
Proposed Way-forward
REVIEW AND STREAMLINE HTCC RELIGIOUS SERVICES

OBJECTIVES

1. Review and streamline HTCC religious services rendered in-house and outside the HTCC by the Panditji. The proposed review will take into account the current and long term needs of the HTCC organisation and its membership so that the HTCC can ensure a self-sustainable quality religious services to its membership; and
2. Prepare/develop a draft HTCC religious service policy and procedures to be adopted by the Executive Committee for implementation as soon as possible.

BACKGROUND

1. Since the inception of the HTCC and the appointment of the current incumbent on the Panditji's position, the membership has recognized that the HTCC religious services be further formalised in order to optimize efficiency and revenue base of the services without compromising on a number of HTCC legal obligations as an employer.
2. The HTCC has been suffering considerable financial losses due to the selective implementation of the current employment contract with Panditji (**Attachment on PG No 8**) for a number of years without any justification.
3. The religious service is a major revenue source for the organization. The HTCC should provide full transparency and accountability in the operation of the services to avoid possible future audit or legal issues, such as conniving in the cash economy.
4. The internet research reveals that:
 - a. a number of religious organizations overseas and within Australia offering religious services to their membership have well defined and widely publicised religious service policies and procedures which include a list of exhaustive religious services. These lists provide services fees and minimum recommended Dakshina for each service directly payable to the organizations;
 - b. these organisations and their religious services providers; Pandits/Pujari have a clearly defined employer – employee employment contracts;
 - c. the available references clearly indicate that Dakshina is fee/tip for rendering a religious service offered by a Pandit/Pujari on behalf of their organisations.
 - d. these publications are thus part of their effort to implement full accountability and transparency as required by those organisation complying with their local legal, taxation and other organisational framework.

POSSIBLE OPTIONS

Options	Actions required	Strategies	Implications
Option A	Do nothing/continue with current arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No strategy required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HTCC will continue with the significant financial loss of revenue and long pending sensitive issues of the Dakshina will remain unresolved. The EC will have no control either on quality of the service or on the service provider. All previous, current and successive ECs, who would fail to enforce the employment contract with Panditji fully could be held responsible for their non action and liable for the organisation suffering significant revenue losses. It is to be noted that at no stage the general membership of the HTCC has been taken in to confidence formally about the employment contacts and the on-going financial losses. HTCC cannot continue with the current policies/ processes supporting Cash Economy and Tax avoidance. <p>Not Recommended</p>
Option B	Review the current service procedure and fees structures for various religious services rendered and to vary the existing fixed salary and allowances paid to the Panditji	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a detail religious service policy and procedure. Adjust/vary the existing fixed salary and allowances paid to the Panditji taking into account the estimated average undisclosed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the current organisational climate, varying the employment contract with Panditji will be sensitive and time consuming. The EC may not be able to achieve its long term objective of streamlining the religious services that

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	under his current contract taking into the average Dakshina amount he is receiving without sharing it with HTCC.	Dakshina amount that Panditji receives in a typical month for in-house and external religious services.	<p>could offer an ongoing revenue source for the organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This option would not resolve the Cash Economy and Tax avoidance issues. <p>Not Recommended</p>
Option C	Review the current service fees structure for various religious services rendered by incorporating the minimum recommended amount of Dakshina directly payable to HTCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a detail religious service policy and procedure. Review and develop a list of religious services with enhanced prescribed service fees taking into account the estimated average minimum Dakshina amount that Panditji should normally receive minimum for each religious service he performs in-house and outside the HTCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HTCC may be able to prevent revenue losses to some degree. However, the EC will still not be complying with its contractual responsibility and it may be subject to future audit issues. The EC will have to come up with convincing justification for the sudden increase in the service fees. The increase will not be consistent with the open and transparent decision making process. It could be attractive approach until new employment agreement is due, and framework is developed. This is not a long term viable approach and would still not resolve the Cash Economy and Tax avoidance issues as above. <p>Not Recommended</p>
Option D	Review the current service fees structure for various religious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a detail religious service policy and procedure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HTCC will prevent revenue losses and will be able comply with its

Options	Actions required	Strategies	Implications
	services rendered by prescribing new service fees and the minimum recommended amount of Dakshina for each service directly payable to HTCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and develop a list of religious services with separately prescribed service fees and the minimum recommended amount of Dakshina directly payable to HTCC. 	<p>contractual responsibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be a number of technical and procedural complex and time consuming issues need to be dealt. The EC should commit itself to spend its time and resources to overcome them. Although there will be some teething problems/resistance in implementing this approach, firm and united efforts with open and transparent communication to membership will facilitate the implementation. This option would resolve HTCC commitment to all legal, taxation, accountability and transparency obligations. <p>Recommended</p>

ISSUES IDENTIFIED

All the options identified above have their pros and cons, and the EC should carefully weigh them against the overall objective that it is committed for the organisation. In doing so, the EC should consider the following issues, the EC thus should:

1. accept full and unequivocal responsibility for the development and implementation of the policy and procedures.
2. agree to fully operationalise the existing employment contract without any reservations/changes
3. be firm, assertive and lead united approach with open and effective communication with its membership.
4. commit to devote time and resources, including required data/information for the development of complex and challenging service policy and procedure, and its effective consultation with stakeholders (if required) and implementation in a timely manner.
5. commit itself to provide skilled volunteers to deal with IT and finance/account issues required for the tasks.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. The existing religious service policy/procedure will be reviewed keeping in view the long term viability of HTCC, its services and in the context with the existing (and possible future) employment contract with Panditji.
2. The policy and procedure for religious services offered by the similar organisations in Australia and Overseas be a guide as these organisations are maturing and their experiences would be of immense help to the HTCC.
3. A draft religious service policy and procedure will be developed in consultation with appropriate and experienced members/experts.
4. Based on the draft policy and procedure agreed by the EC, a secure web based booking collecting fee and Dakshina will be developed by a suitably skilled and experienced volunteer who will also undertake testing before the launch of the policy and procedure.
5. As the above fully functional secure web based booking system development can be a time consuming exercise, an interim manual system be recommended for implementation at the earliest possible time frame.

