

February 2023

Walking Cheerfully

Founded 1926

Newsletter of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) South
Australia - Northern Territory Regional Meeting.



Fleurieu Friends. See p 4.

Only by altering our habits and by endeavouring to live less exploitatively can we prevent the changes to the environment from becoming an unparalleled catastrophe.... The planet cannot provide the resources required to support a life as profligate as that now enjoyed in economically developed nations...

Thomas Halliday, in *Otherlands*, 2022, epilogue, p 303

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QUAKERS AND CHRISTMAS

Kerry O'Regan

Just before Christmas there was a discussion on one of the Quaker Facebook pages about whether Quakers do or should celebrate Christmas, the argument being that, if all days are sacred, then no one day should be more sacred than any other. I must say I don't really buy into that reasoning. All being sacred doesn't mean all being identical. What a dreary old world it would be if every day was a ground hog repeat of the day before. No, as the Country and Western song tells us, "some days are diamonds, some days are stones". But they can all be sacred.

I think we Quakers have sometimes confused equality with uniformity, despite one of our Advices telling us that we are all "unique and precious" – in dress (which even Margaret Fell saw as "a silly poor gospel"), headstones, and goodness knows what else. It's a false equivalence, but back to question of days. If the day we call Christmas is, like every day sacred, but also unique and precious, what is unique and precious about it?

As an aside, one thing I miss about the religion of my Catholic childhood is the rhythm of the liturgical seasons. Within that framework, the uniqueness of each season, each day, was an explicit part of our religious observance and our way of experiencing the world. Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost. Each had its own slant on things, its own focus, its own colour even. Some were diamonds, some stones, but all were sacred. The American Anglican priest, Trish Harrison Warren, says of the flavour of Advent, "To practice Advent is to lean into an almost cosmic ache: our deep wordless desire for things to be made right and the incompleteness we find in the meantime". Unto all things there is a season, and Advent is the season for expectant hope. And then comes Christmas.

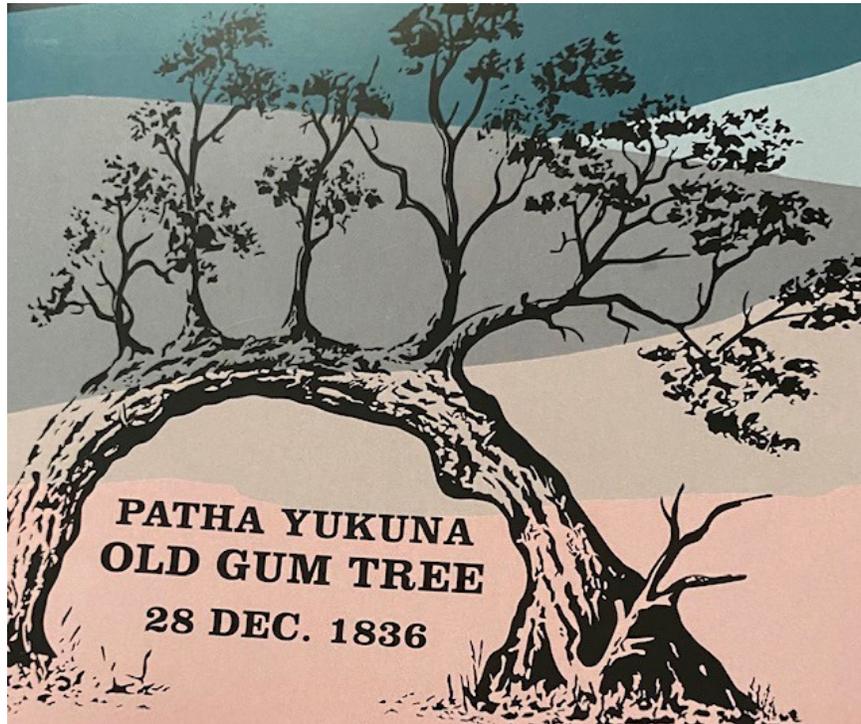
But what are we to make of Christmas? With our testimony to Truth, what credence can we give to the whole Christmas story? Was there really a stable and a manger? A guiding star? Shepherds, kings, angelic hosts? Is it fact or fiction?

