

Quakers Australia Committee, Working Group or Associated Body Report

Name of committee/working group/associated body/concern/group

The Friends' School, Hobart

Membership of the Committee/Working Group/Associated Body:

The Friends' School Board of Governors:

Craig Stephens – Presiding Member and Board nominee; Mary Beadle, Deputy Presiding Member and TRM nominee; Siobhan Harpur, Deputy Presiding Member (currently filling a casual vacancy); Natalia Urosevic, Board nominee; Jen Newton, TRM nominee; Tom Dundas, TRM nominee; Sam Ibbott, Board nominee; Lindsay May, Board nominee; Sarah Sealy, Board nominee; Bruce Henry – Presiding Clerk AYM, ex-officio member

Part A – Report

Progress

2024 sees The Friends' School start the year with new structures in place and a new Principal, Esther Wilkes Hill following the retirement of Nelson File after 11 years of service to the community. The Friends' School started its 138th School year of educating children in the manner of Friends schools on 1 February 2024 with 1305 students enrolled. Of those 1305 students, 205 are new to The Friends' School.

Both the teaching and co-curricular programs remain centred on combining the Australian curriculum, the International Baccalaureate and the School's *Purpose and Concerns* in rich and thoughtful ways. Each Year group has a regular Gathering (Meeting for Worship). At the end of 2023, our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was endorsed by Narragunnawali, a program of Reconciliation Australia, and this year will see its first year of implementation.

The restructure of the School through Learning At Friends' 24 +(L@F24+) has seen a significant reorganisation of students across the two campuses. The Year 11 and 12 students have joined their Year 9 and 10 peers on the Commercial Road campus, creating a Senior School campus on the site. After an extensive and incredibly well-managed building program to accommodate these changes, the students have made a smooth transition to their new environment, engaging in their learning programs and lifting the level of engagement and focus across the whole campus.

On the Argyle Street Campus L@F24+ has seen the Year 7s and 8s form a dedicated Middle School community in the Clemes Building and the leadership have commenced building a strong and innovative program with wellbeing and growth at its heart. With a focus on ensuring effective transitions at key points in students' journey through school, the restructure has also seen the introduction of a focused Year 9 program that emphasises, supports and celebrates the growing independence of our young people at this vulnerable age, and in their first year on the Senior campus.

As with all significant changes, there have been a broad range of responses to the restructure. The students, staff and families have been asked to provide feedback and have been incredibly supportive, with slight adjustments being made as the year progresses in response to that feedback and the inevitable road bumps of change. An ongoing series of post-implementation reviews are being undertaken to ensure that any problems are captured and adjustments can be made.

April 2024 has seen The Friends' School acquire a significant piece of land adjacent to the Argyle Street Campus, in the Argyle Motor Lodge. Whilst no development of this site will be undertaken in the short or medium term future, it provides an incredible opportunity for future generations of students at The Friends' School to benefit from an increased footprint in a tightly held City block.

Issues (if any)

Supporting the ongoing embedding of Quaker ethos and practices across the school.

- Esther Wilkes Hill, Principal