
Sathya Sai Organization Of Australia

A Perspective In The Organization's History In Australia From Inception To The Year-End 1991

The Broader Picture

Sathya Sai Baba has said, "There is only one history, the history of Mankind," - thus reminding us, as always, to see the unity in all of creation. Even so, for us treading the spiritual path in the Sai-fold it is helpful to reflect on the history of the Sai Organization in Australia. Over the years there have been many devoted followers of Sai who have unreservedly committed time and effort to ensure that the Organization commenced with a firm foundation to start, and continued to grow.

The Australian Sathya Sai Organization has thus grown out of the desire of individuals to join together to study and practise the Teachings of Sathya Sai Baba. This document sets out the steps taken to commence meetings dedicated to Sai activities and the subsequent formation of Groups and Centres, which in turn led to the formation of the Organization structure which exists today. For record purposes and clarity some names are mentioned, but there are also many names not specifically mentioned who played an equally important role in establishing the Organization in this country. Of course there always was, is and will be that unseen Divine Hand prompting, guiding, inspiring and directing the course of events in the unfoldment of the Sai Mission here in Australia.

The First Glimpse Of The Sai Movement

The first recorded meetings of Sai devotees in Australia began in 1976 at the residence of Lyn Penrose in the Sydney suburb of Balmain. This resulted after Howard and Iris Murphet, who had spent many years in the proximity of Sai Baba and subsequently returned to Australia, received a call from Lyn seeking contact. A meeting group was constituted and soon there were seven members regularly attending; Howard and Iris Murphet, Karl and Win Hillgenfeldt, Ed and Louise Sayers and Lyn Penrose. Howard, a seasoned journalist with a quest for seeking and imbibing the ideals of a higher spiritual life, had come to Sai Baba after decades of spiritual research and investigation, and carefully documented his and his wife's stay with Sai over a period of 6 years commencing in 1965. What subsequently flowed from Howard was "The Man of Miracles", an oracle which reached out and touched the lives of countless seekers for their Beloved incarnated as Sai. Whilst "Man Of Miracles" seemed to make Sai available to the Western World, it is of note to record that many Indians living in India were similarly brought to Sai through that first book. With the release of "Man Of Miracles", Australia was also on the Sai-map.

In March 1977 a second gathering of Sai devotees was established, this time in Greenacre at the home of Jack and Pearl Harrison. Pearl had been a stranger to Sai except that she had taken on the task of typing the final manuscript for Howard's second book on Sai entitled "Sai Baba Avatar". During the typing phase Pearl's grand-daughter, Mayan, fell ill with medically incurable aplastic anaemia. Lyn Penrose had arranged to visit India and could thus take the manuscript of "Avatar" over for Sai Baba's blessings. The Murphet's started the meeting at the Harrison's in order to increase the faith in, and love for Sai, to assist in the absent healing of Mayan. So now there were two meeting places in Sydney. Lyn's trip also served as a means by which a message of Mayan's plight could be handed over to Sai. As has been recorded on National Television, in a documentary on Channel 9 entitled "Miracles of Healing" as well as in Howard's third book on Sai, "Invitation to Glory", Mayan was completely cured by the Grace of Sai. Evidence of Mayan's miraculous cure also fanned the flame of confidence, love and respect for Sai. Soon other persons joined in the regular meetings.

The Sai Movement In New South Wales

Further to those first meetings other group meetings soon sprung up. From approximately 1978 to 1980 weekly meetings were held on the Lower North Shore of Sydney on Thursday evenings in various homes of a small group of Sai devotees living in proximity to each other. This included the homes of John and Noel Carpenter, Connie Burgess and Vivian Ball (later Abrahams). Connie Burgess worked in the Adyar Bookshop, a renowned source of spiritual books, in Sydney City and was a valuable contact responsible for introducing many persons to Sai as well as directing them to meetings.

In 1980 a group of devotees met on the Lower North Shore and unanimously agreed that a stage had been reached where there was sufficient support to have a permanent meeting place specifically dedicated to Sai. This could be available to Sai devotees on any day and would avoid the constraints of using private homes. A residence at number 1 Hunter Street Strathfield was selected as a central location.

The Strathfield meeting place was officially opened on Guru Poornima in 1980. Regular meetings were held on Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings, and at other times the meeting hall and facilities were available to visitors. Some of the Richard Bock films produced in the U.S.A. about Sai Baba were shown, usually on Tuesday evenings. With the establishment of the Strathfield meeting place, meetings on the Lower North Shore ceased.

The Sai group of Homebush also commenced meetings on Guru Poornima in 1980 in the residence of Sara and Devi Pavan. This took place after the opening of Strathfield so that attendees could take part in both openings.

In the meantime Lyn Penrose had sold her home in Balmain and moved to Coogee Beach where she inaugurated regular Sai meetings which continued from approximately 1979 to 1985.

Further to the above a meeting was convened at the home of the Prakash family in the Blue Mountains. A decision was made between the Blue Mountains (the Prakash family), Coogee Beach (Lyn Penrose), Greenacre (the Harrison family) and Homebush (the Pavan family) Groups to hold rotational meetings at each of their places on the first four Saturday afternoons of the month. That is, each group was allocated a particular Saturday of the month to hold its meetings. Such an arrangement continued from September 1980 to the end of 1982 until the Co-ordinating Committee

was formed. These meetings helped to ensure that the fledgling movement's activities catered for all areas in the vastly spread out region of Sydney.

The January 1981 meeting held at Homebush was memorable in that for the first time some classical Indian instruments were played during the devotional singing. Whilst such instruments as the harmonium and tablas are not essential for devotional singing, they do add to the atmosphere and devotional feelings. Also worthy of note was that in February 1981 the Homebush meeting nominated only proficient lead singers to lead the devotional singing to maintain a vibrantly flowing session. A practice session was held by the lead singers prior to the formal meeting. At the meeting specially printed sheets of the songs were issued to all participants so that those not familiar with the words could appreciate what was being sung and also join in. These items are recorded as it was likely that this was the first time this was done in Australia. Today this is standard routine for most Centres around Australia.

In 1981 Heidi Gulyas made contact with the World Council of Sri Sathya Sai Organizations. She and her husband established a Centre at their home in Wahroonga and applied for affiliation to the World Council which was granted at the end of 1981. This was the first Centre in Australia to be affiliated to the World Council.

