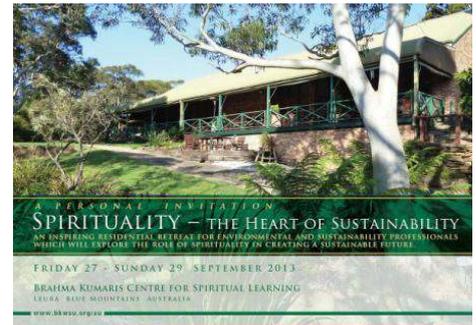


## International Brahma Kumaris (BK) Green Team in Australia - Blue Mountains "Spirituality - the Heart of Sustainability" retreat 27-29 September 2013

The BK International Green Team and some of the Australian Green Team gathered in Blue Mountains Retreat Centre near Sydney, Australia from 27-29 Sep for "Spirituality-the Heart of Sustainability", a retreat for sustainability and environmental professionals. Charlie Hogg from Sydney was the host and special guests were Joachim (Golo) Pilz from India and Germany, Sonja Ohlsson from Denmark, Haydn Washington, an environmental scientist and author and Julian Crawford, a corporate sustainability consultant.



The retreat was held in the beautiful Stone Cottage for 40 participants of whom 24 were professionals in the environment field and 15 from the BK community with an interest in the environment. Discussion sessions flowed out into the garden which was full of spring flowers and noisy cicadas.

On Friday night guests were engaged with Golo's talk on BK renewable

energy projects. On Saturday morning Haydn, Julian and Sonja set the scene by sharing how they see spirituality to be connected to sustainability. Haydn said he felt that humans have lost their "sense of wonder" for nature so no longer respect it. Sonja shared how love is the foundation for sustainability.



The weekend involved a panel discussion, talks on "sustainable self/sustainable world" and "the power of silence". There were small group discussions on topics such as "what gives you the strength to maintain your commitment to what you do". All the participants appreciated the simple program which allowed plenty of time to share with others. Robin Ramsay, host of the international guests showed a film of the Aravali Meditation Sanctuary in northern NSW where the BK Green Teams had convened the previous weekend.

Everyone left the retreat uplifted and happy. One participant offered to coordinate further discussion on spirituality and sustainability.





“Spirituality - the Heart of Sustainability” retreat participants

### Events after the retreat on Monday 30 Sep:

#### Radio program

From 10-11am Ms Shirley Lewis from As Sustainable As Possible (ASAP) invited Golo Pilz and Sonja Ohlsson to speak during their weekly hour at Radio Blue Mountains 89.1 FM. They met in the studio in Katoomba, 10 mins drive from the retreat centre, with others from the local community. Golo and Sonja had the opportunity to share about the retreat at Leura that just happened and about how there is an increasing need for spirituality for environmentalists. Golo also spoke about the need for renewable energies and how rich Australia is in natural resources for alternative energy - sun, ocean, wind and land. At the end of the session everyone shared a meditation and it was the first time the radio station had done a live meditation in the ether.



#### Presentation on Solar Energy Installations for Large Communities



From 7.30-8.30pm at the Leura Retreat Centre, Golo Pilz the director of Brahma Kumaris solar installations in India, presented a slideshow and talk on how the Brahma Kumaris are moving into alternative energy supply in India. The BKs’ spiritual headquarters in Rajasthan is using solar energy to create steam used to cook meals for thousands of people on one of the world's largest solar cooking systems. Golo is now directing the construction of a 1 MW solar thermal power plant which will generate enough heat and power for 20,000 people. The Global Hospital in Mount Abu

is using solar energy for sterilisation.

Golo believes his daily meditation practise is a major foundation for the success of these projects. He says: “We have forgotten the common good. On the deepest level, it could be said the desertification of the planet is a reflection of the human spirit. The technology for renewable energy is there, but the human will and motivation is missing. Daily meditation provides the missing motivation and essential vision of the common good.”

BK Green activities focus on educating Brahma Kumaris centres about eco-friendly management, UN Conferences on Climate Change and creating partnerships with other organizations. Read more at

[www.environment.brahmakumaris.org](http://www.environment.brahmakumaris.org)