818 has been spent on Baba's House. \$2114 was required to repair the footings and \$25704 on the roof project. Upon removal of the old roof it became obvious that it was the appropriate time to do other repair and maintenance work in the roof area.

** This would be zero if GST paid on expenditure was returned from ATO in the same time period.

Friends of Avatar's Abode Financial Support

YES! I would like to become a *Friends of Avatar's Abode Financial Supporter*.

Name: _____

You can give your support in any of the following ways.

Please Tick and complete the section or sections that work for you.

1) I would like to make **periodic contributions** to Avatar's Abode as follows-

(Select Method):

A) automatic transfer from my bank account to **Avatar's Abode Pty Ltd – Friends Account**

\$ _____

Per month Bi-monthly Quarterly Bi-annually Annually

(Please organise these transfers with your Bank).

B) automatic deductions from my credit card by **Avatar 's Abode Pty Ltd– Friends Account**

\$ _____

Per Month Bi-monthly Quarterly Bi-annually Annually, until I notify you otherwise.

Credit card type: Visa MasterCard Other _____

Credit Card No.: _____ Expiry Date: ____/____

Name on Card

Signature

You don't have to organise card deductions with your bank.

This authority can be cancelled or altered at any time.

X) a contribution by cheque / Money Order to **Avatar 's Abode Pty Ltd – Friends Account**

\$ _____

Per month Bi-monthly Quarterly Bi-annually Annually

2) I am at this time making a one off contribution of \$ _____

by Cheque / Money Order Direct deposit

Banking Details:-

Please make Transfers/Cheques/Money Orders payable to **Avatar's Abode Pty Ltd - Friends Account:**

Nambour Commonwealth Bank account identification No. **06442410373465**

(This number is made up with BSB No. 064424 and Account No. 10373465)

After the receipt of this form we will contact you to confirm we have received your donation details.

How do you wish to be contacted?

Email

Mail

Phone

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Thank you for becoming a Friends of Avatar's Abode Financial Supporter and helping maintain and develop His Abode. Jai Meher Baba!

Please return to PO Box 184, Woombye Qld 4559.