

Quakers Australia Committee or Working Group Report

Name of committee/concern/group Thanksgiving Fund Committee
Membership of the Committee/Working Group: Lee Harradine, Elizabeth Kwan, Mary Butler, Topsy Evans (Convenor)
Part A – Report
Progress The Committee is inspired by the enthusiasm of Friends who apply for grants to carry out concerns. We look forward to more applications in line with Friends’ testimonies and which will forward the work of our Society. We take very seriously our responsibility to use Friends’ funds wisely and in ways which will result in positive change. The committee, hosted by SANTRM, has met regularly by ZOOM during the year. The usual work of the committee involves considering applications for funding from Friends. In addition, we have been involved with the Yearly Meeting Finance Committee (FC) and the Undirected Bequests and Donations Working Group (UDBWG) convened by Gerry Fahey, in looking at how we can work together to meet Friends’ expectations about the use of Yearly Meeting funds. This has been a very positive experience and bodes well for our future work together. Many areas of agreement have been found. We are in agreement with the Working Group’s report to Yearly Meeting, which should be read in conjunction with this report. The following projects have been supported by the Fund. We expect that most will be presented at the Preparatory Session for the Fund in June. Dale Hess et al VRM \$25,000 This was the second of two tranches of \$25,000 agreed last year to enable the transfer of 12 of the remaining 24 Afghan refugees presently living in unsafe circumstances in Pakistan, to Spain. Unfortunately, this did not proceed as planned and Alan Clayton has recovered the \$50,000 from the Spanish NGO which had proved unable to carry out this part of the expected move to safety there. The refugees have been settled elsewhere. An update will be presented at the Preparatory Session in June. Elsbeth Hull FNPCC \$5000 This grant provided travel expenses for First Nations participants to the Sovereignty Gathering at Silver Wattle in May. It is hoped that a report will be submitted in time for the Preparatory Session in June. FWCCAWPS Adrian Glanorgan \$8000 This grant supported the Section Gathering of FWCC AWPS in Hong Kong 19-23 October 2023. Friends’ Peace Teams QRM \$1560 1 Rosie Remmeerswaal

Rosie, a Young Friend from Aotearoa, represented Australasia at the Friends Peace Teams Global Face to Face Meeting in New York, after which she travelled in USA for opportunities to give Ministry on her work in Aotearoa.

2 Kins Aparece QRM \$3331

Kins is the Asia Coordinator of FPT. She visited the Thai/Myanmar border to conduct workshops for peace activists on both sides of this border, in areas which face continual attacks by the Myanmar army. She also looked for ways in which the local peace activists could be supported.

3 Annette Ormiston QRM \$2000

Annette is planning to visit the Peace Centre at Pati, in Indonesia to attend workshops in peace activism.

4 Kwi Kwi QRM \$13420

Friends Peace Teams are supporting Kwi Kwi, in his community building work on the Thai/Myanmar border as a result of Kin Aparece's visit earlier this year. (see above)

Gembrook Retreat VRM \$7000

This application was designed to enable the present and future development of Gembrook Retreat. Their website includes 'We invite people on to the land to encounter God in creation, and to equip each other to live a soulful life' This is the second and last tranche of funding for this project.

Lisa Wriley Wahroonga Meeting/Wellspring community/FNPCC \$6000

Care for Creation – Listening to First Nations and Celtic Voices – Wellspring and Iona Community Listening Pilgrimage. We expect that a report will be available for the Preparatory Session in June.

Anvita Bisaria AVP Vic \$3954

Anvita will attend the same peace training workshop as Annette Ormiston at Pati in Indonesia.

The Preparatory Session for the Thanksgiving Fund will be held in the third week in June, by ZOOM. It is expected that many of these recipients of funds will report in this session.

ISSUES

- 1 At Present applications to the Fund come from a limited number of Friends.
- 2 The committee welcomes applications which have been clearly planned, concisely written and firmly supported by a Local Meeting, Regional Meeting or a Committee of Yearly Meeting. We hope that their endorsement will result in ongoing support to the applicant as they carry out their project.
- 3 The committee would welcome a wider membership from more than one Regional meeting. We meet by ZOOM, so distance is not a factor to be considered.
- 4 The present entry in the Handbook does not properly describe our present practice. We suggest a more up to date version. This has been approved by the Undirected Bequests Working Group.
- 5 The suggested revised Handbook entry includes a mechanism should the committee need to be supplemented by more members from the wider Friends community.
- 6 **A suggested new entry for the Thanksgiving Fund in the Handbook**

5.6.8 Thanksgiving Fund

The Thanksgiving Fund was established in 1979 to help Friends implement appropriate Concerns. Contributing to the Fund allows Friends and others to give practical expression of their thankfulness on specific occasions, such as births or anniversaries, or to mark the contribution that has been made by the Grace of God in the life of a much-loved Friend.