In December 1981, Dr. Sara Pavan had to stay back in Homebush while his wife and children were visiting Swami in Puttaparthi. Alone, he was inspired to spend his Sundays usefully, instead of playing golf. He gathered a few children from friendly families for outdoor activities and teaching some value based stories. This was the first time a kind of spiritual education for children began within the Sai fold in Australia. The children were attracted by the inducement of a car drive and the anticipated fun every Sunday morning. The first "Bal Vikas" in Australia, with five children, was held on Sunday 27th December 1981, at Macdonald Restaurant on Villawood Road in Sydney, where the children were given a treat with a 'Big-Mac', French-fries, Apple Pie and Chocolate Sunday, for attending the 'class'. After a few weeks, when his wife, Devi, returned home, 'Sai Home', their residence in Homebush, became the venue for 'Bal Vikas' classes. Within three months the number of children, including Greek, Italian and Jewish children swelled up to 40, and they moved to the Primary school in Burwood. Pushpa Apana and Lakshmi (Connie) with their children from Rydalmere joined the Homebush Bal Vikas and, by the end of 1981, over 75 children were attending!

In 1982 the Strathfield group was also affiliated to the World Council, bringing the number of affiliated Centres in Australia to two.

In 1982 a meeting was convened at the home of Karl and Win Hillgenfeldt in Coogee. The intention was to inaugurate the "Sydney Sai Family", whereby all the Centres and Groups in operation in Sydney could expand the meetings beyond their individual locations to include a public forum to reach the general public as well as members of the Sai movement. However, a polarization occurred in the movement as the two affiliated Centres already existing did not agree with the above consideration, the prime reason being that the "Sydney Sai Family" was made up of groups not affiliated to the World Council. It can be said that the Sai Organization has several reasons for its existence; one of them being a means whereby devoted followers can dedicate their Sadhana (spiritual practises) to Sai more effectively, and another whereby each member can quicken their pace of spiritual growth through the interaction with other followers. The result of such a polarization caused the World Council to send a representative to inaugurate the Sai Organization throughout Australia. This is described separately to keep the sequence of events in date order.

In July 1982 the "Sydney Sai Family" inaugurated a monthly Unity Meeting at the Burwood High School Hall as well as a monthly newsletter. The Homebush group volunteered to relinquish hosting its meeting on the last Saturday of each month in favour of this arrangement to expand the activities of the Movement as a whole.

Dr Sara Pavan was instrumental in the publication of a souvenir magazine to coincide with Sai's Birthday in November 1982.

In February 1982 the Homebush and Greenacre groups commenced the first "Bal Vikas" program, as it was then termed, for the children of Sai devotees. This was the beginnings of what in Australia is now known as Sai Spiritual Education (S.S.E.). The first classes had an attendance of fifteen children, which grew in numbers over the years. Although the classes were initially guided by the format of the program conducted through India, efforts were made by S.S.E. teachers to incorporate Australian ideals with a universal appeal so as to cater for the multi-cultural cross section of children who participated.

The use of a large hall for the regular monthly Unity Meeting fostered greater unity between Centres, drew on the talents of S.S.E. children and encouraged a joint celebration of Sai's birthday celebrations. In 1982 the first joint celebration of Sai's Birthday on a larger scale took place in Sydney, and thus Australia, with the Homebush Centre spearheading the arrangements. This has proved a highlight in the annual calendar of Sai group activities in Sydney and each year saw a gradual growth in attendance. In the more recent celebrations in 1989 and 1990 it was estimated that there was an audience of between 700 and 800.

Over the Anzac weekend in April 1983 Mr Indulal Shah, Chairman of the World Council Sri Sathya Sai Organizations, visited Sydney to foster the next big step in the formation of the Sai Organization in Australia. A conference took place which drew members from principal cities such as Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane and Canberra, as well as some smaller country towns, in addition to those residing in Sydney. Prior to his arrival Indulal Shah approved the affiliation of the Homebush, Greenacre and South Coogee Centres, bringing the total number of Centres to five in Sydney.

Whilst in Sydney Indulal Shah also approved the affiliation of other Centres in other States as outlined hereunder.

Mr Shah's visit was one of the major milestones in the history of the Sai Organization in Australia. It galvanized the Organization and laid the foundation for the expansion to follow. The five existing Centres in Sydney formed a Co-ordinating Committee, the details of which are described later on. This Committee welcomed the Centres of Blaxland in 1982 and Rydalmere in 1985.

Under the auspices of the Co-ordinating Committee, the formation of which is reported later on, the basic principle adopted was that Centres and Groups retained autonomy with respect to their activities, but the public arena was the province of the Co-ordinating Committee. With 6 centres in Sydney under its umbrella the Unity Meeting was arranged under a scenario whereby each Centre played host on a rotational basis from month to month. In later years with the increase of Centres in the region this format was no longer appropriate and other arrangements instituted.

Following the example of the Homebush Centre other Centres also commenced Sai Spiritual Education programs. The various Centres also introduced selfless Service Programs and Study Classes at which Sai's Teachings were propounded. The period of 1983 to about 1986 saw the greatest growth period and the type and style of Centre activities then instituted are now considered the normal requirements for affiliated Centres.

At the end of 1986 the venue for the Unity Meeting in Burwood was no longer available. For a period of approximately a year the Wahroonga Centre, which had relocated to the home of Ian and Vivian Abrahams at Chatswood became the venue for the monthly Unity Meeting. A large separate prayer room had been constructed on the property and served as a suitable venue for the regular attendance of fifty to eighty persons, until a more suitable venue could be found. Eventually a school hall at the Homebush Primary School was selected as suitable and remains the venue to the current time.

Another event to be recorded is the celebration of Eswaramma Day. Each year May 6 is dedicated to Swami's mother, and children of Sai devotees are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities. These include the performance of dramas based on aspects of Sai Spiritual Education, readings, recitations, playing of musical instruments, group devotional singing and the like. On the last few occasions the masters of ceremonies have also been children. It would be correct to record that the young ones have much enthusiasm and can pass on many a good lesson to the elders. In 1986 the Eswaramma Day Celebration was held outdoors in the grounds of the Wahroonga Centre. From 1987 to the present the venue has been the Homebush Primary School Hall, the same venue as the monthly Unity Meeting. The crowds attending this function have also continued to grow with the school hall hardly being able to cope with the numbers, estimated to be reaching 500 persons at the current time.

The next milestone was in 1986 with the formation of the Central Council. From 1986 to 1991 the Centres of Lawson and Cabramatta were formed in Sydney's environs, the Centre of Kiama, located in Kiama, a town on the South Coast from Sydney, and the Newcastle and Wollongong Centres, each bearing their respective City's name.

