



Handbook of Practice and Procedure in Australia

Sixth edition, 2011

The Religious Society of
Friends (Quakers)
in Australia Inc



The image on the cover represents the Aurora Australis, a natural phenomenon of the southern hemisphere associated with Antarctica, a fragile and magnificent part of the planet.

Australian Quakers consider the Aurora Australis an appropriate logo because of its association with

- pure light, the centrality of the Light for Quakers
- beauty, a quality that many associate with God or the Spirit within
- nature, a permanent reminder of everyone's responsibility to care for the world
- the colour blue, used by the United Nations
- the ephemeral and intangible, a reminder that language is inadequate to describe God, the truth or the Spirit within.

Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Seek to live in affection as true Friends in your Meetings, in your families, in all your dealings with others, and in your relationship with outward society. The power of God is not used to compel us to Truth; therefore, let us renounce for ourselves the power of any person over any other and, compelling no-one, seek to lead others to Truth through love. Let us teach by being ourselves teachable.

(A paraphrase of epistles from the Yearly Meetings of Pennsylvania and the Jerseys held in 1694 and 1695.)

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Handbook of Quaker Practice and Procedure in Australia (6th edition)

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SUPPLEMENTS

The following supplements to the handbook are to be found on the Society's website www.quakers.org.au

1. RULES of the RELIGIOUS SOCIETY of FRIENDS (QUAKERS) in AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED (1.1)
2. TRANSFER of MEMBERSHIP between Meetings (3.11)
3. AYM SECRETARY'S DUTIES (5.2.3)
4. PROCEDURES of the BACKHOUSE LECTURE COMMITTEE (5.3.5)
5. GOVERNANCE of THE FRIENDS' SCHOOL (5.4.2)

Table 1.

Abbreviations used throughout the handbook

Abbreviation	Full spelling
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AYM	Australia Yearly Meeting (the organisation)
DAQB	Dictionary of Australian Quaker Biography
FWCC	Friends World Committee for Consultation
JYF	Junior Young Friend
LM	Local Meeting
QSA	Quaker Service Australia
RM	Regional Meeting
SC	Standing Committee
the Society	the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia Inc.
YF	Young Friend
YM	Yearly Meeting (the annual national gathering)

Preface

Purpose

This handbook is intended primarily for the guidance of Members and Attenders of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia, although it may be of interest to others also. It provides information about the conduct of worship, decision-making, the nature of membership of the Society, the relationship between the Society and other organisations, marriage, finance, and so on. It is a necessary resource for anyone appointed to office within the Society.

The handbook complements another publication of the Society, *this we can say: Australian Quaker life, faith and thought* (2003), the aim of which is to explain the faith that leads to the practice and procedures described here. The two books together form the Australian equivalent of the single volume entitled *Quaker Faith & Practice*, published by Britain Yearly Meeting in 1995 and subsequently revised.

Layout

The book starts with an outline of the history and principles on which the present Religious Society of Friends in Australia is based (Chapter 1). Next, attention is given to the workings of the various kinds of Worship Meetings (2.2), the smallest being Worshipping Groups, the largest Local Meetings (2.3), with Recognised Meetings (2.2.2) being of intermediate size. Quakers generally belong to a Worship Meeting of one of those three kinds. All Worship Meetings report to a coordinating statewide Regional Meeting (2.4) and all Regional Meetings report to the national body, the Australia Yearly Meeting (Chapter 5). Chapter 6 covers the Yearly Meeting, the annual gathering of Friends from all over Australia. Such a pattern, outwards from the nearby to the national, rather than from the top downwards, represents the manner in which the Society works.

Chapters 3 and 4 deal respectively with membership of the Society and its caring aspects. These chapters, like the other four, are augmented by Appendices, and also by Supplements on the Society's website www.quakers.org.au.

Definitions

Definitions of key words of relevance or specific meaning to Quakers are contained in Appendix G Glossary. These provide a useful tool to explain the meaning of those words in the context of this Handbook.

The use of an initial capital letter in the words Concern, Member, Visitor, Attender and Testimony denotes their particular meaning for Quakers.

Cross-references

To help the reader and avoid unnecessary repetition, references to other relevant parts of the handbook have been inserted in parentheses. See Table 1 for an explanation of the way abbreviations are used in this handbook.

References to supporting literature are given in each case by the first author's name and the year of publication. The titles of books or journals are shown in italics, with full details in Appendix A.

Amendments

Alterations and additions to the wording of this handbook may be made only by a session of the assembled Yearly Meeting of The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia in accordance with Quaker procedure already established.

Compilation of this edition of the handbook took from 2005 to 2010. Subsequent updating may be required, at least after each of the national gatherings of Australian Quakers (Chapter 6).

It is envisaged that amendments may be published in three ways:

- in *The Australian Friend* (5.5.2), a journal circulated free to every Australian Quaker
- in *Documents in Retrospect* (6.4.1), a document available from the AYM Secretary (5.2.3) shortly after each Yearly Meeting
- in a regularly updated version of the complete handbook on the Society's website www.quakers.org.au.

Preamble

Quakers in Australia acknowledge that we live and worship on the lands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, country which gives them physical and spiritual identity and is filled with the spirit presence of their ancestors.

We acknowledge:

- the sovereignty of Australia's First Peoples over the land we inhabit;
- that the land was taken from them at devastating cost, with no just resolution;
- that this trauma is ongoing and diminishes us all;
- that our testimonies call us to be in right relationship with all peoples, the land and our environment.

Therefore we seek in our daily lives:

- to educate ourselves about the true history and present reality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and uphold their right to self-determination;
- to acknowledge within ourselves, and bring into the light, that which contributes to the debilitating effects of racism, insensitivity, lack of awareness and misrepresentation;
- to work towards justice and peace, and healing for us all.

Chapter 1

THE QUAKER WAY

1.1 General

This handbook deals with three aspects of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia Inc.

1. The **rules** that served as a constitution for the legal registration of the Society in 1967, necessary for it to become an incorporated body. The rules, as revised in 2002, form Supplement 1 on the Society's website www.quakers.org.au. Friends abide by such matters of administration, law and finance with literal strictness.
2. The more flexible **guidelines** resulting from decisions taken at past Yearly Meetings and Standing Committee meetings of the Society.
3. The **customs** that characterise the ways in which Australian Quakers now actually do things, describing the Quaker Way in practice, in the context of YM decisions (6.3.2).

The second feature, the guidelines, represents the accumulated wisdom of successive national gatherings of Quakers. The history of advice and instructions from the central body in Britain to its constituent groups is

traced in their 667-page book *Quaker Faith & Practice*, published in 1995. The first compilation of such national statements was made in 1738, in the form of a manuscript *Book of Discipline*. (In this case, the word Discipline refers to being disciples, i.e. 'humble learners in the school of Christ', to use a Quaker phrase.) The first printed version was issued in 1783. Later revisions reflected developments of language, religious thought and social attitudes. All those editions applied equally to Australian Quakers until 1964, when the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia (AYM) became autonomous, and no longer part of London Yearly Meeting.

Two or three centuries ago, Yearly Meeting decisions specifying conditions for belonging to the Society were applied strictly. For instance, marrying a non-Quaker, owning slaves or bankruptcy carried the penalty of 'disownment', i.e. exclusion from Membership of the Society. This strictness steadied the Society during a series of crises: the social and political turbulence of late-17th century England, the death of the Quaker founders and pioneers, severe persecution and the vicissitudes of more than three centuries. Other radical groups that formed in the mid-17th century, such as the Ranters, have vanished.

National decisions on the conduct of the Society are now largely advisory, leaving their implementation to the discernment of Local and Regional Meetings (Chapter 2). There is a consequent tendency to use the words *normally* and *usually* (Rowlands 2005). Such flexibility accords with advice in an epistle from a group of Elders, meeting at Balby in Yorkshire in 1656, when the Quaker movement was taking shape:

Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all with a measure of light which is pure and holy, may be guided; and so, in the light walking and abiding, these things may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not in the letter; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

1.2 Early Quaker history

The Quaker movement was initiated by an itinerant preacher, George Fox (1624 - 91). He devised a system that allows spiritual freedom to individuals but strength to the group, achieved by bringing an individual's religious insights to subsequent prayerful consideration and decision at regular meetings of the group within a certain area. That testing and decision by the group challenge personal eccentricity, while encouraging individual insights to inspire the fellowship.

Fox persuaded independent congregations of so-called Seekers in northern England to meet together each month for mutual support in the face of the prevailing persecution, and for seeking the will of God in reaching collective decisions as regards faith, organisation and practical matters. That is still the procedure. Issues of particular importance are referred to less frequent meetings of all the Quakers within a larger region. Finally, conclusions reached by annual national gatherings establish precedents that are recorded and then, through handbooks like this, influence decisions in the future.

The evolution of the Society in Britain has been outlined by Doncaster (1958), Fraser (1975, p. 570) and Dandelion (2007) and in three pages of *Quaker Faith & Practice* (Britain YM 1995, 6.01 & 7.01). The initial heroic period of evangelism from 1648 onwards brought many to the initially amorphous movement that became known as 'the Quakers' towards the end of the civil war and in its aftermath. In the beginning, those involved called themselves the People of God, Children of the Light, and then Friends of Truth, subsequently shortened to 'Friends'. The nickname 'Quakers' arose in 1650 and later was accepted generally. Quakers were always quite distinct from the Puritans, a faction of the Church of England concerned to 'purify' that church of corruption and dissent. Puritans treated Quakers as heretics.

Quaker communities in Britain and Australia required their members to periodically examine themselves, personally and collectively, by considering certain counsel (Advices) and questions (Queries) determined by the national body (*this we can say* 2008, Chapter 6). Note that the *Advices & Queries* relate to behaviour not theology, since the Quaker Way is not a creed, but a style of worship and living. Use of the *Advices & Queries* helped engender

unity and coherence, and sustained the movement during considerable government and social oppression in the 17th century. That persecution led to an introspective time of 'Quietism' in the 18th century, when the emphasis shifted to preserving the Society as a 'precious remnant' devoted to the truth (Brayshaw 1927). In the 19th century there was a shift to evangelism and social reform, which led to some revision of the *Advices & Queries*. Biblical scholarship, science and the study of other religions (*this we can say*, pp. 41 - 51), as well as the growth of a spirit of ecumenism, internationalism and environmental responsibility (*this we can say*, pp. 268 - 94) have all influenced recent revisions and additions, in Britain and elsewhere. The current British handbook, *Quaker Faith & Practice* (1995), contains 42 Advices & Queries, which are reproduced in *this we can say* (pp. 295 - 306). The Australian version (2008) is on the Society's website www.quakers.org.au.

The Society has developed considerably, both over the centuries and over the globe. Meetings in Britain and Australia no longer appoint senior Friends more or less permanently as Elders, responsible for the spiritual welfare of the local group. Instead, all Friends are now regarded as eligible to be chosen to serve as Elders from time to time (2.3.6). There is no longer either a uniform Quaker dress or a puritanical attitude to the arts; these went over a century ago. No Quaker in Britain has been expelled from the fellowship for marrying a non-Quaker since 1860. Women do not now conduct business separately from the men, and since 1896 have equally taken leading roles in the Society (5.2.2, 5.2.3; Doncaster 1958). Present-day Friends do not distance themselves from the secular world as they did in the Quietist period. Rather, they are active within it, individually and collectively, commonly in response to a sense of vocation.

Friends do still quote well-loved phrases from the early days, such as those listed in the British *Quaker Faith & Practice* (pp. 665 - 7), and occasionally use characteristic turns of phrase. An example is the expression 'I have a stop in my mind about that', meaning 'I am unable to agree with that'. Or someone may ask those present to hold another 'in the Light', signifying a wish that people think of that person in association with an awareness of God. George Fox's challenge to Friends to 'walk cheerfully over the world answering that

of God in everyone' remains a favourite phrase. More examples are discussed by Heron (1994) and in the glossary.

The word *God* is used in this handbook to refer to the indefinable, underlying spiritual dimension of reality. The word is conveniently short and conventional, but is associated with the masculine pronoun and other human attributes. Consequently, many Friends prefer the terms *Inner Light* or *Spirit*, as in the New Testament (John 4: 24; Acts 17: 28). A core faith in the presence of this indescribable Spirit within the world and in the soul of every person has persisted throughout Quaker history. The Spirit distinguishes good from evil, the true from the superficial, and means the unity of all creation.

1.3 Quakers in Australia

The history of Quakers in Australia has been outlined in books by Benson et al. (1933), Stevenson (1973) and Oats (1985) and in *this we can say* (pp. 308 - 24), for example. Details are given in Appendix B. The first Friend to set foot on Australian soil was Sydney Parkinson, a botanical artist sailing with James Cook. He landed briefly in 1770.

The Society took root in Australia much later, in Tasmania (then called Van Diemen's Land), as a result of the visit by two English Friends 'under concern', James Backhouse and George Washington Walker. British Friends supported them on their journey from 1832 to 1837 (Benson et al. 1933), walking and riding around eastern Australia. Their main task was to enquire into the condition of the penal settlements in Australia and the welfare of the Aborigines and free settlers. In addition, Backhouse and Walker promoted temperance and reported to the colonial administrators, trying to influence them. Along the way, the two men preached publicly and drew together the few Members of the Society already in Van Diemen's Land and New South Wales. Their story is set out by Backhouse (1843) and in an illustrated book for children by Dundas and Haynes (2000).

Over the years the Quaker movement in Australia has gradually grown, adopting a regional structure suited to the vastness of the continent (2.3, 2.4). By 1964 Friends in Australia were sufficiently numerous to warrant an autonomous Yearly Meeting, no longer under the umbrella of British Quakers.

1.4 Quaker principles

1.4.1 Beliefs

Quakers sprang from within the Christian tradition, and feel themselves guided by the same Spirit that was plainly evident in Jesus (Jones 1930). But Friends rely on neither the authority of an established Church nor the authenticity and interpretation of particular words of the Bible. Rather, they rely on seeking a direct experience of God, especially by prayerfully listening together. Subsequently, this basic mysticism can be strengthened by the inspiration of the Bible and other writings, and by the wisdom of church traditions (Boulding 1964).

The Quaker movement emerged in northern England at a time of intense spiritual ferment, largely as a result of the newly widespread availability of the Bible in English. The Quakers felt strongly that prevailing features of Christianity, such as hierarchy, church buildings, sacraments, liturgy and a literal approach to scripture were a hindrance rather than a help in the quest for a right relationship with God. They were convinced by experience that everyone can become aware of the Inner Light directly, as there is that of God in every person.

Since then the Quaker community has evolved to encompass a range of questioning and beliefs. There is no fixed common creed, since a creed may lead either to a pretence of beliefs not yet reached, or to entrapment in dogma that inhibits further spiritual growth. Instead, each individual Friend develops her/his own set of beliefs from personal experience (*this we can say* 2003), though no form of words can really express the essence of any one Friend's core beliefs.

An obvious difference between Quakers and mainstream Christians is evident in the avoidance of the customary sacraments (outward acts with an inner significance). Instead, Quakers focus on the inner experience. Also, Friends rarely discuss life after death as a reward for virtue, compensation for life's difficulties or punishment for evil. Being 'present where we are' (Steere 1967) prompts living fully rather than dwelling unduly on an after-life.

Another distinctive feature of Quaker practice is the 'priesthood of all believers'. To the extent to which anyone is directly and personally

aware of the Spirit, there is encouragement to minister to others in word and deed. Everyone is equal in this responsibility. The consequence is that there is neither hierarchy of religious power, nor any intermediary between God and ordinary people, nor over-reliance on secondhand experience (Gillman 1997).

Quakers in Australia are steeped in the Protestant Christian tradition, they treasure Jesus' message of love and remain connected with the main body of Christians. This is shown by the topics in *this we can say*, by Friends' membership of ecumenical councils throughout the country (5.4.5) and by their involvement in mainstream Christian aid and social justice activities. However, there are Friends, 'Universalists' (see *Quaker Faith & Practice* 1995, Chapters 26 & 27 and the Glossary at the end of this handbook), who do not accept Jesus as the exclusive source of spiritual inspiration. Instead, they also respect and value the same spirit within other faiths (Meredith 1997), especially valuing the mystical elements of religions such as Buddhism (van der Sprenkel 1973; Irie 1973) and the spirituality of Australian Aborigines. This is in line with a statement made as early as 1678 by the first Quaker who was a systematic theologian, Robert Barclay. He referred to

heathens, Turks [i.e. Muslims], Jews, and all the several sorts of Christians, men and women of integrity and simplicity of heart, who by the secret touches of this holy light in their souls [are] enlivened and quickened, [are] thereby secretly united to God, and there-through become true members of the catholic [i.e. universal] church.

Friends combine in a Religious Society as a means of helping each other to live more fully in the awareness of God (Hodgkin 1988). This cooperation provides each person with support and stimulus from various directions, from Universalist, Buddhist, Jewish and even humanist Friends, for example, as well as traditional Christ-centred Friends. So Friends' beliefs differ and are personal. George Fox asked, 'You will say Christ saith this, and the apostles say that, but what canst thou say?'

In summary, Quaker affirmations are these: everyone is endowed with

something of the divine; and one can strengthen awareness of it and obedience to it by silent worship, mutual support and activity together, and by trying to live according to certain testimonies, as follows.

1.4.2 Testimonies

Quakers are agreed on particular orientations of action, called testimonies, which guide personal and corporate behaviour. They help identify what Quakers hold precious. Quaker testimonies include:

- **Simplicity** (i.e. a focus on essentials)
- **Peace** (a striving for harmony)
- **Integrity** (a truthfulness that brings faith and action together)
- **Community** and environment (concern for each)
- **Equality.**

These are all aspects of Love, the Spirit in practice. They describe the relationship of Quakers to the world and are considered in depth in *this we can say* (pp. 144 - 96). As a small example of their application, the testimonies to Simplicity, Community and Equality are evident in the way that Quakers in Australia tend to worship in a circle, facing each other, wherever practicable. Similarly, people are mentioned only by given name and family name, without titles. Also, any kind of ostentation is discouraged.

In a competitive and militaristic world Friends are especially challenged and inspired by the Peace Testimony (Oats 2000; Johnson 2005). Friends try to practise non-violence in every relationship and to be active in peacemaking.

Friends do not establish the truth of a statement by swearing oaths on the Bible. The testimony to Integrity aims at truth-telling always, and Australian law now allows simple affirmation in court proceedings.

The Society's testimonies unite members of Quaker communities generally, despite some differences. For instance, there are two different kinds of Meetings for Worship. In Britain and Australia they are 'un-programmed', based entirely on silent waiting (1.4.3). On the other hand, in parts of the USA, Africa and Latin America, there are many more 'programmed' Meetings with paid pastors and a set order of worship, typically including sermons, corporate prayer and hymns, along with some quiet time.

Note that the Society's collective testimonies discussed here are distinct

from the personal 'Testimonies to the Grace of God in the lives of deceased Friends' (4.8.5).

1.4.3 Worship

Friends are encouraged to find time privately for daily prayer, meditation or uplifting reading. This nourishes subsequent Meetings for Worship together, that are central to Quaker practice (*this we can say*, pp. 76 - 91). Meetings for Worship require no more than two people to be present, though, preferably and usually, at least several more.

Perhaps the most obvious features of a Quaker gathering are the plainness of the room; the absence of any human leadership or program; and the periods of silence, sometimes quite lengthy (Gorman 1973). Quiet and calm are greatly valued by Friends, who seek a peace in which to find true fellowship and to give thanks (Brinton 1955). Such a stilling of the mind is called 'centering down' and if it prevails amongst the worshippers present there is what is called a 'gathered Meeting'. That is, the Meeting is no longer a group of individuals meditating in parallel but a community of thought, shown sometimes by the coincidence between what is spoken by someone and what has been in one's own mind. It is a corporate activity, providing opportunity to be aware of the shared mysterious, challenging and loving power permeating and underlying all life.

*And so I find it well to come / For deeper rest to this still room,
For here the habit of the soul / Feels less the outer world's control;
The strength of mutual purpose pleads / More earnestly our common needs;
And from the silence multiplied / By these still forms on either side,
The world that time and sense have known / Falls off and leaves us God alone.
(from *The Meeting* by John Greenleaf Whittier (1807 - 92), written
in 1868)*

Each Meeting for Worship event is different. People may perhaps begin the preliminary settling down by brief self-examination or reflection on past experiences or thankfulness and becoming aware of a sense of communion with the fellow-worshippers. Or they may choose to begin by dwelling on

the significance of Christ, or the Lord's Prayer, for example. In due course, someone, anyone, might be moved to minister by speech, prayer or song, as a spiritually uplifting gift to the assembly. Such spontaneous 'ministry' is valuable when it comes from discerning a true movement of the Spirit rather than the human urge to share or instruct. Ideally, the message is simple, clearly audible and brief, coming from personal experience rather than hearsay. Ministry like that grows from the silence, enriching the worship and leading in the direction of a gathered Meeting, where all present become united in a spirit of prayerful worship.

Ample time needs to be allowed for sympathetic consideration of what has been offered in ministry, before anybody else speaks. Subsequent offerings may well be relevant, but it is not appropriate to rebut or question previous ministry, to be provocative or to refer to individuals. Controversy and discussion are out of place; these are for other specially convened occasions (4.4, 4.6). Speakers normally speak only once.

