

# MINUTES

## Formal Session 2: Sunday 2 July at 6.30 AEST

### **YM23.8: Welcome and Opening Worship**

MINUTE:

The Presiding Clerk, Bruce Henry, read the following ....

*The meeting for business is a meeting for worship in which we seek to be governed as a corporate body, through the same prayerful listening that we enter in worship. In the meeting for business the Quaker sense of the connection between the interior work of the Spirit of God in both individuals and the corporate body is most fully manifested. At its best, the meeting for business is a disciplined exercise in corporate discernment of Guidance in particular matters of personal conduct, relationships and outward work. Unity is not a unity of opinion. We sense our unity when we have entered into our most profound experience as a corporate body. It sometimes has been called group mysticism. We come to know our oneness in God's presence. Our hesitation, doubts, quibbles and agendas fall away. In that state we can see the decision or stance that expresses our fullest sense of the unity and peace of the meeting.*

Patricia Loring - *Listening Spirituality* Volume 2

### **YM23.9: Minute of Record: Welcome to Country**

MINUTE: Sieneke Martin read a Minute of Record for the Welcome to Country

The Presiding Clerk, Bruce Henry, invited Harald Ehmann, a member of the First Nations Peoples Concerns Committee (FNPCC), to introduce Ken Lechleitner and Deborah Buckskin, who delivered a Welcome to Country.

Harald said that he was pleased to introduce two wonderful people that he has the honour and privilege to know as friends and co-workers for Earth, Country and Culture:

Deb Buckskin, who is a Kurna Elder in Adelaide, is known to many Adelaide Friends through her evolving advocacy for disadvantaged and homeless people through Baptist Care SA, which includes the distribution of home-making packs sourced from the Quaker Shop.

Ken Pengarta Lechleitner is an Anmatyerre Elder in Alice Springs and has been involved with Quakers' FNPCC for about ten years through many programs for disadvantaged people that he has conducted in Central Australia.

Harald asked Friends to offer the gesture of *Ta marra* (the Kurna word for the gesture), which involves the showing of open hands symbolising coming in peace, friendship and unity.

Ken mentioned his gratefulness for the beauty of Australia. He stressed the need to work together, from our dual history, to open our hearts to come to a better future, to build a better nation for us all.

Deb Buckskin welcomed Friends in her language, valuing our joint dreaming, combining 85,000 years of her father's history with the Irish history of her mother in a continuing story-telling history, while acknowledging negative experiences.

Deb hopes that, sometime in the future, all Australians can stand and sing a new national anthem together, following the example of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

We should reflect on the need for unity, to be equal and to embrace the good in all of us, share experiences and find peace.

*And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. (Genesis 1:33).*

A period of silent worship followed Ken Lechleitner's and Deborah Buckskin's Welcome.

The Presiding Clerk thanked Ken and Deb for their welcome and reminded Friends of NAIDOC Week. The Clerk also mentioned that a statement about the Voice will come to Yearly Meeting later in the week.

### **YM23.10: The State of the Society Address**

The Presiding Clerk introduced Mark Macleod of Tasmania Regional Meeting, who then delivered The State of the Society Address. The address will be recorded and will be available on the AYM website and in DIR.

Mark felt that Friends were often too negative about the future, worrying about our ageing membership, about diminishing numbers, about conflict and problems, and about the many things we cannot do anything about. He did not wish to focus on statistics as these are available in Documents in Advance.

Mark wanted to bring a sense of optimism, to talk about challenges, to focus on imagination and creativity, to talk about the quality of travelling in the Spirit. He would like Friends to focus on what we can do.

He feels that there should be no distinction between attenders and members – in that we should use the talents and skills of everyone – to be inclusive, using technology where that is useful. He suggested rather than asking Friends to take on a job for three years, we should consider taking note of the gig economy – asking people to take on a project until it finishes, both as a learning experience and to build community.

He feels that having learned to use technology during the Covid period, we should continue to use Zoom to enable all Friends to participate in a wide range of activities. Getting back to normal will need ministry and learning and spiritual support. Managing technology to our advantage will assist in creating communities with a purpose, communities which are more inclusive.

Prayerful and quiet discernment will guide us in the future of our Society.

Mark quoted from the QRM report that a beloved attender, mourned by her Meeting, encouraged Friends to: Have fun, be kind, laugh.

Mark concluded with: *What is required is a willingness to listen to what others have to say, rather than to persuade them that one's own point of view represents what is right and proper. It also requires restraint ..... Above all, those who take opposing views come to find that the discipline of waiting has mysteriously united them.* QF&P 2.90, John Punshon

## **YM23.11: Summary of Epistles**

MINUTE: Bruce Henry introduced Elizabeth PO' from West Australia Regional Meeting to present the Summary of Epistles.

