

POSITION DESCRIPTION

General Manager

Inspiring Peace and Compassion

Reports to	Board of Directors
Direct reports	Finance Coordinator; Cultural Engagement Coordinator; Marketing & Events Coordinator; Administration Coordinator; Maintenance & Projects Coordinator
Location	The Great Stupa of Universal Compassion, Bendigo, Victoria
Employment	Full-time Employment arrangements in accordance with the contract of employment

Position purpose

The General Manager is the senior operational leader of the Great Stupa of Universal Compassion and is accountable to the Board for translating strategy into coordinated, sustainable and mission-aligned action. The role provides organisation-wide leadership, supports the five department heads, and ensures that the Great Stupa is well governed, financially responsible, safe, welcoming and capable of delivering meaningful impact.

Working within the Great Stupa's Buddhist foundation and its commitment to universal values, the General Manager brings together community engagement, universal education, Dharma, interfaith harmony and responsible revenue generation to advance the mission of Inspiring Peace and Compassion.

Leadership context

The General Manager operates at the intersection of a major visitor attraction, sacred Buddhist place, multicultural and interfaith community hub, not-for-profit organisation, employer, landholder and developing project site. The role must balance spiritual and community purpose with sound commercial judgement, legal compliance and disciplined operational delivery.

Key accountabilities

1. Mission, strategy and organisational leadership

- Lead the organisation in a way that consistently reflects the mission of Inspiring Peace and Compassion and the Great Stupa's values and Buddhist foundation.
- Work with the Board to develop strategic priorities, annual plans and measurable organisational objectives, and translate these into clear departmental work plans.
- Provide visible, values-led leadership across the site, maintaining clarity of direction, constructive communication and a culture of shared responsibility.
- Balance mission impact, visitor experience, community benefit, spiritual purpose, operational capacity and financial sustainability in organisational decision-making.
- Lead organisational change and continuous improvement, encouraging staff ideas that strengthen operations, visitor experience and organisational outcomes.

2. Governance and Board accountability

- Serve as the principal link between the Board and day-to-day operations, providing timely, accurate and decision-ready advice.
- Provide a formal monthly report to the Board, together with timely plans, budgets, policies, proposals and progress updates, and ensure approved decisions are implemented.
- Support effective governance through clear delegations, reliable records, transparent reporting and early escalation of material risks or issues.

- Ensure operations comply with the organisation's constitution, policies, legal obligations, funding agreements and Board directions.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality, integrity and accountability in all dealings.

3. Department leadership and cross-functional coordination

- Lead, support and hold accountable the five department heads responsible for Finance; Cultural Engagement; Marketing & Events; Administration; and Maintenance & Projects.
- Set clear expectations, decision rights, priorities and performance measures; conduct three-month and annual performance and development reviews for department heads; and ensure reviews occur for all other staff.
- Coordinate work across departments so that events, visitor operations, communications, staffing, finance, maintenance and major projects are planned as one organisation.
- Resolve competing priorities, remove barriers and ensure resources are directed to the areas of greatest mission, operational and financial need.
- Maintain clear internal communication so staff, volunteers and relevant site partners understand decisions, responsibilities and upcoming activity.

4. Financial stewardship and sustainability

- Work with the Finance Coordinator and Board to develop, monitor and report against annual budgets, forecasts, cash flow and financial performance.
- Maintain effective financial controls and ensure accurate, timely reporting, payroll, accounts, banking and not-for-profit compliance.
- Review departmental performance and make evidence-based decisions about expenditure, investment, pricing and resource allocation.
- Strengthen diversified and responsible revenue through tourism, donations, grants, memorials, retail and online sales, events, fundraising, sponsorships and appropriate partnerships.
- Protect the Great Stupa's reputation by ensuring revenue generation and fundraising remain ethical, transparent and aligned with mission.

5. People, culture and capability

- Build a respectful, inclusive, accountable and collaborative workplace culture for staff and volunteers.
- Ensure sound workforce planning, recruitment, induction, supervision, development, performance management and succession planning.
- Lead the recruitment and, within Board-approved delegations, appointment of senior staff, drawing on appropriate management and Board input.
- Recommend senior staffing structures and remuneration arrangements to the Board for approval.
- Support department heads to address conduct, wellbeing and performance matters fairly, promptly and consistently, seeking specialist advice where required.
- Ensure employment practices, volunteer management and workplace policies meet legal requirements and organisational standards.
- Model calm, compassionate and direct communication, particularly when navigating conflict, change or sensitive matters.

6. Operations, risk and compliance

- Oversee safe, effective and visitor-focused day-to-day operations across the Great Stupa, Visitor Centre, Peace Park and associated facilities and services.
- Maintain an organisation-wide risk framework covering work health and safety, safeguarding, emergencies, security, infrastructure, events, finance, information, reputation and business continuity.
- Ensure current policies, licences, permits, insurance, registers, training and incident-response processes are maintained and reviewed.
- Oversee major infrastructure, maintenance and development priorities, ensuring appropriate scoping, approvals, procurement, budgeting and project governance.
- Ensure contracted and leased services operating on site meet agreed standards and support a cohesive visitor experience.