However, vocal ministry is not essential. Even silent Friends minister to the life of the Meeting by their calm presence, by their loving thoughts and by their awareness of the needs of the group. So everyone takes responsibility for the quality of the worship.

The Meeting normally lasts about an hour and ends when an Elder, the Clerk, or someone else appointed for the purpose, shakes hands with a neighbour. Then everyone else present also shakes hands with their neighbours and greets them. Next the Clerk may welcome the children and visitors, before making various announcements. After that, anyone present may share news, including those of absent Friends and coming events.

Apart from regular Meetings for Worship, Friends also hold worshipful gatherings on other occasions, often with a particular theme in mind. This might be either to 'hold in the Light' someone who is ill, to consider some great cause, to celebrate a marriage (4.3) or to conduct a Clearness Meeting (4.4). Such occasions take the same form as normal Meetings for Worship, except that the centering down is intentionally focused.

1.4.4 Business Meetings

Quakers reach decisions collectively by seeking to discern the will of God

together in Business Meetings (Brinton 1955; Doncaster 1958; *this we can say*, pp. 86 - 7). Thus even Business Meetings are regarded as unhurried occasions of prayerful worship (2.3.2, 2.4.3). Indeed, the importance of the worshipful seeking of God's guidance is reflected in the proper name for a Business Meeting, i.e. *Meeting for Worship for Business*, although the abbreviation, *Business Meeting*, is commonly used in practice.

In preparing for a Business Meeting, the Clerk lists items that are certain to be discussed and checks relevant facts. Possible eventual conclusions might be sketched out for consideration by the Meeting, to save time when in session.

The procedure in Australia is to begin the Meeting with an acknowledgment of the Aboriginal custodianship of the land on which the Meeting is being held. There is then a period of silence for recollection of God's presence and perhaps an inspiring reading. After that, agreement is reached on the agenda ahead.

Practices within the Society that foster effective corporate decision-making amount to what is called 'Quaker process', as follows:

- Those wishing to speak either raise a hand or (in a large gathering) stand to attract the Clerk's invitation. When addressing the Meeting, they stand, if able, and speak audibly. There is respectful openness of expression.
- Normally people speak only once on any given topic, at least until everyone else has spoken. This provides equality and encourages adequate thought before speaking.
- All voices are to be heard with sympathetic listening, to give mutual support in seeking the right outcome, waiting patiently for God's will to be discerned.
- Each individual in the gathering seeks to stand outside the self to find what is right, i.e. God's will. There is no lobbying or voting and even a single dissenting voice is carefully considered. The aim is to reach unity, neither unanimity, consensus nor a majority opinion (Morley 1993; Sheeran 1983).
- If unity appears out of reach, the Clerk may call for a period of silent worship before discussion is resumed. Dissenting Friends might

then accept that a decision can be made, perhaps subject to any disagreement being noted in the concluding minute. Alternatively, the Meeting may postpone dealing with the matter any further, to allow time for reflecting on the way forward, or may agree not to proceed with the matter.

There is an unusual procedure for recording any decision that has been reached after everyone has had the opportunity to contribute to the discussion of the topic. The Clerk of the gathering first attempts to write down succinctly the sense of the meeting. What has been written is then read out. This draft is subsequently amended in accord with comments from the gathering, until it is agreeable to all. So the minute of record is set down transparently, as part of the occasion. However, simple editorial changes can be made to the minute afterwards, if permitted by the Meeting.

Quaker process is usefully applied in Business Meetings, Clearness Meetings (4.4) and committee meetings (5.3.1). Although settling an issue in this manner can be time-consuming and the resulting decision may differ markedly from what might have been expected, it is commonly much better and more acceptable.

The Clerk's attitude tends to set the desirable pattern of worshipful listening. During any discussion, the Clerk tries to avoid expressing any personal view. Also the Clerk deals firmly with anyone speaking too long or irrelevantly, but at the same time keeps a sense of proportion and humour, and is not too brisk.

Business Meetings close with a short silence, for reflection on what has transpired.

1.4.5 Concerns

Among the topics that may well be dealt with at a Business Meeting there is an important kind arising from a Friend's sense of a requirement by God (i.e. a *leading* - see Glossary) that the Friend undertake some specific task (i.e. a *concern*), however reluctantly. It could, for instance, be some form of service overseas or in the local community. To test the validity of this experience, the Friend first lays the concern before a Clearness Meeting (4.4), a meeting of the Oversight Committee (2.3.7) or the local Worship Meeting (2.3)

for consideration. If the Meeting unites with the concern, it may be carried forward to the Regional Meeting (2.4.3) and then perhaps to Yearly Meeting (Chapter 6) for further support. This proves to be an effective combination of individual initiative with collective decision, followed by widely supported implementation.

It is unusual for the concerns of individual Friends to be dealt with at a Yearly Meeting unless endorsed by their Regional Meeting. However, the Presiding Clerk may allow this (after consultation with members of Standing Committee from several Regional Meetings, including the one from which the concern arises), if the matter arises from the exercise of YM sessions.

Australian Friends collectively are particularly concerned about peace, reconciliation and the problems of indigenous Australians, the environment, overseas aid and social justice. In addition, many individual Australian Friends are active within organisations dealing with prison reform, the United Nations and social welfare, for instance (Kenworthy 1987; *this we can say*, pp.125 - 31). Even if it is decided that a concern is not appropriate for the Society as a whole to support, Yearly Meeting may well encourage Friends, either as individuals or as a group, in particular service.

1.4.6 Fellowship

Quakers attach importance to promoting a sense of belonging and mutual caring (*this we can say*, pp. 104 - 12 & p. 206 onwards). More details are given in Chapter 4.

Caring involves communication, which is promoted by several publications: the periodical *The Australian Friend* (5.5.2), regular Regional Meeting newsletters (2.5.3) and a list of Members (5.5.4). In addition, there are the publications and international visitations of the Friends World Committee for Consultation (5.4.3) and the welcome at Quaker study centres at Woodbrooke in Birmingham, England, and at Pendle Hill in Pennsylvania, USA. Quakers also participate in Internet discussion groups.

Fellowship also grows from sharing the responsibilities of Membership of the Society (Chapter 3), which depends almost entirely on committed unpaid volunteers. Bonding across the nation arises in the shared tasks of AYM officer-holders (5.2), AYM committees (5.3) and of Yearly Meetings (Chapter 6).

Chapter 2

QUAKER MEETINGS

2.1 Introduction

The Quaker Way described in the previous chapter leads to a corporate structure based on Spirit-led decision-making within a context of openness, flexibility and a lack of any fixed hierarchy of authority. The exact form of such a structure in any country depends on the nation's history, geography and culture. The Australian version has been largely influenced by the pattern of immigration, notably from Britain, and the huge distances between centres of population. The consequence has been a series of groupings of different size called Meetings, the word in this case meaning all the Friends within a certain area.

As mentioned in the Preface, Meetings range in size from relatively numerous informal Worshipping Groups of a few Quakers and their friends who come together, perhaps in someone's home, to worship in the Quaker manner. At the opposite extreme, there is the single Australia Yearly Meeting that embraces all Members of the Society in the country (Chapter 5). At intermediate levels, there are, firstly, Recognised Meetings that each unite Friends and like-minded people within a small neighbourhood; secondly, Local Meetings consisting of larger groups of urban Friends; and, thirdly, a Regional Meeting in each state.

The Regional Meeting comprises all the Members in the constituent Worship Meetings, i.e. the Worshipping Groups, Recognised Meetings and Local Meetings. Each Worship Meeting reports to the relevant Regional Meeting, and all the Regional Meetings to the Australia Yearly Meeting, so

that an Australian Friend has a threefold allegiance, to the nearby Worship Meeting, to the Regional Meeting and to the national Yearly Meeting.

Table 2 shows that the pattern of Worship Meetings is not the same across all states, illustrating the degree of autonomy of Regional Meetings.

Table 2.
Numbers of Worship Meetings within Regional Meetings in 2009

Regional Meeting	Worshipping Groups	Recognised Meetings	Local Meetings
Canberra	4	1	1
New South Wales	3	3	4
Queensland	2	4	1
South Australia	3	3	2
Tasmania	6	0	1
Victoria	5	2	3
West Australia	3	4	0
TOTAL	26	17	12

2.2 Worship Meetings

2.2.1 Worshipping Groups

Worshipping Groups consisting of a few Quakers and others who meet informally to worship in the manner of Friends, arise from time to time. They choose a correspondent to maintain contact with the nearest Local and/or Regional Meeting, from which the group is entitled to encouragement and help, such as the supply of literature, the loan of books, occasional visits, and inclusion in the scope of items reported in the Regional Meeting newsletter and its distribution. The correspondent informs the RM Clerk of the names and addresses of people associated with the Group (3.1).

Worshipping Groups provide the Enquirer (3.2) with a noncommittal introduction to the Quaker Way and fellowship (1.4.6). In due course Worshipping Groups may become Recognised Meetings.

2.2.2 Recognised Meetings

Recognised Meetings grow from Worshipping Groups that have continued to hold Meetings for Worship at least monthly with a stable number of people for at least a year, and that include at least one Friend familiar with ministry and pastoral care matters. In such circumstances, the nearest Local Meeting, for instance, may well suggest that the group applies to the Regional Meeting for acknowledgment as a Recognised Meeting. The Regional Meeting may then offer support, perhaps providing the rent for meeting places and local advertising, as well as lending books and articles on Quaker subjects, and visitation when possible.

For its part, a Recognised Meeting nominates one of its number as correspondent to liaise with RM office-holders. As for a Worshipping Group, the correspondent's first duty is to send the RM Clerk the names and addresses of all Members, Attenders, Enquirers, Young Friends and child members of the Meeting (3.1). If practicable, the Recognised Meeting sends a Member or Attender to RM Business Meetings. How far a Recognised Meeting takes on the responsibilities of a Local Meeting (2.3) is for negotiation with the nearest Local Meeting and the relevant Regional Meeting.

2.3 Local Meetings

2.3.1 General

Local Meetings differ from other Worship Meetings in being large enough for a more complete community, with a wide range of friendships and activities, both within the Quaker fellowship and in relationship to the public. Local Meetings have several office-holders and committees, providing opportunities for a deep and broad Quaker experience. Everyone attending the weekly Meetings for Worship - Members (3.4), Attenders (3.3), Young Friends (3.9) and the children (3.8) - are all warmly regarded as members of the Local Meeting.

2.3.2 Local Meetings tasks

In addition to its prime purpose, which is holding Meetings for Worship, a Local Meeting aims to do the following tasks:

- hold regular Meetings for Worship for Business (1.4.4) to make decisions on its local Quaker activities
- hold Meetings for Worship for Marriage, for Remembrance, for Funerals as required
- provide pastoral care for the members of the LM community
- to test concerns (1.4.5) laid before the Local Meeting
- care for isolated Friends in the area
- maintain contact with the correspondents of nearby Recognised Meetings and Worshipping Groups
- encourage Members within the Local Meeting to attend Business Meetings of the relevant Regional Meeting
- send the RM Clerk a report each September on its activities during the past year and on all other matters to assist the RM Clerk to prepare an annual report for *Documents in Advance* (6.2.5)
- accept monetary contributions for the work of the Society (2.3.5)
- host AYM committees agreed at a Yearly Meeting (5.3.6) and the relevant Regional Meeting.

2.3.3 LM Nominations Committee

To carry out the duties listed above, all LM office-holders and committee members are usually appointed for a one to three year period. Friends within the Local Meeting decide on the appointments at a Business Meeting, after considering recommendations from the LM Nominations Committee. (Names for the Nominations Committee itself are proposed either directly at the Business Meeting or by a separate group, perhaps consisting of the present and previous Clerks.)

The Nominations Committee consists of members with knowledge of the Meeting. They serve for three years (ending on a declared date) and, as with all committees, arrange for overlapping of the terms of office to ensure that the corporate memory continues.

The Local Meeting may call on the committee at any time to propose replacements for LM office-holders who cannot continue in their appointment.

2.3.4 LM Clerk

The LM Clerk is a Friend who does the following tasks for the Local Meeting:

- handles the correspondence addressed to the Local Meeting
- responds to enquiries about the Meeting or the Society
- maintains close liaison with other LM office-holders
- prepares an agenda for and conducts regular Business Meetings, at which, after discussion of topics, she/he drafts a minute summarising the decision reached, to be corrected by the gathering (1.4.4)
- sends copies of the Business Meeting minutes to the RM Clerk
- notifies those concerned of decisions made at any LM Business Meeting
- encourages LM representation at any RM Business Meeting
- ensures all births, marriages and deaths and name changes are brought to the attention of the RM Membership Secretary
- makes announcements after Meetings for Worship.

2.3.5 LM Treasurer

The LM Treasurer is a Member or Attender who undertakes tasks that are seen as appropriate by their Local Meeting, sometimes with the help of a finance committee or support group. These tasks may include the following:

- prepare a budget for each financial year, for consideration by a Business Meeting
- receive monies within the Local Meeting and keeps financial records
- provide financial reports at LM Meetings for Business
- make payments as instructed or delegated by the LM Meeting for Business
- transfer funds as necessary to appropriate accounts where donors have indicated specific usage of monies
- transfer funds as necessary to appropriate accounts as approved by LM Meeting for Business
- transmit to the RM Treasurer a sum each year (agreed by the RM and LM Treasurers jointly) to help cover the costs of running the Regional Meeting and Australia Yearly Meeting
- arrange auditing, if required, of the LM accounts
- seek professional financial advice as required.

The LM Treasurer may be supported by an LM Finance Committee.

2.3.6 LM Ministry Committee

The LM Ministry Committee is made up of Friends of experience, understanding and discernment, who are customarily known as Elders. The committee meets regularly with the general task of caring for the spiritual life of the meeting. In particular, the committee does the following tasks:

- helps members of the Local Meeting to deepen their spiritual experience by collective and individual study of Christian and other religious literature, especially Quaker writings
- encourages the practice of inner stillness so that all may come to Meeting for Worship with heart and mind prepared
- arranges the place and time of Meeting for Worship
- encourages punctuality and ensures that the Meeting is conducted in accordance with Friends' practice
- promotes the use of *Advices & Queries* during Meeting for Worship and at other times
- arranges weekend residential gatherings
- gives assistance to Isolated Friends (3.10), to Recognised Meetings and Worshipping Groups and to people who are unable to come to Meeting for reasons such as illness.

2.3.7 LM Oversight Committee

The LM Oversight (or LM Pastoral Care Committee) is made up Members and Attenders of experience, understanding and discernment, who are well known to the Meeting and conversant with this handbook. Its members may be known as Overseers or Carers. There are many aspects to the work they do (Parker 1997). They have the following responsibilities:

- welcoming people to the Meeting, especially new members
- preparing the premises for Meeting for Worship and other functions
- encouraging participation in the life of the fellowship
- testing the Concern of an individual or a group
- encouraging social contact between members
- maintaining contact with members or groups of the Meeting who

are prevented from attending Meeting for Worship by travel, illness, isolation, etc.

- ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for the safety, nurture and education of the Meeting's children
- watching over the welfare of members
- assisting Attenders who are considering joining the Society
- helping maintain an up-to-date list of Members and Attenders (to be sent annually to the RM Membership Secretary)
- enquiring about the reasons for a Friend apparently falling out of fellowship with the Quaker community
- advising members of the Meeting of the contents of this handbook.

Ministry and Oversight Committees may meet either independently or together.

2.3.8 Other office-holders and committees

The **Librarian**, who may be supported by a Library Committee, runs a free lending library of Quaker and related literature. The task is to improve and care for the stock and encourage people to use it. When occasional culling of books is necessary, advice is sought before discarding them. The Librarian may also manage the LM subscriptions for Quaker journals.

The **Archivist** is in charge of old minute books of LM Business Meetings, as well as memorabilia, photographs and other materials (e.g. plans of the Meeting House) that the LM Business Meeting asks to be kept for record or made accessible for research.

A **Child Protection Officer** must be appointed (4.2).

A Local Meeting normally has a **Children's Committee**, since the religious teaching of the children is an important part of the Society's responsibilities (3.8). Arrangements differ widely between Meetings, depending on the number of children involved and the availability of teachers. A guide to planning a program of lessons can be obtained from Friends Book Sales (Linacre 1990). Material may also be available through the YM Children's Committee and the JYF Committee.

A Local Meeting may also appoint other committees, concerned with **Finance, Hospitality, Outreach** and **Premises**, for example.

In each case, the first person named on the list of nominations calls the

first meeting, at which the committee chooses its convener. (This convention applies to all Quaker committees.)

2.4 Regional Meetings

2.4.1 General

The seven Regional Meetings that together make up Australia Yearly Meeting correspond to the six states and the Canberra Region. The latter includes the Australian Capital Territory and part of New South Wales south of a line drawn through Nowra and Cowra. South Australia Regional Meeting is responsible for Friends in the Northern Territory.

Each Regional Meeting is financially separate and legally incorporated, according to company laws of the relevant state or territory. (RM incorporation is in addition to the incorporation of the whole of Australia Yearly Meeting, described in Supplement 1.)

The Regional Meeting carries out the following tasks:

- establishes and supports Worship Meetings in the region (2.2, 2.3)
- represents the region's Worship Meetings at Yearly Meeting and Standing Committee
- contributes funds to Australia Yearly Meeting
- holds Business Meetings to deal with issues raised by the constituent Worship Meetings and particular matters such as testing Concerns (1.4.5), issuing public statements (2.4.4), Membership of the Society (3.6), marriages (4.3) and Testimonies (4.8.5)
- owns property such as a Meeting House
- keeps records of RM membership, activities and finances
- issues a regular newsletter
- provides minutes for travelling Friends (4.7)
- supports any AYM committee (5.3.6) that Yearly Meeting has appointed to the Regional Meeting
- holds an AGM as a legally incorporated body.

The RM Clerk prepares a report on all the activity and the underlying spiritual life of the Regional Meeting by 30 September each year, with an

explanation of any omitted duties. The report goes to the AYM Secretary for publication in Documents in Advance (6.2.5) and then consideration at Yearly Meeting (6.3.2).

Each Regional Meeting is linked to the others by AYM office-holders and committees and by the annual gathering of the Yearly Meeting (Chapter 6). The exchange of RM newsletters and receipt of the AYM Secretary's newsletter each month (5.2.3) also foster communication.

The usual features of Regional Meetings in Australia will now be described, bearing in mind differences in detail due to their autonomy and the effects of local decisions and circumstances. This applies particularly to the sharing of duties between a Regional Meeting and its constituent Local Meetings (e.g. the work of Overseers and Elders).

2.4.2 Properties

A Regional Meeting may have responsibility for various kinds of property: the RM's Meeting House, land (see Werona below), a shop (The Quaker Shop, 51 Kensington Road, Norwood, SA 5067) or a burial site. The Regional Meeting may delegate day-to-day responsibility for its Meeting House to the Local Meeting based there, usually the oldest and largest in the region. (In that case, it is the Local Meeting that appoints a Premises Committee for ongoing maintenance and for arranging the use of the Meeting House for educational or other purposes that serve the wider community.)

Table 3.
Quaker Meeting Houses in Australia

Region	Location	RM Clerk email address
Canberra	cnr Bent St & Condamine St, Turner, Canberra Mail: PO Box 6063 O'Connor ACT 2602	canberraclerk@quakers.org.au
New South Wales	119 Devonshire St, Surry Hills, Sydney NSW 2010 59 Boundary Road, Wahroonga NSW 2076 The Quaker Cottage, Woodford NSW 2778	nswclerk@quakers.org.au
Queensland	10 Hampson St, Kelvin Grove, Brisbane QLD 4059	qldclerk@quakers.org.au
South Australia	40a Pennington Terrace, Mail: PO Box 55, North Adelaide SA 5006	saclerk@quakers.org.au
Tasmania	5 Boa Vista Road, North Hobart, Mail: PO Box 388, North Hobart TAS 7002	tasclerk@quakers.org.au
Victoria	631 Orrong Rd, Toorak, Melbourne VIC 3142	vicclerk@quakers.org.au
West Australia	35 Clifton Crescent, Mt Lawley, Perth WA 6050	waclerk@quakers.org.au

Werona is an area of land administered since 1969 by Kangaroo Valley Friends' Properties Pty Ltd. Shareholders of the company include New South Wales Regional Meeting, the major shareholder (72 out of 131 shares), and Australia Yearly Meeting (5.6.8). Shareholders elect a management committee at an AGM held in Sydney at the start of each year.

The property consists of 40 hectares of river-front natural bushland, 3.6 km from the village of Kangaroo Valley, south of Sydney. It forms part of a wildlife refuge. Basic accommodation and an area for camping are provided for individuals and small groups to experience personal renewal through contact with the Australian bush.

The property is maintained by volunteers of the Werona Users Group, consisting of Friends and like-minded people. Bookings are made via a volunteer known to the Clerk of New South Wales Regional Meeting.

Public liability is covered by the umbrella insurance policy of Australia Yearly Meeting, that includes rules on risk management for people under 18 years of age.