The most recent milestone occurred at the end of 1990 when a new Central Council Co-ordinator was appointed for Australia. In 1991 the Centres of Drummoyne, Pennant Hills and Sutherland were affiliated. This brought the number of Centres in Sydney and surrounding areas to fifteen.

The Sai Organization In Queensland

It has been recorded that the first people in Queensland to be drawn to Sai were George and Muriel Isted of Brisbane. This occurred whilst they were travelling in India in 1977. In 1978 Alan Tate (from Victoria), a friend of George and Muriel's, showed films during a visit to Brisbane and their home soon became the centre-point for those seeking information about Sai. George and Muriel were instrumental in the forming of a Bhajan Group in July, 1979.

Arthur Hillcoat, one of those in attendance at the films shown at George and Muriel's, journeyed to Prasanthi Nilayam in November, 1979 and on his return purchased films from America, which have since been shown from Northern New South Wales to Cairns in North Queensland. Soon after films in Townsville during August 1980, a Bhajan Group was formed in that city, meeting every Monday evening. Also in 1980, contact was made with the Indian community in Brisbane and arrangements were made to have bhajan with them on the last Sunday of each month.

About mid-1982 members of the Brisbane Centre arranged to hold bhajan meetings at Clontarf Beach on the first Sunday of each month.

Following the visit of Indulal Shah as referred to earlier the Brisbane group was granted affiliation with the World Council in May, 1983 and became the Central Brisbane Centre.

A Bhajan Group was formed on the Gold Coast in July, 1983, which held meetings every Thursday evening. In 1985 the Group became a Centre with Bubi (Aaron) Wyscheik as its Chairman. Bubi had come to learn of Sai in the late 1960's whilst residing in South Africa. After migrating to Australia Bubi actively participated and promoted Sai's Teachings on the Gold Coast.

On 23rd November, 1983 the first bhajan were held at Nimbin (Northern New South Wales) with a gathering of people from Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Kyogle, Warwick, Nimbin and other areas. The venue was the home of Tara Aich and was named Shanti Nilayam in dedication to Sai. Bhajan continued to be held on the first and third Sunday of each month as well as every Thursday evening for some years until 1989 when Tara sold the home.

The Townsville Centre applied for and was granted affiliation with the World Council in 1984.

A new Bhajan Group was formed at Caloundra on the Sunshine Coast at the beginning of 1985. This Group, although small in numbers, held Bhajan meetings every Thursday evening.

Soon after, in May, Bhajans commenced at Kippa Ring with a gathering of approximately 70 devotees from Central Brisbane Centre, Clontarf, Gold Coast, Townsville, Caloundra and Kempsey. Meetings were held regularly on the second and fourth Sunday of the month at this location.

The Sai Organization In South Australia

One of the first Sai Bhajans to be held was convened in February 1980 at the home of Ken Soman in Adelaide, when a picture of Sai was installed in the Shrine Room. The picture of Bhagavan was kindly given by Dr. Vithi who resided in Naracoota. This first Sai Bhajan was attended by the Iswarans and Mrs. Ratnasabapathy of Singapore who was then visiting Adelaide. With encouragement from Mrs Ratnasabapathy a weekly Bhajan was arranged, alternating between the homes of the Iswarans and the Somans.

Meanwhile, Mr. John Howie, the foundation President of the Adelaide Centre, having taken strongly to the teachings of Vedanta, came across "The Holy Man and the Psychiatrist" by Sandweiss, in the Adelaide Theosophical Society Bookshop. John's interest was soon aroused and he sought all the available books on Sai. These were also shared with his friends, including Mr. Ted Mulvihill, a long time Catholic Priest and a former Director of Catholic Education in South Australia.

What followed was an intriguing search for other Sai devotees - a search, in May 1980, which included travels to other parts of Australia including Bairnsdale in Victoria and Sydney in New South Wales. Whilst in Sydney they attended a meeting at Strathfield Centre, Sydney, where one of the devotees mentioned to them the weekly two-family Bhajan Group in Adelaide.

On their return to Adelaide, John contacted Mrs. Iswaran, and at the next Thursday Bhajan held at the residence of the Iswarans, the Howies arrived accompanied by a number of their Sai friends including Ted Mulvihill, Jean Young and Barbara Galdes. For the first time there was a real Bhajan Group, and that was the beginning of the formation of the Adelaide Centre.

In June 1982 the Bhajan Group began holding Bhajans at devotees' homes, moving from one home to another each week on a roster basis. Because the Group became larger, the holding of Bhajans in homes became more difficult. The search for suitable premises first resulted in the use

of the Migrant Advisory Centre in Adelaide. Later on, an approach to the North Adelaide Primary School Principal resulted in the opportunity to use their large carpeted hall. This became the venue for the Group's activities.

A visit to Adelaide by Howard and Iris Murphet in the middle of 1982 gave the Adelaide Group an impetus to seek affiliation with the World Council. In January 1983, on return from India, a few members held a meeting of the Group and proposed affiliation with the World Council. The decision to apply for affiliation was taken at a meeting on the 3rd February, 1983, with John Howie elected foundation President, Mrs Iswaran Treasurer and Ken Soman as Secretary. The application for affiliation was granted by the World Council, also in February 1983.

The Adelaide Centre served as the only Centre in Adelaide until 1987 when another Centre in Wattle Park was affiliated. The Iswarans had moved from their home in Urrbrae in 1984, to Wattle Park. There was a continuity of Sai meetings from one home to the other, and they functioned as a Group until formal affiliation was sought.

In 1988 Graham Lake was elected as the Chairman of the Adelaide Centre. In keeping with Central Council directives it was renamed North Adelaide Centre to reflect the area of operation. One of the initial priorities carried out by Graham was to promote more co-operation and working relationships between the two existing Centres in Adelaide.

Also in 1989 an existing Church Hall was procured and given to the Sai Organization to hold meetings in. A new Centre was formed, called the Elizabeth Centre.

Shortly after, a Group which had been operating for sometime in Whyalla upgraded to becoming a Centre. Whyalla is located to the North of Adelaide and with the support of the existing Centres there was able to take the steps to becoming a Centre.

With four Centres in the State a Co-ordinating Committee was set up with Graham Lake as its Chairman.

The Adelaide Centres have remained constantly active, including publishing and distributing two books, one was Elvie Bailey's "Messages From My Friend", and the other a Bhajan Book which included at least half the songs in English.