A Minute of Record will be brought to Formal Session 3.

## **YM23.12: Items for Noting**

MINUTE:

Yearly Meeting receives the following reports from *Documents in Advance 2023* which had no Items for Consideration, for noting, acceptance and recording in *Documents in Retrospect 2023* (this list has been on the YM23 website for Friends to review):

- AYM Archivist's Report
- AYM Finance Committee Report
- Australian Friend Committee
- Australian Friends Fellowship of Healing
- Australian Quaker Narrative Embroidery Committee (Friends in Stitches)
- Australian Religious Response to Climate Change
- Backhouse Lecture Committee
- Child Protection Committee
- Children & Junior Young Friends Committee
- First Nations Peoples Concerns Committee
- Friends Online Recognised Meeting
- Friends Peace Teams - Asia West Pacific
- Information Technology Committee

- Integrity in Public Office Project
- NCCA Ecumenical Report
- Peace & Social Justice Fund Committee
- Publications Committee
- Quaker Peace & Legislation Committee
- Quaker Service Australia
- Rainbow Friends and Allies Meeting
- Sanctuary Management Committee
- Silver Wattle Quaker Centre
- The Friends' School
- Transition Implementation Working Group
- Yearly Meeting Organising Committee

We note these reports from Information Sessions held during May-June. These will appear in *Documents in Retrospect 2023* (these have been on the YM23 website for Friends to review):

- Transition Implementation Working Group Information Session
- QSA Information Session
- QWCC & FWCC-AWPS Information Session.

### **YM23.13: QSA appointments**

QSA brings these names forward to for confirmation (as per QSA Constitutional requirements, 7.2 (b) An appointment of a Regional Meeting Appointee and a Young Friends Appointee must be confirmed by the next meeting of Australia Yearly Meeting or Standing Committee):

1. The name of Aletia Dundas from Wahroonga LM (NSWRM) is brought forward to become a member of the Company of QSA to serve on the QSA Management Committee for a 4-year term, beginning February 2023.
2. The name of Paul Carter from Wahroonga LM (NSWRM) is brought forward to become a member of the Company of QSA to serve on the QSA Management Committee for a 4-year term, beginning July 2023.

#### **MINUTE:**

We approve the name of Aletia Dundas from Wahroonga LM (NSWRM) to become a member of the Company of QSA to serve on the QSA Management Committee for a 4-year term, beginning February 2023.

We approve the name of Paul Carter from Wahroonga LM (NSWRM) to become a member of the Company of QSA to serve on the QSA Management Committee for a 4-year term, beginning July 2023.

### **YM23.14: The Friends' School appointments**

MINUTE:

The Association of The Friends' School Incorporated recommended the nominations of Elective Directors brought forward by the Board of Governors to Australia Yearly Meeting for appointment:

1. Sam Ibbott as a nominee of the Board for a second term of four years commencing from the date of approval by Yearly Meeting.
2. Natalia Urosevic as a nominee of the Board for a third term of four years commencing from the date of approval by Yearly Meeting.

We approve these nominations.

The Board of Governors under the new Rule 8(c)(iv) in the Replacement Rules of Association brings forward these nominations:

1. Deputy Presiding Member, Mary Beadle as a nominee of Tasmania Regional Meeting for a fourth term of up to four years commencing from the date of approval by Yearly Meeting and ending at such time as Mary no longer holds the office of Presiding Member or Deputy Presiding Member.
2. Presiding Member, Craig Stephens as a nominee of the Board for a fourth term of up to four years commencing from the date of approval by Yearly Meeting and ending at such time as Craig no longer holds the office of Presiding Member or Deputy Presiding Member.

We approve these nominations.

## **YM23.15: QWCC Report (Quaker World Connections Committee)**

### ***1. Does AYM wish for an AWP visitor to come each year or less frequently?***

We agree to put inviting an AWPS visitor for Yearly Meeting 2024 on hold.

We ask QWCC to develop guidelines for the invitation of AWPS visitors to Yearly Meeting and Regional Meetings and to bring these to Yearly Meeting 2024.

### ***2. The next World Plenary of Quakers will be in South Africa from 5-13 August 2024 and also as a hybrid (streamed) event.***

We ask AYM Nominations Committee to discern the name of a Friend to represent Australia Yearly Meeting at this gathering in South Africa in August 2024.

We ask that the cost of our representation be included in the 2023 - 24 Budget.

At the Standing Committee in September, we will consider allocating funds to assist Friends from AWPS to attend this gathering.

As there is real concern about climate change and greenhouse gas emissions (especially in regard to travel), we look forward to discussing this further at the CESE session on Monday 3rd July.

The formal session closed with a period of silent worship.