2.4.3 Business Meetings

A major function of a Regional Meeting is the holding of regular Business Meetings, not less than three times a year. In addition, Special Meetings may be held. Notice of Special Meetings is given at normal Meetings for Worship at all constituent Meetings on a Sunday at least three days beforehand. The reasons for calling a Special Meeting are clearly stated and only that business is transacted.

Topics at normal RM Business Meetings can range from personal or group concerns and local problems, to spiritual and international issues relating to the work of the whole Society. The agenda proposed by the RM Clerk may also contain matters referred by Worship Meetings or hosted AYM committees within the region, perhaps in preparation for later attention at Yearly Meeting or Standing Committee. Everything concerned with Membership of the Society (3.6) is decided by Regional Meetings, unless the Regional Meeting chooses to delegate this to the Local Meeting in a particular case.

Decisions reached at a Meeting for Business are recorded in a minute book and copies are sent to the AYM Secretary and (where appropriate) to the Presiding Clerk, the AYM Treasurer and to other RM Clerks.

2.4.4 Public statements

An occasional topic for RM decision is the issuing of a public statement to make

Friends' views on some important regional issue widely known. In contacting media in other regions or approaching the federal government, a Regional Meeting bears in mind its responsibility towards other concerned Regional Meetings and consults them beforehand. This is especially necessary when going beyond Friends' established views to present new interpretations of basic principles.

If there is doubt or urgency, the RM Clerk consults the Presiding Clerk (5.2.2), who in turn would sound out other members of Standing Committee (5.3.2) living in the same region. In any case, copies of all public statements are sent to the AYM Secretary (5.2.3), who can then respond to enquiries.

2.5 RM office-holders and committees

2.5.1 RM Clerk

The RM Clerk is the Friend central to communication within the region. Like the LM Clerk (2.3.4), the RM Clerk handles correspondence, represents the group, answers Enquirers and conducts Business Meetings. In addition, the RM Clerk does the following tasks:

- maintains close liaison with other RM office-holders and the region's LM Clerks
- informs the RM Membership Secretary of all births, marriages, and deaths and name changes within the Regional Meeting
- conducts RM Business Meetings and sends copies of the minutes to the AYM Secretary and (where appropriate) to the Presiding Clerk, the AYM Treasurer and to other RM Clerks
- after approval by an RM Business Meeting, sends an annual report to the AYM Secretary on activities within the region.

An Assistant Clerk is usually appointed to help the RM Clerk.

2.5.2 RM Treasurer

The RM Treasurer is the Friend responsible to the Regional Meeting for its finances, usually with the support of an RM Finance Committee. The RM Treasurer does the following tasks:

- drafts a budget for discussion by Regional Meeting (as a legally incorporated body)

- operates bank accounts on behalf of the Regional Meeting
- reports on the accounts to RM Business Meetings at regular intervals
- transmits the RM's share of the costs of Australia Yearly Meeting to the AYM Treasurer (5.2.4) and forwards sums donated for particular funds
- prepares accounts for annual inspection by the RM Auditor.

Much of the Society's income results from an annual written request from treasurers to members of each Regional Meeting. One way of proceeding is as follows. The RM Treasurer indicates to the region's LM Treasurers the average amount per adult Member needed to run Australia Yearly Meeting, based on the AYM Treasurer's budget, approved by Yearly Meeting (this amount is referred to as 'the quota'). Then the LM Treasurer writes to Members and Attenders within the Local Meeting, and the RM Treasurer to those in the region who are either isolated Members or members of Recognised Meetings or Worshipping Groups.

It is appropriate for the RM Treasurer to remind members occasionally of the importance of making their will while they are in good health (4.8.2).

2.5.3 Other RM office-holders

Each Regional Meeting has an **Archivist**, whose duties include coordinating the work of the Archivists of Local Meetings within the Regional Meeting. The Archivist liaises with them in the keeping of records, including RM minutes and records of births, deaths and marriages within the RM fellowship. These are kept and also sent to the RM Membership Secretary and the AYM Secretary. The Clerk and Archivist together arrange for all records of RM activities to be kept for organisational transparency and historical purposes.

Each Regional Meeting appoints two or more **Registering Officers** to conduct marriages and ceremonies of commitment according to Friends' usages (4.3). The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages of the state or territory in which the Registering Officer usually resides is notified of each new appointment. The Officer's name is added to the state or territory's list of ministers of religion authorised as celebrants, and the Officer is allotted a registration number.

The Religious Society of Friends is a religious denomination recognised under the federal *Marriage Act 1961*, so, as a registered minister of religion, a Quaker Registering Officer may conduct marriages anywhere in Australia.

The relevant Registry must be notified in writing when a nominated Registering Officer ceases to hold that position.

More information on marriage procedure and the role of the officiating Registering Officer is to be found in Appendix C.

Unlike marriages, funerals (4.8.3) and Memorial Meetings (4.8.4) can be arranged and conducted by any Friends chosen by the Regional Meeting.

The **RM Membership Secretary** is a Friend who maintains an up-to-date list of Members and Attenders (including children) within the Regional Meeting, as well as recording transfers of membership and other details. The list, included in the RM Clerk's report, is used to update the annual AYM membership statement in *Documents in Advance* (6.2.5).

The **RM Public Officer** is the representative of the Regional Meeting as regards its being registered legally as an incorporated body. The Public Officer holds a common seal and is responsible for ensuring that the Regional Meeting operates within the legal framework of the state. This usually involves informing the state's Registrar General of Associations each year of the RM accounts, changes of office-bearers and any alterations to the rules of incorporation, as does the Australia Yearly Meeting Public Officer (5.2.6).

The **RM Newsletter Editor** or co-editors produce a regular newsletter for distribution within the Regional Meeting. The newsletter is a useful source of information on recent and future events, reports of Business Meetings, news of members, changes of address and articles. Copies are sent to the RM Archivist, to the other RM Librarians and to the AYM Secretary.

2.5.4 RM Nominations Committee

The RM Nominations Committee acts in the same way as its counterpart in a Local Meeting (2.3.3). It has to nominate an RM Clerk, a Treasurer and other RM office-holders. The latter include two RM representatives for Standing Committee (5.3.2), and one for each of the AYM Nominations Committee (5.3.3), Quaker Service Australia (5.4.1) and the local Council

of Churches. The Regional Meeting also nominates a board member for The Friends' School (5.4.2).

An effective Nominations Committee needs loving support from the whole Regional Meeting to promote a harmonious community.

2.5.5 RM Elders and Overseers

A Regional Meeting may have Elders and Overseers, whose duties would be like those of their LM equivalents (2.3.6, 2.3.7) and arranged to be compatible with them.

Arrangements for ministry and oversight differ between Regional Meetings. One example is the pattern within New South Wales, where there are four Local Meetings (Table 2), each of which recommends to Regional Meeting the names of Friends for appointment to the LM's own Ministry and Oversight committees. On the other hand, Tasmania has only one Local Meeting, whose Ministry Committee and Oversight Committee serve the whole Regional Meeting.

Chapter 3

MEMBERSHIP OF THE SOCIETY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the Society's membership practices and procedures as they affect Enquirers (3.2), Attenders (3.3), Members of the Society, child members (3.8) and Young Friends (3.9). Each of these is automatically a member (note the small m in member) of the respective Worship Meeting and Regional Meeting. This chapter focuses on those formally accepted as Members (capital M) of the Society.

3.2 Enquirers

Anyone is welcome to come respectfully to a Meeting for Worship, to share the prayerful silence, and to respond inwardly to the sense of worship and the spoken ministry. People new to Quaker ways, Enquirers, are usually offered a pamphlet explaining what to expect in a Meeting for Worship before entering the room. After the Meeting for Worship, Enquirers are welcome to share the social time with Friends, seek further reading and note coming activities. An Elder may be on duty, ready to discuss the Meeting for Worship just concluded.

3.3 Attenders

Enquirers who attend Meeting for Worship regularly are invited to be on the mailing list for newsletters and be shown as Attenders in the next edition of *Australian Quaker Meetings, Office-holders, Members, Attenders and Children* (5.5.4).

After obtaining the Clerk's permission, Attenders can be present at any Business Meeting and take part in its deliberations. Also they may participate in the Yearly Meeting (Chapter 6), provided they have been endorsed by their home Regional Meeting. Attenders can be very active within the Society, e.g. hold some offices or be appointed to appropriate LM or RM committees. They also receive a copy of the annual request from the RM Treasurer seeking contributions to support the work of the Society.

3.4 Meaning of Membership

3.4.1 General

Membership of the Society is a recognised outward sign of an inner and spiritual commitment to the way of worship and community within the Society. In the early days of the Quaker movement in England, anyone who followed the Quaker Way was considered part of the group. However, relentless persecution of individuals and small groups, and the need for Friends to care more adequately for each other, eventually led to formal definitions of Membership. British records of who is a Quaker have been kept since 1737.

The experience of Friends is that spiritual growth is enhanced by the formal acceptance of commitment to the fellowship and acceptance of the responsibilities involved.

3.4.2 Requirements

There is no test of doctrine and no outward observance imposed for Membership. Instead, applicants are expected to be open to inner spiritual experience, and be willing to share in the responsibilities of the Meeting. Members try to attend Meetings for Worship regularly, as a joy and a way of spiritual refreshment, as well as a contribution to the life of the Society.

Members are expected to attend Business Meetings whenever possible, and to support the Society financially as they are able.

3.4.3 Preparation

Points worth considering before applying for Membership are these:

- Applying for Membership usually follows extended experience as an Attender and an increasing awareness of the spiritual dimension of life.
- Members are expected to be well acquainted with Quaker history, the Quaker testimonies and also the current *Advices & Queries* (2008), and to be in harmony with them (1.4).
- Sincerity and integrity are important features of the Quaker approach to life, as is a willingness to test individual leadings by Spirit-led discussion with others in the Society, seeking unity within the group.

3.5 Readiness for Membership

3.5.1 Reasons for joining

Common reasons for joining the Society are these:

- to affirm publicly one's support for Quaker principles and community
- to identify more closely with Quaker heritage
- to enjoy more fully the fellowship of the group
- to strengthen the Society's witness.

The Society offers a spiritual home for people who value freedom from dogma, toleration of diversity, mutual support and the close linking of personal belief and living.

3.5.2 Hesitations

Occasionally an Attender may feel unsuited to Membership because they feel unworthy of Quakers, or unable to accept the testimonies in full, or have an ongoing allegiance to another church, or a general doubt about making long-term commitments. Such hesitations can be usefully discussed with Friends in a Clearness Meeting (4.4). Help may also be gained from reading such publications as *Quaker Faith & Practice* (UK) and *this we can say*.

Financial considerations may also cause an Attender to hesitate to apply for Membership. Although Friends undertake to contribute to the funds needed to achieve the Society's aims, they are asked to give only as they are able (5.6). It is not customary for collections to be made at Quaker events.

3.6 Becoming a Member

3.6.1 Application

Responsibility for acceptance into Membership lies with the nearest Regional Meeting, after personal application in writing. The letter is signed by the applicant (unless by email) and addressed to the RM Clerk, who will immediately acknowledge it and bring it to the next Regional Meeting. Most Regional Meetings then follow a similar procedure to the one described below.

On receipt of an application the RM Business Meeting appoints two Friends, called Visitors, to meet the applicant. In appointing Visitors, the Regional Meeting chooses experienced Friends who will have empathy with the applicant. The Meeting may take into account suggestions from Local or Recognised Meetings or from its own Oversight Committee, and preferably choose at least one Visitor already known to the applicant. The Visitors make contact with the applicant as soon as possible and arrange a suitable time and place to meet. Possible matters to discuss are indicated below (3.7.2).

3.6.2 Admission

After hearing the report from the Visitors, the RM Business Meeting decides whether or not to accept the applicant into Membership. A minute is made accordingly, and the applicant advised as soon as possible. If appropriate, the Membership list is amended, and the relevant Local Meeting or other group informed.

The Meeting may occasionally feel led to offer Membership to someone who has a long and/or close association with the Society, but has not applied for Membership.

3.6.3 Support

It is important that a new Member receives the support of Friends in becoming part of the group. To this end, the Regional Meeting may appoint a Friend or Friends to assist the new Member.

3.7 Advice for Visitors to applicants for Membership

3.7.1 General

Visitors are encouraged to prepare for meeting the applicant by reading Chapter 1 and Section 3.4 of this handbook. The meeting is best begun by a short period of silent worship. Then the occasion is an opportunity for in-depth sharing, enabling experiences to be exchanged and fuller understanding of the Quaker Way.

3.7.2 Topics

Points that the Visitors might mention include these:

- The Society was essentially Christian in its foundation and for many, this continues in its inspiration and culture. We recognise that Light may come from many other sources.
- The testimonies (1.4.2) are not beliefs to be accepted but guides to personal behaviour, and Australian Friends differ in their interpretation and acceptance of them.
- Quakers are not free to make public statements or take public action in the name of other Friends without prior agreement by the Regional Meeting.

3.7.3 The Report

In preparing a report on the visit for the Regional Meeting, Visitors are asked to include information about the applicant's religious and spiritual journey towards the Society, and an assessment of where the applicant stands in relation to its principles and testimonies. The report may include a recommendation about the application, if that is the Regional Meeting's tradition, though that may preclude showing the report to the applicant to check its factual accuracy. The applicant leaves the RM while their application is being considered. What happens to the report after Regional Meeting has considered it is for each Regional Meeting to decide. Some archive reports for possible future use, others destroy them to protect confidentiality.

3.8 Child members

3.8.1 Children

Meetings value their children (Boulding 1996; Bayes 2003), and seek to offer opportunities for them to develop an understanding of Quaker beliefs and practice (1.4). Quaker Ways have been explained for children by Stevenson (1996), for instance.

A child who is active within a Quaker community may be listed as a 'child or youth of the Meeting' and counted in the annual tabulation submitted to Yearly Meeting (6.2.5). Such a listing represents recognition that the child is the responsibility of the Meeting and an integral part of it.

The listing of children is done by the RM Oversight Committee (2.5.5), following approaches to the child and the parents. The committee is expected to review the child membership list regularly and treat as lapsed the membership of children who have moved away or ceased attending.

When the child reaches adulthood, this may be seen as a kind of graduation and Meetings may choose to mark the occasion in some way.

Notwithstanding the above, a child of any age who wishes to be a Member of the Society (as distinct from a member of the Meeting) may apply and be visited in the normal way.

3.8.2 Junior Young Friends

Children of the Meeting aged between 12 and 17 are sometimes known as Junior Young Friends (JYFs), and separate gatherings of this group are usually arranged at Yearly Meeting and are sometimes arranged by a Regional Meeting with an invitation for JYFs from other RMs to attend. (6.2.2).

3.9 Young Friends

Australian Young Friends (YFs) began in 1886 (Appendix B). They are a welcoming community of people aged from 16 to about 30, with fluctuating membership, structure and activities. They include those committed to Quakerism and also those wishing to explore or understand it.

There are usually two regular gatherings of Australian Young Friends, one in the week before Yearly Meeting (Chapter 6) and another during Easter. In

addition, various activities are held between times. Young Friends are committed to building and maintaining links within our section of Friends World Committee for Consultation (5.4.3) and also the global YF community (5.4.4).

Australian Young Friends have been autonomous since 1982 and they have their own nominations process to fill positions within the group and on relevant YM Committees. Australia Yearly Meeting gives some financial assistance to Young Friends, who arrange their own fund-raising efforts also. For further information go to the YF website, accessed through www.quakers.org.au.

3.10 Isolated Friends

Some Members and would-be Attenders live too far from others for regular attendance at Meetings for Worship. Their needs are of special concern to Elders and Overseers of the relevant Regional Meeting.

Such isolated people are urged to make themselves known to RM office-holders. Contacts are available from the AYM Secretary. They will then regularly receive the RM newsletter, and (if a Member) *The Australian Friend*. Also they can make contact (by post, phone or email) with the Australia-wide Quaker Fellowship (5.3.6) or with the conveners of other AYM committees (5.3).

The list of Members and Attenders (5.5.4) shows the location of the nearest Quakers, who would welcome contact. There are further opportunities for personal encounter in the course of travel (4.7) or attendance at Yearly Meetings (Chapter 6). In addition, the Internet provides links to various online Quaker discussion groups.

3.11 Transfer of Membership

Every Member of the Society is recorded as belonging to a particular Regional Meeting, usually that within which the Member lives. When a Member moves only temporarily from the area of one Regional Meeting to live within the area of another, the first RM Clerk or Membership Secretary may notify the receiving Regional Meeting, but no formal transfer is needed. However, if the Member moves permanently to another RM area, or overseas, a transfer of Membership is usually initiated by the original

Regional Meeting in consultation with the Member (Supplement 2).

Members of other Yearly Meetings living permanently in Australia are encouraged to have their Membership transferred to the appropriate Regional Meeting here, and their names included in the list of Members of that Regional Meeting.

3.12 End of Membership

3.12.1 Resignation

A Member may resign from the Society by writing to the RM Clerk. The resignation is formally accepted at the next Business Meeting, and the Clerk confirms the fact in writing, indicating the Meeting's openness to future contact. The RM Oversight Committee may explore with the resigning Member the reasons for the decision, if doing so would assist the Meeting and if the resigning Member is willing.

3.12.2 Lapsing

The Membership may be recorded by the Regional Meeting as having lapsed if a Member's address has been unknown for at least three years, and the Oversight Committee has had no success in tracing the Member. A Regional Meeting could also consider a Membership lapsed if a Member does not respond to reasonable attempts to contact them, or their response is either ambiguous or not given in writing.

3.12.3 Termination

On rare occasions, if a Member has brought the Society into disrepute or taken action clearly contrary to Quaker principles and practices, a Regional Meeting may take the initiative in ending the person's Membership. However, such a step is to be undertaken only after prayerful discernment and taking into account the likely pain to the person concerned. The Regional Meeting has to abide by the relevant parts of the respective rules of incorporation of the Regional Meeting and Australia Yearly Meeting (Supplement 1) when dealing with such situations, as well as the grievance policies of the Society (4.6).

Chapter 4

CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

4.1 Introduction

Ministry and Oversight Committees (2.3.6, 2.3.7, 2.5.5) share the pastoral role in each Meeting, caring generally for all who belong. Particular aspects of caring for one another are arranged in rough chronological order in this section of the handbook.

In some Local Meetings caring begins with the informal recognition of a new child arriving within the family of a member of the Meeting. This might involve a simple acknowledgment, welcoming the newcomer into the fellowship as a 'child of the Meeting' (3.8.1).

4.2 Care and protection of children

The Society is committed to providing a safe environment for all in its care and in 2007 prepared the *Child protection policy and procedures*, a document setting out general principles. The more detailed version appropriate to local legal requirements is available from the RM's designated Child Protection

Contact Friend listed on the Society's website www.quakers.org.au. The document applies to all activities within the Regional Meeting that are authorised by or under the control of the Society.

The main concern is the protection of children from either abuse (physical, sexual or emotional) or neglect. This is done by ensuring that all activities for those under the age of **16** are supervised by a **Child Carer** (appointed by the Regional Meeting) with the assistance of either at least one Helper or another Carer. A Carer is someone aged over 18, paid or unpaid, who is responsible for looking after children in a recognised activity of the Society. Carers who are paid need to be suitably qualified, and unpaid volunteers must have been locally active in the Society for at least six months. A **Helper** is a Carer's unpaid assistant, aged over 16, and familiar with the *Child protection policy and procedures*. Helpers have to be aware that they are subject to the supervision of a Child Carer and accountable to that person. In Queensland, at least, both Carers and Helpers must obtain a special card (a 'blue card') issued by the state government. If any activity for children of a Meeting involves other organisations also, their child protection procedures operate in conjunction with ours.

Potential Child Carers are screened carefully by interviewers appointed by the relevant Regional Meeting. Prior to the interview, the applicant writes to the Local Meeting, giving personal details, relevant qualifications for working with children, and details of two referees. The applicant must also affirm the following:

- having read and understood the RM's *Child protection policy and procedures*
- not having acted in the past in any way contrary to the RM's *Child protection policy and procedures*
- not being aware of any concerns by other people about his/her behaviour towards a child
- not having been convicted of a criminal offence, nor the subject of an investigation relating to child abuse or sexual incidents
- giving consent for the Society to obtain a police check of the applicant's suitability.

At the interview, the interviewer asks the applicant why they wish to be registered as a Carer, about positive and negative experiences they have had in working with young people, and whether there are any impediments to them becoming a Child Carer.

The outcome of the interview is communicated to the RM Clerk and to the Child Protection Contact Person, as well as to the applicant. The names of successful candidates are added to an RM Register of Child Carers, and their application papers are archived. The papers of unsuccessful applicants are destroyed. It is not essential to maintain a register of Helpers, although it might be found useful.

4.3 Committed relationships, including marriage

4.3.1 Introduction

A Quaker Meeting is concerned for the spiritual growth of all its members, upholding them in whatever way seems best, and ensuring that they know about appropriate areas of support available to them. In particular, Friends recognise the spiritual enrichment possible within an enduring and unselfish relationship, providing mutual support and tenderness. Quakers seek to care for all such relationships within the Meeting, to foster loving and positive lives.