In 1987 the Adelaide Centre was given the responsibility of hosting the annual Sai Easter Conference. A decision was taken to make this conference "like none other" to ensure that its impact stayed with those attended as a lasting memory. One of the key strategies to be implemented was to make the event a residential one so that participants could be soaked in spiritual vibrations for the whole time. Ken Soman was one of the driving elements to organize the Conference which was a huge success and established the patter of Conferences to follow. In 1991 Adelaide again hosted the Conference as its turn had come up, and once again the participant expressed the view that the love and joy that was generated was indescribable.

The Sai Organization In The Australian Capital Territory

The first Sai Bhajan Group-singing recorded in Canberra was held weekly from 1978 at the home of Mary Meller in O'Connor. Mary, a Sai devotee for some years, took the first group of

devotees to Puttapparthi and Whitefield in December 1979. When she moved to Singapore Bhajans continued at a devotee's home until the weekly Bhajans at the Reddy family at Mawson became known.

Devotees of many years, Manikam and Subhadra (Rosalind) Reddy and their four children, arrived in Canberra in 1981 from Fiji. They held weekly Bhajans in a room next to the garage amidst a flower garden. Attendance grew and plans were made to become a Centre.

On 23 April 1983 at the Conference in Sydney a Certificate of Affiliation was presented to Canberra by Sri Indulal Shah, making it the first affiliated Centre in the A.C.T.

The Reddy's home in Mawson continued to be the venue for the Centre's activities until 1986 when increasing numbers of members necessitated a move to a hall. Initially a move was made to Stirling College, but soon after another move took place to Torrens Hall, which remains the venue to the current time.

In 1985 the Dickson Centre was inaugurated and commenced weekly meetings consisting of bhajans and study circles. The venue is the Dickson Library. The Dickson Centre also undertakes service activities. Two of the members, Mark and Luxmi Durr, together with Alan and Sue Brown, have been pivotal in establishing suitable syllabuses for the S.S.E. and E.H.V. programs for Australia.

The 2 Centres in Canberra usually have common public meetings, such as on special celebrations to celebrate Sai's birthday, and when speakers guest visit the city.

The Sai Organization In Victoria

The first known Sai activity began in early 1977 when a group of four people met in a yoga studio in Ringwood to learn and sing Sai bhajans followed by group meditation. This gathering was prompted after the owner of the studio, Margaret Motyer, and her friend Teresa Kruse, had read "Man of Miracles" and "The Holy Man and The Psychiatrist", felt inspired to respond to Sai's call. At that time, those two books, often referred to for the efficacy they had in drawing people to the Holy Presence of Sai, seemed the only available literature in Melbourne. Grace O'Brien and her daughter, Elizabeth Hollow, completed the initial group.

There was little first hand information about Sai in Melbourne in those 'early' days, and occasionally when a devotee would appear, usually through the Theosophical Society, their stories and experiences were well received by the little group.

At that time bhajans were learnt by listening to examples of various songs from specially made learning tapes, accompanied by their corresponding written words, produced by Janet Bock from America, and which included also presentations of songs by Veena Vijaya. Veena was a proficient lead singer and composer of many fine bhajans and resided for several years in Puttapparthi rendering her talents and devotion to Sai. In June 1977 the bhajan session became more formalised as the group gained confidence in its abilities to conduct bhajans.

In October 1977 a small meditation group also commenced in Box Hill with meetings held on Thursday evenings. This group was formed after two of its members had visited India to see Sai.

By December 1977 a more formal group was established in Hawthorn by John Bader and Erica Kerr. The intention was to 'throw its doors open' to any person interested in Sai. In later years, with the formation of the Organization, when a group large enough carried out such a function, it was allocated "Centre" status. The Ringwood group also participated in the Hawthorn meetings and it was uplifting for the participants of both Groups. The spiritual vibrations seemed magnified as a result of the harmony and co-operation engendered by such a joining together in devotion to Sai. Periodically devotees from other parts of Australia found their way to Hawthorn to participate in the meetings.

These two groups continued to gain strength in member attendance and activities throughout 1978. The Ringwood group compiled a bhajan folder, the first such in Melbourne, to facilitate the bhajan singing, and remained the only source of its kind for several years. At that time the devotees in Melbourne had no access to published bhajan books, indeed, there were probably none in Australia.

To the North-East of Melbourne, approximately 4 hours away by car, lies Bairnsdale, a small country town. Bert and Heather Raisbeck commenced bhajan meetings and under their guidance formed the foundation for a strong spiritual group in the area. Devotees from both interstate and Victoria were always warmly welcomed and offered hospitality by the Raisbeck's who personified the spiritual injunction that a guest was to be treated the same as the Divine. The Raisbeck's were a fountain of information and had many fascinating personal experiences which they shared. Sai had presented Bert with one of His robe's which was ceremoniously used by placing it on a chair near the altar at many festivals attended by the Raisbeck's when they visited Melbourne.

Sai's Birthday celebration was held for the first time in Victoria in 1978 at the Hawthorn venue and was attended also by visitors from distant parts of Victoria. A great thrill on this occasion was when Peter Morgan, from Tasmania, attended and brought with him a robe which he had also received from Sai. The program included the chanting of the 'Aumkara' and 'Subrabhatum' in the early morning, and the balance of the day devoted to bhajan singing and spiritual discussions.

In 1979 the Hawthorn group ceased to function although some activities took place occasionally. In the meantime the Ringwood group expanded its activities to include study meetings and discussions on the subject of the Bhagavad Gita. The number of attendees had risen to be ten to twelve. In 1978 the Ringwood group celebrated Sai's Birthday in its own premises. At the same time a celebration was also taking place in Bairnsdale on a larger scale. The efforts of the Bairnsdale group would gain strength with the added contribution made by Lorraine and Ron Daymond.

Lorraine Daymond also commenced taking groups over to India to visit Sai and she remained a well respected and trusted group leader for many years. She personally attended to all the details for organizing the groups including preparing the members for what to expect in the Ashram and how to conduct themselves. Such tours also provided a means for individuals, who would not otherwise have contemplated such a trip alone, to go over to visit Sai. Lorraine produced a report outlining her experiences and knowledge with respect to arranging group tours to India and recommendations for qualities group leaders should have. Since then many other group leaders from all over Australia have also taken groups to India. Some of these appeared successful from the reports of the tour members, whilst others seem not to have been successful. One of the benefits to have come out of group tours has been the perceived notion that Sai prefers groups and has frequently called groups in for interviews. As individuals they may not have been successful to gain that 'coveted' interview. It should be noted that to this day the Sai Organization has not taken formal steps to either arrange tours of members to India, nor endorsed any particular group leader

to take members over. This is a correct attitude to adopt as the Organization's structure and thrust is not in such a direction at this point in time.

