

Life Eternal Trust 'right of reply' to the Council's 28th August claims

Jai Shri Mataji!

Dear Yogis

We, the Trustee-directors (Trustees) of Life Eternal Trust Australia (LETA), are responding to a collective email message from the Sahaja Yoga Council in Australia (Council) sent on 28 August 2023 in which the Council expressed concerns about the Life Eternal Trust (Trust). Given how the concerns were presented, it appeared to promote a particular narrative. Many Sahaja Yogis requested that we reply to some of the serious claims made in that email and share the instructions regarding the Trust given by HH Shri Mataji in more recent years, leading up to Her stay in Burwood over 2006-2007. Therefore it is important that our response is unedited and fully reflects what we perceive to be in alignment with Shri Mataji's instructions.

For fairness and due process, we asked the Coordinator of Australia to allow us a right of reply that could be sent using the same collective email system which is provided through collective funds. Conditions were however imposed by the Coordinator before the responses could be shared openly.

While no conditions were imposed on the email that was sent by the Council on 28 August 2023, it is only fair that the response from the Trust be provided without any conditions or editing. As we were prevented from using the collective email system, the Trustees had no option but to share our responses using the Trust's email distribution platform. If you know of any practising Sahaja Yogi that did not receive this message, you may forward the email and encourage them to read it.

We humbly and in good faith present these responses at the Lotus Feet of Our Divine Mother, pray for the unity of the Sahaja collective and ask for Her Divine Forgiveness if we made an error in sharing this information.

Please note: The text in this email marked with * and in *Italics* is sourced from the Council's original email of 28 August 2023. The Trustees' responses are below each quote.

In 2004-2005 Shri Mataji also directed the Trustees on how to create the first Sahaja Yoga Council in Australia.

Please review this important record of Shri Mataji's instructions with the formation of the Council.

[PDF LINK. Life Eternal Trust, Shri Mataji and the creation of the Australian](#)

https://www.syletanews.com/files/ugd/993a5e_141edb1ade8c4895aaa97d5e2a9b3bd6.pdf

* *Life Eternal Trust Australia as a purely administrative structure, the Trust is meant to operate silently in the background, while the day-to-day running of Sahaja Yoga in Australia is in the hands of the Council as the collective leadership body created by Shri Mataji.*

Shri Mataji created the Trust in 1987 and wrote the roles and responsibilities of Trustees. The Trust Deed, its aims, objectives and purpose are clear and remain unaltered from those that Shri Mataji drafted. The limits of the authority of LETA are also articulated in the Trust Deed drafted by Shri Mataji as a foundational document for Sahaja Yoga in the UK, India and Australia. The primary purposes of the Deed are:

- Promotion of the spiritual teachings of the Sahaja Yoga religion by hosting lecture courses, public meetings, study groups and by any other means.
- Establishment of centres, meeting places, places of worship, research centres, schools.

While amendments have been made over time to ensure LETA can meet its requirements adhering to the evolving legislation within the not-for-profit sector in Australia, the essence of the Trust Deed remains the same. You may be aware of Shri Mataji's instructions to always promote the teachings and operation of Sahaja Yoga entities within the laws of each country.

Given the history of Sahaja Yoga leadership here, the dual Council and Trust arrangement has proven to be the most stable structure for Sahaja Yoga in Australia. It is also the structure advised by Shri Mataji in discussion with Her appointed Trustees in 2004-2005. This dual arrangement is needed to provide appropriate checks and balances and to avoid the problems of impropriety and deception that occurred in the past with leaders holding dual roles.

[PDF LINK. Life Eternal Trust Australian Deed Trust Purposes](https://www.syletanews.com/files/uqd/993a5e_2dcfdfa2fcb04b16aa4d0c57c125e976.pdf)

https://www.syletanews.com/files/uqd/993a5e_2dcfdfa2fcb04b16aa4d0c57c125e976.pdf

** The Trust and the Council need to work together, with the Trust being firmly within the control of the collective itself, not acting as a spiritual elite or corporate authority or exercising any form of independence from the collective.*

The claim that Trustees are alleged to be a kind of spiritual elite is a personal view held by a few individuals. We are not there as spiritual elites in Sahaja Yoga. This view may have been based on our adherence to the principles of vibrational selection, which also apply to the selection of Trustees. We have always supported an independent vibrational selection process and will collaborate at each available opportunity with the Council and the wider collective to ensure the independence and integrity of such a Sahaja Yoga process to solely reflect Shri Mataji's Will in the appointment of Sahaja Yogis to leadership positions. We uphold this broadly accepted process and speak up when these principles are under threat. We spoke up about the selection process for the current Coordinator, when we were made aware that one of the retiring Coordinators and their family member were involved in decision to declare the current Coordinator, without sharing results of the vibrational selection for transparency. This involvement, together with the alleged destruction of the records of that selection exercise was a clear breach of the principles of an independent and transparent process and of the separation of duties, in essence, a real or perceived conflict of interest. The current Coordinator and Council took a different view of that selection process, which is at the core of the disagreement between the Trust and the Council, as it violated the independence and integrity of the selection.