Friends support couples who make a long-term and deep commitment of love to one another. In its physical, intellectual and spiritual aspects, such a commitment gives each partner opportunities for growth and interdependence without the loss of personal identity. This relationship constitutes an adventure, with all its consequent uncertainties and possibilities. It requires forbearance and love, flexibility and humour. Through shared experiences such as caring for family, working or volunteering and supporting each other's spiritual life and faith, the couple can achieve harmony of spirit and action and thereby contribute to the stability and creativity of the wider community. Friends who accept the challenge of such a committed relationship in the care of the Meeting do so in the confidence that their Meeting will endeavour to nurture and encourage that relationship.

4.3.2 Prospective partners

Prospective partners may wish to discuss their relationship with parents, relatives or close friends, but help is also available from any Friend within a Regional Meeting, especially from members of the Ministry and Oversight Committees and the Registering Officers (2.5.3).

Early on, couples may underestimate difficulties in a future partnership or may regard consideration of possible problems as disloyal. They also need to be aware of changes in legislation made in recent years that have legal and financial consequences for couples living together.

Exploration of potential challenges is healthy and a mark of a loving relationship. Before offering assistance to the prospective partners, Ministry and Oversight Committees check that their involvement would be acceptable.

At the request of the couple, their Meeting can usually arrange help through a Clearness Meeting (4.4), a support group (4.5) or occasions of worship-sharing. A Clearness Meeting is particularly valuable where the couple is contemplating a public affirmation and celebration of their commitment. In such ways and through prayer and reflection, discussion and reading, the prospective partners can develop a clearer understanding of their hopes and aspirations, their obligations and needs, and the opportunities, joys and challenges that a committed relationship entails.

4.3.3 Making a personal and spiritual commitment

A relationship between two adults may reach a stage where the couple decides to make a commitment to each other. This joyful commitment may be made privately as the couple realises the significance and longevity of their relationship. Or, if at least one of them has significant contact with the Society, they may choose to seek support from their Regional Meeting to acknowledge their commitment publicly, either through marriage or a ceremony of commitment. The relationship is thereby recognised and placed in the care of the Meeting.

4.3.4 Affirming and witnessing a marriage or commitment

Prospective partners may wish to declare their mutual commitment during a special Meeting for Worship, either for Marriage or for a Celebration of

Commitment. Such Meetings for Worship are held in the manner of Friends and provide an opportunity for the couple to express their commitment to each other publicly.

The Society gladly celebrates a solemn commitment by any two people to be loving and faithful partners to each other throughout their lives. Friends are present to witness this affirmation, to show their acceptance and encouragement of the relationship and to demonstrate that it is under the care of the Meeting.

The couple writes to the appropriate RM Clerk to ask that the Regional Meeting agree to recognise the relationship and appoint a time and a place for a special Meeting for Worship for this purpose. The required permission of the Regional Meeting extends to the wording of the vows if they are to differ significantly from the example in Appendix C. Before agreeing to the couple's request, the Regional Meeting establishes that both partners understand fully the nature of their commitment and that there is no spiritual or practical impediment.

4.3.5 Marriage and committed relationships

For the right joining of marriage is the work of the Lord only, and not the priests or magistrates; for it is God's ordinance, not man's; and therefore Friends cannot consent that they should join them together: for we marry none; it is the Lord's work, and we are but witnesses (George Fox 1669).

Friends regard marriage and commitment as principally of a spiritual nature. On the other hand, the state defines the secular legal effects of a range of relationships and each couple needs to assess the legal implications relevant to their relationship. Those seeking a legal affirmation of their commitment should read Appendix C of this handbook.

Friends accept that couples describe their committed relationships in different ways, as they seek to reflect with integrity the truth of their feelings. As in the broader society, the traditional form of committed relationship among Friends has been marriage. Today, for many and often very personal reasons, some couples choose to celebrate their relationship with a commitment ceremony rather than a conventional marriage.

While the *Marriage Act* (1961) currently only recognises the union

between a man and a woman as a valid legal marriage, Friends recognise that the spiritual commitment of marriage can equally be present in same sex and other committed relationships not recognised by law. Australia Yearly Meeting has agreed to treat all requests for celebration of marriage within our Meetings in accordance with Friends' usages, regardless of the sexual orientation or gender of each of the partners. Where marriages are not able to be legally recognised, Friends celebrate the spiritual aspects of the wedding ceremony. Australia Yearly Meeting hopes that the law relating to marriage will be amended to allow Regional Meetings to support all couples to full and equal recognition of their marriages.

Aspects of the role of the Registering Officer in officiating at a marriage are discussed in Appendix C. Whatever the format of a Meeting for Worship for Marriage or for a Celebration of Commitment, those in attendance may be given a leaflet explaining the conduct of Quaker worship. Such a leaflet specifically devoted to weddings, marriages or ceremonies of commitment is available on the Society's website www.quakers.org.au and may be reproduced. Meeting houses may have copies, as may Correspondents of Meetings.

4.3.6 Marriage and relationship breakdown

Separation or divorce may threaten if a couple find that they are unable to remain in a loving relationship. Friends may be able to help by prayer, listening, Clearness Meetings and practical support. In offering this help, Friends are sensitive to the feelings of the partners and any children and ensure that everyone is treated with equal concern and loving care.

Each situation has to be dealt with on its own merits, without any assumption that a particular solution suits all cases. The support of the Meeting is as important when a couple decides to lay down their relationship as when the relationship is beginning.

4.4 Clearness Meetings

A Meeting for Clearness is a Meeting for Worship, but focused on a particular topic (Committee on Eldership & Oversight 2007). It is an opportunity

for individual reflection and for listening to the member(s) calling such a meeting. It is not a time for a debate of competing ideas, dealing with detail or reaching conclusions. Neither is it a forum of conflict resolution; though such a forum may be useful as a quite separate precursor. No Clearness Meeting should set out to change anybody. The aim is simply the better discernment of God's will by the person or people seeking clarification.

A Clearness Meeting is normally for clarifying a problem facing a member of the Meeting, where personal difficulties or choices can be explored together in a non-judgmental way. However, Clearness Meetings are useful in many other ways too. They were originally used to ensure 'clearness for marriage' and can still be helpful for couples contemplating such a commitment. Or, for example, the reason might be that a member of a Meeting wishes to test a Concern or leading, or to discuss the idea of applying for Membership of the Society. Also, a matter of weight to be decided at a forthcoming Business Meeting may well be preceded by a Clearness Meeting on a separate occasion.

There is no set procedure for arranging a Clearness Meeting. Initially the person seeking clarity about a particular issue might approach an Overseer or Elder for help in gathering a few diverse members of the Meeting to come together on a convenient occasion. Some people to be invited might be suggested by the Overseer and some by the person concerned. However the group is formed, the concerned member is in charge and decides who attends.

It has been suggested that the best people to serve at a Clearness Meeting are those who feel unqualified and therefore are more likely to listen to the Spirit (Charland 2008). In any case, it is assumed that everybody has an Inner Teacher who can provide guidance, so that the answers sought are within the person needing clearness. The others in the Clearness Meeting simply serve as channels of divine guidance in drawing out that Inner Teacher.

A Clearness Meeting is most successful when there are deep silences, attentive and prayerful listening, with a powerful discipline of restraint in a non-judgmental and caring environment. There has to be a loving respect and acceptance of the intentions and integrity of everyone in the group.

One practical outcome might be the formation of a support group to help

the member carry forward the matter being discussed. A rightly used Meeting for Clearness revitalises one of the features of early Friends — Friends' reliance on one another and those associated with their Meetings for both wisdom and strength in facing and dealing with difficulties (Loring 1992).

4.5 Support groups

A specially created support group can provide valuable help for anyone with a serious challenge in life, where the problem is ongoing. Unlike a Clearness Meeting (4.4) that is normally a single event, a support group continues until the problem ends or is resolved. The group meets with the person in need of support from time to time for informal discussion of current uncertainties and difficulties, and for consideration of what practical assistance is needed. The group also affirms that the individual is not alone in dealing with the difficulties.

A support group consists of a few congenial people of discretion, gathered by the person being supported, perhaps after consultation with the Oversight Committee (2.3.7). Members of the group provide patient listening and gentle questioning, and offer encouragement to the focus person. They do not offer advice.

Meetings of the group may occur irregularly, as required. The group reviews its usefulness occasionally.

4.6 Resolving conflicts

4.6.1 Quaker process

On occasion, dissension may arise either between members of a Meeting or committee, or between an individual and the broader Quaker community. It is recognised that conflict can be a force for creativity and an opportunity for learning and new growth. Conflict within the Quaker community needs to be considered in the light of the Quaker testimonies, our community life and responsibilities to Regional and Yearly Meetings. It is the expectation that Quakers experiencing conflict would move towards resolution using all of the resources and processes available to them and that they would be

supported to do so by the commitment of both individuals and the broader community of Quakers.

It is helpful to bear in mind Quaker principles in dealing with conflict, such as respect for all persons, openness to new light, seeking common ground, approaching the matter prayerfully, seeking the guidance of the Spirit and expecting to be led to a way forward. The principles of natural justice also underpin these efforts to restore our relationships to proper order.

4.6.2 Natural justice

Regard for the principles of natural justice helps to ensure procedures are fair and trusted. Natural justice means that everyone involved:

- has adequate information to fully consider the facts, issues and circumstances of the matter
- has enough time to prepare for any discussion
- has the opportunity to participate in the overall process
- has an assurance that content and any records are kept appropriately confidential.

Another aspect of natural justice is that it is prompt. So any person or Meeting, when asked to support resolution of a conflict:

- acknowledges the request as soon as possible
- starts proceedings as a matter of urgency
- informs the people involved in writing or by other appropriate means.

4.6.3 Resource people

The Quaker community includes many people who, through their commitment to peace, have pursued training, qualifications and experience in facilitation of communication and conflict resolution.

To support the resolution of conflicts, a list of willing trained and experienced people is drawn up by LM Ministry and Oversight committees, coordinated by the Regional Meeting, and publicised, possibly in the RM newsletter.

People who are registered with the Attorney General's Department as Dispute Resolution Practitioners and other registered mediators and AVP-trained facilitators are considered for inclusion. Other practitioners could be considered in the list as Local and Regional Meetings deem satisfactory.

People can withdraw from the list or be withdrawn from the list on the decision of Regional Meeting. This may be a temporary or ongoing removal.

4.6.4 Dealing with difficulties, disputes or grievances between individuals

Friends who are experiencing conflict may themselves initiate a resolution process, or a group of concerned Friends or Elders from the Meeting who are affected by the conflict may suggest that the conflicting Quakers participate in one of the following processes.

Talking with each other

Friends' first preference is to raise any issues directly with the people with whom there is any difficulty. Ideally, this would be as soon as possible, before thinking and feelings have become entrenched.

Before such a conversation, a Clearness Meeting (4.4) may be useful to discern deeper matters or individual issues and may bring insight about the individual's contribution to the situation.

When undertaking such a discussion, it is useful to approach the other person in a spirit of curiosity and respect for the other person's feelings and views and to spend some time preparing so you can express your views clearly and without blame or criticism. The goal is to come to a positive acceptance of the situation or to agreement about the way forward.

Talking with an experienced Friend

The prayerful exploration of the issue with a wise Friend who is not directly involved can be helpful to either person individually or both together. Clerks, Elders and Overseers are available for this service and generally experienced in Friends' ways. People of a YM committee not hosted by a Regional Meeting might consult the AYM Clerk.

Ministry and Oversight Committees will be supported to become familiar with available Quaker processes and these new processes. They will be encouraged to use the identified resource people to support their ministry.

Mediation

People who are at odds can approach the RM Clerk, the Ministry Committee or Oversight Committee, or consult the published list of resource people who are experienced, acceptable and independent of the issue, to find a mediator. After an initial separate conversation with all of the people involved, a Meeting for Worship for Mediation is arranged as soon as possible, to which each of the involved people is encouraged to bring a congenial companion.

The format of the mediation meeting may either follow whatever practice is favoured by the experienced mediator and accepted by the people experiencing conflict; or be conducted in accordance with Quakers' usual process (4.6.1).

Whatever procedure is used, the outcome sought is a written statement agreed to by everyone present, acknowledging the results of the meeting and signed by all. For important issues, the written statement is lodged with the RM Clerk or AYM Clerk, as a record for the archives of whatever progress has been achieved thus far.

Structured resolution

In practice, it may be necessary occasionally to resort to a more determinative procedure.

Once again, the participants meet in the spirit of worship, approaching the matter prayerfully and seeking the guidance of the Spirit. They might begin with a separate Clearness Meeting (4.4), to help define the problem.

To assist a Regional Meeting to reach a proper decision about an issue referred to it by either an individual or hosted AYM Committee, the matter would be considered by a panel of three people, at least one of whom will be a resource person with facilitation and conflict resolution skills, set up by the Regional Meeting in collaboration with the people involved.

If that group cannot recommend a solution acceptable to all concerned, a second panel of three people may be formed, with the participation of the AYM Clerk if practicable, but containing no-one belonging to the Regional Meeting concerned.

At any stage, those involved may agree to mediation or a Clearness Meeting (4.4).

When a Friend considers they are not in dispute, but rather experiencing inappropriate behaviour, they may refer to the Respectful Relationships Guidelines in the Members' area of the Society's website www.quakers.org.au.

4.6.5 Refusing to be part of the process to resolve the difficulty

When a person experiencing conflict refuses to be part of resolution processes, they are supported to explore other options that may be more appropriate for them. Because of the commitment of Quakers to the testimonies, our community life and responsibilities to Regional and Yearly Meetings, it is important that it is not accepted that people remain in conflict.

Meetings can exert further efforts including holding the person in the Light, the use of silence and bringing to people's attention other possibilities for settling matters. Note that:

- Local Meetings can call on resource people from Regional Meeting.
- Other resource people can be called on for further support (4.6.3).

Where a matter proves to be intractable, Yearly Meeting could consider giving direction using a panel process similar to the one above in Structured Resolution.

There is further sound advice on conflict resolution in the Bible (Matt 18:15) and in section 10.21 of *Quaker Faith and Practice* (Britain Yearly Meeting 1995).

4.6.6 Disagreeing with an RM or AYM committee decision

A different kind of dissension arises when an individual member of an RM or AYM committee (5.3.1) disagrees strongly with the Meeting's or committee's decision on a subject. In principle, this should not occur, because an essential feature of Quaker processes is the attempt to discern God's will together (1.4.1), and each Friend is expected either to accept or, at least, acknowledge the corporate discernment to which the Friend has contributed. Education about Quaker discernment processes can be offered to all Friends finding themselves in disagreement. However, if disagreement continues, this situation is treated with serious attention, following the above processes.

4.6.7 Differences within an AYM committee that is not under the care of a Regional Meeting

Where there are differences in an AYM committee that is not under the care of a Regional Meeting, the resource people who are from the state or territory where the Yearly Meeting is held that year will form the resource people to support the resolution of the concerns. Where there are insufficient resource people in a state or territory, the Yearly Meeting will appoint other identified support people to support them.

4.7 Care of travellers

Throughout its history the Society has derived much spiritual nourishment from intervisitation, either between Meetings or between individual Friends, especially when visits are made to isolated or distant Friends (3.10). Financial assistance may be available (5.6.6).

A Friend may have a Concern (1.4.5) to undertake Quaker work outside the local area. If this Concern is endorsed by the Yearly Meeting, a Travelling Minute is provided by either the AYM or the RM Clerk. The Travelling Minute states the position of the relevant Clerk, details of the traveller and the traveller's standing in the Quaker community, and the nature of the journey. It gives a succinct account of the work to be undertaken and serves as identification for use in places where the Friend is a stranger. The Clerk of any Meeting being visited usually endorses such a minute with a greeting to the issuing Meeting. At the conclusion of the journeying, the minute is sent to the issuing Meeting for information and for its archives. Preferably a copy is made for the traveller to keep.

Even when Friends are travelling for personal reasons or on private business, they are encouraged to contact other Friends wherever possible. In these circumstances, it is usually appropriate for the Clerk of the traveller's home Local Meeting to issue a Letter of Introduction and Greeting (not to be confused with a Travelling Minute).

Another sort of traveller is the 'sojourner', who typically comes to Australia for some months but retains membership of her/his home Meeting. Australian Friends warmly welcome such links to overseas cousins within the global Quaker family.

Intending travellers are reminded to check the websites of various Yearly Meetings for helpful details about Meetings in Australia and abroad. Further useful information may be available in their Meeting House library, notably in the *Australian Directory for Travelling Friends* or the International Directory produced by Friends General Conference in the USA, both of which which contain the addresses of Friends able to offer simple accommodation.

4.8 Care through life

4.8.1 Australian Friends Fellowship of Healing

An Australian Friends Fellowship of Healing was established in Melbourne in 1971. There are now Fellowship of Healing groups associated with Meetings throughout Australia. Friends in these groups have a particular belief in the power of healing through prayer. The activities of the Fellowship are reported to Yearly Meeting annually in *Documents in Advance* (5.5.5) and in a newsletter called *Wholeness*.

Each year at Yearly Meeting, members of the groups gather in an AGM that is reported in *Documents in Retrospect*. The AGM receives reports and appoints a convener and the editor of the newsletter. It also appoints the three Trustees of the Australian Friends Fellowship of Healing Charitable Trust, which resembles a similar organisation in Britain and is independent of Australia Yearly Meeting. The Trust was set up in Western Australia in 1986 to help people in need of a period of rest and creative renewal, away from the busyness and stress of life, to regain health and wholeness.

4.8.2 Wills

Friends are urged to make their wills well before there seems any need, to avoid disputes or undesired distribution of their estate. Wills should be reviewed regularly, in times of good health and sound judgment, particularly when personal circumstances change.

Friends are also encouraged to make available information that would be helpful to others in the event of death. This could include personal particulars needed for the registration of a death; names of people who should be informed; any wishes as to burial or cremation (subject to any

legal requirements); arrangements for the donation of organs, or of the whole body, for medical purposes; where the will may be found; the names and addresses of the executor(s); any information which could be of help to the executors; and biographical information for a possible obituary notice. Regional Meetings may like to designate a place where such information can be held in safekeeping for Friends.

4.8.3 Funerals

Funerals are about the departure of the body of the deceased, while Memorial Meetings serve to acknowledge the legacy of the dead person's life, notably the evidence it contained of God's working in the world. Both are occasions of tender feelings and of deep reflection on the significance of human existence and the bonds between people, especially within families and a community like the Religious Society of Friends.

The conduct of Quaker funerals follows no prescribed pattern. Usually there is a short Meeting for Worship after the manner of Friends, whether at the home, the Meeting House, the crematorium or the graveside. Obviously this is not practicable when the deceased person has willed that her/his body shall be taken for organ transplants or medical education.

Whatever the format of the funeral, mourners are usually given a leaflet explaining the conduct of Quaker worship. Such a leaflet specifically devoted to funerals and Memorial Meetings may be downloaded and reproduced from the Society's website www.quakers.org.au. Meeting houses may have copies.

Friends are urged to observe simplicity in funeral arrangements and, if relevant, in the choice of gravestones. In burial grounds under the control of Friends, it is traditional to preserve uniformity in the materials, as well as in the size and form of the stones and the mode of placing them. In this way, no distinction of status is made between one person and another beyond the deceased's names and dates.

4.8.4 Memorial Meetings

A Memorial Meeting may be held at the same time and place as the funeral, or, instead, at some other more convenient time, usually later. It may be at the Meeting House or elsewhere. Music is sometimes played while relatives

and friends of the deceased are gathering, but the timing of such music needs to be planned carefully so that it does not encroach on the period of silent worship. It is helpful at the start of the proceedings for an appointed Friend to give a simple explanation to those assembled of the nature of a Friends' Meeting for Worship and how it will be closed.

The Memorial Meeting is a time for prayer and the upholding of those who mourn, as well as for the giving of thanks for the Grace of God in the life of the person who has died. Also there may be a reading aloud of appropriate extracts from Quaker literature, such as *this we can say* and *Quaker Faith & Practice* (Britain Yearly Meeting 1995).

As well as holding Memorial Meetings for deceased Members of the Local Meeting, Friends occasionally feel it is right to do the same for other people who belonged to another Meeting, or were well known to members of the Meeting, or had associated with the Meeting in the past.

4.8.5 Testimonies to the Grace of God

When a Friend in the region dies, it is customary for the Regional Meeting to arrange the writing of a biographical note called a Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of the deceased Friend. The Testimony covers aspects of the Friend's life that reveal the workings of the Spirit in the world, as an inspiration to others.

When Friends are asked to write a Testimony, they might begin by compiling a factual biography. This could be added to the entry for that Friend in the *Dictionary of Australian Quaker Biography* (5.5.3) and would be useful to historical researchers. The following kinds of information are required: date and place of birth; parentage — names of forebears; early environment and influences; early religious contacts; the time, reasons and place of migration; education and training; occupation and interests; marriage or relationships; influence of partner(s), siblings and children; any publications, artistic works or notable achievements; connection with the Society and its members; concerns and roles in the Society; date and manner of death; and perhaps the location of a plaque.

Such biographical facts, along with personal recollections and reflection, allow the distillation of a Testimony, which is essentially different in that it

concentrates on 'that of God' in the life now ended, the evidence of religious learning and living. It is not just an account of a sequence of events or a eulogy.

