

**YM23 Preparatory Session Report:
Climate Emergency & Species Extinction Working Group**

Preparatory Session	Climate Emergency & Species Extinction Working Group
Clerk: Jude Pembleton	Note taker: David King
<p>Report: PART B: ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION</p> <p>1. Do Friends accept and commit to the Action Plan developed by the Working Group? Friends accept and commit to the higher-level Action Plan developed by the Working Group. Many Friends are already active in this area, but we are asking the Quaker community to be more outspoken and supportive of action. Different Friends will be active in many ways to address this urgent issue.</p> <p>2. We ask RMs to supply a short, written report on their activities in their Meetings in relation to advocacy on climate and biodiversity mitigation, to the CESE WG by the end of May 2023 to be shared prior to, and tabled for, the Preparatory Session. This has been done.</p> <p>3. That YM23 extend the Working Group for 1 (one) year to enable the completion (with RMs) of the draft Action Statements (Appendix 2) We agree that YM23 extend the Working Group for 1 (one) year to enable the completion (with RMs) of the draft 'Carrying out the plan' document. We see this will be a living document.</p> <p>4. That QPLC, in consultation with relevant Quaker groups, conduct two lobbying workshops online during 2023-24 on the topic of climate crisis and species extinction. We ask that QPLC, in consultation with relevant Quaker groups, conduct two lobbying workshops online during 2023-24 on the topic of climate crisis and species extinction.</p> <p>5. That relevant AYM finance-related committees to review their guidelines to release funds to support climate activism, education, community building and earth repair actions. Collaboration amongst several funding sources may be a way to encourage funding a greater diversity of actions. We also ask that relevant AYM committees who manage their finances review their guidelines to release funds to support climate activism, education, community building and earth repair actions. Collaboration amongst several funding sources may be a way to encourage funding a greater diversity of actions.</p> <p>6. That Clearness Meetings are provided as needed for individual Friends who are led to travel among Australian Friends under a specific climate and biodiversity crisis ministry. We encourage Friends who are led to take action under concern with respect to the climate and biodiversity crises to avail themselves of Clearness Meetings where they can test these leadings. Ongoing guidance may be needed from a support group. We encourage Ministry Committees or equivalent to discern and facilitate these opportunities.</p> <p>7. We ask all Meetings for Business, at AYM, RM, local and committee level to consider the Climate and Biodiversity Crisis, as a standing item on their agendas.</p>	

We hear from RMs on their activities in their Meetings in relation to advocacy on climate and biodiversity challenges and ask that these go into *Documents in Retrospect 2023*.

We ask all meetings to consider how they could keep the Climate and Biodiversity Crises in the forefront. This could be as a regular newsletter item, or kept in mind when dealing with relevant agenda items at meetings for business.

Recommendations in your Report which you will bring to Yearly Meeting:

1) We ask that YM23 extend the CE&SE Working Group for 1 (one) year (to YM24) to enable the completion (with input from the Regional Meetings) of the draft 'Carrying out the plan' document. We see this will be a living document.

2) We ask that QPLC, in consultation with relevant Quaker groups, conduct two lobbying workshops online during 2023-24 on the topic of climate crisis and species extinction.

3) We ask that relevant AYM committees who manage their finances review their guidelines to release funds to support climate activism, education, community building and earth repair actions. Collaboration amongst several funding sources may be a way to encourage funding a greater diversity of actions.

We:

1) note that Friends accept and commit to the higher-level Action Plan developed by the Working Group. Many Friends are already active in this area, but we are asking the Quaker community to be more outspoken and supportive of action. Different Friends will be active in many ways to address this urgent issue.

2) encourage Friends who are led to take action under concern with respect to the climate and biodiversity crises to avail themselves of Clearness Meetings where they can test these leadings. Ongoing guidance may be needed from a support group. We encourage Ministry Committees or equivalent to discern and facilitate these opportunities.

3) ask all meetings to consider how they could keep the Climate and Biodiversity Crises in the forefront. This could be as a regular newsletter item, or kept in mind when dealing with relevant agenda items at meetings for business.