As far as we are aware, there is no evidence that LETA has obstructed any of the activities for the promotion of Sahaja Yoga or for collective events, or withdrawn support to the collective Council leadership, which has been proposed.

We are committed to upholding and acting according to the Trust Deed, to further its aims and objectives. These are part our 'fiduciary duties' according to Australian law and in our opinion, Divine law drafted by Shri Mataji as part of the Trust Deed. We do not sway according to changes in the political wind that could result in compromising the aims of the Trust Deed.

The Council is correct to say we act as a corporate authority. These are also part our 'fiduciary duties' according to Australian law. We advise and educate each Council and when required, the wider collective about their legal responsibilities as volunteers. LETA is obliged to set up systems to support legal requirements and to comply with the evolving legal landscape of the not-for-profit sector, within which Sahaja Yoga operates in Australia. These legalities are often about values and may challenge us to adapt so that we can grow and protect the public standing of Sahaja Yoga in Australia.

** It is clear there is a real need for genuine fixed terms of some kind within the Trust.*

No fixed terms were declared by Shri Mataji for Trustees in the UK and Australia, and subsequently in Her 2010 letter, as has been cited by the Council. There have been twelve changes to Trustees since the formation of LETA; the tenure of a LETA Trustee is not permanent.

At the end of their term, each current Trustee will be asked after five years if they wish to continue in the role. If they do, this must be supported by other Trustees. This is in accordance with Shri Mataji's Trust Deed and the manner in which other Non-Government Organisations within Sahaja Yoga operate, such as the World Foundation and Life Eternal Trust (UK).

** have access to detailed accounts. These requests have been denied, even though the financial accounts are your contributions, and you have a right to know to-the-dollar what is going on.*

The Trust Deed is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC). It is online and available to scrutiny by the public. Also available online are eleven years of audited financial statements of all the contributions by Sahaja Yogis to the dollar, submitted annually as required by the law. In addition to the ACNC, LETA is also oversighted by other government agencies, such as the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, the Office of State Revenue, the Australian Tax Office. There have been no reportable matters in the thirty-six years since the Trust was established by Shri Mataji and the ten years since it was registered with the ACNC.

You may not be aware that in the past, combining the positions of Leader and Trustee in one role resulted in significant failures in the management of finances. The underlying reason for these failures was due to a lack of necessary checks and balances between the leadership role of Sahaja Yoga and responsibility as a Trustee. Sahaja Yoga was put at risk of losing its not-for-profit / charitable status and for major punitive fines. LETA then undertook a major three-year project, with the assistance of volunteers, to review the five years of LETA accounts which were potentially the subject of audit. Detailed forensic accounting took place during the review, which was essential to bring the Sahaja Yoga financial accounts back into order, before LETA could reengage with the relevant Government authorities (noted above). The government authorities scrutinized the accounts and we avoided punitive action.

A detailed presentation of the financial accounts is made each year at National Easter Puja at Balmoral, after which the floor is open to questions. The Trustees are also willing to answer any questions at other times. The National accounts for the 2022 financial year were emailed to the collective in advance, prior to presenting them at the Easter seminar of 2023. We have not denied access to detailed accounts when requested.

[PDF LINK. Australian Charities Not for Profit Commission](https://www.syletanews.com/files/ugd/993a5e_3eccd2db94ad483eb44ceb08baf1fdb.pdf)

https://www.syletanews.com/files/ugd/993a5e_3eccd2db94ad483eb44ceb08baf1fdb.pdf

** In summary three private individuals own LEPA as shareholders of a private company, which has no obligation to Sahaja Yoga at all. They operate beyond the scrutiny of the collective.*

To the contrary, under the Trust Deed established by Shri Mataji, the Trustees (who are practising Sahaja Yogis and not just private individuals), have far greater responsibilities to Sahaja Yoga than most Sahaja Yogis. The responsibilities are also legal and can be the subject of legal sanction. As a consequence, Trustees share a disproportionate accountability of outcomes relative to most Sahaja Yogis, including the Coordinator and the collective Council leadership. The Trustees take their roles of accountability seriously, not only to the laws of the country but also to Sahaja Yoga, as entrusted by Shri Mataji.