Each Regional Meeting brings Testimonies or a compilation of Testimonies to Standing Committee for possible reading during Yearly Meeting. Standing Committee discerns where on the agenda the chosen Testimonies will be read, and advises Yearly Meeting of this, and who will be reading each Testimony. Normally only one place is available on the YM agenda for each Regional Meeting.

Chapter 5

AUSTRALIA YEARLY MEETING (AYM)

The national organisation

5.1 Introduction

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) is a worldwide movement, consisting of autonomous bodies in many countries, called Yearly Meetings. Each has its own internal structure and membership. In Australia every Quaker Member belongs to Australia Yearly Meeting by virtue of membership of one of the constituent seven Regional Meetings (2.4). Each Friend is also legally a member of the national association called the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia Incorporated and of the appropriate Regional Meeting association. Supplement 1 sets out the rules binding the national Association, its office-holders and members.

As explained in the Preface, the term Yearly Meeting has two meanings. In Australia it refers to:

- the annual national gathering of Quakers, discussed in the next chapter, and also
- an organisational structure, described in this present chapter.

Here the word *structure* does not imply rigid, prescriptive relationships but a set of flexible, pragmatic arrangements. The legal role of the Australia Yearly Meeting is spelt out in Supplement 1 and the various responsibilities involved are discharged by means of office-holders and AYM committees, as follows.

5.2 AYM office-holders

5.2.1 General

The Presiding Clerk and the Treasurer are office-holders of Australia Yearly Meeting, each appointed by decisions of a YM business session (6.3.2), after recommendation by the AYM Nominations Committee (5.3.3). The AYM Secretary is also appointed by decision of a YM business session, but after recommendation by a specially appointed Search Committee. In each case, the appointee takes up duties at the end of a designated YM session. The term is usually three years initially, renewable annually thereafter, except that the term for the AYM Secretary is three years, renewable in three-year periods to a maximum of nine years.

Any Member of the Society is eligible for office at any level. Appointments are made by gatherings open to all Members of the Society equally and collectively seeking the will of God. Office-holders' terms of office are limited. They exercise no personal authority over others, but rather bear the responsibility to serve the Meeting. The Regional Meetings that comprise Australia Yearly Meeting are significantly autonomous (2.4).

5.2.2 AYM Clerk

The AYM Clerk presides at the business sessions of the Yearly Meeting (Chapter 6) and at Standing Committee (5.3.2), and prepares draft minutes for consideration by those gathered. The preparation of minutes involves discerning the leadings of the Spirit in the Meeting's deliberations and ensuring that the concerns of all Regional Meetings have been considered, so that decisions truly reflect the corporate discernment of the Society.

The Presiding Clerk is on all AYM committees *ex officio*, except for the AYM Nominations Committee (5.3.3). The Clerk is also a member of any

other body set up by Yearly Meeting. No Presiding Clerk may serve for more than six consecutive years (Table 4.)

Table 4. Presiding Clerks of AYM

Each normally assumed office at the conclusion of the Yearly Meeting held in the January of the year mentioned by their name.

1964 David Hodgkin	1981 Ruth Haig	2000 Colin Wendell-Smith
1966 Richard Meredith	1984 William Oats	2004 Ruth Watson
1970 Eric Pollard	1987 Bronwen Meredith	2006 Lyndsay Farrall
1976 Margaret Roberts	1990 Joan Courtney	2010 Maxine Cooper
1979 Richard Meredith	1992 David Purnell	
1980 Bronwen Meredith	1995 Patricia Firkin	

Only the Presiding Clerk signs public statements on behalf of the whole Society. This is done in consultation with the AYM Secretary, who normally has received a draft statement from either a YM session, an AYM committee or a Regional Meeting. The Presiding Clerk represents the Society as Head of Church on the National Council of Churches in Australia (5.4.5).

Other responsibilities of the AYM Clerk are mentioned at various places in this handbook. The Presiding Clerk may delegate specific tasks to individuals or committees after consultation with other Friends.

A Presiding Clerk's Advisory Committee may be set up by the Regional Meeting to which the Clerk belongs, to assist and counsel. Also, in the conduct of YM business sessions, the Presiding Clerk is helped by an Assistant Clerk for the duration of that year's gathering. The Assistant Clerk is appointed by the preceding mid-year Standing Committee (5.3.2), following nomination by the Regional Meeting hosting the Yearly Meeting.

5.2.3 AYM Secretary

The AYM Secretary is the paid executive officer of the Society, providing administrative support for Australia Yearly Meeting. That includes providing information about AYM activities to enquirers both within and outside the Society. The relevant email address is ymsecretary@quakers.org.au.

The appointment of the Secretary by Yearly Meeting follows the recommendation of a Secretary Search Committee previously appointed by Yearly Meeting or Standing Committee. The appointee works from an AYM office in close consultation with the Presiding Clerk.

The Secretary is supported by an Advisory Committee from the Secretary's Regional Meeting. Usually three members of this committee are chosen by the Secretary, and three are recommended to the AYM Nominations Committee by the Secretary's Regional Meeting.

A bookkeeper is employed part-time at the AYM office to reconcile bank statements, and record the financial activities of the AYM Secretary and Treasurer.

The many duties of the Secretary are listed in Supplement 4. The Secretary is *ex officio* a member of all AYM committees and on any other body set up by Yearly Meeting, except the Thanksgiving Fund Committee and the Nominations Committee. The Secretary reports regularly to Standing Committee and Yearly Meeting on tasks performed, issues encountered and ideas for future activities. Beyond this, the Secretary informs Friends of developments within the Society through personal contact, correspondence and the monthly *AYM Secretary's Newsletter*. (Copies of the newsletter are lodged with the Australian National Library.)

In extremely urgent situations, the Secretary, the Presiding Clerk and one other member of Standing Committee (together with the AYM Treasurer, if appropriate) are authorised to make decisions together on behalf of the whole Society.

Table 5. Past AYM Secretaries, times and locations

Name	Start of term	AYM office
Donald Groom	April 1970	Sydney
Richard Meredith	August 1972	Tasmania
David Hodgkin	July 1974	Canberra
David Purnell	July 1977	Canberra
Eleanor (Topsy) Evans	April 1986	Tasmania
Beverly Polzin	April 1998	Victoria
Judith Pembleton	April 2004	Queensland

5.2.4 AYM Treasurer

The AYM Treasurer is responsible for overall management of the financial affairs of Australia Yearly Meeting, with the assistance and advice of the AYM Finance Committee (5.3.6). The AYM Treasurer is appointed by Yearly Meeting for an initial term of three years, with the possibility of additional periods.

The AYM Treasurer is a member of all AYM committees *ex officio* except the Nominations Committee. The AYM Treasurer reports to Yearly Meeting and Standing Committee.

The AYM Treasurer oversees AYM bank accounts, investments and properties, and checks the bookkeeping. Another task is to ensure that all assets and transactions are properly documented and fulfil superannuation and tax obligations, though Standing Committee has delegated some payments to the AYM Secretary (Supplement 4). The AYM Treasurer receives and disburses bequests, interest-free loans and earmarked funds, as authorised by duly appointed AYM office-holders (5.2) or committees (5.3). In each case, the AYM Treasurer ensures that sufficient funds remain available for expected expenditure. The opening or closing of any account requires specific authority from Yearly Meeting.

The AYM Treasurer prepares a budget for each mid-year meeting of the Standing Committee (5.3.2) and drafts and arranges the auditing of annual financial accounts for approval by Yearly Meeting, and then passage to the Public Officer (5.2.6).

The AYM Treasurer's duties do not include any involvement with Quaker Service Australia (5.4.1), which handles its own finances.

If the AYM Treasurer is temporarily unable to act, the Presiding Clerk can appoint a member of the AYM Finance Committee (5.3.6) to serve as Acting Treasurer.

5.2.5 AYM Auditor

The AYM Auditor is recommended by the AYM Treasurer. The AYM Finance Committee must be satisfied that the nominee has suitable qualifications and experience. The appointment is made by the Association at each AGM (6.2.4). The post cannot be held by a Member of the Society.

5.2.6 AYM Public Officer

The AYM Public Officer is appointed by Yearly Meeting on the recommendation of Canberra Regional Meeting, since the appointee must reside in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), where the Association (the legal entity representing the Society) has been registered. The office is held for life, unless the Public Officer moves from the ACT or resigns, or Yearly Meeting considers a change is necessary. The Public Officer holds a common seal.

The principal task of the Public Officer is to ensure that annual returns containing the audited accounts and details of changes of office-bearers, as well as any alterations to the Rules of the Association, are submitted to the ACT Registrar-General's Office.

5.2.7 AYM Archivist

The AYM Archivist has responsibility for the general oversight of the records of Australia Yearly Meeting. This includes advising and assisting the AYM Secretary with the records of the AYM office regarding the legal requirements to retain certain records and the selection of items for the Australian National Archives. The Archivist liaises with the AYM Treasurer concerning financial records.

In addition, the Archivist communicates with RM Archivists (2.5.3) for the same purposes and seeks to promote a wider awareness of the heritage of the Society in Australia. Advice and assistance may be given for exhibitions and publications.

5.3 AYM committees

5.3.1 General

The corporate activity of Friends is mainly undertaken after consideration in RM Business Meetings and by AYM committees, seeking to discern what the Spirit requires and then bringing important issues to the next Yearly Meeting. This section deals with the AYM committees, which are all set up at Business Meetings of Yearly Meeting. The different committees related to the running of a particular Yearly Meeting are dealt with in Chapter 6, while Chapter 2 discusses committees reporting to Regional and Local Meetings. The temporary Working Groups (appointed by Yearly Meeting for specific one-off tasks, such as arranging insurance) and Interest Groups (i.e. informal networks of like-minded Friends) arising from interactions at a Yearly Meeting, for instance, are not covered in this section.

The appointment of any AYM committee is properly the outcome of a YM minute, stating its purpose, composition, operation and funding. At the same time, Yearly Meeting specifies the Regional Meeting that is to host the new committee. The committee is normally appointed for a three-year term and then either reappointed in the same or another Regional Meeting, or laid down.

Composition: The Presiding Clerk and AYM Secretary belong *ex officio* to every AYM committee (except for cases mentioned above), as does the AYM Treasurer (5.2.4) where appropriate. Wherever practicable, an AYM committee includes up to two Young Friends. Standing Committee can appoint members until the next Yearly Meeting.

The first-named of the appointees calls the first meeting of the committee, at which a continuing convener is selected by the committee itself (except for Yearly Meeting and Standing Committee). The convener tells the AYM Secretary her/his name and address, the other committee members' names and the committee's functions, so that the AYM Secretary can advise enquirers. Some of that information is subsequently available in *Australian Quaker Meetings, Office-holders, Members, Attenders and Children* (5.5.4), in *Documents in Advance* (5.5.5 & 6.2.5), in *Documents in Retrospect* (6.4.1) and on the Society's website www.quakers.org.au.

The convener may allow non-members of the committee to attend committee meetings. AYM committees, with the exception of the Nominations Committee, have the power to co-opt further members (subject to the approval of a host Regional Meeting) until the next meeting of the Standing Committee.

A Friend may apply to join a particular AYM committee by communicating with its convener. Also, a Friend's Regional Meeting may recommend to the AYM Nominations Committee her/his appointment to the particular committee (5.3.3).

Money: AYM committees may be authorised by Yearly Meeting or Standing Committee to engage employees, consultants or other workers for positions approved by Yearly Meeting or Standing Committee, to pay them on behalf of Yearly Meeting and to arrange matters such as taxation, accommodation and other conditions of employment only after consultation with the Treasurer. It is the responsibility of the committee's convener and treasurer to keep the AYM Secretary and Treasurer fully informed of all details relating to employment.

The committees normally rely on Australia Yearly Meeting for funding, usually from the General Fund (5.6.2) under the supervision of the AYM Treasurer (5.2.4) and the Auditor (5.2.5). They may also receive earmarked donations from individual Friends.

If an AYM committee receives a grant or loan, it is accountable annually to Australia Yearly Meeting by way of a report and (in the case of a large grant) audited accounts, sent to the Secretary, and, where appropriate, to the Treasurer. This has to be done by November each year for the preparation of *Documents in Advance* (6.2.5).

Customs: Each committee determines the frequency of its meetings, the conduct of its business and the keeping of appropriate records. Copies of a committee's meeting minutes are sent as soon as possible to the AYM Secretary and the Presiding Clerk.

The committee submits a report to the AYM Secretary each year for

Documents in Advance, and may also report to mid-year Standing Committee. The report concludes with a Part B that briefly states the issues that need comment or decision by Standing Committee or Yearly Meeting.

No AYM committee can issue a publication without consulting the Publications Committee (5.3.4).

Other features of decision-making by AYM committees have been described elsewhere (1.4.4).

Kinds of AYM committees are as follows:

- a) **Representative committees** are the Standing Committee (5.3.2) that represents the whole of Australia Yearly Meeting (including one or two Friends from every Regional Meeting and a YF representative); the Nominations Committee (5.3.3); and the FWCC Committee (5.4.3).
- b) **Expert committees** have members appointed by Yearly Meeting to undertake ongoing tasks for Australia Yearly Meeting. Members of such committees are drawn from various Regional Meetings as necessary and appointed for their individual expertise. This applies to the Publications Committee (5.3.4) and the Backhouse Lecture Committee (5.3.5).
- c) **Hosted committees** (5.3.6) consist mainly of Members and Attenders from a single host Regional Meeting chosen by Yearly Meeting. In practice, the work of a hosted committee is usually carried out by a group within a single Local Meeting selected by the Regional Meeting (i.e. by people in close contact with each other). The group reports directly to Australia Yearly Meeting via *Documents in Advance* and to Standing Committee via the host Regional Meeting's appointees to that committee. The convener of a hosted committee keeps the Regional Meeting informed of the committee's activities and is supported by their oversight.

5.3.2 Standing Committee

Standing Committee carries on the work of Australia Yearly Meeting between YM gatherings. Members include the Presiding Clerk, Secretary and Treasurer, *ex officio*. Also included is the immediate Past Presiding Clerk, and, during the last year of the present Clerk's tenure, the Friend appointed as the next Presiding Clerk. In addition, two Friends are appointed by each

Regional Meeting, and two by Young Friends, usually for no more than three consecutive years. In short, there are 20 members of Standing Committee, whose names and addresses are sent to the Secretary and periodically sent by the Public Officer to the Registrar-General responsible for the Society's incorporation (5.2.6).

RM representatives on Standing Committee are not advocates for their Regional Meeting's views but contributors to the Standing Committee, discerning God's will collectively. It is helpful if RM representatives come prepared to report on current activities of AYM committees hosted by their Regional Meeting (5.3.1, 5.3.6).

Standing Committee meets twice during the year, normally mid-year in July and in January just prior to Yearly Meeting. (The AYM Treasurer pays the transport costs of members attending mid-year Standing Committee from the General Fund.) Standing Committee can be convened by the Presiding Clerk at 14 days' notice for any extremely urgent and important matter. The quorum is six members.

Standing Committee normally does the following tasks:

- follows up on decisions taken at the previous Yearly Meeting
- takes action on matters that cannot wait for consideration by the next YM gathering
- considers matters referred by Regional Meetings or AYM committees
- approves changes of membership of any AYM committee where necessary
- deals with administrative matters such as the timetabling of YM sessions
- considers the AYM annual budget of income and expenditure after the Treasurer's draft has been sent to Regional Meetings for their comments and before transmitting it to Yearly Meeting
- considers the State of the Society at its mid-year meeting.

Standing Committee does not deal with matters that are properly dealt with by Yearly Meeting (except in a preliminary way) nor usually does it initiate topics for decision. It cannot veto any YM decision.

RM representatives report back to their respective Regional Meetings

after each SC meeting. Since 2006 minutes taken at SC meetings have been published in the subsequent *Documents in Advance* or *Documents in Retrospect*.

Further details of Standing Committee are in Appendix D.

5.3.3 AYM Nominations Committee

The AYM Nominations Committee gives prayerful consideration to recommending to Yearly Meeting or Standing Committee the names of people and Regional Meetings thought suitable for various roles within the Society, other than that of the AYM Secretary (5.2.3). It does not decide on appointments, but helps Yearly Meeting and Standing Committee to do so. Recommendations can be referred back to the committee, if a proposal is not acceptable.

The Nominations Committee includes one experienced Friend appointed by each Regional Meeting, normally for three years. In appointing its representative, a Regional Meeting looks for a sound understanding of Quaker ways, particularly in regard to Australia Yearly Meeting, and familiarity with many of the national membership. There is also one YF representative. There are eight members of the committee in total.

It is advisable that committee members are already experienced in the work of their own RM Nominations Committee, thereby gaining a good knowledge of local Friends. Committee members are normally expected to be able to attend Yearly Meeting, when the committee meets. A member who cannot attend a particular Yearly Meeting asks her/his Regional Meeting to arrange a proxy for that occasion.

Membership of the committee is recorded by Yearly Meeting. When a vacancy occurs, the appropriate Regional Meeting makes an appointment and informs the AYM Secretary, who brings the new name to Standing Committee for confirmation.

The committee appoints its own convener, who is responsible for disseminating material to committee members. Should a convener be unable to continue, the Presiding Clerk may appoint an acting convener until the proper office-holder returns or the committee appoints a new one.

The committee is responsible for nomination, to either Standing

Committee or Yearly Meeting, of the following office-holders, usually for three years:

- The next Presiding Clerk (5.2.2), who works alongside the current Presiding Clerk for a year before taking over. (The committee will have confirmed the current Clerk's intention as to length of service.)
- The AYM Treasurer (5.2.4)
- Representative(s) to Aotearoa/New Zealand Yearly Meeting (5.4.4)
- A representative (as proxy for the Presiding Clerk) on the Executive of the National Council of Churches in Australia in consultation with the Presiding Clerk (5.4.5)
- Delegate(s) to the General Meetings of the National Council of Churches in Australia
- Members of the Publications Committee (5.3.4)
- Members of the Backhouse Lecture Committee, preferably with a representative for six years from a number of Regional Meetings (5.3.5)
- Members of the AYM FWCC Committee (5.4.3) and delegates to FWCC gatherings
- The Regional Meeting to host *The Australian Friend* (5.5.2)
- The Regional Meeting for each of the hosted AYM committees (5.3.6)
- Any other appointment that Yearly Meeting or Standing Committee asks the Nominations Committee to consider.

In an emergency, the committee can make a temporary appointment for any of these offices, operative till the next Yearly Meeting.

The Nominations Committee has to start work well before Yearly Meeting, especially in connection with recommending which Regional Meetings might host particular AYM committees. Such recommendations need ample time for Quakerly consideration by the prospective host Regional Meetings. Conferring may be done by letter, teleconference or email. No record is kept of the discussions, which are confidential.

A list of AYM positions soon to be filled is sent to all members of the Nominations Committee and to RM Clerks, by the convener or the AYM Secretary. Any Friend may suggest the names of people from their Regional Meeting seen as suitable

for various positions, in writing and with reasons, to their RM representative on the committee. After discussion with the RM Nominations Committee or other appropriate group, the AYM Nominations Committee member approaches any suggested Friend to ascertain their willingness to have their name go forward. The RM representative, following general agreement, forwards the name with supporting information to the convener.

The convener then circulates the material to all committee members for their consideration. If a single name does not emerge for each position, the convener corresponds with committee members to draw up a final list of names in order of preference. The convener checks that the person at the top of the list accepts nomination. If that person is unable to accept, the next on the list is approached. This whole process is carried out without undue delay, so that those people nominated have time to prepare for their responsibilities. In principle, it is desirable for the Nominations Committee to supply job specifications drawn up by past and present holders of various offices.

5.3.4 Publications Committee

The Publications Committee produces publications on behalf of Australia Yearly Meeting, including all that are prepared by AYM office-holders and AYM committees, either in hard copy or electronic versions. In general, the Publications Committee decides on the need, text, overall style and format of all material approved by Yearly Meeting, and progresses each item through the stages of script preparation, refereeing, revisions, etc., through to and including printing. Exceptions are: *The Australian Friend* (5.5.2); newsletters from the AYM Secretary (5.2.3); media statements by the Presiding Clerk or from Regional Meetings, and documents that are part of the organising of Yearly Meeting (Chapter 6). As regards the Backhouse Lectures (5.5.6), the Publications Committee is involved only in the printing. The Publications Committee is not responsible for publications produced by Regional or Local Meetings (Chapter 2). It is consulted by the AYM Secretary about changes to the content of the Society's website.

Yearly Meeting appoints a Regional Meeting to act as host to the committee, but nominates at least three expert members of the committee from across the whole Society (5.3.1). It is important that members be knowledgeable about

practical aspects of contemporary media. All nominations are recommended for ratification at the next Standing Committee or Yearly Meeting. Appointments are for three years. The committee itself is empowered to co-opt temporary advisers when special skills are needed.

Ideas for new AYM publications may come from within the Publications Committee, from other AYM committees, from Regional Meetings or individual Friends.

Friends proposing either a new publication or the rewriting of an existing publication are asked to test their leading by first taking it to their RM Business Meeting for consideration.