The Thanksgiving Fund is administered by the Thanksgiving Fund Committee and monies are distributed by the AYM Treasurer on its recommendation.

For details on the Thanksgiving Fund Committee and its purpose and grants, please see: below and at <https://www.quakersaustralia.info/Thanksgiving>

Purpose of the fund

Distributions enable Friends to pursue Concerns ([1.5](#)) of the Society, such as education, historical research, publicity, social welfare, spiritual healing, international order and refugees, children's issues and such other matters as the Society becomes involved in as a form of work and witness. Outside groups with similar Concerns also may be supported. Typically, payment is made for administrative equipment and expenses, publications and conference costs, and assisting with honoraria and travel costs. The fund will not normally be available for the purchase of land or buildings or vehicles.

Fund Income derives partly from bequests (5.6.5). Bequests or donations of money to Australia Yearly Meeting are normally added to the Thanksgiving Fund's income, unless the donor specifies otherwise.

Note that the rest of 5.6.8 applies equally to the **Peace & Social Justice Fund** (5.6.7). The Thanksgiving Fund Committee takes into account any conditions or requests associated with a bequest to the Fund. Should there be difficulty in meeting such conditions, the committee may ask Yearly Meeting to allocate the funds elsewhere.

Administration: The fund is administered by a committee of at least four Friends appointed for three years by Yearly Meeting. No member may be a paid officer of the Society nor serve for more than three consecutive terms. Committee members need a wide knowledge of the Concerns, workings and processes of Australia Yearly Meeting.

Should a vacancy occur on the committee, Yearly Meeting Nominations Committee recommends the appointment of Friends with relevant expertise to Standing Committee or Yearly Meeting. Since the committee meets by ZOOM, distance is not a consideration.

Grants from the Fund are made by the AYM Treasurer as directed by the Fund committee.

The Committee makes an annual report to Yearly Meeting with details of all grants made that year. The Finance Committee provides a summary of the transactions in the Fund during that period.

Grant application forms may be downloaded from the Society's website:

<https://www.quakersaustralia.info/Thanksgiving> under the heading [Applying for a grant](#).

The applicant submits to the committee convener a written outline of the proposal and a completed Application Form (see above) accompanied by a minute of support and endorsement from a Local Meeting, Regional Meeting, Yearly Meeting, Standing Committee or AYM committee.

Such support would depend on a thorough investigation of the project by the supporting group especially in the light of Friends' testimonies (1.2), along with a commitment to provide ongoing support if the grant is awarded. A Clearness Meeting may be helpful.

Steps in the processing of applications:

1. The applicant submits relevant background material to accompany the application, e.g. biographical notes about the people involved or background of the proposed project, well in advance of requiring the funds for the proposal.

2. The committee may interview the applicant and/or ask for more written information about the application for funding.
3. The committee makes a decision as soon as practicable, and not more than four months from the date on which the application was lodged.
4. In some cases, the committee may offer the applicant a grant that is less than the amount requested and/or has conditions attached.
5. The grant recipient submits a written report to the committee on the use of the allocated money at the end of the grant period, or annually (whichever is the sooner).
6. The committee makes an annual report to Yearly Meeting with details of all grants made that year .

Maintenance of the Fund

The fund is maintained by reminding Friends on appropriate occasions of its existence and its purpose. Information for intending donors is available from the AYM website (5.6.9).

Part B

- 1 Acceptance of this report by Yearly Meeting.
- 2 Acceptance of the proposed changes to the Handbook entry concerning the Fund.
- 3 Actions which follow from 1 and 2
 - a that Friends Groups which support applications to the Fund continue their interest and support in the work done during (and after) the life of the project.
 - b that appointments to the Fund committee are sought from the whole AYM membership through the AYM Nominations Committee.