Changes were on the way and in 1980 the bhajan meetings ceased in the Ringwood studio. In order to continue the meetings it was decided to rotate the meetings in several homes. In 1980 the birthday celebration was held in the home of Dr Alfred Wilson, in Doncaster. Bhajan meetings continued under this arrangement until 1981.

In 1981 another turning point occurred. A couple recently migrated from Penang, Irene and Fouja Singh, began to conduct bhajans in their home, in Nunawading, on a monthly basis. To the delight of all, vibhuti (holy ash) and amrith (nectar) materialised on the various pictures on the shrine, an apparent response to the sincerity and devotion of the meetings. Such miracles have been recorded in many books and other publications, but to see them right there before one is a wonderful experience. The miracles continue in the Fouja family's home to this day.

The birthday celebrations in 1981 were held in the Spiritualist Church in Mornington. A number of members of this Church had been drawn to Sai and they were happy to make the venue available.

The numbers of members had increased and a milestone decision made - a hall was to be sought for future meetings. In 1982 a hall in Richmond was rented, and by co-incidence the carpeting was orange in colour. With the increased attendance more organization was needed and a committee was formed. The committee comprised of Ed Oberg, Chairman, Elizabeth Hollow, Secretary, Carlos da Silva, Service co-ordinator, Teresa Kruse, Bhajan co-ordinator, Anne Secondi, Treasurer. Later changes included Gautum Jadunundun replacing Carlos as Service co-ordinator, Anna Secondi changed to be an S.S.E. teacher and Santosh Kunar as Treasurer. This committee in Victoria was a stable influence on the growth of Sai activities in the region. Many tests were faced, as is part and parcel of taking some responsibility, and by the Grace of Sai successfully passed. In keeping with Sai's direction, no money was sought from any members towards the costs of renting the hall. The committee received voluntary donations, albeit that some may have been at the eleventh hour, to meet any commitments.

The latter part of 1982 saw a trend in Australia towards formal affiliation with The World Council in India, and application was made in the name of the Melbourne Centre. At that time acceptance was more difficult since no Organization existed in Australia to oversee such applications. 1982 was a busy year for the centre with the commencement of a study circle, bhajan practice, service activities and S.S.E. classes. A visit by Jegathesan, a leader in the Sai movement in Malaysia, was most inspirational and informative. One of the notable achievements that year was to hold the 'Akhanda Bhajan' (twenty-four hour continuous bhajan, held on a global basis by all Sai Centres), usually two weeks before the twenty-third November, Sai's birthday, each year. Although numbers dwindled over the smaller hours of the night the period remained unbroken.

In the meantime the Centre was notified that the Richmond Hall would be unavailable in 1983, so the birthday celebration in 1982 was held in the Prahran Migrant Resource Centre. The Prahran venue seemed a good alternative, especially as it was central to Melbourne. Initially there seemed to be obstacles to the use of the hall as the Centre had to compete with other activities held there, not so much a time problem, but that furniture and sports equipment needed to be moved out of the way. Meetings are still convened in this Migrant Resource Centre to this day.

In 1983 the expansion blossomed in all fields of activity. The first Sadhana Camp was held in March whilst over the Anzac weekend in April members from Melbourne journeyed to Sydney to

participate in the conference arranged by Indulal Shah. At this conference a certificate was handed over by Indul Shah as recognition that Melbourne Centre was finally affiliated to the world Council.

Service activities expanded to include:

- v Participation in a Home Tutor Scheme to teach English to migrants
- v Helping elderly people with their removals, gardening, clean-up and the like
- v Transport for the elderly and infirm to medical appointments
- v Assistance to the needy, such as provision of food parcels

From 1983 onwards the bhajan singing had risen to be a consistent high standard. Invitations were received from other groups, such as the Hindu Society, to render bhajans at their functions. Similarly, the Centre was requested to provide the bhajan session at many house-warmings.

In 1983 an in-depth study of the Bhagavad Gita was conducted by a teacher of Vedanta, Dr T Ganapathy, which lasted for three years. For those who attended it was a richly rewarding experience.

Following on from 1983, the 1984 year was much the same, with the gradual increase of more members and a consolidation of all activities. The Centre also took time to come to terms with the Charter of the World Council, which proposed that consensus be reached on any matters, rather than implement decisions reached by a majority of the members. Although some committee meetings were lengthy as a result of this, ultimately there were agreements with regards to all Centre undertakings.

In 1984 a bhajan group was started up by John and Celia Elliott at Mount Toolebewong, in Healesville, a small country town not far from Melbourne. This group also joined in with some of the main events held in Melbourne, and likewise attracted some support in its activities in Healesville. The group still continues to meet, although meetings are held on a rotating basis amongst the devotees.

In 1984 a birthday magazine was published in Melbourne for the first time to commemorate Sai's birthday. Many interesting contributions were included in the issue.

The policy announced by the Charter for duration of office in the committee was limited to two years (unless special circumstances prevailed). As the Melbourne Centre was well supported there was no difficulty in filling the positions vacated by the outgoing committee. The best arrangement arrived at was to allow the new committee to take the reigns straight after the completion of the Birthday celebrations.

In 1985 difficulties arose as the new committee was divided about the proposal to raise money for a project seen as beneficial towards the Sai movement. This caused some committee members to resign. As time went by the difficulties persisted, and it was opportune for some of those committee members, who had resigned, to form a new centre. The Mill Park Centre was established and was soon granted affiliation to the World Council. Some co-operation did take place between the two affiliated centres, but it would take almost two years before the relationship was properly normalised.

One notable event that occurred in 1985 was that an English Bhajan tape cassette was made in Melbourne from compositions by Grace Burford, and completed towards the end of September. It was presented to Sai during a visit by some of the devotees, including Grace, on 1 October 1985. At

Sai's invitation the Australian devotees were honoured, the next day, to lead the bhajans in the Mandir during the official bhajan period. Many of the bhajans sung were those that Grace had composed. It was a most profound and uplifting experience for those Australians in the group.

By 1986 the foundations were being laid for E.H.V. with an informal group meeting periodically to take steps to set up a program suitable for Victoria.