In his book *Schindler's Ark*, Thomas Keneally said something about the nature of myth that I found very helpful. He said, "The thing about myths is not that they are true, or that they should be true, but that there is something about them that is truer than true". So asking if the events in the Christmas story actually took place is the wrong question. It doesn't matter. The real question is: What is the truth that's embedded in the Christmas story?

It seems to me that the essential message of the Christmas story is the very antithesis of the Prosperity Gospel which some Christian groups espouse today. Rather, it's about the acknowledgement of the divine in the poor, the outcast, the dispossessed. Everyone has to go to their place of origin to be registered because the oppressive occupying regime says they have to. If you're eight and three quarter months pregnant, too bad. And if you can't find anywhere to give birth, or even to stay, along the way, that's too bad too. I like how Mary is the one who speaks out against injustice and says that's not what God wanted from this whole incarnation thing: "He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble and the meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away "

So I am, as a Quaker, happy to celebrate Christmas as a unique and precious day. And whether actual angels sang in the sky about peace on earth, good will to all, doesn't matter. It's a truth that's truer than true, and that's good enough for me.



As we commemorate the 186th Proclamation Day here today, we ask you to reflect on our joint histories and acknowledge the importance of walking together on a path to reconciliation and truth-telling. Kaurua Nation and Council have forged a partnership built on trust, respect and reconciliation.

From the ceremony program.

WALKING TOGETHER

Ann Rees.

At the recent Proclamation Day Ceremony I observed the following incident, and wished I had been ready to film it or at least to take a photograph; There was an armed guard at the gate to the Old Gum Tree reserve. This consisted of five very elderly men standing to attention in a line, dressed in what might have been the appropriate military uniform in 1836 which was a red coat with gold braid and buttons, white trousers and shirt, and a white helmet with a spike on top. They each held a bayonet rifle. After standing to attention for 45 minutes it seemed it was time for them to turn to the left and march off in single file. However, the man in the middle had become rather unstable on his feet and a first aid person had already given him a drink of water. As they stepped forward, he began to stagger, and one of the younger Aboriginal men who had earlier performed the smoking ceremony, quickly went to his side to support him. Although the elderly man tried to wave him off, he obviously needed assistance, and the other young Aboriginal man went to his other side. The line of five elderly uniformed guards proceeded to march off down the street in a not very straight line, but what struck me as being simultaneously both quite profound and humorous, was that the T shirts worn by the Aboriginal men bore one of the catch-phrases for the day, and was clearly visible from the rear. "Walking together"!

NEWS OF FRIENDS

Jo Jordan: There has been wide support for the appointment of Jo Jordan as the regional meeting clerk. Over many years Jo has proved to be a devoted Friend. For the past three years she has been the energetic manager of the Quaker Shop. She brings invaluable experience to her new role, having served as Presiding clerk of Australia Yearly Meeting (2015-18). In fact, she is the 28th clerk of the meeting, the first, Jacob Hagen, having being appointed in ‘Second month’ 1843.

Margaret Philp is the new assistant clerk, coming to the position with many years experience as a member of the Society of Friends. Indeed, she served as clerk (1985-86) Margaret has recently retired as a psychiatrist specialising in children and adolescents.

Wendy Hartley is facilitating the transition at the Quaker Shop to the new manager, Virginia Phillips.

Fleurieu Meeting

There is a fine group of Friends who meet in Victor Harbor in the spacious and welcoming home of Christine and Bronte Collins.

After Meeting for worship a particular word is discussed, followed by a shared meal. The most recent word was ‘humility’. This led to a lively discussion. Humility does not mean denial of self-esteem. Our upbringing has a powerful effect on our life. Water is soft yet it can wear away rock. That we should listen to others with humility and maintain an open mind was emphasised, “to think it possible that you may be mistaken” as Advice 19 says. Humility is part of other necessary attributes which were given as pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy as the Epistle of James states.



L-r David Evans, Jo Jordan, Topsy Evans, Aline Irakozi, Marie-Gorette Bucumi, Inga Tolley, front: Jolie Irakoze, Mark David Nininahazwe, Jolie Irakoze, Michael Tolley, Vanny Irakozi.

The Eastern Suburbs meeting held their Christmas gathering, as usual, at the home of Jean Paul Nininahazwe and Marie-Gorgette Bucumi. It is a time of happy conviviality and a sumptuous spread. It is held in the northern suburb of Munno Para. The third Sunday of the month is when a Friendly Gathering is held in various homes and which a speaker is invited.