WAYFORWARD

1. The way forward proposal developed after preliminary consultation with the President should be endorsed formally by the EC within 1 week.
2. The EC would consider making a formal brief announcement about the commencement of the policy and procedure development work to the community.
3. Following the endorsement, the EC will commence working on the development of policy and procedures with the assistance of volunteers; Shri Rakesh Malhotra, Shri Ashok Garg and Shri Yogesh Parikh who will also coordinate the proposal and the policy and procedure development with the President and the EC.
4. Estimated time frame for a draft policy and procedure development is 3-4 weeks. As the fully functional secure web based booking and fee collection may take several weeks/ months, the draft manual policy and procedure be agreed to and implemented by the EC within 2 weeks thereafter.

PANDITJI'S CURRENT EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT**Hindu Temple & Cultural Centre of the ACT (Inc.)**
(A.B.N. 64 469 334 050)

81 Ratcliffe Crescent (Cnr. Connah St.), Florey ACT 2615

Phone: (02) 6259 3057 email: htcc_mail@yahoo.com

Postal Address: PO Box 331, Civic Square, Canberra City ACT 2608

28 August 2008

To
Pundit Dr Shailesh Kumar Diwedi
81 Ratcliff Crescent,
Florey,
ACT 2615

Re: Confirmation of Employment conditions

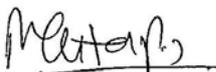
Dear Dr Shailesh Kumar

Please note that as your nomination for permanent residency under the Employer Nominated Scheme has now been approved, your new salary in accordance with the contract made on dated 3/12/2007 will be effective from 1/09/08. A copy of the contract is enclosed herewith.

HTCC will provide furnished accommodation and all utilities for which you will be required to pay \$ 300 per week.

Please be aware that as a permanent residence, you will be eligible for Medicare facility and HTCC will not continue medical insurance for yourself and family.

If you have any queries, please contact me.



Prakash Mehta
President
Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre.

Hindu Temple & Cultural Centre of the ACT (Inc.)

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CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

This contract is made between the Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre of the ACT Inc represented by the President Prakash Mehta and Pundit Shailesh Kumar Diwedi as per the following terms and conditions:

Name of Employer: The Hindu Temple & Cultural Centre of the ACT Inc (HTCC)
Address: 81 Ratcliff Crescent, Florey, ACT 2615
Telephone: (02) 6259 3057

Name of Employee: Pundit Shailesh Kumar Diwedi
Address: 81 Ratcliff Crescent, Florey, ACT 2615
Telephone: (02) 6259 3057

The HTCC will employ Pundit Shailesh Kumar Diwedi as the Priest for the temple for a period of five years on approval of his nomination for permanent residency under the Employer Nominated Scheme.

At the end of the term, the HTCC will review the appointment and consider the terms and conditions for future employment if both parties agree.

The roles and responsibilities are outlined below.

Role Statement

1. Conduct all religious rituals at the temple including Arti, Havan and any religious activities approved by the HTCC.
2. Provide advice and guidance on religious and cultural activities which support the objectives of the HTCC.
3. Promote cultural values and activities in the community through the teaching of language and scriptures as endorsed by the HTCC.
4. Conduct other rituals and ceremonies requested by community members as endorsed by the HTCC.
5. Perform and register marriages as required by members of the community.

Duties

1. Open temple from 6.00-9.00am and 6.00-8.00pm daily.
2. Perform community puja on Sundays from 10.00am-1.00pm
3. Perform Artis in the morning and evening in accordance with Hindu scriptures.
4. Teach Hindi and Sanskrit languages to members of the community for two hours a week.
5. Provide advice on and perform rituals (religious and cultural) for all festivals and occasions the HTCC committee decides to observe at the Temple.
6. Perform religious rituals for members of the community as requested.

Web site: <http://www.htcc.org.au>

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Employment conditions

The HTCC will provide the following remuneration/support to the Priest:

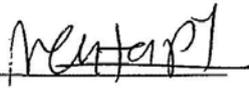
1. An annual total remuneration package of \$45,780 (including super) paid each month into a nominated bank account on approval of nomination for full-time employment.
2. Four weeks of recreational leave per annum.
3. The HTCC will maintain adequate workers' compensation cover as per Australian laws.
4. In addition to annual Salary, any amount in form of Daxina (personal donation normally offered by devotees during pooja) received by priest will be shared (50 % to the HTCC and 50 % to the priest).

The parties agree with the terms and conditions stipulated above.

Signed: _____

Prakash Mehta
President
HTCC

Date: 3 / 12 / 2007



Hindu Temple & Cultural Centre
of ACT Inc.
A.B.N. 64 469 334 050

Signed: _____

Shailesh Kumar Diwedi
Resident Priest
HTCC

Date: 03 / 12 / 2007

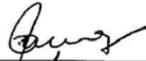


Witness

Signed: _____

Printed Name: AKHOK KUMAR

Date: 3 / 12 / 2007



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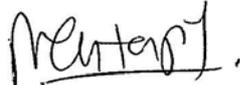
Total Remuneration Package

Employee Name: Pundit Shailesh Kumar Diwedi

Annual Salary: \$ 42,000

Super (9%): \$ 3780

Total \$ 45,780 (Dollar Forty five thousands seven hundred eighty only)



Prakash Mehta
President
Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre

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