7. External relationships and representation

- Represent the Great Stupa professionally with government, funders, tourism bodies, donors, sponsors, media, contractors and community partners.
- Maintain respectful and productive relationships with Buddhist teachers and communities, Atisha Centre, Thubten Shedrup Ling Monastery, Machig Labdron Nunnery and the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT).
- Strengthen relationships with First Nations, multicultural, interfaith and local communities in support of welcome, understanding and harmony.
- Build partnerships that extend impact, visitation, education, funding and organisational capability while protecting the Great Stupa's purpose and reputation.
- Act as a credible spokesperson and ensure significant external communications are accurate, respectful and appropriately authorised.

Mission delivery framework

Mission pillar	Inspiring Peace and Compassion
Community engagement	Tourism, events, workshops, memorials, Tibetan Dharma art and museum experiences, environmental sustainability, volunteerism and employment.
Universal education	Secular ethics, the Foundation for Developing Compassion and Wisdom, and the 16 Guidelines for Life.
Dharma	A respected place of pilgrimage, Buddhist teachings and retreats, delivered in constructive relationship with FPMT and the neighbouring Buddhist communities.
Interfaith harmony	The Peace Park, faith installations, library, multicultural events and an inclusive refuge for all.
Revenue generation	Ethical and responsible tourism, donations, grants, memorials, retail, events, fundraising and sponsorships that sustain the mission.

Decision-making authority

The General Manager acts within the strategy, budget, policies and delegations approved by the Board. The position has authority to direct day-to-day operations, manage staff and volunteers through established reporting lines, approve expenditure within delegation, enter operational arrangements within authority, and respond to urgent safety or continuity matters. Matters reserved for the Board, outside delegation, or carrying material strategic, legal, financial or reputational risk must be escalated promptly.

Key relationships

- Internal: Board of Directors; department heads; staff; volunteers; Buddhist teachers, sangha and spiritual advisers; and relevant committees.
- Site and tradition: Atisha Centre; Thubten Shedrup Ling Monastery; Machig Labdron Nunnery; FPMT representatives and associated Buddhist communities.
- External: visitors; donors; sponsors; funders; government agencies; tourism and industry bodies; First Nations, faith and multicultural communities; schools; contractors; suppliers; tenants; media and local residents.

Performance indicators

- Board-approved strategy, annual plans and key initiatives are delivered with clear reporting on progress, risks and outcomes.
- The organisation operates within approved budgets, maintains sound controls and improves the sustainability and diversity of revenue.

- Department heads, staff and volunteers experience clear priorities, coordinated work, consistent leadership, appropriate support and fair performance processes.
- Risk, compliance, visitor experience, mission delivery, major projects and partnerships are responsibly managed, with material matters escalated appropriately.

Selection criteria

Essential

- Demonstrated senior leadership experience in a complex, purpose-led organisation, with accountability for strategy, operations, people, budgets and organisational performance.
- Proven ability to work effectively with a Board or governing body and to provide concise, reliable reports, advice and recommendations.
- Strong financial and commercial capability, including budgeting, financial analysis, controls, revenue development and resource allocation.
- Demonstrated success leading managers and multidisciplinary teams, including performance management, organisational change and culture development.
- Sound knowledge of governance, workplace relations, work health and safety, risk management and compliance obligations relevant to a Victorian not-for-profit employer and public visitor site.
- Exceptional relationship management and communication skills, with the judgement to work respectfully across Buddhist, interfaith, multicultural, government, tourism and community settings.
- Ability to lead multiple operational and strategic priorities, make timely decisions, manage sensitive issues and follow work through to completion.
- Genuine alignment with the mission of Inspiring Peace and Compassion and willingness to work respectfully within the Great Stupa's Buddhist foundation, spiritual environment and universal outlook.
- High standards of integrity, discretion, accountability and professional conduct.
- Current driver's licence and willingness to obtain and maintain required checks and certifications, including a Working with Children Check.

Desirable

- Relevant tertiary qualification in management, business, governance, finance, community development, tourism or a related field, or equivalent substantial experience.
- Experience in one or more of the not-for-profit, tourism, cultural attraction, faith-based, community, education, events or major-project sectors.
- Experience with grants, philanthropy, sponsorships, fundraising, capital works or visitor-economy partnerships.
- Understanding of FPMT, Tibetan Buddhism, secular ethics or interfaith engagement.

Role requirements

- The role is primarily site-based and requires visible leadership across the Great Stupa precinct.
- Some evening, weekend and public-holiday work will be required for major events, retreats, incidents and stakeholder commitments.
- The position must comply with all Great Stupa policies, codes of conduct, safeguarding requirements and lawful directions.
- This position description may be reviewed as organisational needs, strategy and structure evolve. Material changes will be managed through appropriate consultation.