Our duty is to be present within the collective and available to Sahaja Yogis. We cannot resort to a mere website presence and/or email announcements. We must be present for the collective when issues relevant to the aims and objectives of the Trust Deed arise and then exercise our role impartially, provide accurate information, and sometimes make difficult decisions in the collective's best interests. We may have aspirations that exceed the collective resources but we manage the resources entrusted to us responsibly. Due to the nature of the role as established by Shri Mataji, it is easy for others to criticize and make us a target, but it is also our duty to wear this. We just ask that Sahaja Yogis recognize that we are Sahaja Yogis too, and work for the collective beyond our normal day jobs and family responsibilities. We respond to scrutiny from Sahaja Yogis, as well as welcome all constructive input. Sahaja Yogis should also be aware we cannot delegate our legal responsibilities under the Trust Deed, as it violates not only the laws of the country but what Shri Mataji entrusted us with.

** This opaque structure is highly unusual for Not-for-Profit charities.....*

The entire operation of LETA is far from opaque. It is Shri Mataji's instrument. It supports around 900 yogis who volunteer to undertake a whole range of activities according to their own initiative, capacities and capabilities. They receive minimal direction from the Council as they know what needs to be done. LETA provides additional support through booking-keeping services, and the legal structure that is accountable to government and the collective.

There is no lack of transparency or accountability as the Trust Deed is registered with the ACNC and available online. For increased transparency, we have trialed emailing the financial accounts to Sahaja Yogis before LETA's open forum meeting at the last Easter Seminar of 2023. This is in addition to the publicly published audited statements.

Collective financial affairs are decentralized, with the collective of each state and territory collecting, spending and accounting for monies according their own specific needs and activities.

While LETA has funds for key priorities, collectives of all the states and territories of the country (except WA) retain their own finances but provide accounting data to LETA for consolidation into national accounts, which are then reported to relevant authorities under auspices of LETA, the legal face and corporate body set up by Shri Mataji to underpin an independent dynamic collective, which is not overrun by political interests.

Sahaja Yogis in Western Australia have had their own LETWA for decades (and its own long-standing trustees), which manages its affairs. Over the years there has always been a presentation of the finances to the collective and there have been no issues servicing the loan for the Gidgegannup property, receiving donations and paying for operational expenses within WA.

It is not uncommon for trustees in Sahaja Yoga to have tenure running into decades, as with the LETWA trustees and the UK Trust where one Trustee has served for four decades and a number of others serving for over two decades. In LETA, four new Trustees were added last year to expand the number of trustees to seven. This was done through an open application process within Sahaja Yoga in Australia, with clear selection criteria. The final appointment was through independent vibrational selection conducted before the collective present at Balmoral, from amongst the Sahaja Yogis who applied for the role.

** In summary, three private individuals own LEPA as shareholders of a private company, which has no obligation to Sahaja Yoga at all.*

The notion that LETA properties are owned by three private individuals is false. Life Eternal Properties (LEPA) is a property holding company which holds the titles for Sahaja properties. The directors of LEPA have no claim or can treat company property, assets or funds as if they are their own.

LEPA acts as the sole corporate Trustee of Life Eternal Trust and holds the titles in trust on behalf of Shri Mataji as the President of the Trust. The company, LEPA, is also bound by the charitable aims and objectives of the Trust as Shri Mataji drafted. If further explanation of the organizational structure is needed, any Sahaja Yogi can approach the Trustees in person.

** They operate beyond the scrutiny of the collective.*

Despite serious impropriety arising from former Leaders/Coordinators who have since left the collective, a high level of scrutiny has been directed at longer standing LETA Trustees over a significant period of time, who therefore have been made the longest standing targets of frustration within the collective. This is regardless of the fact that the Trust's actions invariably reflect the will of the collective and where the Trust continues to financially support collective projects within its resources, facilitated through its legal framework.

Despite our efforts, goodwill and hard work dedicated to projects such as the return of the Burwood property for use of the larger collective and the proposed establishment of a Sahaja Yoga school in Australia, the Trust often takes the brunt of collective frustrations when all their aspirations are not realised.

The view that there is a lack of collective engagement is not correct. The completion of the Wamuran Puja Hall, the amazing renovation of Gidgegannup and the long-awaited Adelaide ashram project could not have been done without engagement with the respective collectives. The work of the Trust is for the service of Sahaja Yoga, in following the aims and objectives that Shri Mataji drafted within Her Trust Deed.

** Shri Mataji insisted that the growth of Sahaj needed to be organic. We were never meant to be run as an organisation, but simply to have organisations within the Sangha that supported the growth of the collective*

During discussions with Trustees, Shri Mataji mentioned that all the serious problems with the administration of Sahaja Yoga in Australia **have not arisen from LETA, but from Leaders/Coordinators**, which include matters of sexual and financial impropriety, misadministration, bullying and harassment. This is a matter of historical record.

In the past, when the role of Leader and Trustee were combined, the lack of appropriate checks and balances resulted in major financial impropriety. Shri Mataji allowed this to play out in each occurrence, until the time when She chose to intervene. Shri Mataji advised the Trustees at that time how to prevent the same from resurfacing in future. None of the current Council or former Trustees (state or national), or the signatories of various letters demanding the resignation of current Trustees, were present with Shri Mataji to hear this advice.

