

RESPONSE FROM QSA to the Relationship Between QSA and AYM Working Group Report Summary, as of 10.5.22

PART A: REPORT Achievements / Activities These are articulated in our full Report and a one-page summary is provided.

(SEE SEPARATE PDF, ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS IN ADVANCE 2022).

The following Part B: Items for Consideration, are a summary of what appears in the Report of the 2021 Working Group on the Relationship between QSA and AYM, which accompanies DIA22.

PART B: ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Relationship of QSA with Australia Yearly Meeting – recommendations

[QSA RESPONSES IN BOLD FONT]

- 1(a) That the wording of the QSA entry in the 6th edition of the Handbook be reinstated and that any proposals to change the substantive terms of that entry be subject to the well-established forms and processes of Australia Yearly Meeting.

This was reviewed at AYM2019, following the well-established forms and processes of AYM. The revised edition (7th) reflects that QSA is a separate legal entity from AYM. It is descriptive with links to the QSA website (qsa.org.au) for further information (Endnote i).

- 1(b) Given the now demonstrated ability for groups to conduct business through video conferencing applications such as Zoom and Teams, that QSA revert to its former arrangement of “a committee of the whole”. This is seen as the simplest solution to the issue of meaningful participation of all Members. It is also seen as the approach most in accord with Quaker values in not having a status distinction among and between Members. In terms of having a committee that is not too unwieldy in terms of numbers, that the membership of the “committee of the whole” be constituted by seven regional meeting nominees, a Young Friend nominee and the AYM Presiding Clerk and Secretary as ex officio members. That is 10 members in total.

As a separate legal entity from AYM, QSA is responsible for the creation of any committees as per the QSA constitution (Endnote ii).

QSA and the Management Committee do not choose the members of the Management Committee or the Linkages Committee.

All Company members of QSA have been nominated by their respective Regional Meeting Nominations Committees and the nominations agreed to by that Regional Meeting. These are then endorsed by the next AYM or Standing Committee meeting, whichever comes first.

1(c) That the Recommendations from a QSA review committee be included in Documents in Advance for the next Yearly Meeting following the submission of the review committee’s report and that these Recommendations be part of the determinative processes at that Yearly Meeting.

As a separate legal entity AYM may choose to make recommendations to QSA. However, it is the Management Committee of QSA that has the responsibility for decision making regarding the governance of QSA.

- 1(d) That Australia Yearly Meeting maintains a record of the progress of implementation of the Recommendations from a QSA review committee report that have been agreed at Yearly Meeting and that an updated report on such progress be given to each subsequent Yearly Meeting.

Each time a review of QSA has taken place by AYM the responses have been shared with AYM. The last review responses are recorded in Documents in Retrospect 2013 (pp57,58) and in Documents in Retrospect 2014 (YM14.26, p21).

In addition, there were other recommendations recorded in Documents in Retrospect in 2015 (YM15.46 pp 31,32) and Documents in Retrospect 2016 (YM16.45, pp26,7).

There were also updates noted in Documents in Retrospect 2017 (YM17.37, p73), requests from QSA to AYM in Documents in Retrospect 2018 (p66) and Documents in Retrospect 2019 (pp 64, 65), and a recommendation for AYM in Documents in Retrospect in 2020 (YM20.26, p21).

In Documents in Retrospect 2021 there were no recommendations (YM21.17, pp17,18).

- 1(e) It is unfair and impractical for Australian Friends to require QSA to be all things that Friends would wish to see done in the world. In recognising that QSA has necessarily marked out a specialist remit for itself (for example in aid and development, not emergency relief) within a framework linked closely to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's funding mechanisms for Non-Government Organisations, there must be space to both dialogue with QSA about that mission, and look more broadly afield for what other areas Friends may be called to operate. This requires a clear mechanism within AYM, to both engage directly with QSA, and to enable ongoing conversations within AYM about issues beyond QSA's remit, which may lead to alternative expressions of Quaker faith in action. More development education within AYM is needed to help Friends more deeply appreciate aid dynamics, which can appreciate QSA's choices, and more broadly help Australian Friends contextualise the existence of poverty and its relationship with militarism and exploitation of the earth, dispossession and colonialism. AYM should also periodically review whether there are any corporate leadings to invest efforts in other areas not defined by QSA's work.

The establishment of the Linkages Committee by the QSA Management Committee was to allow for direct communication regarding QSA activities with all the Regional Meetings of Australia and to facilitate direct communication from Regional Meetings to QSA (footnote iii).

Linkages Committee members are invited to regular e-learning sessions regarding aspects of QSA's work with the intention of education regarding development issues.

QSA would be supportive of the Linkages Committee members nominating members or attenders of their respective Regional Meetings who would like to also attend any of these e-learning sessions.