In 1986 a National Conference was hosted by the Victorian Sai Centres and held at La Trobe University. The arrangements included for visitors from interstate to be accommodated in private homes. The weekend's activities, which included talks and associated spiritual activities like bhajans with large attendances, turned out to be a valuable milestone in the Organizations history. It would be several years before another National Conference was hosted in Melbourne.

In 1986 the dissension amongst members of the Melbourne Centre grew to the point where some action was warranted. The main difficulty was that the Centre was publicly conducting fund raising activities which many members disagreed with. This was not supposed to be done under the rules of the Charter, and in keeping with Sai's direction that Sai Centres should not have anything to do with the collection of funds. At that time the newly formed Central Council of Australia was in the process of establishing its functions. Representatives from the two Melbourne Centres on the Council advised the other Council members of what was going on. The Council felt that there was no alternative but to request the Chairman of the Melbourne Centre to stand down. It should also be recorded that later on this decision was reviewed by the Council, and whilst there was no opportunity to reinstate the past Chairman, meetings between the Chairman of the Central Council and the past Centre Chairman had meetings and resolved all outstanding issues so as to clear the Chairman for any of the apparent misdirected actions to raise funds.

The new Chairman of the Melbourne Centre to be selected was Tom Zajec. In a short period of time Tom was able to steer the Centre back on its course of activities with no further impediments of conflict amongst the members. For a relatively short period of time, a number of devotees had temporarily disassociated from the Melbourne Centre and conducted meetings at the Ashburton library hall. With matters settling down in the Melbourne Centre the meeting at Ashburton ceased in favour of the members rejoining the Melbourne Centre.

Subsequently, the Melbourne Centre changed its name to be the Prahran Centre to conform to the Central Council's policy that the names of Centres should reflect that of the local area of operations. This would also be equitable for all Centres operating in Melbourne as none could exclusively keep the name of the whole city.

In 1987 activities continued as before, including the bhajans, study circle, S.S.E. classes and service activities. Service activities expanded to include regular visits to nursing homes to provide entertainment and to give company to those who may not have been fortunate to have received visitors. A range of books were also available in a library section run by volunteers. In 1987 a bulletin was printed regularly listing the activities of the Centre.

In 1988 this bulletin expanded its scope to include the activities conducted by all the Centres and Groups in Victoria, a particularly in the areas of Melbourne, Healesville, Bairnsdale, Geelong and Melton.

In 1987 the Melton Group was formed with the Percic family playing a key role in its formation. Subsequently this Group upgraded to become a Centre. In 1989 another Group was also formed in the Melton area, and was known as the Sunshine Group.

In 1987 an E.H.V. Group was formalised with Margaret Ristrom elected as convenor. A suitable training program was developed and introduced into the Sai Centres.

In May 1988 the Prahran Centre commenced a bold activity which was to feed the poor at the Prahran Migrant Resource Centre. This was held once a month instead of the usual bhajan. In August 1988 this was discontinued and instead devotees cooked and served a full meal for the underprivileged at the Prahran Mission. This became a regular activity with members of other Centres and Groups also providing assistance.

The E.H.V. program trained five teachers and the first class to be opened to the public commenced in Frankston.

Also in 1988 Grace Burford composed some further English bhajans which were put to music and recorded on a cassette tape. One tape was presented to Sai in September 1988.

In 1989 the National Conference, held over each Easter period on a rotating basis amongst the States, found its way back to Victoria as its venue. A residential camp at Kyneton was rented for the occasion. Overseas guests of honour on that occasion were Jegathesan, from Malaysia, and Art Ong Jumsai and Loraine Burrows from Thailand.

The E.H.V. program trained a further sixteen teachers and eight assistants. By 1990 six more teachers had been trained, a class completed in Healesville and a network set up for teachers to meet quarterly.

The year 1991 commenced with a leap forward with the visit to Melbourne by the newly appointed Central Co-ordinator, T Sri Ramanathan. A meeting of all existing Centres and Groups was arranged at the St Francis of Assisi Church Hall in Mill Park. The Central Co-ordinator invited some of the groups to take up the opportunity to become affiliated Centres. The result was that eight Centres and three Groups were now registered in Victoria. A new Co-ordinating Committee was set up with Rick Prescott as its Chairperson. The new arrangements also included for the Hobart Group and the Launceston Centre, both in Tasmania, to come under the jurisdiction of the Victorian Co-ordinating Committee.

Also conducted in 1991 were two E.H.V. seminars and each was successful. In June 1991 a Unity of Faiths Symposium was held in the Carringbush Library, Richmond. Representatives from Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist and Jewish Faiths presented talks with the aim of promoting a better understanding and awareness of each of the Faiths.

The Unity Bulletin, which had served a useful purpose in all the years, changed its character to become more of a newsletter. To supplement it, a separate publication entitled, Directory of Centres and Groups, was produced with their corresponding activities.

The Sai Organization In Western Australia

In the context of the current Sai Organization in Perth and its origin, a group of seven people commenced a bhajan meeting in March 1983.

Initially, the bhajans were held at the homes of Professor Frodsham and Senthil Rajah. After a few months the venue was changed to Tamil House in the city centre. This was done to provide a central location to meet the needs of a growing number of members. Perth is relatively isolated in

terms of the rest of Australian population centres. Not-with-standing, membership continued to increase and occasionally visitors from other centres visited. Jegathesan, from Malaysia, visited Perth in 1983 and inspired the members with his talks and bhajan singing. Senthil Rajah was the co-ordinator of the Group.

In 1985 an informal Study Class was initiated. The Perth group became an affiliated Centre in 1985. In 1986 some service activities commenced. One of the main annual events to be celebrated from the very beginning was Sai's birthday. In 1985 and 1986 the birthday celebrations were held at the Australia-Asia House with an encouraging number of people attending.

In 1987 the venue was changed to the Nurses Memorial Hall in Kings Park Road as attendance at the bhajan meetings necessitated a larger hall. In August 1987 an S.S.E. class for children was instituted. Also in 1987, service activities expanded.

In 1988, Drabble House became the venue for meetings as it had facilities for centralising bhajans, study circles and S.S.E. classes in one location. The Perth Centre was also given the opportunity to set up a book shop within the existing premises of one of the devotees's shops. When any person entered the shop, or passed by, they could not help noticing a large picture of Sai displayed, with a number of books available for purchase at reasonable prices. This 'Book Shop' proved to be a useful contact point for many interested persons who eventually joined in the Centre's activities.

The pattern of increased numbers attending caused the Drabble House venue to have insufficient space and the Perth centre once again found itself on the move in order to cater for the attendees. The Joan Watters Community Centre in Wembley was selected and remains the meeting place to the present time.

