

From: [Suryamitra](#)
To: [Atmamuktananda Saraswati](#); [Ahimsadhara Saraswati](#); [Poornamurti \(Phil\) Connor](#); secretary@syta.org.au; [Amarnath \(Anthony\) Cormack](#); [Bert Franzen](#); **REDACTED**
Cc: [Yogasandhan](#); [Gurubhatka](#)
Subject: Mangrove History Task Force
Date: Friday, 21 March 2014 12:40:10 PM

Hari Om

In consultation with other members of the team it has been proposed that we form a task force to manage the current issues arising re Mangrove's history. This task force will be made up of representatives from SYTA, Manly Yoga and SYA, so that all three parties can agree on the appropriate path forward.

There are a number of reasons for doing this, but I think most importantly it will ensure that all communications/responses/actions are determined based on full information and appropriate advice (legal and otherwise), we give consistent messages to our community and the public, and we do the best we can for all affected parties. We also don't want to over-engineer it.

It is important that the responsibility for managing this issue be limited to a few so that it can be done effectively and with full awareness of the potential consequences of any action taken. These matters are sensitive, which is another reason for not including more people than we need to in the decision-making process. As I'm sure you're all aware, it is essential that we get the tone and wording right for any communication as it is so easy to misinterpret what has been written and cause unintended harm.

I will represent the Mangrove management committee on this task force but we (the MMC) will not be active in the decision-making as I think it's important for some distance and perspective to be applied, and we are also busy running the day to day operations here.

It is proposed that the task force be made up of:

- Atmamuktananda (SYA)
- Ahimsadhara (SYA)
- Suryamitra (SYA)
- Poornamurti (SYA)
- Haribodhananda (SYA)
- Krsnadhara (SYTA)
- Amarnath (Manly Yoga)
- Bert Franzen (HR Consulting)

We will take advice from the Royal Commission and potentially others such as Kate Eastman (legal).

I have attached below Bert's email from last night as I think he has very clearly outlined what our next steps should be. Most importantly, we should limit our actions to only what is essential so that we don't fan the flames and keep the issue going.

Please let me know if you are in agreement with this and we can start the ball rolling on communicating between us. I have cc'd Yogasandhan and Gurubhakta to let them know what is happening but they don't need to be included on communications going forward.

Om

Suryamitra

Message from Bert:

Hello Everyone

My view is that we should not escalate. I think it would be unwise to get Niranjanananda involved publicly as it puts him in a very difficult position and could put out the wrong messages. On a private level however he should reserve his right to take legal action regarding the Bhakti/Smith emails.

I'd also guard against the potential to over-engineer internally. Keep it simple and the people involved to a minimum. Invite the distressed initiate (recipient of Bhakti/Smith email) in to meet with someone to discuss her concerns. This will allow the chance to correct misconceptions.

Be media ready. I believe Suryamitra is the media person so all media should be referred to her.

Proposed next steps

- In the immediate short-term, we issue a 'cease and desist' letter to both parties (I'll have draft by close business tomorrow) shutting that down from causing further damage.
- I believe Suryamitra has sent an email to the recipients of the Bhakti/Smith emails, putting them in the picture. How detailed were we in these communications?
This was sent from SYTA to the SYTA members - I'll send it to you separately, Bert (SM)
- If not already done, we should consider some form of damage control initiative focused on the initiates affected by the Bhakti / smith emails.
- Suryamitra has shut the Facebook forum. Removing that as a problem.
- Focus our energies on the apology and the healing ceremony. In so doing emphasising that we have implemented systems and processes that have ensured 29 years of trouble free growth and development for the Ashram, Sannyasins and community alike.
- We should push the apology/healing day loud and clear for everyone to hear and attend.
- Hold the special day where we sincerely acknowledge what went wrong, those who were hurt and join together in healing;
- Ensure that we have proper referral services available. There will be those who will not be satisfied but, unfortunately, there's nothing that we can do other than offer support and understanding. Referral to independent support and counselling services are available and should be utilised.
- After the Apology / Healing day we continue to provide ongoing support to those affected and in need. This could involve invitations to free stay/s at the Ashram and/or attend specific programs, referral to external experts etc.