2. Legacy Issues

- 2(a) This Review: I. draws attention to the provision in the 6th and previous editions of the Handbook that "QSA's strategic direction, management plan and project selection criteria" are matters that are required to be submitted annually to Yearly Meeting for approval; II. notes that such matters often involve complex matters of discernment and the need for informed

judgment; and III. recommends that, given the findings of successive QSA review committees that many Australian Friends have a strong interest and concern about the nature and geographical spread of QSA's remit, as well as issues relating to project selection, that a special session on these issues be arranged at next Yearly Meeting.

As stated in footnote 1, the Handbook is constantly revised to reflect truthfully our changing circumstances. This is the case in regards to the current relationship between QSA and AYM. As two separate legal entities it is no longer the case that QSA needs to submit to Yearly Meeting for approval. However, there is a strong desire to continue to assist with development education opportunities through Yearly Meeting. In YM22 QSA plans to hold an explanatory session which will assist with this desire.

- 2(b) In the light a strongly expressed desire among Australian Friends for greater involvement by QSA with First Nations concerns in Australia, we reiterate the recommendations of the 2012 Review (albeit with a different time frame) for: I. a review of QSA's Statement of Purpose by both QSA and the AYM First Nations People Concerns Committee with a view to making a recommendation to the QSA AGM at next Yearly Meeting that the Statement of Purpose be reconsidered for its inclusivity of Aboriginal projects; and II. representatives from AYM First Nations People Concerns Committee and QSA commence a dialogue about Regional Meeting's engagement with the identification and choice of Aboriginal projects and report back to QSA within six months. As an initial step, we call on Friends who have been active in concerns around Indigenous Australians to share their knowledge of organisations and communities with which they have worked, as a first step to identifying areas where QSA support could be appropriate, and partners with whom relationships could be built. This call to partnership also applies in relation to project selection by Friends with knowledge of the Pacific region.

2(b)i. Statement of inclusivity of Aboriginal projects within QSA's Statement of Purpose (from 2012 Review).

The Minutes of the YM First Nations Peoples Concerns Committee meeting from 9/6/2013 noted that the Committee discussed the current statement of purpose of QSA and made the following suggestion that "culturally" be inserted.

This revised Statement of Purpose of QSA was reported to and approved by AYM, and noted in Documents in Retrospect 2014 (YM14.26, p20).

QSA's purpose is to express in a practical way the concern of Australian Quakers for the building of a more peaceful, equitable, just and compassionate world. To this end QSA works with communities in need to improve their quality of life with projects which are culturally sensitive, as well as being economically and environmentally appropriate and sustainable.

2(b) ii. Representatives from AYM First Nations People Concerns Committee and QSA commence a dialogue about Regional Meeting's engagement with the identification and choice of Aboriginal projects and report back to QSA within six months.

Any project that fits the QSA's selection criteria is welcome to be suggested by any member/attender or regional meeting. This was also mentioned in Documents in Retrospect 2014 (YM14.26, p21), and has been repeated frequently at AYM sessions of QSA and with Linkages Committee members.

The Project Manager of Indigenous Projects of QSA (Jackie Perkins) has attended the First Nations People Concerns Committee for over 10 years. In this time, numerous projects suggested by the First Nations People Concerns Committee have been supported by QSA. Currently QSA is supporting two projects suggested by the First Nations People Concerns Committee. One is a Men's Shed project in Northern Territory and the other is developing a business plan for an indigenous plants nursery to be run by an indigenous community in Queensland.

- 2(c) That, in line with a previous recommendation, the specific mention of working with Aboriginal groups within Australia, contained in the 6th edition of the Handbook, be restored.

2(c). See above comments regarding the Handbook entry in Edition 7 regarding QSA.

Endnotes.

^[1] YM19.45 Handbook Revision Committee Preparatory Session Report (Documents in Advance, pp41-45) *We accept the report in Documents in Advance and hear the report of the Preparatory Session which will be published in Documents in Retrospect. We hear that the Handbook changes constantly to reflect truthfully our changing practices. We accept the Part B recommendations in the Handbook Revision Committee's report in Documents in Advance 2019, p45. We accept those changes to the Handbook which all Regional Meetings supported or gave no comment. We accept those changes agreed to at the Preparatory Session as detailed in the Preparatory Session Report.*

^{[1][1]} Constitution Quaker Service Australia Limited, ACN 618 346 839 A Public Company Limited by Guarantee 21 Committees 21.1 Delegation to committees (a) The Management Committee Members may delegate any of their powers, to a committee consisting of such one or more of their number as they think fit. (b) A committee to which any powers have been delegated under clause 21.1(a) must exercise those powers in accordance with any directions of the Management Committee Members. A power so exercised is taken to have been exercised by the Management Committee Members.

^{[1][1][1]} QSA Linkages Committee's Terms of Reference Version 4 4/10/2019
The Quaker Service Australia Linkages Committee is a committee appointed by the QSA Management Committee. Its purpose is to support QSA through developing and sharing an understanding of the projects and wider institutional frameworks in which QSA is working. The Linkages Committee will: Assist the QSA Management Committee to strengthen links between Regional Meetings and QSA.