

## YM22 Explanatory Session Report Silver Wattle Quaker Centre

<b>Incorporated Group: Silver Wattle Quaker Centre</b>	
<b>Session Facilitator: Sheila Keane</b>	<b>Session Note Taker: Duncan Frewin</b>
<b>Number in attendance: 34 incl presenters</b>	<b>Person submitting report: Duncan Frewin</b>
<p><b>Session Report:</b> Six members of Silver Wattle Quaker Centre gave an overview of the activities of Silver Wattle Quaker Centre. As well as present activities they looked at some of the directions that are being planned. Comments from some of the participants are also summarized in this report.</p> <p>Brydget Barker-Hudson, the Centre Coordinator, started by explaining daily life and work at Silver Wattle – the rhythm of daily activities, the logistical work that supports on-site courses and gatherings, administrative functions, land management, and the very wide-ranging essential work done by volunteers, (and the procedures for volunteering), and use of the premises by individuals (sojourners) and non-Quaker organisations. The weekday on-line meetings for worship are appreciated by many outside Silver Wattle’s immediate community. These activities are carried out by a varied community living at, and working for Silver Wattle, with many types of contribution by residents, visitors, course participants, donors and supporters, volunteers, course leaders, board and committee members.</p> <p>The very foundation of Silver Wattle is a spiritual calling. To support the spiritual grounding of the Centre a committee of elders arrange for elders to uphold the daily rhythm of life at Silver Wattle and give support for course leaders – to release them to share the ministry they have been given. The Silver Wattle Elders Enrichment Program (SWEEP) also shares spiritual development with the rest of AYM through on-line gatherings every six weeks or so to enrich their spirit life and work.</p> <p>Silver Wattle is above all a community, and land care activities – presently revegetating the foreshore – are an important facet of the community’s work. Weed control – a constant need – now depends much less on chemical control. Walking trails are being developed, including one that is wheelchair accessible, and the campground is being upgraded. The Centre is hoping to engage Aboriginal consultants to guide us about cultural sites, cultural business, and traditional land management. Bringing back vegetation to the land means bringing back life to the land and is parallel to regenerating the life of the Quaker community in Australia.</p> <p>Resident volunteers keep the orchard and gardens productive. Visitor volunteers are always welcome.</p> <p>Built assets require continuous maintenance and improvement, including pest control. Air con and improved heating, and a lift in the Woodhouse room have been installed. Plans include a wheel-chair accessible unit in the near future (see below).</p> <p>Silver Wattle aims to develop the spiritual life of Quaker individuals and groups. There are now roughly equal numbers of on-line and on-site courses, some intensive, some more extended. Two central themes have emerged: coming into right relations with Indigenous peoples and providing food for the soul. Leaders for upcoming courses come from around Australia and from overseas. The Programs and Learning Committee is calling for proposals for courses for 2023. Comment: Online courses are much appreciated as a way to satisfy the hunger for spiritual food. There were queries/comments about length of on-line courses, costs of on-site courses (financial support is available direct from Silver Wattle or via RMs),</p>	

use of “pods” for courses, the advantages of face-to-face courses, a desire for a course based on Christian scripture.

Silver Wattle’s finances are sound after a period of vigilance over costs and diversifying income. Income exceeds expenses by roughly 10% and debts are negligible. Risks to the finances, as well as to people, the environment, data, infrastructure, governance and reputation are being monitored actively by the Board. For instance, fire risk management includes proactively reducing the risk to buildings and personnel as well as ensuring there are procedures for dealing with in-building fires and wildfires that might overtake the site.

The Centre has developed plans to ensure its viability into the future by investing in upgrades and improvements to address future needs. Plans include a disability and wheelchair-friendly 3-bedroom unit (paid by an anonymous donor), secure machinery shed, new library space and meeting room, new laundry. An appeal for other capital costs will be launched this year, and an appeal to develop an endowment fund is also planned. Other long-range future directions include diversifying the community, Silver Wattle’s role in the Religious Society of Friends, and its role in decolonising and Indigenising our thinking/being/doing.