An opportunity to voice Sai's Teachings "on the air" presented itself to the Perth Centre at the beginning of 1989. Sai's Blessings were sought and confirmed as positive to proceed. A program commenced when a time slot every third Thursday was made available on Radio 6NR by arrangement with the Tamil Association. This is now being produced on Ethnic Radio 95.3 on the first Monday of each month.

Another important event occurred in 1989 when a shop in the city, 900 Hay street, was donated to the Perth Centre to use as a "spiritual oasis" and an administrative office. It is used as the main contact point for the public for enquiries and to have access to Sai literature, videos, audio cassettes and the like. Time is set aside for meditation and bhajans and all are welcome to participate.

Under the chairmanship of Dr Leslie Gan the Perth Centre has continued all the mainstream activities and the Centre has seen a steady increase in the number of devotees.

On the 1 January 1990 Balan Nair commenced a devotional singing group and was affiliated to the Organization as the Willetton Group. Its function was to serve devotees and newcomers who lived south of the Swan River.

Subsequently the Willetton Group increased its activities to include public talks on Sai as well as S.S.E. amongst the children. From May 1991 the Willetton Group was upgraded to be a Centre, with Balan Nair as its Chairman, and continued to perform all the activities expected of a Centre, including having a service wing. In October 1991 a Unity of Faiths Symposium, designated to take place in all the major cities in Australia, was held in Perth. The Willetton Centre organized the Symposium as part of a weekend retreat when various speakers from different faiths presented talks. The Mayor of the area officiated at the opening.

Also, in 1989 a group commenced singing bhajans at one of the member's homes in Kingsley. From those bhajan meetings an increase in numbers occurred which allowed the group to evolve to become a registered Centre. In 1991 the activities were transferred from the home to the Kingsley Community Centre. Registration as a Centre took place in July 1991 with Narsey Polra as its chairman.

Another Centre was formed in Perth in 1991. A decision was made to have the shop in the city, referred to as an "oasis" above, as an independent Centre. The format employed is to have most of the devotional singing in English, with perhaps only one or two in the traditional Indian style, most of the prayers in English and no ritual offering of the Arathi. The study circle, which followed devotional singing, includes explanations of the significance of symbols and the spiritual practises encouraged by Sai. This Centre was registered as the Perth City Centre and Alan Selectkovic installed as its chairman.

Thus the year 1991 brought the number of Centres in Perth to four. Devotees and newcomers are thus presented with a fairly broad range of activities to suit the needs of each person. This is exemplified by the Perth City Centre offering mostly English songs with a minimum of ritual, to an all Indian style, on the other hand, with appropriate rituals at the Hindu Temple meeting.

The first Youth Retreat was held in August 1991 by the Perth Centre at Mount Helana.

Moving away from Perth to the country-side, to the South-West, there has also been a spate of Sai activity for many years. As far in time as 1976, Bob and Ann Parks set up an Information Centre in Balingup. This served the area for a number of years.

In January 1984 a home devotional singing group was started with four adults as its constituents. This expanded so that activities were subsequently transferred to the Bridgetown Community Centre. The numbers reached about forty constant members with devotional singing and study circles held twice weekly. In 1985 the Bridgetown Group was registered with the Central Council.

In 1987 Bob and Ann Parks were instrumental in starting S.S.E. and E.H.V. programs in the South-West. In August 1987 a retreat was held in the South-West, at Boyup Brook. This was the first retreat to be held in Western Australia. Following the retreat an Education and Human Values Implementation Committee of W.A. was formed.

In 1990 the Chairman of the Central Council and the Central Co-ordinator visited Perth and the South-West. The Bridgetown Group was renamed to the South-West Group under the group leadership of Jenny Monson. To date, the present devotional singing and study circles are held on the first Sunday of each month in Russelton, and on the third Sunday of each month in Bridgetown. The Group was upgraded to Centre status in May 1991.

With the formation of several Centres in 1991, Western Australia qualified for a Co-ordinating Committee and Dr Leslie Gan elected as its first Chairman.

The Sai Organization In Tasmania

Helen and John Barnes started a Group in the Launceston area after finding out about Sai in about February 1986 from an elderly lady, Bell Barker, who in turn had heard about Sai from her sister in the Isle of White. Helen was inspired greatly and soon after, in September and October 1986, travelled to Puttaparthi.

John and Helen had read a few books on Sai and also made contact with Kim Peart, who lived in Hobart, to foster their mutual interests in Sai. The main activity to be carried out for several years was bhajans. When John and Helen moved out of the area, in 1988, Jenny Thrush offered her home as a possible venue, the one main consideration was that the property was a little out from the main Launceston area. However, it worked out well and over a period of time the number of members grew and activities increased, including an interest in S.S.E. In 1991 Launceston was affiliated as a Centre.

Sai activities in Hobart commenced with Kim Peart who hired a room which was available to the public. Eventually meetings moved out to a residence in one of the suburbs.

Formation Of The Organization Network

With the growing awareness about Sai Baba in Australia, the need to conduct activities in an orderly and organized way, and to ensure a proper link with the Sai Organization headquarters in India, the time came for a formal Organization to be established. This occurred when Mr Indulal Shah, Chairman Sathya Sai World Council Sathya Sai Organizations, visited Australia in April 1983.

Over the Anzac long week-end in April 1983 a conference was arranged in Sydney dedicated to expounding the aims and ideals of the Sai Organization. At that time the rules permitted any region with a minimum of five centres to form a Co-ordinating Committee which would serve as the governing body in that particular region. As Sydney qualified for such a Co-ordinating Committee, Mr Shah inaugurated one and Karl Hillgenfeldt was selected as its first Chairman.

Subsequently, in June 1983 T Sri Ramanathan was appointed under the aegis of the World Council as the first National Co-ordinator of the Sai Organization in Australia. His jurisdiction was over all States in Australia except for New South Wales which was administered by Karl Hillgenfeldt. Mr Kutumba Rao, the chief administrator of Prasanthi Nilayam, wrote to T Sri Ramanathan, on behalf of Sai, and invited him as a guest at the forthcoming Guru Poornima celebrations to be held at the Ashram. During the visit Sri Ramanathan attended a meeting of the World Council, and it was minuted that Sri Ramanathan's appointment was a special appointment made by Sai for the purposes of expanding the movement in Australia.