REPORTS FROM REGIONAL MEETINGS to CESE WG sharing the activities of Friends in their regions, in relation to the climate emergency and species extinction.

Canberra and Region Quakers

Canberra and Region Friends have been engaged in a variety of climate/species extinction activities including:

For over two years the weekly eNews bulletin has included an 'environment corner' of topical stories and initiatives related to climate crises and species extinction.

From August 2022, regular Conversation Cafes have been held fortnightly at lunchtime on Fridays for Friends to share actions taken, and to learn more about the Climate Emergency and Ecological Crises. David Shorthouse and Kay de Vogel have led these sessions, which have attracted up to 8 Friends at a time. Interesting books have been discussed and videos watched.

Commencing September 2022, as requested by the Climate Emergency and Species Extinction Working Group, the topic of 'Climate Emergency and Species Extinction' is a standing item on every Meeting for Worship for Business agenda.

In acknowledging first nations people every Sunday after Meeting for Worship, the Clerks also acknowledge the fundamental significance of caring for our earth, urgently and faithfully.

On 24 September 2022 CRQ Quakers hosted a stall for the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) at the North Canberra Sustainability Fair. ARRCC does not have a branch in Canberra, so Thea Ormerod sent information and other promotional materials to Canberra.

Worthwhile and interesting conversations occurred with several people who are interested in the work of ARRCC, some of whom were already members or part of churches which are members. Our presence was also noted by the ACT Environment Minister, Rebecca Vassarotti.

One of the outcomes of the stall was that a full page of people signed up to receive the ARRCC newsletter. This was returned to Thea Ormerod along with the receipt book and other materials.

The Christian Climate Action kit has been placed in the Library at the Turner Meeting House.

Our October 2022 Meeting for Worship for Business (Minute 2.1.1) affirmed "every decision of the Meeting be discerned in the light of our testimony to the environment and its concomitant concern about the climate emergency, to ensure that these are in harmony."

On Saturday 15 April 2023 the Meeting held a workshop on personal witness to address the Climate Emergency and Species extinction and the draft report of the Climate Emergency and Species Extinction Working Group.

Representations have been made to a range of people in influential roles with political parties and independent Parliamentary representatives.

On 17 April 2023, two members of our Meeting met with the ACT Attorney General, Shane Rattennbury, to highlight the need for urgency of action on climate change and other existential threats.

On 23 April 2023 the distinguished science writer Julian Cribb addressed around 20 Canberra Friends and others at the Turner Meeting House, with 21 joining on Zoom. Julian outlined 10 existential threats, followed by a confident presentation on substantial ways they can be mitigated, and even turned around if we all take action. A lively Q and; A followed.

We continue to be challenged for our individual actions and Meeting House practices to minimise energy use.

QUEENSLAND RM REPORT

I haven't received many replies yet though I know of Queensland Friends taking actions while involved with other groups or as individuals. Our Meeting doesn't have a CE&SE correspondent at the moment, and the small Peace and Social Justice working group have been busy with Disrupt Land Forces and similar actions. But there are more individual actions taken rather than the Meeting as a whole.

For example, I have been involved locally with protests at the Commonwealth Bank and NAB in Brisbane City, David Lowry is a skilled and experienced geologist, and avid letter writer to his local paper when he spots a climate change denialist, and Greg Rolles has been involved in guerilla gardening. Opposing military build ups impacts on the climate and various actions have been taken locally by Quakers. We continue to have the monthly peace vigil and incorporate the climate crisis as a justice matter by holding posters or banners at times, and sometimes have conversations with passers-by on precisely this issue. This is our form of outreach too. David King is a contact person on the Queensland Churches Environmental Network as a subgroup of Qld Churches Together (QCT)

As a Meeting we have supported applications for funding regarding climate related issues, we bank with Bank Australia and I have included Roger Sawkins to confirm any other ethical money related matters as he is our treasurer. There are PV cells on the roof of the car parking area. The Pay the Rend Fund has given financial support to the development of a First Nations Wellness Centre on land near Blackbutt in Queensland. I have included Christine Venner-Westaway who can report much better than I on other activities and initiatives by the P&SJ group related to the Climate Emergency.

