

## AYM Secretary's Report to Yearly Meeting 2020

Following Yearly Meeting 2019 in Hobart, I began working with our new Presiding Clerk, Ann Zubrick to plan for the upcoming year. Ann and I initiated nearly weekly Zoom meetings to plan for online Standing Committee meetings (the first full SC meeting was in September to discuss the YM2020-21 Budget), followed by several other Zoom meetings, both emergency and regular.

In mid-September AYM received notice from the National Redress Scheme that there were applications to the Scheme naming Quakers. Initially I communicated with the NRS Relationship Manager to understand the Scheme's requirements and parameters. Ann Zubrick and I participated in NRS overview webinars and I attended a daylong training session. In December, Standing Committee met via Zoom to consider and discern whether AYM should join the NRS. At SC1.20 in Brisbane, it was agreed that AYM would apply to join the NRS as a Participating Group, with AYM as the Representative for the Participating Group. Standing Committee accepted the name of Jennifer Burrell to be the Quaker Representative Contact Person on the National Redress Scheme, and she immediately began liaising with the Scheme and working with the RMs about information that was needed from them. I continue to work with Jennifer as needed about the Scheme.

Following through with my plans to visit regional meetings and some of the smaller meetings and worshipping groups in 2020, I visited SANTRM 6-10 March before the Coronavirus had drastically changed our lives here in Australia. Past Presiding Clerk Jo Jordan helped provide opportunities for me to meet with Friends to discuss many things (including lots of questions about the AYM website and how to use Find a Friend!), to have shared meals, as well as include visits to the Quaker Shop and a trip to Friends in the Fleurieu Worshipping Group who meet in Port Elliott. I was grateful for this time with Friends to learn about their concerns and to share time in worship and community.

On 17 March I initiated a "go to" page for Friends during the time of the Coronavirus disruption <https://www.quakersaustralia.info/news/update-quakers-australia-during-coronavirus-disruption> which began with listings of closures and cancellations of Quaker events and activities, and then evolved to include listings of online meetings for worship and Zoom tutorial sessions. I worked with the dedicated group of Friends (Emily Chapman-Searle, Di Bretherton, Sheila Keane and Michael Searle, with assistance from Rosemary Epps and Ronis Chapman) who rose to the occasion and responded from "the grass roots" to develop these sessions. The "quick response team" recognised the need for Friends to become equipped to use Zoom as a way to maintain community during this time of social distancing. They created Zoom tutorial sessions for all Friends, to teach the basics of getting connected to and learning to use using, Zoom feedback / reflection times, and sessions about using Zoom for Meetings for Business. They have been invaluable in helping us all transition to navigate being in our new online Quaker community.

Simultaneously, CRM initiated discussions about threats that Covid-19 might present to the holding of YM2020 and it was agreed at a Standing Committee meeting via Zoom that a physical gathering for YM2020 should be cancelled as a response to COVID-19. With the change of plans for YM2020, I began working with the CRM YM20 Hosting Group, the AYM Presiding Clerk and others to assist with adapting and adjusting plans for YM20 to become a virtual Yearly meeting Gathering. In holding a shortened virtual YM there will be fewer Formal sessions so YM Business will be attended to differently this year. Reports with Items for Consideration were sent early to RMs (prior to Documents in Advance 2020 being sent out) to allow May and June RMs to consider and send their responses to the AYM Secretary. Reports with Part As & B's have been uploaded early to the YM20 website. There will be some Preparatory or Open Sessions held prior to VYM20. The CRM YM2020 hosting group is exploring creative ways in which other aspects such as the Backhouse Lecture, Friendly School, State of the Society address, Share and Tell, Welcome to Country and concert contributions of YM might be held. And as we move towards preparing for a virtual Yearly Meeting 2020 the instruction and skills of the Quaker Zoom Technology Group will no doubt continue to support us all.

I look forward to the YM20 Hosting Committee providing an assessment of the YM20 Gathering to help us shape our future Yearly Meetings, the handling of YM business and the spiritual life of our Society.

I assisted the C&JYF Coordinators and Lucy Slevin, the EFG Camp Leader, in the planning for the Easter Family Gathering (10-12 April), by arranging Zoom sessions for the weekend's activities, as well as sending links for resources from Quakers and others around the world who were also shifting gears to hold online youth gatherings and worship meetings. The Coordinators and Lucy, along with the JYFs and families and Friends created a meaningful, enriching and spirit-led program for everyone.

I continue to send out the AYM Secretary's Newsletter and attend to the many other duties (great and small) that are part of the Secretary's role. I remain grateful to serve Friends in the role of Secretary for the Society.

***Jacqueline Schultze, AYM Secretary***