

Relationship Between QSA and AYM Working Group

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

1. Relationship of QSA with Australia Yearly Meeting

- 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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.

- 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(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.

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