

Quakers Australia Committee or Working Group Report

Name of committee/concern/group:

Friends Peace Teams/Asia West Pacific (FPT/AWP)

Membership of the Committee/Working Group:

Taisoo Kim Watson, Valerie Joy, AYM; Rosie Remmerswaal and John Michaelis (NZ), Kins Aparece, Raissa Marfa (Philippines), Melanie Siaw (Malaysia), Jung Joo Park (Korea), Petrus and Nanik, Ratih, Ida (Indonesia- Java & Bima), Selly and Sint (West Papua), Kwi (Myanmar), Ram Chandra (Nepal); Nadine Hoover, Mark Hoover, Fenna Mandalong, Cassie Cammann, Janet Anderson (USA).

Part A – Report

Progress:

Globally, the past year has seen FPT expand from 3 to 5 Regions. The new ones are Europe and the Middle East and North America. The work in AWP has also expanded- geographically into Myanmar (Karenland on the Thai-Myanmar border), and also the depth of our work in existing countries- Korea, Philippines, Malaysia, West Papua and Indonesia.

- The Jan de Voogd (JDV) funding enabled the development of the [Power of Goodness](#) (PoG) workshops to over 6,500 young people. Power of Goodness is an Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) mini-workshop.
- Regional Training for 40 + participants took place in the Philippines last July, and bookings are already going well for the Regional Training in Pati, Java, Indonesia this July. The training is titled “[Regional Training for Justice and Peace](#)”. It is an AVP workshop for justice and peace with special topics on resilience, liberation and discernment. It is also a time for the PoG teams to introduce the program to other participants and to deepen their experience now that the JDV funding is finishing.
- The annual journal “Peaceways” was distributed in November 2023 to supporters of FPT/AWP, although it is sometimes difficult to know which Meetings or Individuals have sent financial aid. We have an [Epistle that just came out and was posted on Streamlines and also on the FPT website](#).
- The support of FWCC/AWPS via the Secretary Adrian Glamorgan has been of great value, and makes sense, given both groups are working in the same region.
- We have sought similar ways of working together with QSA and hope this will emerge in the near future, benefiting both organisations.
- Regular news of our work has been included in “Streamlines”, which is of great importance.

We are fortunate to have Kins Aparece from the Philippines to coordinate the work on a daily/weekly/monthly basis, and Jane Drexler as our Treasurer. Early this year, Heather Saville (NSWRM) became our Public Officer. Taisoo Kim Watson was our Co-Clerk for some time but has laid this down. An Australian Friend to take on this job would make a nice balance with our Aotearoa Co-Clerk, Rosie Remmerswaal.

Issues:

We seek a greater involvement in our work with Australian Friends. The Working Group monthly meetings are a way of closer involvement, but there are many other ways- particularly that of supporting one or two of our Peaceworkers. Support is not necessarily financial but is friendship and care and understanding each of the other. Our workers do ask us about our work for peace which increases our ties of friendship and understanding.

Knowledge of what our work involves needs to expand amongst Australian Friends. Our website is up to date and contains news stories published every week- www.friendspeaceteams.org

We do not yet have Charitable Status, and therefore Tax deductibility. Achieving this would be an added incentive for giving from Friends. There is a great disparity between Regional Meetings who give to FPT. Friends who understand our budget would be welcome in seeing where there are opportunities to raise funds.

We pay stipends to our Peaceworkers and are aware that these barely cover living costs. Some workers are getting close to retirement and have few resources to sustain them.

A particular call-out is made to younger Friends who have an interest in volunteering in Asia.

We encourage

- Regional Meetings to discuss ways in which their members, individually or in groups could establish ways of becoming involved in Friends Peace Teams/Asia West Pacific (FPT/AWP).
- Regional Meeting Newsletters to seek to regularly publish FPT stories of interest on the various ways peace is being established in areas of conflict.
- Friends in FPT/AWP to invite Australian Friends to submit suitable examples of local peace stories to a new edition of the Power of Goodness (POG). POG is a modified AVP training, using stories of peace with children and young adults.

- Consideration is given to showing a video on FPT work when Peace and Social Justice events are on Meeting calendars. We now have a large collection of such videos.
- a Peace worker to be invited from time to time via Zoom to give an up-to-date picture on how the work is going. QRM has had a live online session on the Peace work on Jeju Island, South Korea and another with Ratih in Indonesia on Peace Libraries. QRM also hosted the presentation on Myanmar on 11 February 2024.
- FWCC-AWPS to continue to enable regular meetings to take place between supporters of FPT/AWP, QSA and others interested in international peacebuilding.

We look forward to an opportunity for a FPT/AWP Peace worker to travel in the ministry amongst Australian Friends. This will require an organising group with Regional Meeting representation and a budget. Coordination of the tour can be provided by the AYM representatives on the FPT Global Coordinating Committee.

A similar recommendation has been made to the Friends School via the Quaker Values Committee: for a Peace worker to work with staff and students at Friends School Hobart, as a Friend in Residence.

In 2015, Silver Wattle arranged for FPT's Nadine Hoover to travel in the Ministry to Meetings in Australia, as well as conducting courses on "Quaker Discernment" at Silver Wattle.

Further discussion on these proposals is welcome.

Contact Valerie Joy <valuable1@optusnet.com.au>