Restina Nininahazwe has completed year 12 at University Senior College. At the graduation ceremony she wore traditional Burundi dress made by her sister, Joelle. Restina is planning to take a gap year before deciding on future study plans.

Jean-Paul Nininahazwe and Marie-Gorgette Bucumi have spent the month of January visiting relatives and friends in Burundi.

Claver Irakozi works at Gym Fitness where he provides clients with health and fitness guidance, motivation, and establishing healthy eating habits into their lifestyles

Aline Irakozi is working in care support for older people in their own home in aged care nursing. This is help in everyday living, health care, accommodation and providing equipment such as walking frames and ramps.

Peter Webb has had a quite sudden heart operation. Convalescence has been successful and Peter says he intends to contribute to life in the full once again.

**CHURCHES TOGETHER SA. STATEMENT FROM THE HEART
with Professor Aunty Anne Pattel-Grey and Rev'd Dr Garry Deverell
15th February at West Adelaide Uniting Church.**

Morning session: 9.30 for 10am. Morning tea provided. Evening session 7pm.

To register: Contact Churches Together SA. A donation of \$15 is suggested.

Friends who have heard Anne Pattel-Grey recognise her as an outstanding Australian with a clear, reasoned and passionate message about the coming referendum on a First Nations Voice in Parliament, and why a 'Yes' vote is essential. Friends are encouraged to attend.

SIXTY SIX YEARS OF QUAKERISM

Charles Stevenson.

On January 15th by chance I attended meeting for worship in Melbourne. It was there where 66 years previously to the very day I had very nervously, and at last, summed up enough courage to attend a Friends' meeting for worship. The gathered silence was one of the profound experiences of my life. (On the table was a book 'These Three: Love, Faith, Hope' – had I then known it – about my father-in-law!). What are my thoughts about meeting for worship now?

Meeting for worship is important to me. It is a weekly need to come apart from the turmoil of both the competitive world and the general bustle of living. I like the silence because I can look inward into the depth of my uncluttered being. In the words of a hymn (written on fleeing zeppelin raids on London) "midst, all the traffic of the way, turmoil without within make in my heart quiet place ... a little shrine of quietness."

Whether I come to meeting from a sense of *joie de vivre*, or some misfortune, I can stand, so to speak, before the eternal things – peace, goodness, beauty, love, and close to that 'cloud of unknowing', which we call God.

It is here that I inevitably find a renewed sense of poise, a positive energy to face the world with cheerful caring, and anxious to see the good in others. A friend who likes to provoke tells me that I can get the same uplift by a walk into the bush. True, but I sense some ineffable momentum from the togetherness of gathered seekers. Here my friend confronts me again: "Let me remind you that there are some Friends who irritate you – so how can you make these claims?" My experience is that one reaches a plateau in the gathered silence where human frailty, and our differences, recede so that one is swept into a maturer state of goodwill which Friends call "knowing one another in the things that are eternal."

I am amazed that humankind has for millennia had this same need for renewal, expressed in the Psalms: "Create in me a clean heart, O Lord, and renew a right spirit within me", and, "he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul".

MAUFF HANIFFA

Topsy Evans

Mauff began attending Eastern Suburbs Meeting in Adelaide just over eleven years ago. He preferred to sit in an inconspicuous place and left immediately after Meeting ended. In time he told us that he was a Muslim, but found our form of worship most acceptable. After a while he asked advice about what activities he should do using a Foundation he started in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 2005, to honour the community work of the matriachs in his family. The Foundation seeks to continue their work as a voice for the voiceless.

The Foundation's motto is now *Changing the world one girl at a time.*

In 2012 he wrote to our Meeting asking for advice on future directions for the Foundation. He recognised the tremendous advantage he had had as a result of his higher education in England in which he succeeded both academically and as a marathon runner. So it is not surprising that after careful consideration he decided to continue working with the work of the Foundation and focussing on a project to pass on the benefits of a good education, particularly for girls. It now seeks talented girls without sufficient financial support to continue their studies and take a responsible place in society.

In 2015 David and Topsy met Mauff and the Board members in Colombo. Their report follows.

“We met with Mauff Haniffa, the founder of the Foundation and son of Ummu Hafeera, his niece, and three of his grand nieces. They and one other relative comprise the Committee of the Foundation.