The Kelvin Grove Meeting House location among Hoop Pines and other forest species, maintained by a small but dedicated group including the caretakers, in a suburb close to Brisbane city is the subject of a working group to advise and further plans to make building improvements and other alterations. This has taken up a lot of our energy lately.

Frances Long, Co-Clerk

FURTHER NOTES FROM QRM:

QRM's advocacy efforts on climate and biodiversity mitigation was predominately played out via the participation of its Peace and Social Justice Group members in the *Disrupt Land Forces* campaign, waged over the past 2 years in Brisbane. The campaign focused on the Land Forces Exposition: an international industry event to showcase equipment, technology, and services for the armies of Australia and the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

The campaign sought to highlight the use of weapons by military forces in many countries to

- suppress labour, climate, and democracy movements
- aid the militarisation of fossil fuel and other land-based resource extraction (mostly from the land of First Nation communities)
- appropriate obscene amounts of money to purchase and utilise weapons at the expense of the health and wellbeing not only of the peoples of the Earth but the Earth itself

Activities included leafletting outside city train stations; attending other peace related rallies and marches, bearing posters and banners proclaiming "**Earthcare not Warfare**"; dissemination of hundreds of white poppies noting that \$122m is spent daily on Military-Industrial complex; attending and supporting XR protests.

More recently Quakers have attended Bank sit-ins with other faith groups, urging divestment in coal. The wearing of our Quaker tabards is a regular feature.

From Maleny:

Whack-a-mole

Climate denialists continually write irritating letters to my local community paper (Glasshouse Country and Maleny News). I see it as my job to inject some logic and science into the debate. I visualise it as the arcade game of Whack-a-mole where the player has a lawn from which moles emerge at random and the task is to hit them on the head with a mallet.

I have been doing this for 14 years but I expect my circle of influence is very small. However recently there was an enthusiastic letter to the editor which rather startled me. I have not met the writer (Gaby Luft) but I am told she is a serious Greenie.

Perhaps I should keep writing.

David Lowry, April 2032

I wish to congratulate tenacious letter writer David Lowry from Witta on his endurance and dedication on 'highlighting Good Common Sense and Real Science, regarding the crucial matter of Climate Change. I wholeheartedly agree with all points he makes in his letters and I truly admire his courage to carry on this important debate in the 'public arena'! I have no doubt whatsoever that he represents the real views of millions of us who do whatever can be done to minimise our Carbon Footprint. Thank You Mr Lowry for 'carrying on the good fight'. You are awesome!

Goby Luft, Maleny

SANTRM REPORT

SANTRM is blessed to have members who have professional knowledge as well as deep interest in the health and wellbeing of our environment. Peri Coleman, Faith Coleman and Harald Ehmman have been students, teachers and advocates for our environment for many years.

Peri has campaigned, and continues to campaign, for mangroves and the ecosystem of the St Kilda region following the widespread death of mangroves caused by the leakage of hypersaline water. Faith Coleman's extensive research of the ecology of the Coorong includes the participation of local communities. Harold Ehmman is a retired wildlife ecologist who travels to the far north to monitor landscape systems and at home he is a climate activist.

SANTRM Friends are on the organising committee for Extinction Rebellion which conducted over 60 actions relating to the environment during the past year in SA. Friends are on two committees of Churches Together SA which is responsible for the annual Palm Sunday Walk for Justice and Peace and the "Beyond the Garden Gate" event which invited a panel of experts to address a range of climate issues.

Many Friends have strong and lasting commitments to the activities of ARRCC, the Conservation Council of SA, Trees for Life and the Greens. David Evans has been lobbying and campaigning for a sustainable earth and clean energy for years.

At the front of the Quaker Shop a large banner supplied by ARRCC states "For the sake of all beings, Climate action now". The Quaker Shop offers an example of the circular economy. Alongside the Shop's purpose to raise funds for QSA and Australian Refugee Association, it recycles large quantities of clothing, bric-a-brac and small electrical items and, in addition, delivers unsaleable donations to other organisations for recycling.

Individual Friends are doing their best to purchase only what they need, to use public transport, to have a plant-based diet, to recycle unwanted items and to take time to marvel at the country which sustains us.

