

QSA and AYM Relationship Working Group

PART A: REPORT

BACKGROUND

Yearly Meeting 2022 considered the Working Group Report of the AYM/QSA Relationship, and affirmed the value of QSA as giving practical expression to Friends' work for peace and justice in our region and the world. Owing to the absence of a clear way forward on the recommendation of the Working Group, Yearly Meeting agreed that two members of the QSA Management Committee and two other Friends consider the recommendations of the WG Report and focus on building the relationship in order to ensure good governance and operational management of QSA, ensuring that Australian Friends remain informed of the work of QSA and contribute to the directions of its work.

Those involved in this discernment have been Rae Litting and Mary Jane Hogan from the QSA committee, and Duncan Frewin and David Purnell from AYM. We have shared details of the various meetings held over the last few years about the future of QSA, and the frustrations and tensions over the place of the Linkages Committee whose role was reduced once QSA became registered as a company. We have also looked at the current structure of QSA and in particular the constitution of the Management Committee. We have recognized the need to bring greater connection between AYM and QSA and acknowledge that this may require alterations to the current Constitution of QSA as well as to the role AYM in relation to QSA.

PART B: ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

PROPOSALS

We have come to the view that the following changes would create a better outcome for all concerned:

1. That, to enhance the effectiveness of the oversight of QSA policies and operations, the membership of the QSA Management Committee be increased from seven to nine (including office bearers)
2. That, instead of being hosted by a Regional Meeting (at present NSW), QSA be hosted by Australia Yearly Meeting. In that situation, the members would be chosen by the Nominations Committee of AYM in consultation with the present Management Committee of QSA and other stakeholders, and members would be selected from anywhere in Australia. The appointments to the Management Committee would then be made by Standing Committee (after feedback from Regional Meetings) and confirmed at the next gathering of AYM.
3. That the current Management Committee and officers of QSA advise the AYM Nominations Committee of the skills and knowledge needed for the effective oversight of QSA as vacancies occur, to assist in the selection of names for appointment.
4. That the Linkages Committee be discontinued, and replaced by regular opportunities for Quakers to interact with QSA through webinars offered by QSA for sharing of information and ideas. In addition to these webinars offered by QSA, any Regional Meeting could ask QSA for a meeting of this kind, and QSA would also use Yearly Meeting gatherings, newsletters and other ongoing communication methods to keep Quakers informed and receive feedback.
5. That appropriate legal advice be sought by AYM and QSA about the implications of these changes for QSA's standing as a company, so that AYM and QSA can have the necessary background to make a decision on changes in the governance arrangements as proposed. (Note – there may be some confusion caused by naming the oversight body 'the

Management Committee' rather than 'The Board', and this point might be clarified by legal advice about the requirements expected of a company).

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Working Group members: *David Purnell (CRQ) and Duncan Frewin (QRM)*