

Silver Wattle Quaker Centre

PART A: REPORT

Silver Wattle is going well. We host many groups, including Buddhist and Anglican retreats, Men's groups, Aboriginal women's writers, seasonal Garden & Landcare weeks, and the Easter Family Gathering. Business has recovered from Covid times. Finances are sound with a small annual surplus, though we would appreciate gifts and bequests to build the endowment. Infrastructure investment continues to be upgraded: interior painting, new carpets, move to LED lighting, machinery shed to house farm equipment and vehicles.

Our Centre Co-ordinator Brydget Barker-Hudson completes her 2-year term on 23/3/23, and leaves knowing the Centre is in much better shape than when she started during the Covid pandemic. Guests continue to report having had a wonderful experience at Silver Wattle. Emily Chapman-Searle and Yarrow Goodley are the new Centre Co-ordinators.

The Elders continue to offer SWEEP programs, with several open to Elders from RMs. The Elders retreat in February 2023 was a highlight. Programs have been well supported. The first year-long spiritual nurture program Food for the Soul attracted 8 participants and is having a profound effect on both the leaders and the participants. The garden continues to produce wonderful fruit and vegetables. Revegetation continues and a significant grant will assist our weed control efforts. We are bringing First Peoples into our programs as leaders and elders, and to advise on land management.

Silver Wattle is both a place and spiritual community, and we have welcomed new members as Board and Committee members, volunteers and contract staff.

Issues/Analysis:

We see several issues at stake for Quakers and for Australia, and are deeply considering ways Silver Wattle needs to change, and how it might contribute more broadly:

1. Quaker faith and practice – how do we contribute to developing Quaker spirituality and skills, to becoming a place for training in contemplative practices. Weekend, week-long and yearlong course will continue.
2. Climate crisis – planning for serious environmental change and making Silver Wattle more resilient, and helping prepare individuals and communities for coping non-violently with social change.
3. Decolonising minds and practices--will require our attitudes to move from exploiting the land to deep reverence for it, and infuse our work with the Spirit of the Land as Teacher and Elder.

Submitted by: SWQC Board: John Baker (NSWRM); Jonathan Benyei (CRQ), Treasurer; David Johnson (QRM); Ann Zubrick (WARM).