In the case of a new publication, the committee considers the following points before approving it: the purpose and nature of the publication; how it will meet a need; the target readership and its size; how long it is likely to be relevant or current; whether a printed version is necessary or whether it can be placed on the website for printing on an 'as-needed' basis and/or provided on other digital media; the authorship; overall style and format; and a timetable for producing the item.

Reprinting of publications can be approved by the Publications Committee after considering whether the content, language, style or format needs to be updated. For either a new publication or a reprinting, the committee may spend a specified amount without prior approval by Standing Committee or Yearly Meeting. Larger publications approved by the committee require a submission to Standing Committee or Yearly Meeting, accompanied by a 'covering brief', discussed below. Once either Standing Committee or Yearly Meeting approves the proposal of a publication, the committee manages the processing of the manuscript, revisions, preparation of proofs and the obtaining of an ISBN number and gives half-yearly reports to Standing Committee. Approval of the final version is again required from either Standing Committee or Yearly Meeting before the committee supervises the printing.

Publications from 2007 onwards carry the AYM logo, as on the cover of this handbook.

The 'covering brief' mentioned above contains advice related to the committee's management of the Publications Fund, previously known as the

Book Fund. (The Fund receives income from the sale of the publications that the committee issues and is used to pay for future approved publications. It also covers web-page costs.) The brief deals with the likely sales of the item, costs of production and storage, handling and retail mark-ups, an appropriate print run and price.

The aim is to minimise the number of unsold copies and to ensure financial viability. Such assessment by the committee is required also for the printed outputs of the Backhouse Lecture Committee and the Handbook Revision Committee.

The Publications Committee informs the AYM Treasurer in advance of expected major expenditures. Subsequently, it liaises with the AYM Secretary and Treasurer about expenses incurred in producing and promoting any publication, and with the AYM Secretary and Friends Book Sales about stocks and sales.

Once the publication is printed, the AYM Secretary arranges sales promotion and, for publications that are also distributed electronically, uploads them onto the Society's website. The AYM Secretary sends copies to the appropriate deposit libraries, as required by law. The storage and sales of AYM publications are the responsibility of Friends Book Sales.

5.3.5 Backhouse Lecture Committee

The Backhouse Lecture Committee organises a public lecture in commemoration of James Backhouse (1.3), which has been given almost every year since Australia Yearly Meeting was inaugurated in 1964. The purpose of the lectures is to present fresh insights into the Quaker movement and contemporary issues, and to bring before Friends and the public the spirit and underlying principles of the Religious Society of Friends. The committee might choose to invite Australian Friends and international Friends in alternate years. The lecturers present their own views and experiences. The lecture is traditionally given at Yearly Meeting and is simultaneously available in booklet form. Titles of past lectures are listed in Appendix E.

Committee members are appointed by Yearly Meeting for six years on the recommendation of the AYM Nominations Committee (5.3.3). They are selected for skills in writing, publishing and knowledge of relevant topics and speakers, rather than RM representation.

The work of this 'expert committee' is described further in Supplement 4.

5.3.6 Hosted committees

Hosted committees are the third kind of AYM committee mentioned earlier (5.3.1), consisting of people from a Regional Meeting previously chosen by Yearly Meeting. The Regional Meeting then selects the committee's members possibly from a single Local Meeting, subject to subsequent ratification by Standing Committee or Yearly Meeting. Later the committee may co-opt other members, also subject to confirmation. The Regional Meeting notifies the AYM Secretary of the names of members of such an AYM committee.

An AYM committee is the result of a Concern (1.4.5) presented to Yearly Meeting, usually by members of a particular Regional Meeting and with evidence of the Regional Meeting's support. The Yearly Meeting may then appoint that Regional Meeting as host to the new committee and state its terms of reference. Subsequently the committee reports to Standing Committee as necessary and to Yearly Meeting each year by means of *Documents in Advance* (5.5.5), and, as a courtesy, to the host Local and Regional Meetings.

Correspondents may be appointed by other Regional Meetings to keep in touch with a committee's work and provide feedback and assistance. They can attend the committee's meetings when practicable.

In principle, Yearly Meeting reviews the work of such a committee after three years to decide whether to extend its life for a further term, transfer responsibility to another Regional Meeting, or lay down the Concern. As a result of these decisions, there is an ever-changing list of such committees and host Regional Meetings, as the work of Australia Yearly Meeting evolves. Addresses of current AYM committee conveners are given in *Australian Quaker Meetings, Office-holders, Members, Attenders and Children*, a copy of which may be consulted in any RM library.

Brief mention follows of hosted AYM committees in existence at the end of Yearly Meeting 2010. Updated information for later years is available in the corresponding *Documents in Retrospect* (5.5.5).

The Australian Friend Committee (5.5.2) is responsible for the publication of *The Australian Friend* on a regular basis.

The Australia-wide Quaker Fellowship serves any Member or Attender wanting an ongoing link with Quaker life and thought, especially people who cannot take part directly in RM activities. The Fellowship Committee publishes reprints of items garnered from a range of Quaker and other literature. The reprints are in a newsletter issued three or four times a year and posted or emailed for a small cost. To subscribe, consult the Society's website www.quakers.org.au.

The Donald Groom Peace Fund Committee (5.6.5) appoints a Donald Groom Fellow for one to two years and provides them with support during their fellowship.

The Finance Committee supports the AYM Treasurer (5.2.4). It consists of the AYM Treasurer and at least three other Friends from the Treasurer's Regional Meeting who have been recommended by that RM's Nominations Committee and confirmed by the subsequent Standing Committee and Yearly Meeting.

Friends Book Sales is run by Friends who handle the storage and sales of AYM publications (5.5.1).

The Handbook Revision Committee is responsible for development and updating of the current edition of the handbook, largely in the light of recent decisions by Yearly Meeting and Standing Committee. The amendment procedure now envisaged is described in the Preface to this edition.

The Indigenous Concerns Committee focuses the strong interest of Quakers on Aboriginal affairs (*this we can say*, pp. 246 - 76).

The Peace & Social Justice Fund Committee (5.6.4) assesses applications and allocates funds to individuals or other AYM committees.

The purpose of **Quaker Learning Australia** (QLA) is to create, nurture, and coordinate a program of Quaker learning in Australia. QLA supports

Meeting for Learning, a year-long program, with a retreat week marking each end of the journey. The retreats provide time for inner seeking of the Spirit and learning about Quaker ways in company with Members and Attenders from around Australia. During the year each participant undertakes projects of their choice, with encouragement from a support group. QLA also supports Quaker Basics, a distance learning program. Financial support for QLA's work comes from direct donations, grants, the AYM Thanksgiving Fund (5.6.3) and from Regional Meetings.

The Quaker Peace & Legislation Committee aims to monitor international and national legislation and government policies and actions regarding matters of particular interest to Friends. The purpose is to keep Quakers informed of issues by circulating briefing sheets indicating basic details and possible action by Friends locally and beyond. The committee can also make representations to government or parliament on behalf of Friends, or propose such action to the Presiding Clerk, Standing Committee or Yearly Meeting. Financial support for the committee's work comes from the AYM Peace & Social Justice Fund (5.6.4) and from Regional Meetings.

The Quaker Peace & Social Justice Testimonies Committee aims to strengthen individual Friends' ability to act as peacemakers, focusing on the spiritual basis of Quaker service. Activities of the committee include gathering and preparing written resources for use by Friends, encouraging Friends' awareness of peace and social justice issues, helping them provide spiritual support to those actually working in these fields, facilitating the funding of relevant study by Friends, and cooperating with other Quaker peace groups. The committee can apply for grants from the Peace & Social Justice Fund of up to \$4000 or more with the approval of either Standing Committee or Yearly Meeting.

The Thanksgiving Fund Committee is responsible for the management of the Thanksgiving Fund to help Friends implement appropriate Concerns (5.6.3). The Thanksgiving Fund Committee is charged with raising awareness of the fund among Friends and encouraging them to donate to the fund or

make provision in their wills. The Thanksgiving Fund Committee receives Concerns (1.4.5) that have been adopted by Meetings, determines the appropriateness of funding them in whole or part from the Thanksgiving Fund and advises the AYM Treasurer accordingly (5.6.3).

5.3.7 Laying down of committees

Where no Regional Meeting has come forward offering to take on an AYM committee, or when an AYM committee informs Yearly Meeting that its task is complete, then Yearly Meeting will decide whether it should be laid down or handled in a different way.

5.4 AYM service and collaboration

5.4.1 Quaker Service Australia

Quaker Service Australia (QSA) is the service and overseas development/aid organisation of Australia Yearly Meeting, constituted during Yearly Meeting in January 1959. Its purpose is to express in a practical way the Concern of Australian Quakers for the building of a more peaceful, equitable, just and compassionate world. To this end, QSA works with communities in need, to improve life by means of projects that are economically and environmentally appropriate and also sustainable.

QSA works with project partners on projects that have been initiated by the local communities themselves. QSA works with Aboriginal groups within Australia on a range of initiatives, and with communities in other countries where the focus currently is on food and water security, environmental sustainability, poverty alleviation and capacity building. The aim is for QSA's project partners, and their associated communities, to become self-sufficient and thus enable QSA to exit the project at a suitable point.

QSA is a non-government, non-profit organisation. It is currently hosted by NSW Regional Meeting and has been legally incorporated as an association in that state. It has accreditation from the Federal Government agency AusAID, reviewed every five years. QSA is a signatory to the Australian Council For International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct and adheres to its requirements. It is a Public Benevolent Institution, is endorsed

as a tax-deductible gift recipient (for its two tax-deductible funds) and endorsed as an income-tax-exempt charity.

It is a committee under the care of AYM, although separately incorporated. Its membership is limited and controlled by Australia Yearly Meeting, it reports regularly to Yearly Meeting in *Documents in Advance* each year and at QSA sessions and during its AGM held during Yearly Meeting. QSA's strategic direction, management plan and project selection criteria are submitted annually to Yearly Meeting for approval. Also QSA is reviewed by an AYM-appointed committee at intervals of approximately five years. However, QSA is financially independent of Australia Yearly Meeting, and people employed by QSA are not employees of Australia Yearly Meeting.

QSA's membership comprises Friends appointed by Yearly Meeting or Standing Committee, including a representative from each Regional Meeting, the AYM Presiding Clerk and AYM Secretary *ex officio*, and others appointed by QSA itself, subject to confirmation by Standing Committee or Yearly Meeting. Overall there must be no fewer than seven members (excluding ex-officio members) who are nominated by and represent the host Regional Meeting. QSA appoints its own Convener, Treasurer and Public Officer, the appointments being confirmed by the next meeting of Standing Committee or Yearly Meeting. An Auditor is appointed by a general meeting of QSA or at its AGM, and confirmed at the next meeting of Standing Committee or Yearly Meeting.

The QSA Association's Rules provide that the Management Committee shall comprise all members of QSA. The Management Committee agrees on policy matters, ensures the legal and ethical integrity of QSA, supports the office staff, ensures adequate resources are available for the conduct of QSA and determines which projects QSA is able to support. The day-to-day management of QSA and its projects is delegated by it to the staff, assisted by volunteers.

The finance for projects comes from both Quaker and non-Quaker sources, including overseas-aid funds made available to QSA through AusAID. Donations of \$2 or more made to QSA for its Overseas Aid Fund and its Aboriginal Concerns Fund (specifically for Aboriginal Communities in necessitous circumstances) can be claimed as tax-deductible donations.

The financial year ends on 30 September each year and audited accounts are presented at QSA's AGM. They are subsequently available from the QSA office and on the QSA website.

If AYM decides to relocate QSA to another Regional Meeting, care is necessary to ensure that all relevant legal requirements are complied with and that there is no negative impact to QSA's standing under tax law or any other law, or with bodies such as ACFID, AusAID and its own insurers.

The history of QSA is detailed in *Friends in deed* (Saville 2009).

5.4.2 The Friends' School

The Friends' School in Hobart was founded in 1887, jointly by Friends there and in London. It has always been coeducational, accepting both residential and day students. The enrolment at present is over 1300.

The school has been described by Oats (1979) and Given (1997). The broad curriculum includes both academic and practical subjects, and offers many cultural and physical activities. The school provides an education from kindergarten to tertiary stages that is basically religious but non-sectarian. Through formal classes, assemblies and its overall atmosphere, the school encourages students to search for truth and a commitment to a personal set of values.

The following Purpose and Concerns Statement resulted from deliberations by the whole school community in 1990:

Friends' is a co-educational Quaker School based on fundamental values such as the intrinsic worth of each person, the recognition of 'that of God' in everyone, the desirability of simplicity, and the need to establish peace and justice. We are concerned for the academic, cultural, physical, social and spiritual development of each person in our care. We seek to help our students grow into men and women able to think clearly and make decisions for themselves but sensitive to the needs of others, strong in service to the community and with an international perspective. We believe that these aims can best be achieved with the active support of all members of our School community.

Overall responsibility for the management of the school has rested since 1924 with the Australia Yearly (formerly General) Meeting, which appoints a Board of Governors consisting of a Quaker representative from each

Australian Regional Meeting (but three from Tasmania Regional Meeting) along with seven members from the Tasmanian community, recommended by an Executive Committee located in Hobart. The school was incorporated in 2000 under the Tasmanian *Associations Incorporation Act 1964*. Details of the school's governance are given in Supplement 5.

The school particularly welcomes the children of Members and Attenders, and can consider applications for assistance with their fees.

5.4.3 Friends World Committee for Consultation

Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) was established in 1937 to facilitate loving understanding of diversities among Quakers and explore the common ground spiritually, with God's help; and to enable fuller expression of Friends' testimonies in the world.

The FWCC brings together representatives of Yearly Meetings around the globe for personal contacts and mutual support of Yearly Meetings, smaller groups and individual Friends. The aims are to achieve a world vision of the truths Friends hold in common and to strengthen the global community of about 340 000 Quakers in over 70 countries. There is a World Office in London serving a Central Executive Committee that includes the Clerk and Secretary of each of the regional four Sections: Africa, the Americas, Asia and the West Pacific, Europe and the Middle East. The Central Executive Committee publishes *Friends World News* twice a year. The committee is also responsible for the Quaker United Nations Offices in New York and Geneva.

In the past, the committee organised large world gatherings every three years ('Triennials') but now plans to hold such international meetings only occasionally. Australia Yearly Meeting would be entitled to send two representatives, as its Members currently number just under 1000. Each representative would be appointed at Yearly Meeting for three years from the next July. Their names (and those of their 'alternates' — Friends preparing to become representatives) are proposed by the AYM Nominations Committee from among members of the AYM FWCC Committee, described below.

Asia West Pacific Section (AWPS)

All constituent Yearly Meetings of FWCC are totally autonomous, but

they are grouped geographically into Sections. The Asia West Pacific Section (AWPS) was defined in 1985 and consists of the current FWCC representatives from Australia Yearly Meeting and their counterparts from Aotearoa/New Zealand and Japan, from four Yearly Meetings on the Indian subcontinent, plus smaller Worshipping Groups in other nearby countries. An AWPS handbook may be downloaded from the AWPS website www.fwccawps.org. (That website also includes a contact list and copies of the Section's newsletters.)

The AWPS arranges a meeting of its FWCC representatives at the world gatherings and at times between. Also, it encourages and facilitates intervisitation between Yearly Meetings in the area, and can act as a Regional Meeting for isolated Friends or groups in the area, as regards Membership (Chapter 3) and pastoral care.

Like the FWCC proper, the AWPS depends on financial support from Yearly Meetings and private individuals. Australian contributions can be sent via the AYM Treasurer. Australia Yearly Meeting makes some provision in its budget to meet reasonable travel expenses of its representatives at FWCC or AWPS gatherings, but not observers or Friends attending on behalf of QSA or *The Australian Friend*, for example.

The AYM FWCC Committee

Within Australia, Australia Yearly Meeting has a committee to support AWPS and Australia's FWCC representatives. This 'Representative Committee' (5.3.1) consists of one Friend from each Regional Meeting appointed by Yearly Meeting who serves for up to seven years; the Presiding Clerk and AYM Secretary, *ex officio*; any Australian office-holder within the structure of FWCC internationally; and either one or two Young Friends.

The committee meets during Yearly Meeting. It promotes the work of FWCC and AWPS among Australian Quakers, being responsible for ensuring that FWCC documents go to all correspondents and RM Clerks, and for preparing a report for inclusion in *Documents in Advance* each year (5.5.5). The committee identifies Concerns of Australian Friends that warrant FWCC's attention, after bringing the matters to either Standing Committee or Yearly Meeting for

endorsement. In addition, the committee may bring items of interest, such as projects for support, to the attention of QSA (5.4.1).

Quaker United Nations Offices (QUNO)

Friends have an office in New York and another in Geneva that are accredited to the Economic & Social Council of the United Nations as parts of a non-governmental organisation. The staff seek to put forward to various UN committees Friends' views on global matters concerning human rights, refugees, peace, disarmament, economic issues, emerging crises and conflicts. Both offices provide opportunities and places for diplomats to meet informally and discuss controversial matters 'off the record'.

Administrative responsibility for each office is held by a committee including five Friends from FWCC and one from each of the sections of FWCC. Five other members are appointed by Britain Yearly Meeting and by the American Friends Service Committee, to the Geneva and New York offices, respectively. Funding comes from Yearly Meetings and individuals. For more information see www.quno.org.

5.4.4 Aotearoa/New Zealand Yearly Meeting

Aotearoa/New Zealand Yearly Meeting (A/NZYM) and Australia Yearly Meeting maintain contact with each other, notably by sending as representatives to the Yearly Meeting of the other one or two Friends, who then report back. An Australian YF representative attends A/NZYM YF Easter camp and in return a Young Friend from A/NZYM attends Yearly Meeting in Australia and the associated YF gathering (3.9).

5.4.5 National Council of Churches in Australia

The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) is the successor to the Australian Council of Churches (ACC) and Friends have been active since the ACC's foundation in 1946 in support of an ecumenical witness. Australia Yearly Meeting is a member, even though Friends do not subscribe to any statement of a creed.

The Presiding Clerk (or a proxy appointed by Yearly Meeting) represents Friends *ex officio* at gatherings of the Heads of Churches and

Friends have two representatives on the NCCA Executive, one being the Presiding Clerk (or a proxy). Other Friends may be appointed to various Commissions of NCCA (see *Documents in Retrospect*) and its service arm, Christian World Service. Those appointments and the respective duration of each (usually three years) are decided by Yearly Meeting or Standing Committee. The appointments are normally made after consideration of names brought forward by the AYM Nominations Committee, as for AYM committees (5.3.1).

The NCCA organises a triennial Forum, attended by three Friends appointed by Yearly Meeting, including the Presiding Clerk *ex officio* and normally a Young Friend. AYM representatives submit reports to *Documents in Advance*, for consideration by Yearly Meeting.

5.4.6 Other affiliations

Apart from AYM collaboration with national bodies, which require YM approval, an individual Regional Meeting may appoint representatives to appropriate organisations operating only within its own area or state.

5.5 AYM publications

5.5.1 General

Australia Yearly Meeting issues a regular periodical (5.5.2) and also books for particular purposes, by means of the AYM Publications Committee (5.3.4). Examples include *this we can say* (mentioned in the Preface) and the present handbook. Such books are added to the collection of historical Quaker literature in the National Library of Australia in Canberra. (Access to material in the AYM archives requires permission from Australia Yearly Meeting until 30 years from the date of publication.)

Most AYM publications are available from Friends Book Sales (5.3.6), whose email address is sales@quakers.org.au, and current postal address is Friends Book Sales, PO Box 181, Glen Osmond, South Australia, Australia, 5064.

Reference has been made already to the monthly newsletter compiled by the AYM Secretary (5.2.3). This is available free, by post or email, on application to the Secretary.

5.5.2 *The Australian Friend*

The Australian Friend is the official journal of Australia Yearly Meeting. Its purpose is to keep Friends in touch with activities of the Society and each other, to share spiritual insights and practical concerns, and to stimulate awareness of the wider witness of Quakers in Australia and beyond. The journal is published by *the Australian Friend* Committee (5.3.6), formed by a Regional Meeting appointed at Yearly Meeting. The editor (or co-editor/s) comes from that committee itself, or not, as the committee decides.

Issues of *The Australian Friend* usually include reports of Yearly Meeting and Standing Committee gatherings, Yearly Meeting epistles and news from AYM committees and Regional Meetings. There may also be poems and articles on spiritual subjects, life stories, essays on current political and social questions, book reviews, correspondence, photographs and illustrations. Contributions from individual Friends and others are welcome, and may be invited by the editor. Sometimes an edition of the journal focuses on a theme of interest in Australia, or is edited by a guest or group.

The Australian Friend is currently published four times a year and posted free to every Member of the Society. It is also available on the AYM website. Australia Yearly Meeting bears the costs of the journal's publication and distribution, but the journal is also available to others by subscription.

Regional Meetings are encouraged to use *The Australian Friend* as a form of outreach to Attenders and Enquirers by purchasing copies to give away.

5.5.3 Dictionary of Australian Quaker Biography

The *Dictionary of Australian Quaker Biography* (DAQB) is a series of loose-leaf folders containing details of past Australian Friends. The Dictionary follows works by William Oats such as *Quakers in Australia before 1862: A Biographical Index* and *A Question of Survival: Quakers in Australia in the Nineteenth Century*. Most of the text consists of 'Testimonies to the Grace of God in the life of X' (4.8.5) written by Regional Meetings, along with published biographical articles and other background material. (Note that such 'Testimonies' relate to individual Friends' life stories, whereas the 'testimonies' discussed in section 1.4.2 are about the Society's religious principles.)

