

YM22 Session Report

AYM Committee / Working Group: Children & JYF Committee	
Session Clerk: Emily Chapman-Searle	Session Note Taker: Di Bretherton
Number in attendance: 16	Person submitting report: Emily Chapman-Searle
Session Report: <p>The meeting included the Children and JYFs Committee, the Children and JYFs Coordinator and the Child Protection Committee. There has been increased collaboration with the Committees attending each other's meetings, giving feedback on the e-safety guidelines to make them more realistic and practical. A joint session on Quaker Approved Child Carers was very well attended and a further workshop is planned later in the year.</p> <p>The need for all meetings to have Quaker Approved Child Carers if children attend was discussed.</p> <p>Sofia Jones, the paid CJYF Coordinator, gave a report on plans for the AYM Children's Program which will include both pre-recorded and live online material. Sofia described her experience of the job and suggested it was difficult to follow the Quaker structures and find out the roles of people working with children. There is a significant New Zealand report, <i>Engaging Our Young People</i> by Meghan Stewart-Ward, based on interviews from which themes emerge, themes that relate to Australian Quakers as well: the "busy-ness" of modern life, to focus on the needs of families rather than individuals, to value intergenerational experiences and to become aware of the gap between theory and practice. The report recommends offering childcare during meetings, and questions whether silence is the only way to worship.</p> <p>We note that Emily's term as convenor will finish in July at AYM and the committee will need to name a new convenor. Nominations is working on finding new committee members.</p> <p>Were any Items for Consideration RESOLVED in this Preparatory Session, and if so, you will NOT be bringing to Yearly Meeting 2022 for consideration?</p> <p>Questions considered that will need ongoing discernment beyond YM22, and therefore, will not be brought for consideration at this YM:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are the needs of families and young people within Australian Friends?2. How can Australian Quakers best support young people and families in their spiritual development and to be engaged in their meetings? <p>IDEAS RAISED:</p> <p>When someone asked to bring children to a very small meeting then there would need to be two carers, leaving only two people in the adult meeting – can meetings work together to find ways to welcome families in these contexts?</p> <p>Some meetings have a designated day each month for children's meeting. JYFs are tired of Zoom, we will need to be creative to find ways to support our young people gather virtually, and eventually, in person, Penn Friends can be an effective way for connection across generations.</p> <p>What are the Items that remain UNRESOLVED that you WILL be bringing to Yearly Meeting 2022 for consideration?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. What structures might support this more effectively? <p>The current structures and processes to support young people are complex and multi</p>	

faceted. At the AYM level this includes the CJYF Coordinator and Committee and the CP Committee. At the meeting level, this includes families and young people, Quaker approved child carers, children and JYF Committees, Child protection contact Friends and correspondents.

We recognise there is a need to consider more deeply the needs of young people and families within Australia Yearly Meeting, and that a process is needed to make space for this consideration. We see great value in having a paid worker and also see value in moving forward in a way that has a more connected communication network, more centralised and accessible role for the paid worker, which also enables us to meet our obligations as ethical employers.

Recommendations:

1. We recommend that young people and families be brought more into the heart of AYM and aligned more closely with other national coordination being undertaken in AYM by continuing the paid CYJF Coordinator position (may need a new name –referred to here as ‘paid worker’).
2. We recommend that the management of this paid worker be the responsibility of the AYM Office in order to provide more support and coordination of the work. We acknowledge this will add to the workload of the AYM office, and may require additional support from a Friend/consultant with the necessary HR skills. We see that bringing the work of this person to a more central location with AYM will support their work and enable more cohesion and connection with the rest of AYM.
3. We recommend that, for the next six-twelve months, the paid worker focus on a consultation project with families and young people, local and regional meetings, worshipping groups and isolated Friends to:
 - a) identify and consider the needs of meetings, families and young people;
 - b) build community, relationships and support for those working with families and young people;
 - c) connect people with similar challenges, ideas and needs; and
 - d) consult with other YMs and learn from their experiences (e.g. A/NZ).
4. We recommend that this project be designed by the paid worker, the CJYF and CP Committees, in consultation with Friends with relevant expertise in social research. We wonder if it might be possible to consult with young people as part of this project by bringing them together in-person.
5. We recommend that this project will propose a way forward for the paid worker and CJYF Committee to support families and young people within AYM. We ask that Friends consider that the way forward include a broader mandate and consider the needs of families, young friends, children and JYFs. This may include borrowing from BYM the concept of A Quaker Life Committee.
6. We recommend that the current CJYF Committee become the support committee for the paid worker in this consultation project.
7. We recommend that AYM Nominations Committee identifies a Friend to take on the role of the paid worker from 1 September 2022 (to allow for a one-month transition with the current CJYF Coordinator).
8. We recommend that the CJYF committee work with AYM Nominations Committee to develop a role description for the paid worker.