

# Quakers Australia Committee or Working Group Report

<b>Name of committee/concern/group</b> <a href="#">First Nations Peoples Concerns Committee</a>
<b>Membership of the Committee/Working Group:</b> Committee members: Chris Hughes and Sharee Harper (Co - Conveners) (VRM), Correspondents: Clare O’Leary (WARM)), Elspeth Hull (NSWRM,) Anne Felton (CRM), Katherine Purnell/ Sara Hewitt (TASRM), Harald Ehmann (SANTRM), Gedda Fortey / Douglas Amarfio (CORE), Pia Reiersen (QSA)
<b>Part A – Report</b>
<b>Progress</b> <p>The Committees activities since AYM 2023 have included the distribution of \$6500.00 to Original Australians. These include \$1000 to the Victorian Aboriginal Child care Agency winter appeal 2023, \$2000 to assist two young First Nations athletes to attend specialist sport climbing training to assist them in obtaining their potential in this emerging elite sport, \$1000 to the Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council children garden and \$2500 assisting a young Indigenous ranger to attend the UN 23rd session on ‘Enhancing Indigenous Peoples’ right to self-determination in the context of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP): emphasising the voices of Indigenous youth in New York. These donations have consumed all our current funds, kindly donated by Friends. The Committee has provided feedback to the AYM Climate Emergency and Species Extinction Working Group, Action Statements and wrote a letter of concern to the NT First Minister and relevant Ministers regarding the use of private security firms for policing roles in the NT. Sharee Harper attended the Raising Our Tribal Voices Conference on behalf of both the Committee &amp; Quakers to listen to and learn from FN Theological Leaders and report back ideas, issues and concerns that were raised.</p> <p>The Committee is liaising with two Original Australians / First Nations People co- facilitators to deliver a Workshop to be conducted at Silverwattle Post Voice Referendum, healing, and the way forward, later in the year. We have had to postpone the original May dates to later in the year, Dates to be confirmed. We thank the PSJC (Peace &amp; Social Justice Fund Committee) for assisting Original Australians / First Nations Peoples attend the Raising Our Tribal Voices Conference as well as the proposed Post referendum Workshop. We also thank the Thanksgiving fund and the Tasmanian RM for funding to assist Original Australian/First Nations People attend the Workshop.</p> <p>The committee has decided to provide articles to our Streamlines electronic Newsletter to inform Friends of the work of the committee and opportunities to donate funds to specific projects the Committee is assisting in. We thank the generosity of F/Friends that enable the committee to provide funding to Original Australian/ First Nations People organisations and individuals and would encourage them continue their generosity. The Committee thanks Gedda Fortey and Elspeth Hull for their contributions and commitment to the Committee over the time they were on it. We welcome Douglas Amarfio, the New Convenor of CORE, on to the committee and hope to hear of the new NSWRM representative shortly. The QRM and YF positions are still vacant.</p>
<b>Issues (if any)</b> The defeat of the Referendum vote for a voice demonstrates the need for healing and reflection on the next steps needed for our nation to come into right relationship with this ancient land and all its peoples. Our Testimonies and traditions of deep listening enable us to work with diverse groups in conflict to assist them and ourselves in creating the beloved community we all strive for. We ask Friends to discern inwardly and engage outwardly. We need to educate ourselves, speak our truth to others, and engage in activities that bring people together as Friends have done for over 350yrs.
<b>Part B Items for consideration by Standing Committee or Yearly Meeting Business Meeting</b> The Committee has no items for Part B