The AYM Secretary produces an annual supplement to the DAQB,

containing material on Friends who have died during the preceding year or two, or adding to the information on Friends already included.

Copies of the DAQB are available on CD-ROM and as printed text, in RM libraries and in the private collections of some Friends. In addition, copies are lodged in the University of Tasmania library, some New South Wales libraries and the National Library of Australia. Some overseas libraries also receive updates.

5.5.4 *Australian Quaker Meetings, Office-holders, Members, Attenders and Children*

The names and addresses of individual Australian Members and Attenders (subject to their agreement) are listed in *Australian Quaker Meetings, Office-holders, Members, Attenders and Children* (Australia Yearly Meeting 2009). It is supplemented by the other information indicated in the title and published at roughly two-yearly intervals. The information is provided on a continuing basis by RM Membership Secretaries and by the AYM Secretary, and is collated centrally. Members can update their own information securely via the Society's website www.quakers.org.au.

The aim is to aid communication within Regional Meetings and throughout Australia Yearly Meeting. The list is not available to the public, either in hard copy or online.

5.5.5 *Documents in Advance and Documents in Retrospect*

Documents in Advance consists of reports by AYM office-holders, AYM committees and Regional Meetings, for consideration by the next Yearly Meeting gathering (6.2.5). Section B of each report points out where a decision is sought from Yearly Meeting. RM reports mention any changes of trusts or accounts. The Annual Tabular Statement, which is included, shows the current numbers of Members and Attenders in the various Regional Meetings. *Documents in Advance* also includes the minutes of the previous mid-year Standing Committee, while those of the Standing Committee just prior to Yearly Meeting are recorded in *Documents in Retrospect*.

Documents in Retrospect includes minutes taken at the Yearly Meeting gathering, as well as background papers, a Yearly Meeting photograph, the epistles and other supporting documentation (6.4.1).

Both booklets are compiled by the AYM Secretary and distributed within the Society. They are also available on the Society's website www.quakers.org.au and from Friends Book Sales (5.3.6).

5.5.6 Backhouse Lectures

The Backhouse Lecture Committee, not the Publications Committee (5.3.4), publishes the text of the lecture presented at each Yearly Meeting (6.3.3, Appendix E). Apart from the printed version of around 70 pages, most lectures are also available on audiotape and CD-ROM, as a podcast, on the Society's website www.quakers.org.au and from Friends Book Sales (5.3.6).

5.6 AYM finance

5.6.1 Introduction

Individual Friends are enjoined to try to live simply and to use their possessions not as ends in themselves but as God's gifts entrusted to them, to be shared with others under God's guidance. They are challenged to ask themselves whether they regard their possessions as given to them in trust, and whether they part with them freely for the needs of others and give a right proportion of their resources to support the work of the Society (2.5.2), in part as a bequest perhaps (5.6.9).

The AYM budget for the General Fund (5.6.2) for the financial year starting on 1 October is prepared by the AYM Treasurer (5.2.4) and sent to each RM Treasurer for consideration by the July meeting of Standing Committee. Draft annual accounts for the year ended 30 September are later sent to RM Treasurers, and the audited accounts are available for approval at the January Yearly Meeting.

Australia Yearly Meeting's cash assets include the General Fund (5.6.2) and the various funds managed by committees appointed by Yearly Meeting, e.g. the Thanksgiving Fund Committee (5.6.3), and the Peace & Social Justice Fund Committee (5.6.4). Such committees may operate their own bank accounts but may employ people only with the permission and guidance of the AYM Treasurer (5.3.1).

In addition, there is a Reserve Fund held for contingences. Yearly Meeting

or Standing Committee transfers amounts to and from it as necessary.

5.6.2 General Fund

The General Fund is the main fund for the work of Australia Yearly Meeting. It receives contributions chiefly from Regional Meetings on a quota basis (2.5.2). The quotas are agreed as part of the budgeting process and are based on the relative memberships of the respective Regional Meetings.

AYM budget proposals for the General Fund include the estimated income and the expenditures on the AYM office and AYM officers, travel on behalf of Australia Yearly Meeting, publication of *The Australian Friend*, and support for FWCC and other Quaker activities.

5.6.3 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 (5.3.6) and monies are distributed by the AYM Treasurer on its recommendation. Distributions enable Members and Attenders to pursue concerns (1.4.5) of the Society, such as education, historical research, publicity, social welfare, spiritual healing, international order, 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.

Fund income derives partly from bequests (5.6.9). Bequests of money to Australia Yearly Meeting are normally added to the Thanksgiving Fund's income, unless either the donor specifies otherwise, or alternative arrangements are decided by Yearly Meeting.

Note that the rest of 5.6.3 applies equally to the **Peace & Social Justice Fund** (5.6.4).

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 and investments representing it are held by, and in the name of, the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia Incorporated. The Fund is administered by a committee of at least four Members and Attenders appointed for three years by Yearly Meeting, with the AYM Treasurer usually an additional member. 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.

The committee is hosted by a Regional Meeting, which, should a vacancy occur on the committee, consults people with relevant expertise and then appoints a successor, to be confirmed later by Standing Committee or Yearly Meeting.

Allocations are usually made from the Income portion of the Fund, which is separate from the Capital portion. The Income portion is made up of interest earnings on the Fund and any donations to the Fund that are not specifically marked as being for the Capital portion. However, the Committee may in any one year make a single grant of up to 10 per cent of the capital, provided there is agreement by the Presiding Clerk, the AYM Secretary and one RM Clerk. Furthermore, the committee may make grants of more than 10 per cent of the capital in any one year, provided Standing Committee agrees.

Normally the committee does not accept multiple submissions by a single entity.

Grants from the Fund are made by the AYM Treasurer as directed by the committee. The following steps are taken.

- a) Grant application forms may be downloaded from the Members' section of the Society's website www.quakers.org.au. The applicant submits to the committee convener a written outline of the proposal and the funds sought, accompanied by a minute of endorsement from a Local Meeting, Regional

Meeting, Yearly Meeting, Standing Committee or AYM committee. Such sponsorship would depend on a thorough investigation of the project by the sponsor from several points of view, notably that of Friends' testimonies (1.4.2), along with a commitment to provide ongoing support if the grant is awarded. A Clearness Meeting (4.4) might be useful.

- b) The applicant supplies relevant background material to accompany the application, e.g. biographical notes about the people involved or proposed publication.
- c) The committee may interview the applicant and/or ask for more written information about the application for funding.
- d) The committee makes a decision as soon as practicable, and not more than four months from the date on which the application was lodged.
- e) In some cases, the committee may offer the applicant a grant that is less than the amount requested and/or has conditions attached.
- f) 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).
- g) The committee makes an annual report to Yearly Meeting with details of all grants made that year and the income and capital in the Fund.

Maintaining the Fund is promoted by reminding Members and Attenders on appropriate occasions of its existence and its purpose. Forms for intending donors are available from RM Clerks.

5.6.4 Peace & Social Justice Fund

The Peace & Social Justice Fund provides financial support to Quaker peace committees and to individual Members and Attenders to implement the peace and social justice Concerns of the Society. These include reconciliation, disarmament, non-violent conflict resolution and improving race relations, in addition to other aspects of the Society's work and witness for peace and social justice.

Allocations from the Fund are used mainly to encourage Friends to undertake activities on behalf of the Concerns just mentioned, notably by paying administrative expenses, equipment, travel costs, publication costs, conference fees and the costs of employment by Australia Yearly Meeting of

peace and social justice workers. This applies to individual Friends, but also to Regional Meetings and AYM projects or AYM Committees. The Fund may also support similar projects, even if not directly connected with Quakers, if sponsored by a Regional Meeting.

Normally it may not be used for ongoing projects that require extended management, or fellowships like those financed by the Donald Groom Peace Fund (5.6.5).

The **capital** of the Peace & Social Justice Fund is built up mainly by donations from members of the various Worship Groups, occasionally as bequests (5.6.9). The committee may also seek to raise money from philanthropic and other sources outside the Society.

Administration of the Fund is through a committee of Members and Attenders who are committed to peace and social justice and knowledgeable about Australia Yearly Meeting. The committee operates in a similar way to the Thanksgiving Fund (5.6.3), under the care of a host Regional Meeting appointed by Yearly Meeting. It meets at least twice each year.

To encourage patient discernment and measured action in Quaker witness, the Peace & Social Justice Fund Committee normally does not respond to urgent requests for money. If a rapid decision has to be made, a Local or Regional Meeting may decide to provide the requested support itself and then apply for possible reimbursement from the Fund.

Grants from the Fund of up to \$4000 can be made directly by the committee. Larger grants can be made if approved by Standing Committee or Yearly Meeting. This limit does not apply for the Peace & Legislation Committee and the Peace Testimonies Committee. These committees can support applications of whatever size directly to the Fund, whether for Quaker projects or not, and without requiring Yearly Meeting or Standing Committee approval.

Many other aspects of the operation of the Peace & Social Justice Fund are the same as for the Thanksgiving Fund, as shown in 5.6.3.

5.6.5 Donald Groom Peace Fund

The Donald Groom Peace Fund commemorates the first full-time AYM Secretary, who served from 1970 until his accidental death in 1972. Donald Groom's life of dedication to non-violence is described in the *Dictionary*

of *Australian Quaker Biography* (5.5.3) and in his biography, *Peace Comes Walking* (Rigney 2002).

The Fund's committee was set up in 1974 to support fellowships for training and projects concerning non-violent social change. Fellowships are awarded according to the money in the fund, which is replenished by bequests and donations from Members and Attenders, often by means of annual contributions via their RM Treasurer (2.5.3). There have been 26 Fellows since 1975 (Appendix F).

5.6.6 AYM Travel Fund

The AYM Travel Fund helps cover the travel costs of bringing to Yearly Meeting Asia West Pacific guests (5.4.3); the Backhouse lecturer (5.3.5, Supplement 4); various AYM representatives; members of mid-year Standing Committee; certain office-holders; and members of AYM committees where approved by the committee in each case. Money from the Travel Fund may be augmented by grants from the Thanksgiving Fund (5.6.3).

5.6.7 Investments

AYM funds not required for day-to-day purposes may be invested by the AYM Treasurer and AYM Finance Committee (5.2.4 & 5.3.6), having consideration for issues such as security, ethical criteria, availability and convenience to the Treasurer for deposits and withdrawals. Options for investments include deposits with a bank, building society or public company, property as authorised by Yearly Meeting, and any other form of investment authorised for trust funds by law and Yearly Meeting.

5.6.8 Trusts and property

Land, buildings and/or shares may be acquired by the Society by purchase, gift or bequest. Title deeds of Meeting Houses, burial grounds and trust properties are kept in a safe place known to the AYM Secretary. The Friends' School (5.4.2), however, looks after its own title deeds. In 2009 the only property owned by Australia Yearly Meeting consisted of shares in Werona (2.4.2), and The Sanctuary, a house behind Wahroonga Meeting House in Sydney.

The relevant Regional Meeting is consulted about any proposal by a Local or Recognised Meeting to sell or let on long lease any Meeting House or

burial ground, or to relinquish power over them. Provision is made in any tenancy agreement for ending the tenancy at reasonably short notice should Friends need to use the property. Any Meeting considering dissolution or an end to its distinct character needs to consult the Regional Meeting or Yearly Meeting about the disposal of any trust property. Respect for the traditional ownership of the land by local Aborigines is to be considered as part of any of these decisions.

5.6.9 Bequests

Bequests are an important source of income for carrying on the Society's work. Friends may direct bequests to their Local or Regional Meeting, to AYM funds (5.6) or to specific AYM committees (5.3). Gifts bequeathed simply to 'The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia Incorporated' go to the AYM Thanksgiving Fund (5.6.3). If it is intended that a Regional or Local Meeting or a specific committee should administer the bequest, the will (4.8.2) needs to refer to that Meeting or committee by its full name.

The wording of a bequest is best made as simple and general as possible, consistent with the intention of the testator, to allow the Meeting or committee to use the proceeds most effectively. The following wording is suggested:

*I GIVE the sum of \$..... (or 'my property at') to #..... and
DECLARE that the receipt of the relevant Secretary, Treasurer or other
proper officer shall be sufficient discharge to my Trustee/s.*

Here insert the full name of the appropriate Meeting or committee, after checking it with the AYM Secretary.

If property is bequeathed to the Society, it proves helpful to include a clause allowing its sale, should this be deemed advisable by the Yearly Meeting, beneficiary Meeting or committee. Also, thought should be given to a parallel bequest of funds to maintain the property.

Chapter 6

YEARLY MEETING (YM) THE ANNUAL NATIONAL GATHERING

6.1 General

In the previous chapter, consideration was given to the first meaning of *Yearly Meeting*, the organisation of the whole body of Quakers in Australia, denoted by AYM. Now this chapter is about the other meaning, the annual gathering of Australian Quakers, denoted by YM. One purpose of Yearly Meeting is the reaching of decisions on AYM policy and conduct. Other reasons for Yearly Meeting are the enriching of fellowship between Friends, mutual support in spiritual growth and the discussion of current issues.

Yearly Meeting is usually held for seven to eight days in January, and is hosted by each Regional Meeting in rotation. A Summer School (6.3.4) is held in association with Yearly Meeting.

6.2 Before Yearly Meeting

6.2.1 Practical arrangements

The final choice of the host Regional Meeting for Yearly Meeting in a

particular year is made by Standing Committee at least two years in advance, and generally follows a rotation around all Regional Meetings. The chosen Regional Meeting then sets up an Arrangements Committee to examine possible venues and the adequacy of associated off-site accommodation; suggest a theme for the Summer School; and estimate costs. For guidance, the AYM Secretary has distributed to all Regional Meetings copies of a CD-ROM that records the experiences of past Yearly Meetings. *The A-Z guide to organising a Yearly Meeting* is also available on the Society's website.

It is helpful for the host Regional Meeting to start by establishing several YM committees. These differ from AYM committees (5.3) in lasting only one year and being focused solely on organising the next year's gathering. Typically, the YM committees deal with arrangements, the agenda (6.2.4), pastoral care (6.3.1), the checking of minutes and preparing of an epistle (6.3.6), along with other matters.

An early responsibility of the Arrangements Committee is the listing of tasks to be covered, and the allocation of responsibility for each task. Preliminary ideas are discussed at a Business Meeting of the host Regional Meeting and sent to the AYM Presiding Clerk and the AYM Secretary for comment. The Arrangements Committee establishes liaison with the Backhouse Lecture Committee and the AYM Treasurer. The host RM Clerk reports to each subsequent meeting of Standing Committee on the Arrangements Committee's progress.

The Arrangements Committee seeks early contact with the local Indigenous community, to invite an Elder or other representative to address Yearly Meeting at the opening session and, if they wish, to offer a welcome to country. The committee also constructs a budget of all the likely costs associated with conducting Yearly Meeting at the chosen venue. The cost items are set out in detail in the Members' section of the Society's website www.quakers.org.au. Estimates of such outgoings and of the likely number attending enable calculation of the registration charges for those at Yearly Meeting. This is tendered to a Business Meeting of the host Regional Meeting for approval and for the consideration of possible financial assistance to Friends requiring it.

Standing Committee allocates an amount (e.g. \$10 000 in 2009) to the host Regional Meeting YM Organising Committee, which is available from the AYM Treasurer in the October before Yearly Meeting. This subsidy is to offset some of the initial costs, such as a deposit for the venue, and, more recently, to reduce costs for those attending. It is not expected that the subsidy will be eventually returned to Australia Yearly Meeting. It also pays for the cost of those who are hosted and paid for by Yearly Meeting, among whom are the AYM Presiding Clerk, the AYM Secretary, the FWCC AWPS visitor and the Aotearoa/New Zealand Yearly Meeting representatives.

When plans are clear and approved by Standing Committee, the Arrangements Committee arranges timely publicity through the AYM Secretary, in *The Australian Friend* and by correspondence with RM Clerks.

6.2.2 Arrangements for younger Friends

The importance of caring for younger Friends and spiritually nourishing them cannot be overemphasised (3.8). At Yearly Meeting Friends seek to give their children grounding in what the Society represents.

Junior Young Friends (3.8.2), aged between 12 and 17 years, have their own program, formed in consultation between them and the Arrangements Committee. It may include camping, visits to places of interest and physical activities appropriate to the venue. As well, there are opportunities to discuss issues they care about and to engage with the whole of Yearly Meeting throughout the week, including the concert and the final Meeting for Worship, when they present their epistle.

Children younger than 12 are cared for separately in an appropriate space. Their program may include art, music and games, as well as quieter times for talking and worship.

Friends' concern for a trusting open society is tempered by the duty of care owed to younger members. The Arrangements Committee ensures that leaders and Carers working with the younger Friends comply with current Child Protection legislation and guidelines (4.2). The AYM Committee for Child Protection, in consultation with the AYM insurers, has developed a policy and a procedure for child care during Yearly, Regional and Local

Meeting occasions which take into account state regulations. This document is available on the Society's website www.quakers.org.au.

6.2.3 Media coverage

Media coverage is arranged well ahead of Yearly Meeting. The Arrangements Committee appoints one or two local Friends, and has power to co-opt others, if required during Yearly Meeting, to contact local newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations, in order to provide background information. A media conference might be arranged for the beginning of Yearly Meeting, and also interviews with particular Friends, such as the Backhouse lecturer (5.3.5). Media releases may be issued by the Presiding Clerk if newsworthy decisions are reached during Yearly Meeting. However, neither reporters nor members of the public are permitted to attend YM sessions.

6.2.4 Agenda

The Agenda is first drafted several months in advance by a YM Agenda Committee consisting of the Presiding Clerk (5.2.2), the Assistant Clerk (usually the Clerk of the host Regional Meeting) and the AYM Secretary (5.2.3). In addition, they may co-opt two other Friends.

The agenda allows for presentation of reports from the Presiding Clerk, the AYM Treasurer, the AYM Secretary, the QSA Convener and the Presiding Member of the Board of Governors of The Friends' School. There are also reports from the various AYM committees (5.3), Regional Meetings (2.4.1) and organisations associated with Australia Yearly Meeting, as well as particular statements of concern. In each case, the report ends with a brief identification of questions for decision by Yearly Meeting, if required.

An agenda item stipulated by the Rules of Incorporation (Supplement 1) is the AGM of the 'Association', as Australia Yearly Meeting is termed. The AGM must consider the audited annual financial statement of Australia Yearly Meeting, reports of current AYM office-holders and committees, and appointments for the coming year (paragraph 9.2 of the Rules). In practice, these topics are all dealt with during the various YM Business Meetings and reported in *Documents in Advance* (6.2.5) and *Documents in Retrospect* (5.5.5).

6.2.5 *Documents in Advance*

Documents in Advance contains the draft timetable and agenda of Yearly Meeting, along with RM and AYM committee reports (5.5.5, 6.2.4). The booklet is prepared by the AYM Secretary and issued in time for discussion by Regional Meetings at their Meetings for Business in November and December.

6.2.6 **Attendance**

All Members of Australia Yearly Meeting are entitled to attend Yearly Meeting and to take part in deliberations there. Each Regional Meeting ensures that it is adequately represented. Members of overseas Yearly Meetings also may attend, once the Presiding Clerk is satisfied as to their Membership. The Clerk may invite a representative of the local Council of Churches, whose attendance has been arranged by the Regional Meeting hosting the Yearly Meeting.

Australian Young Friends not in Membership are welcome to attend when their representatives on Standing Committee have obtained Standing Committee's agreement to their nomination and the Presiding Clerk has invited them.

In addition, Attenders of Regional Meetings are encouraged to participate in Yearly Meeting; the only requirements are a recommendation from the Ministry Committee of the respective Regional Meeting, experience of their RM Business Meetings where possible (1.4.4), and endorsement by Standing Committee prior to Yearly Meeting. (The RM Clerk provides Standing Committee and the Arrangements Committee with a list of such Attenders from an RM area in advance.) In circumstances outside the above requirements, an Attender may seek permission to participate from the Presiding Clerk in consultation with the SC representatives of the relevant Regional Meeting.

Shortly after Yearly Meeting's opening, the host Regional Meeting displays a list of the names and affiliations of everyone present.

Anyone entitled to attend a YM session is automatically entitled to participate in the discussion. This replaces an earlier custom for an Attender to obtain permission in order to speak.

Regional Meetings ensure that the procedures described above are widely

known and try to prepare both non-Members and Members for participation in the Yearly Meeting.

6.2.7 **Preliminary meeting of Standing Committee**

It is current practice for one of the regular meetings of Standing Committee to be held on the first day of Yearly Meeting. The full range of responsibilities of Standing Committee is explained in 5.3.2 and Appendix D, but on this occasion its agenda is limited largely to the following items:

- draft agenda of the imminent Yearly Meeting
- time and place of the reading of selected Testimonies of recently deceased Australian Friends
- necessary alterations to the timetable already published in *Documents in Advance*
- approval of the non-Members attending
- bringing forward of names for The Friends' School Board
- arrangements for future gatherings.

