

MINUTES

Formal Session 4: Monday 3 July at 4.00pm AEST

YM23.21: Welcome and Opening Worship

Bruce Henry read from *this we can say* 2.37

To discern the leading of the Spirit we listen for promptings within ourselves and in the ministry of others. This does not mean that we don't use our brains or think. It does mean, however, that we try to open ourselves to an awareness of the working of the Spirit both within ourselves and within the meeting as a whole. It is this experience of being gathered in the Spirit that is the unity we seek in making decisions. We share our knowledge, opinions, and insights as we feel led, but in the end, we release them as we discern the leadings of the Spirit in a gathered meeting.

Meeting for worship for business is a central part of the life of a Quaker meeting, for it is here that we experience the corporate gift of God: love in action.

Roger Walmsley 2003

YM23.22: First Reading of the Epistle

Jenny Seaton (TRM) presented a first reading of the YM23 Epistle. The Clerk reminded Friends that the Epistle draft can be found on the YM23 website and that they can send their comments to Susan Rockliff at susanl.rockliff@internode.on.net.

YM23.23: QSA & AYM Relationship Working Group Report

Yearly Meeting receives the following recommendations from the QSA & AYM Working Group:

1. That to enhance the effectiveness of the oversight of QSA policies and operations, the membership of the QSA Management Committee be increased from seven to nine (including office bearers).
2. That instead of being hosted by a Regional Meeting (at present NSW), QSA be hosted by Australia Yearly Meeting. In that situation, names would be put forward by the Nominations Committee of AYM in consultation with the present Management Committee of QSA and other stakeholders, and members would be identified from anywhere in Australia. The appointments to the Management Committee would then be made by Yearly Meeting (after feedback from Regional Meetings).

3. That the current Management Committee and officers of QSA advise the AYM Nominations Committee of the skills and knowledge needed for the effective oversight of QSA as vacancies occur, to assist in the selection of names for appointment.

4. That the Linkages Committee be discontinued, and replaced by regular opportunities for Quakers to interact with QSA through webinars offered by QSA for sharing of information and ideas. In addition to these webinars offered by QSA, any Regional Meeting could ask QSA for a meeting of this kind, and QSA would also use Yearly Meeting gatherings, newsletters and other ongoing communication methods to keep Quakers informed and receive feedback.

5. That appropriate legal advice be sought by AYM and QSA about the implications of these changes for QSA's standing as a company, so that AYM and QSA can have the necessary background to make a decision on changes in the governance arrangements as proposed. (Note – there may be some confusion caused by naming the oversight body 'the Management Committee' rather than 'The Board', and this point might be clarified by legal advice about the requirements expected of a company).

We confirm these recommendations.

We note that there are associated bodies, which use our name and to some of which we appoint board members at YM. We note the Handbook section 5.2.3. We feel that there need to be ways for YM to be more involved in their governance, to make sure that this involvement is in right ordering.

We ask Alan Clayton to consult with other Friends and bring forward practical ways to ensure this happens, to Standing Committee or YM for consideration and discernment.

YM23.24: Handbook Revision Committee Report

We note from the HRC Preparatory Session Report:

1. Most of the revisions agreed at Yearly Meeting 2022 have been incorporated in Handbook 7 (revised December 2022) as on the AYM Website.

2. The Handbook Revision Committee is mindful that they have not involved the Regional Meeting Liaison Friends during the year. They hope to increase this important role in the coming year.

They note that the changes to the operations of Quaker Australia Office will require the drafting of a new section within the Handbook.

3. The Handbook Revision Committee will make the appropriate lower-case changes to the agreed text of section 4.3. (Friends believe that marriage is a form of a committed relationship. Friends preferred lower case rather capitalisation in this section).
4. With regard to Section 5.3.7.4 Other Committees, there will be some minor alterations to reflect the updated terminology for the Quakers Australia Office.
5. With regard to Section 1.9 Service to the Meeting (Our Nominations Process), Friends asked that the two paragraphs (starting with 'The Nominations Committee serves') needed reworking. The Committee did this and Friends now endorse the new wording.
6. The purpose of the flowchart is to explain the process of drafting an amendment to the Handbook. This process is not included in the text of the Handbook. The section relating to Associated Bodies has been removed from the flowchart. The revised Flowchart will be in Documents in Retrospect.
7. Following a question about minor and major (additions or changes) in the Flowchart, we trust that the committee will discern which changes are minor. Major changes are subject to discernment by Yearly Meeting.
8. Quakers Australia Office. The Handbook Revision Committee will work with the Transition Implementation Working Group to bring a new Handbook section to YM24.

Yearly Meeting confirms these arrangements.

The Session closed with silent worship.