

Friends Online Recognised Meeting

PART A: REPORT

Achievements/Activities

Although under the care of NSW Regional Meeting, we welcome Quakers and attenders from different regions of Western Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory, South Australia, Queensland, Victoria, NSW and the UK. This is the only Quaker meeting some participants attend, while others enjoy both a face-to-face meeting and our online meeting. Weekly attendance is usually twenty to twenty-five people, with some not attending each week. The presence of the Friends Online Recognised Meeting on the Australian Quaker website attracts many people wishing to find out about Quakers. A number have stayed and are now regarded as attenders. We have a number of younger attenders (under fifty years of age) who often attest to how welcome they feel and that they are able to share their insights in a supportive presence.

Last year we reported on a small group of our members and attenders who met to reflect on one person's poetry inspired by attending this meeting. This assisted greatly in "getting to know one another". With support from the Thanksgiving Fund and NSWRM this book of poetry named Journey Companion by our attender Justin Simpson has now been published. There is the possibility of having another small group meeting to again reflect on their own faith journeys.

Issues/Analysis

We continue to have a roster of people to host the meeting. Hosting involves being online around fifteen minutes beforehand to both welcome people as they arrive and also to then settle the group into silence about five minutes before the meeting begins. Our Meeting for Worship lasts for thirty minutes after which there is generally an opportunity for worship sharing, welcoming and information sharing.

Following on, we are invited to join a breakout room for further talk in a smaller group. One breakout room may focus on ministry that has been shared, one is often for newcomers to be able to talk and ask questions about Quakerism, another may be for a specific topic nominated by someone and there is always at least one room just to enjoy fellowship! Many attenders share just how important the breakout sessions are to them and that these are what has developed a sense of community in our online meeting. Some people join initially feeling hesitant but over weeks of attending feel more confident. One of the benefits of this meeting is that those with physical barriers such as distance or disabilities are able to join in fully.

We encourage Quakers and attenders from across Australia to join us one Sunday!

PART B: ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

None.

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