What subsequently flowed in a natural course of events was a shift in the way activities were undertaken within the Sai Organization. Public meetings and associated activities in the public arena became the responsibility of the umbrella organization in each Region to administer., while Centres and Groups carried out specified activities in their own areas.

The formation of the Organization became a platform under which many other activities could take place. The Education In Human Values program is one example, and nationwide conferences and retreats another.

Under the roles performed by both Karl Hillgenfeldt and Sri Ramanathan the number of Centres and Groups in Australia began to grow. The eight centres in existence at the time of Mr Shah's visit grew to fifteen. The Sai fragrance in Australia spread to other areas such as Hobart and Launceston in Tasmania, Perth and Bridgetown in Western Australia, and Whyalla in South Australia.

Organization Milestones

From 1975 to the present, a World Conference of the Sai Organizations is held in Prasanthi Nilayam every five years. Policies are initiated, and changes made as appear appropriate to maintain the dynamic flow of work at all levels in the Organization.

Following the 1985 World Conference which celebrated Sai's Sixtieth Birthday the Organization in Australia received instructions from the World Council that Australia qualified for a Central Council as more than 10 Centres were in operation. Each Centre was to nominate a representative to sit on the Central Council. Each such representative was then given the opportunity to nominate two persons on the proposed National Council, for the position of Chairman of the Council. Following the above procedures which were administered directly by the World Council, Arthur Hillcoat was selected as the Chairman.

Arthur Hillcoat requested that the inaugural meeting take place at the Wahroonga Centre (which was at that time operating from Chatswood) over the weekend of 25 and 26 September 1986. Without any preconceived plan, the first meeting of the National Council took place with the hosts being the first affiliated Centre of the Organization of Australia.

Australia had also been designated as part of the Far East Region under the general supervision of the World Council in India, which was also dissolved by Sai and re-organized as the Central Office. Art-Ong Jumsai, from Thailand, and Terry Gallagher, from Kiama in Australia, were nominated to be Co-ordinators for the Central office in the Far East Region.

At that time the fifteen Centres under the Organizations umbrella were Prahran and Mill Park in Melbourne, Bairnsdale, in Victoria; Townsville and Central Brisbane in Queensland; Lawson, Blaxland, Wahroonga, Strathfield, Coogee, Hurstville and Homebush in Sydney, New South Wales; Canberra and Dickson in the A.C.T.; and Adelaide in South Australia.

It soon became apparent that whilst there were immeasurable benefits to having a Central Council, fifteen members was not functional. As other Centres were bound to become affiliated, so the size of the National Council was bound to grow with corresponding communication, administration and logistic difficulties. In recognition of this the Central Office in India, in 1987, directed that the Central Council be disbanded in favour of an organization which contained no more than 6 members.

The new membership of the Council consisted of the Chairman, Arthur Hillcoat; Spiritual Wing Convenor, Brian Sealy; Service Wing Convenor, Valmai Worthington; Education Wing Convenor, Alan Brown and later on his replacement, Ron Farmer; Secretary, Ian Abrahams and Special Adviser, Howard Murphet. In 1988 the membership of the Central Council received a directive from India to include the Chairman of each Co-ordinating Committee as a member of the Central Council, wherever one had been established in a region. The following Chairpersons of Co-ordinating Committees joined the Central Council; Tom Zajec, Victoria; Barbara Kimber, Queensland; Graham Lake, South Australia and N Anandakumar, New South Wales.

In 1990 during the World Conference of Sai Organizations held in India, changes were made to the Organization with Australia designated as part of Region 5, which also included New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and the Pacific Islands. Two Joint Central Co-ordinators for Region 5, T Sri Ramanathan was allocated Australia and Papua New Guinea and Arthur Hillcoat allocated New Zealand, Fiji and the Pacific Islands. The appointment of T Sri Ramanathan as the Central Co-ordinator for Australia, a second term in this office, was at the specific direction of Sai.

Brief Summary Of Activities Conducted By The Organization

The Organization has conducted the following functions and activities:

Bulletins: When T Sri Ramanathan was the Central Co-ordinator between 1983 and 1985 a special Bulletin was compiled by him for circulation around Australia. This Bulletin was informative and served to keep members abreast of the latest developments in the Organization.

Arthur Hillcoat, as Chairman of the Central Council, issued circulars on a quarterly basis to advise Groups and Centres about matters dealing with the Organization.

Newsletter: The first appointed editor was Sara Pavan who carried out the task of compiling and distributing a quarterly newsletter for many years until 1987 when he retired from the task for a short duration.

In that interlude, Barbara Kimber, in Brisbane edited the Quarterly, whilst Leslie Sangster, in Adelaide, typed up, printed and distributed the Newsletter around Australia.

In 1991 Sara Pavan was appointed by T Sri Ramanathan to once again take up the service of being the editor and publisher of the Newsletter. With some 400 subscriptions around Australia, at least a twenty-five percent increase since the beginning of 1991, the Newsletter is a major mouth-piece for the Organization.

Magazines Sara Pavan has edited several magazines on behalf of the Organization. In 1982 it commenced as a 'Souvenir', and it was recorded that he had to climb many hurdles to obtain co-operation to eventually complete the magazine. When Sara Pavan subsequently visited India he took a couple of magazines over. Whilst seated in the Poornachandra Auditorium amongst the huge crowds patiently waiting for the days program to commence, Sai came down the corridor and sought out Sara, called him over, took the magazine from Sara's astounded hands and autographed the cover with Blessings for the work.

Sara also produced two Special Magazines to coincide with Sai's birthdays, one in 1984 and another in 1985, the latter to commemorate Sai's sixtieth birthday.

Conferences From 1984 to 1991 a National Conference has been held each year in one of the capital cities in Australia. Perth, in Western Australia, being so far away from the main areas of 'Sai' population, that is, the Eastern seaboard States, has not hosted a National Conference, but members from the Centres there have travelled and participated in Conferences held elsewhere in Australia.

- 1983 - was held in Canberra, but the emphasis was more on S.S.E.**
- 1984 - was held in Melbourne**
- 1985 to 1986 no Conferences took place**
- 1987 - was held in Adelaide – Overseas Guest: Dr. John Hislop**
- 1988 - was held in Wederburn, near Sydney – Arton Jumsai / Lorraine Burrows/ J. Jegatheesan**
- 1989 - was held in Melbourne – Kineton (Vic)**
- 1990 - was held in Brisbane - ? Dr. Hislop**
- 1991 - was held in Adelaide – Dr. Sandweiss**
- 1992 - ? Ballarat**