All were enthusiastic and well informed about the work of the Foundation, which is now centred entirely on finding girls from poor backgrounds who have done well in their studies to date, but who are at risk of having to leave school before completion of High School because their parents cannot pay for the additional tuition needed to achieve high results. They also support girls who need extra tuition in a wider range of subjects than is available in the State system.

Teaching is not a popular occupation, and few of those who do teach are well qualified to do so. Teachers are paid even less than other lowly paid workers and as a consequence need to find other sources of income. So many take considerable unofficial time off work to undertake privately paid tutoring for students whose parents can afford to pay for it. Consequently those teachers who are left to fill in the gaps must do so with larger class sizes and with less than adequate resources. Morale is low.

The range of subjects taught in the government system is restricted, and few teachers are qualified to teach Science, English, Mathematics and IT. Little social science is taught and the students graduating from this State system are not well equipped for jobs in today's society, or for further education at tertiary level. They need to have extra tuition, mainly in these additional subjects to gain University entrance, or a well paid job.

The Foundation aims to assist girls who have shown aptitude in their studies in the State system but who for financial reasons may not be able to fulfill this promise. They provide extra tuition for them and have a policy of only supporting as many girls as they can see will be likely to take full advantage of their help. They are also careful to ensure that they have enough funds to support each girl until she finishes her studies at High School level.

We were very impressed with the capabilities of the women on the Foundation Committee. All were excited about the work they are doing, and the Treasurer is a qualified accountant. Their accounts are audited, and they will send these to us once the audit is complete.

Coincidentally, two articles appeared on 19th and 20th October in the newspaper *Ceylon Today*, describing the poor state of the national education system. In 1950s soon after Sri Lanka achieved independence from Britain, a law was passed making it mandatory for schools in the State education system to teach only in the local vernacular. As a result, English is not a central part of the education system, but however qualified a student is, she will not obtain a good job unless she is proficient in spoken English. Hence the addition of English to the list of subjects targeted by the Foundation.

Members of our Eastern Suburbs meeting began to contribute to the work of the Foundation and Mauff was meticulous in sending receipts and pictures of the girls being supported. In time the Foundation supported a few boys but always the emphasis was on assisting girls to overcome the widespread bias against them receiving anything more than a very basic education.

Mauff married in 2015 but was unable to bring his wife to Australia because she had two



Mauff is on the left. Topsy and David Evans on the right.

children from a previous marriage and it seemed not possible for her to obtain visas for them. He went back to Sri Lanka but returned to Australia several times for medical treatment. He lived very frugally and once when asked if he was eating enough he memorably replied 'But I have an egg once a week!' He became quite frail. He had a Pacemaker inserted in 2022 and this improved his health a little but by May 2022 his health

began to deteriorate just as the political and economic situation in Sri Lanka became more chaotic. Eastern Suburbs Meeting decided to send funds from the Pat Allman Ward Bequest for distribution 'as he saw fit' to help the families of the girls being supported by the Foundation.

Eastern Suburbs Meeting contacted him for World Quaker Day, and his reply contained chilling news about the Sri Lankan economic crisis and a breakdown of the school system. He said that Sri Lanka currently ranks sixth globally in terms of child malnutrition. People are compelled to eat only what is necessary to satisfy their hunger, cutting down on protein that needs to be given to children leading to malnutrition in the long-term and an unhealthy future generation. He also said that the disparity in the quality of teaching between urban and rural schools has been an impediment for rural students to pursue higher education or achieve upward social mobility. Interestingly, private tuition has been able to mitigate this problem to a great extent by allowing students from dysfunctional rural schools to

supplement their education. Consequently, this enhances their ability to compete for places in top universities. This is evidenced by the fact that results of rural students at the GCE AL exam are currently improving exponentially. His report finished by saying that Sri Lanka The is in a Black Hole. Daily two hour power cuts and economic crimes.

Eastern Suburbs Friends decided to ask the Grace Geraldine Brown Bequest Committee if they would send \$1000 to the Foundation. They agreed

Mauff died on 27th November. His son Mark, who lives in Japan, is trying to establish contact with the Treasurer of the Foundation so enable us to send this money. Mauff was a gentle soul, determined to help others not as privileged as he, often at his personal cost.

