

# Silver Wattle Quaker Centre

## PART A: REPORT

Silver Wattle continues to go well. In mid-January 2024 a Gathering was held to bring together the Board, members from each of the six Silver Wattle Committees, and a few other Friends with long associations with the Centre. We were privileged to participate in wonderful sessions guided by Rowe Morrow. She sharpened our observations and understandings as we considered some of what is needed now and will be needed to care for Silver Wattle as the climate continues to change. Rowe subsequently sent a wonderful report to guide on-going planning, decisions and work. The garden, vegetable tunnels and orchard produce abundant fruit and vegetables. Revegetation continues and sheep, on loan, have assisted with weed control. Our Centre Co-ordinators Emily Chapman-Searle and Yarrow Goodley started a 2-year term mid-2023, and are shaping offerings and opportunities for Friends, visitors, 'sojourners' and many different occasional groups who use the Centre. Visitors returning to Silver Wattle after the long period of COVID restrictions are immediately struck by the look of the land—a flourishing garden, lush orchard, thriving chickens, and the astonishing diverse bird life. However, alongside Lake Weereewa with its higher water levels we note many water-logged trees that are collapsing or dying.

We held a wonderful hybrid Meeting for Worship and Gratitude as David Johnson laid down his role as Clerk of the Silver Wattle Board. David continues to contribute to the SW Library Committee.

We continue to host many diverse groups, including Buddhist and Anglican retreats, Men's groups, artists and writers, seasonal Garden & Landcare weeks, and the Easter Family Gathering. Late December 2023 several Friends came together as 'sojourners' for a week. Guests continue to report having enjoyed generous hospitality, extraordinary food from the garden, and restorative experiences at Silver Wattle.

Business—venue hire, stays and courses post-COVID--continue to recover slowly. Finances are sound with a small annual surplus. We appreciate gifts and bequests to build the endowment as plan for needed changes to accommodation and facilities onsite. The year-long spiritual nurture program Food for the Soul concluded at the end of 2023. Leaders and the 8 participants were profoundly changed through the spiritual projects undertaken and shared during the year. We had hoped that the Voice referendum might bring First Peoples to Silver Wattle as both a place and spiritual community. This remains a challenge. We welcomed Brydget Barker-Hudson as Board and several others as new Committee members, volunteers and contract staff.

**Issues/Analysis:** We see several issues at stake for Quakers and for Australia. At the Gathering in January we considered some ways to build stronger ties with Australian Friends and more widely. We plan to offer a couple of opportunities during YM24 in Adelaide to further the Silver Wattle Community. We continue to sit with deep questions. 1. Quaker faith and practice – how can SWQC contribute to developing Quaker spirituality and skills, including training in contemplative practices? 2. Climate crisis – planning for serious environmental change and making Silver Wattle more resilient. How might we help prepare individuals and communities to practice non-violence in the face of major social change? 3. Decolonising our minds and practices-- infusing our work with the Spirit of the Land as Teacher and Elder.

Submitted by: SWQC Board: John Baker (NSWRM); Jonathan Benyei (CRQ); Brydget Barker-Hudson (QRM) ; Ann Zubrick (WARM).