Jo Jordan, SANTRM Clerk

Adelaide Local Meeting

I am writing on behalf of the ALM Zoom group. We have an after-Meeting discussion once a month and we have been discussing the Quaker Testimonies. The last three months we have been talking about our the Earthcare Testimony in our lives. As well as our individual responses (e.g., solar panels, changing from gas to electric HWS, electric or hybrid vehicles, straw-bale and

mud brick house requiring no artificial heating or cooling, changing superannuation, insurance and banking to more ethical companies), we have posed ethical dilemmas such as diet (including that of pets). Most of us are unable to take direct physical action such as attending protests, but we try to keep ourselves well-informed about issues and pass on knowledge gained. Personally, I was very fortunate to have attended a Share and Tell at the last Yearly Meeting about the ARRCC in relation to investment, and have since attended seminars run by them. The information provided there and on their website, has enabled us to make important decisions about our finances).

In Love and Friendship, Julie

VICTORIA RM REPORT

A catalyst for climate advocacy by Victorian Friends has been membership of the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC). Victoria Regional Meeting has taken part in a number of Australia-wide actions auspiced by ARRCC. We went public to the extent of displaying a "Vote climate" banner on the outside of the Quaker Centre in advance of the federal elections. A successful model was the Quaker vigil held on 6 May 2022 opposite the electoral office of the federal member for Chisholm. Other demonstrators ran a concurrent rally with speeches and crossed the road to merge with our silent vigil to wind up. Some Quakers participated as well in Friday vigils outside the office of the (former) Treasurer, Josh Frydenberg.

We were in evidence with Quaker banner in a number of public climate justice rallies in the city during the year. ARRCC has joined with the Move Beyond Coal and held a number of actions outside NAB headquarters, to lobby against their funding of Whitehaven coal. During the 2 action weeks large rallies have occurred in December and March.

A personal concern of Sue Ennis and other Quakers has found them working with the ARRCC Divestment Working Group and joint action with Market Forces on their superannuation campaign. Sue says that many people are not fully aware of how important the investment policy of their superannuation organisation is in terms of their carbon footprint. Some may not be able to change their super but can send letters to their superannuation fund.

Our Climate Action Earthcare Network has a Google Group which is now live and open to contributions from interstate Friends. To join, contact Gerry.

And please contact me if you would like to join our
Quaker Climate Action Earthcare Network.

Gerry Fahey gerryfahey@me.com 0428838755



Victoria Quakers VQN309 – October 2022

WARM REPORT Minutes from the Meeting (Standing agenda item for each WARM business meeting, regarding the ecological crisis.)

2021

September

Care of the garden, woodland and front border on the south side of the Meeting House continue as in past years. Currently, the garden's winter plantings are transitioning to those for summer. In the woodland, planting during the Garden Ecology Workshop on 21 August included many Kangaroo Paws & orchids as well as numerous plants from about 11 native species. Also in August, the southern border area was topped up with a range of new plants kindly provided by Brian Groom. All Friends on this Working Group have agreed to continue their contribution in service. *Henry Esbenshade for Lili Bowes & Clare O'Leary*

2022:

June

WARM supports a stand in solidarity with the alliance against uranium mining in Western Australia. Specifically, we agree to:

- a) Sign onto the "Uranium Free WA Charter 2022" in the name of WARM
- b) The WARM Clerks to request from our AYM permission to add the Australian Quakers' logo to the new "Save Mulga Rock, no uranium mining on Upurli Upurli Nguratja" campaign t-shirts with art-work from Upurli Upurli woman Tina Carmody.
- c) The WARM Clerks and/or other interested Friends to write to the WA State Premier Mark McGowan, Environment Minister Reece Whitby, Mines Minister Bill Johnston and the WA State Opposition Leader Mia Davies expressing WARM's disapproval and call on them to review the approvals and do what it takes to stop the company Deep Yellow from mining at Mulga Rock.
- d) Donate \$100 to the CCWA protest fund on behalf of WARM.
- e) We ask the Clerks to ask WARM Friends via the electronic newsletter to publicise and action these matters individually via social media platforms where possible.