LISTEN TO JANE SLOANE:

Saturday 4th February, 3.30pm. Quaker Asia Climate Action Network zoom

Climate, Covid, Conflict: Gender Transformative Responses to Disasters

Jane Sloane, Senior Director Women's Empowerment Program
The Asia Foundation
Improving Lives, Expanding Opportunities

In 2022 our Quakers in Asia West Pacific Climate Action Network began exploring the climate impacts across the Section, from the

- Third Pole in the Himalaya Tibetan Plateau, and the heat waves in South Asia
- to the supertvphoons in the South China Sea and the flooding of Pakistan
- to the “cascading disasters” in communities in Australia

In 2023, how are we to transform such events to be part of the solution? How can considering gender help us be more resilient?

Register by clicking here

Climate Action Network
Saturday 4 February 2023 by Zoom

Delhi	Singapore	Osaka	Adelaide	Sydney	Wellington
Sat 10:30 am	Sat 1:00 pm	Sat 2:00 pm	Sat 3:30 pm *	Sat 4:00 pm *	Sat 6:00 pm *

Our Climate Action Network Speaker for February will be Friend Jane Sloane, who leads The Asia Foundation’s programs to empower women and promote gender equality. Jane has over thirty years’ experience working in international development and over fifteen years of experience in leadership roles focused on advancing women’s rights and promoting gender equality around the world.

Format Our Climate Action Network gatherings last about 90 minutes and we build in opportunities to meet others from across the Section, hear from our speaker for about half an hour, gather in silence and offer worship sharing, as well as hear of climate-related events or campaigns that may be happening in each of our lives.

Link to

Register:https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAuduGgrTgqGd3TdAY89Bl6MH6YxYMTY_aQ6 4 February 2023

Zoom Meetings

There are a number of opportunities through each week to join online meetings for Worship

Friends Online Recognised Meeting (FORM) Sundays 4.30pm

Worship will be for 30 minutes followed by afterthoughts and a time of fellowship.

The link will be <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7151604648?pwd=a253KzZGV3lkE96UUpOanZXdnndsdz09>

Meeting ID: 715 160 4648 Passcode: 385895

Rainbow Friends and Allies Online Meeting for Worship

Meeting for Worship 6.30pm on the 4th Sunday of each month. You are welcome to join from 6:15pm. With this revised time, we hope more Friends will be able to join us in worship. You can email the coordinators at

rainbowsunday@quakerway.com

To join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83253846845?pwd=K1MwS2Z3blZnRmo0WmQ1VE1UcTZZZz09>

Meeting ID: 832 5384 6845, Passcode: 457636

The Friends World Committee for Consultation- Asia West Pacific Section (FWCC-AWPS) Meeting for Worship Online is held every week on Thursday 5.30pm. Worship will be for 30 minutes followed by afterthoughts and a time of fellowship.

<https://zoom.us/j/2125403144?pwd=M0g0b0hOZmxRKzI4amdMQi9uc0hXQT09>

Meeting ID: [212 540 3144](https://zoom.us/j/2125403144?pwd=M0g0b0hOZmxRKzI4amdMQi9uc0hXQT09) Password: 1652

Pray for Peace in Ukraine

Each Sunday at 4.45pm for one hour we continue to pray for peace in Ukraine.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82024585770>

Meeting ID: 820 2458 5770 | Passcode: 823028

Zoom meeting for social contact with other Friends across Australia (and the world).

Every Wednesday evening, 8.00 pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7709725207?pwd=bmlzeEdKT1ZYV0x1Q21xcGxVRWltdz09>

Meeting ID: 770 972 5207. Passcode: Friends

Dial by your location - Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kb3a8nkQNb>

Meeting ID: 770 972 5207. Passcode: 1085575

Week days Tasmania Regional Meeting Meeting for Worship 6.30 - 7.00 am.

<https://zoom.us/j/7612938035?pwd=azMxRkcvMWpSQUJKNEdMcm1pTmthQT09>

Meeting ID: 761 293 8035 Passcode:137 918 Contact maggi storr 0415 355 336

Barrie Halcrowe was an active Friend in Adelaide from 1980 until he moved to Thailand in 2002. He organised a Peace bus (1982-1995) which attended country shows and various shopping centres. He organised a peace booth in Rundle Mall in 1983, and Saturday morning Peace Vigils in Victoria Square. He was editor of the newsletter (1989-91). He is now recovering from TB in Thailand. He writes: "I was told by one of my doctors yesterday I was lucky to have TB because it can be cured unlike other lung diseases such as cancer. Lucky or not this certainly takes it out of me."



