

## Transition Implementation Working Group

### PART A: REPORT

*Task: develop role descriptions for the new Office team to replace the AYM Secretary, manage the transition and handover process, support staff.*

### Background

Our group was appointed in October 2022, and has met frequently. We have carefully reviewed the work of previous working groups looking into the role and workload of the AYM Secretary. We noted a strong focus on both Business and Community, an expectation that several people would make up the newly-imagined national office, and an essential breakdown of tasks into:

- Administration (Yearly Meeting, Standing Committee, AGM)
- Community connections, media and outreach
- Finances (payments, reimbursements, renewal fees)
- Compliance (annual audits, licences, etc)

Throughout our work, we have consulted with our current Secretary, Jacque Schultze. We have also consulted with other key stakeholders: Working Party on the Role and Work of the AYM Secretary, Presiding Clerk, Finance Committee, Selection Committee, IT Committee, AYM Archivist, Handbook Revision Committee, Child Protection Committee and AYM Nominations Committee. Earlier reports from Friends and working groups, together with these consultations have informed our discernment in completing role descriptions for the new office structure.

Our thinking has been driven by a strong concern for: good governance (accountability, authority, avoidance of any conflict of interest); the welfare of staff (workloads, communications, appropriate oversight, pastoral care); and the responsibilities of both employees in a collaborative, non-hierarchical team and Quakers Australia (QA) as their employer. We are using new names for familiar work, to make clear that this is a radical change.

### Roles in the new QA Office

There are two part-time paid roles each accountable to the Presiding Clerk and two key unpaid roles each reporting to the Presiding Clerk. There is also the potential for other volunteers to be co-opted to assist short or long term. The Secretary's work has been trimmed and distributed amongst several roles.

- **Coordinator:** paid; an ongoing position; responsible for supporting the internal business operations of QA as an organisation.
- **Communications & Publicity Manager:** paid; a contract position; responsible for QA's website, social media, community connections, outreach and external enquiries (also a newsletter if continued).
- **Staff Oversight & Support:** unpaid; responsible for supervision and welfare of the two staff, able to handle queries and provide support.
- **Probity Adviser:** unpaid; responsible for QA's compliance obligations.

It is expected that the Staff Oversight & Support will meet with the two paid staff at least fortnightly. Effective team communications will be vital for all. There may be an additional volunteer role working with the Treasurer and Finance Committee to handle payments and reimbursements. A QA Office volunteer could scan the backlog of undigitised records, as ready access to many physical files is necessary to answer queries.

### **The transition process**

TIWG has been involved with the Selection Committee in writing contracts of employment and advertisements so that the recruitment process could begin in March. Appointments are expected in May, with the Coordinator starting work on 1 July 2023 and the Communications & Publicity Manager starting on 31 July 2023. We anticipate that the two unpaid positions, Staff Oversight & Support and the Probity Adviser, will have started prior to or around YM23.

Jacque Schultze's term has been extended to the end of September to allow for a thorough handover to all new staff. There will be a two-week, in-person induction with the Coordinator in Jacque's current home office. There are financial implications with overlapping salaries, possible cost of travel and accommodation (depending on location) and expenses relating to removal and setting up a new office. A separate group has been exploring appropriate sources of funding. Jacque will also be retained as a mentor, as needed, at an agreed hourly rate, until YM24 (a cost to be covered by the 2023–24 Budget).

TIWG expects to organise and manage the transition process, working with the Selection Committee and the new staff to create a strong QA Office. We anticipate laying down our service at YM25.

In the meantime, we are holding Information Sessions during March and May/June for Friends to learn more and ask questions. As well as these scheduled Information Sessions, TIWG is willing to provide an online Question & Answer session to any interested group on request. Friends are welcome to look up our web page and/or contact us on [ctransition@quakersaustralia.info](mailto:ctransition@quakersaustralia.info).

We recommend that all Committee conveners and Regional Meeting clerks and newsletter editors promote these changes widely prior to YM23.

### **Issues/Analysis**

1. **Other office holders / committees:** Restructuring the Office has impacts across a range of responsibilities—as referred to in the report of the AYM Archivist and as raised in consultation with the IT Committee.
2. **Probity:** The Probity Adviser will receive any serious allegations from the Safe Quaker Community Network. This implies that the following may need to be reviewed: the confidential archives policy; the *Handbook* section on reporting Grievances; and the *Safe Quaker Community Policy*, as our current practices involve the AYM Secretary.
3. **Finance:** While our Terms of Reference did not include consideration of the Finance Committee, it is clear that one of our key recommendations (all financial tasks to be devolved to Bookkeeper, Treasurer, and/or Finance Committee, with support), has an impact on Finance Committee business. We recommend that a volunteer be appointed to handle routine payments and invoices (who may or may not be a member of the Finance Committee), and that significant payments be made by the Treasurer or a delegated member of the Finance Committee. We have suggested that the Finance Committee's role become more strategic in focus.
4. **Human Resources review:** We suggest that QA budgets for, and engages, specialists every five years to review our current practices in HR (contracts management), OHS, and risk. This will provide a solid basis from which the Probity Adviser can start; and will facilitate our compliance with legal obligations, both immediately and ongoing.
5. **Handbook:** Since terminology has changed, amendments will need to be made in the *Handbook*, such as all mention of 'Secretary'. We expect to work closely with the

Handbook Revision Committee to support them in this, if requested.

**PART B: RECOMMENDATIONS**

None.

*Working Group members: Jonathan Benyei (CRQ), Jennifer Burrell (NSWRM), Kerstin Reimers (TRM)*

**Contact:** [CTransition@quakersaustralia.info](mailto:CTransition@quakersaustralia.info).