August

- Practical response to Climate Emergency and Species Extinction: We hear that WARM Friends would like to know more about the ecological crisis and the positive steps taken and ask that links and articles be included in the WARM newsletter. We invite WARM Friends to forward information.
- We ask Nominations Committee to reach out to South Coast Friends regarding the WARM Correspondent for the AYM Climate Emergency and Species Extinction Working Group role and bring some names to next MfWfB.
- Friends heard about Paula Paananen's 4 September webinar on finding ways to support communities and individuals to prepare, recover and to build resilience from unpredictable weather events using permaculture and Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) tools. Following on from invitations sent on 8 August thru WARM Notices and the Facebook page 'Greg Patch', 3 people attended the workshop on Wednesday 31st August. At the outset, we visited the nearby Inglewood Triangle bushland, which serves as a reference site for plantings at the Meeting House. Volunteers from the Friends of Inglewood Triangle generously shared details about work underway, which involves planting, weeding, seed collecting and public education. Following our return to the Meeting House at about noon we planted 17 natives to replace those that did not survive from last year's planting (66% survival rate). Also, the plantings included native orchids and 5 non-natives for general beautification.

September

- WARM Friends authorise expenditure up to the amount of \$800 and ask that the Friday group and Premises Committee work with Gabriel Amol to choose a suitable model. We ask that those involved keep in mind strong ecological and sustainable standards and that the present vacuum cleaners be carefully disposed of.

October

- We hear that Ro Morrow (NSWRM) will be visiting Perth in November re: permaculture. We ask Jo Vallentine to liaise with Ro regarding a possible workshop on Saturday 19 November in response to this permanent agenda item.
- We ask the Premises Committee to investigate replacing gas appliances with non-fossil fuel appliances at the QMH and bring a report to the February Business Meeting.

November

We ask the Clerks to:

- a) add the signature of WARM to the ARRCC Public Letter.
 - b) Enroll WA Regional Meeting for a "passionate level" membership with ARRCC.
 - c) Formally contact the AYM Climate Emergency and Species Extinction Working Group. Ask them to consider arranging an Australia -wide webinar to allow the sharing of current Quaker climate change activities in all states and regional areas of states.
- With the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) annual Conference of the Parties (COP27) being held from 6-18 November in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, there are plenty of climate-related activities going on. Some information on these has already been sent out through notices from WARM's new correspondent to the AYM Climate Emergency and Species Extinction Working Group, Amanda Hamilton-Holloway. (Fremantle Meeting). We welcome any local news of developments and good environment news we can share around the Meeting, e.g., the ARRCC Multi Faith gathering in October and Quakers' support for their newspaper ad; one episode of the television show *Frankly* has a story of a postcode area which is aiming to become carbon neutral.

December

- Friends will remember Rowe Morrow's 2011 AYM Backhouse Lecture entitled "A Demanding and Uncertain Adventure: Exploration of a concern for Earth restoration and how we must live to pass on to our children". Rowe has worked in many difficult places, like Afghanistan, Cambodia and Jordan, using many of the practices of the Alternatives to Violence Project in her education processes, sometimes under the auspices of Quaker Service Australia, sometimes as an independent practitioner. A copy of Rowe's book is held in the library. Rowe was interviewed by Arian Glamorgan and Elizabeth PO' for an upcoming video on Australian Quakers for Peace.
- Rowe Morrow joined eleven WARM Friends on Wednesday 23rd November for a shared meal and launch of her new permaculture book at the Mount Lawley Meeting House. Following the meal, Rowe shared some time with us, updating her 2011 AYM Backhouse lecture's message, and telling us of some of her recent adventures, as well as checking out Henry's gardening experiments in our Meeting House garden.

2023

February

- We note the work of the AYM CESE working group and support the seven areas of action which include: Activism, Education, Reducing Our Carbon Footprint, Finances, Mourning Loss & Instilling Hope, Earth Repair, and Indigeneity & Solidarity with First Nations Peoples (see Appendix 2). We ask that during MfWfB one person report on actions taken that have a positive environmental impact. We note that the Meeting House Maintenance Working Group has initiated contact with renewable energy, and passive solar architecture & retrofit industries. Information is being obtained to begin the process of seeking indicative costs to totally electrify our QMH.