SILVER WATTLE

REGISTRATIONS OPEN FOR EASTER FAMILY GATHERING 2023

The Quaker Easter Family Gathering will again be held on the shores of Lake George at Silver Wattle, 6-10 April 2023. This will be a time for children, Junior Young Friends, Young Friends and adults to come together for worship, nourishment, fun and time on the land together. The program will be developed in collaboration with participants, with the possibility of constructing a labyrinth on dry land. Accommodation will be in cabins and BYO camping/caravans. This is heavily subsidised by Silver Wattle. All children under 18 will be free of charge, all adults are asked to contribute 50% of normal food tariff (ie. \$40/per person/per day). Additional information will be sent to participants prior to the event.

All queries please contact Anna Wilkinson annagreenthumb@gmail.com

Registration: <https://forms.gle/KPuFbdzy1aFgS7ny5>

Please register your interest asap to help us support and accommodate those who would like to come. We are happy to discuss support for you if there are financial/transport or other barriers to your attendance

Poetry and the Spirit: Judith Wright – Environmental, Indigenous and Spiritual Concerns. Led by Michael Griffith, March 9 – 15.

This course offers the opportunity of deepening your experience of spirit through exploring Judith Wright's poetry. Mornings will be structured readings and conversations on the nature of poetry and the way it can open us to new ways of seeing ourselves and what is around us. Afternoons will provide ample time for individual reflection and your creative responses to what you have discovered through poetry and within the landscape of Silver Wattle. Some evenings may provide opportunities for relaxed sharing of what we have learned or discovered.

John's Gospel led by David Johnson. Apr 26 - May 2, 2023

John's Gospel is regarded as the Quaker Gospel because of its inwardness and the emphasis on the divines Light which is gifted to very person, without exception. This Gospel is central to Quaker spirituality, and was beloved of many early and medieval Christians, especially St Cuthbert.

We will read and meditate on these writings for they have many layers, and we will also examine many early Quaker texts which illustrate how this Gospel inspired and comforted them.

Artists Retreat May 19 - 25, 2023

This retreat is for anyone who has a creative practice: Painters, Poets, Musicians, Textile Artists, Mixed Media, Writers, etc. The intention is to create a space that is supportive and nurturing to all, with time to focus on Spirit and Nature, to reflect on your creative practice and to rest in the Spirit knowing you are enough. We will immerse ourselves in the Country and the Spirit to be inspired to create. Some collaboration and sharing may occur as guided by the Divine.

**a slant of sunlight
catches sandals
parked in the porch**

Robin Sinclair

Meetings for Worship

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Adelaide: 11 am every Sunday.

Friends Meeting House, 40a Pennington Terrace, North Adelaide.

Clerk: Geoff Greeves.

Fellowship of Healing: in recess

WMSAdelaide@quakersaustralia.info

Meeting House bookings: RMSANTBookings@quakersaustralia.info

Eastern Suburbs: 10 am every Sunday. Leabrook Guide Hall, Rochester St., Leabrook .
Zoom link every 2nd and last Sunday of the month.

Clerk: Topsy Evans 0417 517 471 WMSEastern@quakersaustralia.info

Fleurieu: 11 am second Sunday of each month. Contact: Chris Collins 0407 049 535

WMSFleurieu@quakersaustralia.info

Hills: 10.30 am second Sunday of each month. Various venues.

Contact: Robin Sinclair 0418 908 163 WMSHills@quakersaustralia.info

Southern: Third Sunday of month. Contact: Barbara Talbot

WMSSouthern@quakersaustralia.info

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Alice Springs: 4 pm every Sunday at Campfire in the Heart, Ragnesi Road, Alice Springs.

Contact Diana Campbell 0422 472 918 WMSAlice@quakersaustralia.info

Darwin: 4.45 pm first & third Sunday of each month. Salvation Army Community Centre. Cnr Lee Point Rd & Yanyula Dr., Anula, Darwin.

Contacts: John Duguid (08) 7978 7080 Barbara Sampson 0447 201489

WMSDarwin@quakersaustralia.info

REGIONAL MEETING.

Business meetings: 1 pm first Sundays of February, April, June, August, October, December.

Clerk: Jo Jordan RMSANTClerk@quakersaustralia.info

Treasurer: Lee Harradine RMSANTTreasurer@quakersaustralia.info

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