

## Quakers Australia Committee

### Name of committee:

[Yearly Meeting Organising Committee \(YMOC\)](#)

### Membership of the Committee:

Co-Convenors: Vidya (CRQ) and Clint de Young (WARM);  
David Tehr (WARM), Drew Thomas (TRM), Harald Ehmann (SANTRM),  
Jo Jordan (SANTRM) and Topsy Evans (SANTRM).

### Part A – Report

#### Progress

After the restrictions imposed by COVID during recent years, SANTRM responded to the widespread yearning among Friends for a face-to-face Yearly Meeting. The experience of online Yearly Meetings during the past four years taught us the advantages of a more inclusive, economic, environmentally sensitive Yearly Meeting. So it was decided that YM24 would be the first hybrid Yearly Meeting in Australia, with Friends able to choose to participate at the venue or online. Michael Searle offered to assist by sharing his experience of recent hybrid Yearly Meetings in Aotearoa New Zealand.

A small SANTRM organising committee took on the responsibilities of searching for and booking a venue, as well as organising accommodation, meals, and programs for the children and the Junior Young Friends (JYFs) for an unknown number of Friends.

The ongoing QA Yearly Meeting Organising Committee (YMOC), which had planned and organised four online Yearly Meetings, shared its extensive knowledge about Yearly Meeting requirements, including necessary deadlines, timetabling and registration procedures. It has been fortuitous that three of the SANTRM organising committee also serve on the QA YMOC. Joining QA YMOC meetings from late July 2023, this has ensured speedy and effective communication.

Bookings for the venue and accommodation began in July 2023 and the YM24 Treasurer, Betsy Holden, joined the SANTRM organising committee in August 2023. Unfortunately, there was a lengthy delay setting up the YM24 bank account, so payments for all deposits had to be made by SANTRM and these were reimbursed in April 2024.

YMOC developed the first iteration of the YM24 timetable in the QA calendar in October 2023 and continually adjusts this as the placement of sessions becomes clearer.

From early February 2024 onwards, QA YMOC has gradually activated small teams of Friends organising Friendly School, Share & Tells, Home Groups, technical equipment, and coordination of sessions. These teams include members of YMOC and Friends from SANTRM and other Regional Meetings.

YMOC developed the YM24 registration form in February, opening to registrations via Streamlines on 1<sup>st</sup> March.

The YM24 Clerking Team and QA Coordinator are organising the Formal, Preparatory and Information Sessions and are consulted on all aspects of Yearly Meeting during the planning.

During Yearly Meeting, Friends from all over Australia will be active as Elders and Pastoral Carers, on the Help Desk, providing morning and afternoon teas, door welcoming, being microphone runners, Zoom hosts, clerking sessions and contributing to discernment.

A face-to-face Yearly Meeting builds local community too. Friends from Adelaide local meetings and worshipping groups are coming together to welcome Friends from interstate, caring for young children, helping with morning and afternoon tea, providing excursions and other transport during Yearly Meeting, and sharing local knowledge at the Help Desk.

## **Issues**

### **Children and young people**

The SANTRM organisers hope to encourage the participation of children and young people who have not been able to gather as a group at Yearly Meeting for four years. Support from the QA Children and JYFs Committee, and from the Grace Geraldine Brown Bequest Committee, is making it possible to meet the expenses of the children and JYFs: registration, accommodation, meals, the JYF camp and qualified care for the young children. It is a high priority for SANTRM to extend a special welcome to children and young people at our national gathering to re-build Quaker community. We ask: ***“Are Regional Meetings encouraging families to come to Yearly Meeting?”***

### **Yearly Meeting in 2025 and 2026**

How will our Yearly Meetings be held in 2025 and 2026? These could be online only, at a venue only or hybrid. If online only, Yearly Meeting can be organised by the QA YMOC.

If we are to have a venue, then a Regional Meeting (or perhaps two Regional Meetings working together) need to take the initiative knowing that they will have the support of YMOC.

All of these options can be supported by many small teams of organisers, with each team focussing on a single aspect of Yearly Meeting. These teams can continue to be set up each year by the QA YMOC, involving interested and willing Friends in a variety of Regional Meetings.

## **Part B Items for consideration by Yearly Meeting Business Meeting**

Friends are asked how Yearly Meetings in 2025 and 2026 are to be held? Options include:

- (1) online only, organised by the QA Yearly Meeting Organising Committee (YMOC);
- (2) at a venue only, organised by a Regional Meeting with support from YMOC; or
- (3) hybrid, at a venue and online, organised by a Regional Meeting with substantial support from YMOC.

Regional Meetings are asked:

- (1) Are there any Regional Meetings willing to host Yearly Meeting at a venue in 2025 or 2026?
- (2) If so, at a venue only or hybrid (at a venue and online) with the support of YMOC?