March

- Jo Vallentine reported on her presence (with Quaker banner) at the Friday 3 March School Strike 4 Climate action to share the message that Quakers are Earthcarers. Henry Esbenshade

reported on his new learning after meeting with Millennium Kids Project leaders (see <https://www.millenniumkids.com.au/projects/current-projects/> for more information). Sally Herzfeld reported on her role with the Dalhousie community garden group who have been planting native trees.

- April

Jo Vallentine tells us of an Extinction Rebellion rally on Monday 17 April, 2023. This non-violent protest asks us to consider what we want to leave to future generations. Sharon Matthews reports on the Success Hills reserve community planting group where nearly 40% of native plant seedlings planted have survived summer.

ADDITIONAL EMAILED REPORTS FROM AROUND THE REGION (WARM):

From Jennifer Hole:

- Along with other members of the Citizens' Climate Lobby I have visited my Federal MP three times over the past year. The CCL policy is to have a fee on carbon emissions at source (coal, gas and oil) which is returned to households as revenue to help them pay any additional costs charged by fossil fuel producers, manufacturers etc. As the fee is designed to increase each year,
- It also encourages polluters to increase investment in cleaner technologies and procedures and consumers to purchase cleaner products and services. This is difficult politically, so in the meantime we are asking for an extension of the Safeguard Mechanism and tighter monitoring of emissions and offsets, effective fuel efficiency standards and more opportunities to adopt electric vehicles.
- I am also part of the CCL letter writing group and have had several letters published in the Sunday Times and West Australian. Most of these were to counter the views of climate deniers.
 - I have also made submissions or signed several petitions where biodiversity could be impacted by mining or oil and gas extraction in WA and elsewhere in Australia, as well as overseas."

From Joanna Hall:

- 1) Mundaring Shire Reserve Rehabilitation: The Eastern Hills is laced with creeks that flood in the Winter and dry up in the summer. These creek lines arise in the Western Hills and flow through to Perth via the Hills creek systems which flow into the Helena River and then into the Swan River. and into the sea across the coastal plain at Fremantle.
 - These creek lines have largely been damaged and degraded by horses, cattle and sheep over the last two centuries and, of course, from logging. The Reserve groups rehabilitate and clear out creeks, so that they flow naturally again. Black cockatoos of three species use these creek lines to navigate from the Wetlands of the coastal plain to the dry areas east of the Hills and across to the desert. Then we replant, weed and tend the native vegetation along and around the creeks, and out into the land around it. There are many such groups and projects in the Perth region and all across the State. In this way, a green corridor is provided for the black cockatoos, so that they can more safely follow their traditional flight pathways.
 - My son and I have responsibility for 2 Shire reserves, once of which has been replanted and recovered over the last 8 years, and another near where we live that has been seriously invaded by weeds. Native frogs have returned to the creek, and many other small species as well, and domestic animals of all kinds are excluded by fencing.

- 2) Hasluck Friends of GetUp. This small group (8-10 people) has been active for the last 12 years and addresses environmental issues in co-operation with other much larger groups, such as the WA Forest Alliance and reps from First Nations communities.

- The issues we have worked on over time in relation to the environment have included a campaign to stop "contracted" logging in 53 areas of South West forest, including two large areas in the Hills, working to prevent the WA Government from fracking the Kimberley, and stopping the previous WA Liberal Government from building a huge freeway across the middle of the Beeliar Wetlands just south of Perth, which is a principal black cockatoo breeding area.

3) My family owns two one-acre blocks where we live in the Hills, and both these we have restored to natural bush over the years.

4) Save Perth Hills. This is an ongoing campaign to prevent a housing development for 4000 people in the Hills. There are many reasons why this is a bad idea, and you can google "Save Perth Hills" if you want to know more. Suffice to say it is the equivalent of proposing a housing development in the middle of a national park or on the Sydney Harbour foreshore. The land is owned by the Anglican Diocese of Perth and the developer is Satterley. with whom they are in commercial partnership.

- All this has involved heaps of work and we (group 2) have had many conversations and correspondence with politicians, at all three levels of Government."