The manner in which some of the current Council are operating, appears towards repeating past mistakes by reversing the separation of duties between the Trust and the Council, seeking to take control as the past Leaders and directing the Trustees on how to operate within the Trust Deed.

** We feel it is time for positive change in the Trust in the short term through the introduction of genuine fixed terms for Trustees-Directors.*

To resolve the current problems, the Trustees have proposed that at the end of the current term of the National Coordinator that we move to two joint Coordinators. One candidate for vibrational selection would be drawn from the Council, as has been done previously. The second candidate will be drawn from the recently appointed Trustees. The joint Coordinators would work cooperatively and encourage collaboration between all aspects of Sahaja Yoga leadership, Coordinator, Council and Trust. This is a positive recommendation that the Trustees proposed at the Balmoral meeting in late December 2022 to deal with the recent challenges.

** The position the Trustees have attempted to adopt with the Council over the past 18 months is one of complete authority and control over all matters within the Australian collective.*

LETA Trustees strive to be professional, respectful, and factual with all their communications, publicly and with the Sahaja Yoga collective, also with Coordinator and Council, despite the recent challenges.

You may be aware that an independent vibrational checking was held in 2022 to confirm whether the Coordinator should continue in the role, or to resign, after the Trustees were made aware that the appointment of the Coordinator was not independent and appropriate to the results of the vibrational selection. The result of the 2022 vibrational checking was reported by the independent team of Sahaja Yogis who hosted the process. The outcome, when shared, was rejected by the Council, who also decided not to allow the communication of that outcome to the larger collective. For the Council to not accept and communicate an outcome from a vibrational checking that related to the Coordinator continuing in his role, shows a lack of integrity and transparency, which may be underpinned by a sense of loyalty, resulting in a real or perceived conflict of interest. With unconditional access to the collective email system denied, the Trust had no alternative other than to set-up a non-censored means of communication with the collective.

LETA therefore established an information website to present the Trust's positive contributions to Sahaja Yoga and the email distribution list as an independent means of communication with the larger collective, that is not bound by conditions or censorship. To date, there has been no communication by LETA that is critical of the Council or their role.

** As a purely administrative structure, the Trust is meant to operate silently in the background, while the day-to-day running of Sahaja Yoga in Australia is in the hands of the Council.*

The current Council was not involved in directions received from Shri Mataji in 2005 when the arrangements for Sahaja Yoga leadership in Australia were fundamentally realigned. The role of the Trustees is to uphold the aims, objectives and purpose of the Trust Deed. It is unrealistic and speculative to assume that their role is purely functional, solely administrative and exclusive of the role of Councils, or any other Sahaja Yogi with an interest in furthering Shri Mataji's mission of Self Realisation for the transformation of humanity.

Traditionally, the Trustees have facilitated and hosted Shri Mataji's visits to Australia, including the renovation of Her Burwood home for the 2006 and 2007 stays. They ensured a broad participation by Sahaja Yogis from around Australia and for visiting Sahaja Yogis from overseas to enjoy Shri Mataji's presence.

Matters such as building an ashram, a school, creating a child safe environment or addressing other important risks of our public engagement cannot meaningfully be dismissed as just administrative matters that can be passed on to Councils; with no prior experience or expertise.

** The position the Trustees have attempted to adopt over the past 18 months is one of complete authority and control over all matters within the Australian collective.*

All Councils within Australia have promoted and continue to promote Sahaja Yoga with no control or intervention by the Trust.

The Trust proposed a meeting with the Council at Balmoral in December 2022 to re-establish collaborative ways of working. Undertakings were made to work together; however, it appears that the Council has continued supporting demands for Trustees to resign. These actions by certain members of the Council have become counterproductive as evident in a recent meeting in Sydney to discuss the future of Burwood where supporting certain individuals' desire to continually attack the Trustees was detrimental to constructive outcomes towards the very purpose of that session.

Shri Mataji never supported public criticism of Sahaja Yogis or anything which would damage the good name of Sahaja Yoga. The Council's email message on the eve of Shri Krishna Puja is a breach of this protocol and an indication of the escalating direction the Council is taking. What is more important than the intellect that can divide, is the intelligence of the heart, because an open heart is empathetic towards the other and as Sahaja Yogis, what unites us is far greater than what divides us.

The proposal to bring the Trust and Council together at the time of the appointment of the next Coordinator is a genuine attempt to end the current challenges. In the meantime, we pray to Shri Mataji to always guide us and that we all never lose sight of the purpose of all of us in receiving our Self-Realisation from Her.

If you want any questions answered, please do not hesitate to contact LETA via email:

life.eternal.trust.australia@gmail.com

Yours faithfully,

The LETA Trustee-directors