The Agenda Committee (6.2.4) subsequently posts up decisions on these items for the information of everyone at Yearly Meeting.

6.3 **During Yearly Meeting**

We did conclude among ourselves to settle a meeting, to see one another's faces, and open our hearts one to another in the Truth of God once a year, as formerly it used to be. (Yearly Meeting in London, 1668, in *Quaker Faith & Practice* 6.02, Britain Yearly Meeting, 1995).

6.3.1 **The first day**

The first day is a busy time. On arrival, those attending complete their earlier registration, pay any outstanding fees, work out the geography of the premises, find their allocated accommodation and renew acquaintanceships. They also need to confirm their choice of Summer School group (6.3.4).

For first-timers there is a special meeting to explain the formal and informal aspects of what lies ahead. Ideally each newcomer to Yearly Meeting is linked with an experienced Friend.

For everyone, the first day is for considering the *Documents in Advance*,

to assess which parts of the program are of particular importance. The YM program includes several kinds of planned session: Business Sessions, Summer School, Share and Tell group meetings, the open AGM of QSA (5.4.1) and the Backhouse Lecture (5.5.6 & 6.3.3). There are also opportunities for members of any representative or expert AYM committee (5.3) or of an associated body to meet, and for office-holders in the various Regional Meetings to confer with their counterparts. A Meeting for Remembrance is held in memory of all those Friends who have died during the year.

The first day is the time for the preliminary SC meeting (6.2.7) and the opening session of Yearly Meeting. The latter is the initial Business Meeting and may deal with the following matters:

- welcome to the land by a representative of the local Indigenous group
- welcome by Australian Quakers to Friends from other Yearly Meetings
- consideration of recommendations from the AYM Nominations Committee for YM committees, viz. the Media Committee, the Minutes-editing Committee and the Epistle Committee, each serving only for the duration of the Yearly Meeting
- approval of Friends (one or two from each Regional Meeting and from Young Friends) to serve on the YM Pastoral Care Committee, which has the task of caring for those attending Yearly Meeting
- an analysis by a Friend (invited by the host Regional Meeting or the Presiding Clerk) of 'The State of the Religious Society of Friends in Australia', based on the reports in *Documents in Advance*, particularly those from Regional Meetings. (Sometimes this analysis is delivered at a later session.)

By the end of the first day, the Arrangements Committee will have posted up a list of everyone registered as present at the Yearly Meeting.

6.3.2 Business Meetings

At the core of Yearly Meeting are the Meetings for Worship for Business, where all the matters presented in *Documents in Advance* are considered and appropriate decisions made. There are two kinds of Business Meeting at

Yearly Meeting: Preparatory Sessions and Formal Sessions. Procedures at both sorts of meeting have been described earlier (1.4.4).

The purpose of Preparatory Sessions is to allow preliminary consideration of certain reports in *Documents in Advance* (5.5.5). A Preparatory Session raises Friends' awareness of the work behind a report, provides additional relevant information and promotes consideration of the questions raised in Part B of the report. Friends who wish to contribute significantly at a Formal Session later are particularly encouraged to participate in the relevant Preparatory Session.

The Agenda Committee asks experienced Friends to clerk and scribe each Preparatory Session. The clerk ensures that the session includes:

- worship
- presentation of the report
- responses to the report
- clarification of issues
- identification of 'matters for the consideration of Yearly Meeting'.

Later, but preferably on the same day, the clerk prepares a record of the session, listing the 'matters for the consideration of Yearly Meeting'. The clerk's statement is posted on a noticeboard before the corresponding Formal Session.

At the Formal Session a Friend presents the record of the Preparatory Session, summarising the clerk's statement and detailing the 'matters for the consideration of Yearly Meeting'. The matter is then open for discernment, under the guidance of the Presiding Clerk (1.4.4). Friends are encouraged to contribute only from a position of knowledge and preparation. The Formal Session culminates in a recorded minute to be included in *Documents in Retrospect* (6.4.1).

6.3.3 Backhouse Lecture

The Backhouse Lecture (5.3.5 & 5.5.6) is generally given early in the week. Friends are encouraged to make it known to members of the public and to invite them to attend, since the lecture is an opportunity for outreach throughout the community and can arouse great interest. Printed copies are available for sale at the lecture venue, directly after the lecture.

The lecture is conducted in the manner of Friends, beginning and ending in silence, without applause. A day or two later, a time is set for Friends to meet the lecturer for questions and discussion.

6.3.4 Summer School

Summer School is aimed at deepening the religious experience of the participants. The theme and form are different each year and are chosen well beforehand by the host Regional Meeting, which invites several Friends to lead groups. There may be artwork, physical activity, quiet periods and/or deep discussion. All create opportunities for joyful and unexpected openings.

The school usually begins on the first Sunday, with the groups meeting separately during the following week, perhaps with a final plenary session.

6.3.5 Share and Tell sessions

Share and Tell sessions are periods in the YM timetable for individual Friends to share their concerns or interests with others. Such Friends make a booking with the Arrangements Committee for a discussion time and space and then put up notices inviting others to gather to discuss the stated subject. After the session, the convening Friend or Attender provides a report to the AYM Secretary for the *Documents in Retrospect* (6.4.1).

6.3.6 'Epistle to Friends everywhere'

The Epistles are statements in which Friends try to describe the atmosphere, setting, weighty issues and spiritual climate of a particular Yearly Meeting. During the first YM Business Meeting, an appointed Friend gives a summary of epistles received from other Yearly Meetings around the world.

Later in the YM program, an Epistle Committee presents a draft epistle from the current Yearly Meeting for consideration at a Formal Session. The final draft is read out, considered and accepted during the last Formal Business Meeting and read again during the closing Meeting for Worship of the Yearly Meeting.

6.3.7 Conclusion

Everyone - Members, Attenders, Young Friends, Junior Young Friends

and younger children - comes together at the closing Meeting for Worship on the final day of Yearly Meeting. They hear epistles from the Yearly Meeting, Young Friends, Junior Young Friends and the younger children. These epistles reflect shared experiences, decisions made, friendships renewed, and times shared together. These epistles are then forwarded to a range of Yearly Meetings with whom we have some relationship.

6.4 After the Yearly Meeting

6.4.1 Documents in Retrospect

Documents in Retrospect matches *Documents in Advance* (6.2.5) in format, and contains the recent SC and YM minutes, and all the agreed reports of activities during Yearly Meeting, including those of the Share and Tell Sessions, the Summer School, and the various epistles (6.3.7). It is compiled and issued by the AYM Secretary in the month following Yearly Meeting.

6.4.2 Follow-up tasks

- Each RM Clerk arranges for a Friend to read aloud the YM Epistle at some meeting of their Regional Meeting.
- RM representatives at Yearly Meeting report back to their Regional Meeting.
- At the earliest RM Business Meeting the Clerk reports on matters sent by Yearly Meeting for Regional Meeting's attention.
- The YM Arrangements Committee updates the YM Organisers' CD-ROM with a factual report on the whole YM experience and a financial balance sheet. Copies of the revised CD are sent to future Arrangements Committees (6.2.1) and the AYM Secretary. *The A-Z guide to organising a Yearly Meeting* on the website is then updated.
- The AYM Secretary advises RM clerks and the conveners of AYM committees of pertinent YM minutes. This includes telling the Handbook Revision Committee of decisions necessitating amendments to the Handbook, as described in the Preface to this edition.
- The AYM Secretary makes the printed Backhouse Lecture available for sale by Friends Book Sales (5.3.6).

- *The Australian Friend* reports on Yearly Meeting in its next issue by means of contributions from Friends who attended.
- The AYM Secretary sends the epistles from Australia Yearly Meeting to other Yearly Meetings with whom we have a relationship.
- The Public Officer sends information from the AGM of Australia Yearly Meeting to the ACT Registrar-General concerning the AYM annual accounts and office-holders, as required in paragraph 9.3 of the Rules (Supplement 1).

Appendices

Appendix A. REFERENCES

The following publications are mentioned in the text of the handbook. Most of them are available on loan from the library of any Australian Regional Meeting, along with much more literature on similar topics. In addition, Quaker reference material is held in the National Library of Australia in Canberra. Items available from Friends Book Sales (5.3.4) are marked with an asterisk.

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Appendix B. BRIEF HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN QUAKERS (1.3)

The following list complements an essay in *this we can say*, pp. 308 - 24.

1770 Sydney Parkinson, a young Friend from England and the natural history draughtsman on Cook's ship *Endeavour*, was the first Friend to set foot on Australia.

1832 - 38 James Backhouse and George Washington Walker, Friends of London Yearly Meeting, investigated conditions of Aborigines, convicts and early settlers, first in Hobart, later on the mainland and Norfolk Island. Their promotion of temperance addressed an acute social evil. Walker established the Savings Bank of Tasmania to encourage thrift.

1832 First Quaker Meeting in Australia held at Hobart in the sitting room of James Backhouse.

1833 Monthly Meeting established in Hobart.

1834 First Annual Meeting of the Van Diemen's Land Yearly Meeting. Van Diemen's Land Yearly Meeting continued until 1853, after which it became known as the Yearly Meeting of Tasmania until 1865, when it became Tasmania Annual Meeting.

1834 First Meeting for Worship held in Sydney on board the *Henry Freeling*, a vessel provided by London Yearly Meeting for Daniel and Charles Wheeler for a religious visit to the Pacific.

1835 First Meeting House in Sydney opened. It was sold in 1840.

1837 First Meeting for Worship in Adelaide, South Australia, held at the home of Barton and Bridget Hack in Hindley Street during the visit of Backhouse and Walker. Meetings for Worship have been held weekly in Adelaide ever since.

1839 Formation of Sydney Monthly Meeting as part of Van Diemen's Land Yearly Meeting.

1839 - 41 Friends settled in Adelaide and at Mount Barker in South Australia. Meetings for Worship were held at Mount Barker from 1842 until 1894.

- 1840 London Quakers shipped a prefabricated Meeting House to Adelaide.
- 1841 London Quakers shipped a prefabricated Meeting House to Australind in Western Australia, which lasted into the 1950s.
- 1842 Joseph Hagen, a South Australian Friend, was elected to the South Australia Legislative Council, probably the first Quaker state politician, ahead of Joseph Phelps Robinson in New South Wales (from 1844), Joseph Barritt (South Australia 1862), Joseph Jones (Victoria 1874-79), Alfred Allen (New South Wales 1889), Robert Mather (Tasmania 1964) and others.
- 1843 Regular Meetings for Worship commenced in Melbourne in the Little Bourke Street home of Edward and Deborah Sayce.
- 1851 - 60 There were about 400 Friends in Victoria. A Monthly Meeting was established in Melbourne in 1854. A Meeting House was opened in Russell Street in 1860.
- 1852 - 55 Robert Lindsey and Frederick Mackie from Brighthouse Monthly Meeting in England visited Australian Friends on a mission of 'care and concern'.
- 1854 A temporary Meeting House was established in Devonshire Street, Sydney.
- 1860 A Meeting for Worship was started at Rockhampton, Queensland, leading to the erection of a Meeting House in 1880. It was moved in 1882 and 1926, but sold in 1968 when the Meeting closed.
- 1861 London Yearly Meeting officially recognised the Meetings in Hobart, Adelaide and Melbourne.
- 1863 Meetings for Worship began in Brisbane in the home of Rachel Hopkins.
- 1865 A timber Meeting House was opened in Brisbane. It was rebuilt in brick in 1932, then replaced by a new one in 1945 on an adjacent site. A new Meeting House was built on the present site at Kelvin Grove in 1972.
- 1867 Meetings for Worship began in Ballarat in Victoria. However, the Meeting dwindled and the Meeting House, purchased in 1875, was sold in 1951.
- 1868 A new Meeting House was built in Sydney, but demolished in 1902 for the Central Railway Station, and replaced by the present building in 1903.
- 1877 First List of Australian Quakers published.
- 1880 Friends from Brisbane travelled over 600 km to attend Quarterly Meetings in Rockhampton.
- 1885 Melbourne Friends opened the Elizabeth Fry Retreat for women ex-prisoners (now Swinborn Lodge).
- 1886 The Young Friends movement was started.
- 1887 The Friends' School was founded in Hobart, and the first issue of *The Australian Friend* was published. Sydney Monthly Meeting was recognised by London Yearly Meeting.
- 1888 First Inter-Colonial Conference of Australasian Friends held in Melbourne.
- 1901 General Australasian Conference in Melbourne.
- 1902 First Australian Friends' General Meeting held in Melbourne as a Quarterly Meeting (i.e. a component) of London Yearly Meeting.
- 1903 Eden Hills Meeting in South Australia was established.
- 1909 London Yearly Meeting sent out two Young Friends, Wilfred Littleboy and Elliott Thorp. During the visit, weekend camps for Young Friends were held in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia. The *Defence Act 1909* (Cwlth) imposed compulsory military training on teenage boys.
- 1910 Following Australia General Meeting, the first interstate camp of Australian Young Friends was held at Healesville, Victoria.
- 1911 London Yearly Meeting set up an Australasian Defence Acts Committee and sent out four Young Friends to organise public opposition.

1912 Quakers founded the Australian Freedom League to object to compulsory military training. During the next two years, many 15-year-old Friends and others were held in solitary confinement in military camps for conscientious objection to cadet training.

1916 - 17 Some Friends participated in the Australian anti-conscription campaigns.

1920 - 24 Australian Quakers collaborated actively with the War Victims Relief Committee of British Quakers.

1926 The first Quaker Meeting newsletter began, in South Australia.

1930 Meetings for Worship commenced in Perth as a result of a visit by Edwin Ashby and F Watson Coleman of South Australia.

1933 Australian Quakers celebrated the *Centenary of Australian Quakerism* including publication of *The Centenary of Australian Quakerism* by Australia General Meeting, being eleven essays presented at a gathering in Hobart.

1938 Australia General Meeting set up the International Relief Committee, which became the Friends Service Council (Australia) in 1940, and the Quaker Service Council Australia in 1960, until renamed Quaker Service Australia in 1987. Thousands of garments were shipped to Europe, and refugees from Nazi persecution were welcomed. Friends strongly advocated for internees and held Meetings for Worship in internment camps at Hay (NSW) and Tatura (Vic). A Meeting for Worship was held regularly at Tatura and several internees became Friends.

1944 The first Annual Summer School was held just before General Meeting.

1953 Canberra Meeting was founded. Melbourne Friends moved to Friends House, Orrong Rd, Toorak.

1960 A new Meeting House was opened in Hobart and the Quaker Service Council of Australia was established there.

1961 Canberra Meeting House was built and opened.

1964 An autonomous Yearly Meeting was established in Australia. The first annual Backhouse Lecture was presented. A Meeting House was built in Wahroonga, Sydney.

1965 Australian and New Zealand Friends travelled on a goodwill mission to Indonesia and Malaysia, to help reduce international tension.

1966 Laurence Wilkinson started eight years as a senator for Western Australia in the federal parliament.

1967 Australia Yearly Meeting was legally incorporated in the ACT. Australia Yearly Meeting supported David Martin, a young Quaker who went to jail in Brisbane as a conscientious objector to compulsory military service during the Vietnam War.

1968 QSA undertook an aid program for the development of intensive domestic agriculture in Vietnam.

1969 The Quaker Shop opened in Adelaide. Sydney Friends and others purchased the rural property 'Werona' in Kangaroo Valley (NSW).

1970 The Quaker Race Relations Committee was established. Donald Groom was appointed Australia Yearly Meeting's first full-time paid Secretary. (He died in a plane crash in 1972.)

1972 The first issue of *Quaker Healing News*, initially edited by Olaf Hodgkin, was published; it was renamed *Wholeness* in 1993.

1973 Friends World Committee for Consultation met in Sydney for its 12th Triennial Conference. Friends supported the establishment of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra.

1974 The number of Australian Friends passed 1000. Blue Mountains Meeting was established at Woodford, NSW. The Donald Groom Fellowship was established. Friends Book Supplies was opened in Sydney (later transferred to Canberra and then Brisbane, laid down in 2000, and taken up by Adelaide in 2008).

1975 Marjorie Sykes, the first Donald Groom Fellow, visited from India.

- 1977 Darwin Meeting was established at the home of Richard and Bronwen Meredith. Local meetings were established in the eastern suburbs of Adelaide and Melbourne.
- 1980 A Meeting was established in Denmark, Western Australia (later called the South Coast Meeting).
- 1981 - 93 QSA undertook a major English language project in Cambodia.
- 1982 A Peace Action caravan organised by South Australian Friends travelled from Adelaide to Buderim in Queensland. The Race Relations Committee organised a major international campaign for the land rights of Aborigines around the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane.
- 1984 Jo Vallentine was elected as a senator for Western Australia in the federal parliament, with re-election in 1987 and 1990 (Appendix E).
- 1985 After years of discussion, Yearly Meeting accepted the need to 'offer loving support to those who are sharers in relationships other than marriage — which includes unmarried couples and homosexual pairs'. Quakers in Canberra organised a seminar on Indo-China for diplomats, academics and public servants.
- 1987 The Wider Quaker Fellowship was revived for mailing articles to isolated Members.
- 1988 The executive officer of QSA was made a full-time appointment. A collection of poems by Australian Friends was published in Canberra.
- 1989 *The Dictionary of Australian Quaker Biography* was inaugurated by William and Marjorie Oats.
- 1990 The Northern Suburbs Meeting was established in Melbourne. South Australian Friends began a weekly community-radio program, 'Dove Talk', broadcasting to Adelaide, Canberra and Townsville.
- 1991 Friends organised a stall advocating peace at a major exhibition of military equipment in Canberra.
- 1992 - 93 Lynn Arnold was Premier of South Australia.
- 1993 Stephen Angell of New York Yearly Meeting introduced the Alternatives to Violence Program in Queensland. In the following year, AVP workshops were started in Victoria and Western Australia, later spreading across the country.
- 1996 Victorian Friends introduced the Meeting for Learning program across Australia, for study and retreats to deepen spiritual awareness.
- 1998 Yearly Meeting formally said 'Sorry' to Australia's Aborigines for its part in past misdeeds by White Australians.
- 2000 - 05 Friends Lodge operated at New Norfolk in Tasmania as a place of healing.
- 2001 The national census recorded 1815 people who stated their religious affiliation to the Society, though AYM records showed just below 1000 Friends, and more than 900 Attenders.
- 2002 An exhibition of display panels was arranged in Fremantle to celebrate 350 years since the start of the Quaker movement. Later the exhibition was circulated nationwide between Regional Meetings, and displayed publicly.
- 2003 Publication of *this we can say: Australian Quaker life, faith and thought*. A Quaker home page www.quakers.org.au was established on the Internet and the AYM Secretary's monthly newsletter became available by email.
- 2007 A Friend and his male partner were married in the manner of Friends under the care of the Canberra Regional Meeting.

Appendix C. COMMITMENT & MARRIAGE (4.3)

i) Declaration of an intention to celebrate a marriage/committed relationship

The following information has to be provided by the couple to the Regional Meeting’s Registering Officer at least one month before the proposed date, but no more than six months.

To Regional Meeting of Friends
I, (full name)
of (full address)
a Member/Attender/non-member of (Regional Meeting) ,
son/daughter of (name of father) (living/deceased)
of (town or locality) and of (name
of mother)(living/deceased) of (town or locality)
and, (full name)
of (full address)
a Member/Attender/non-member of (Regional Meeting) ,
son/daughter of (name of father) (living/deceased)
of (town or locality) and of (name
of mother)(living/deceased) of (town or locality)
hereby inform you that it is our intention to marry/celebrate a committed
relationship, and that it is our desire, subject to the convenience of Friends,
that our marriage/commitment ceremony be solemnised according to the
usages of Friends at a Meeting for Worship at
Meeting House on (date) at (time)

(Note: if necessary, the spaces for place, date and time may be left blank, but in that case, after discussion with the Meeting’s Registering Officer, the details are furnished to the Regional Meeting as soon as possible.)

We, on our respective parts, hereby declare that we are free of any other marriage engagements or committed relationships and that either we have attained full age, or are proceeding in this matter with the consent of our parents, surviving parents, or guardians, as the case may be, and that we are not subject to the marriage, civil union or registered relationship laws of any other country.

Signature of the first party.
of (place)
on (date)
Name, signature and full address of one adult witness
.....
.....

Signature of the second party
of (place)
on (date)
Name, signature and full address of one adult witness
.....
.....

ii) The Quaker commitment procedure is as follows:

- a) The Meeting for Worship having gathered, a short explanation of a Friends’ Meeting for Worship, and the form which the Meeting will take, may be given by an appointed Friend, for the benefit of any present who are not familiar with Friends’ way of worship and procedures.
- b) The Meeting is conducted in a spirit of worship based on silence, out of which vocal ministry may arise, both before and after the partners make their declaration.
- c) The partners at a convenient time shall stand and, taking each other by the hand, shall declare, the one after the other in the order chosen by themselves, and in an audible and appropriate manner, the words of the Marriage Declaration or Commitment Declaration.

d) If by reason of an impediment of speech or otherwise a partner is unable to make the declaration distinctly, then the Registering Officer present shall read audibly the declaration and the partner shall signify to its terms in some clear and unmistakable way to the satisfaction of the Registering Officer.

e) After both partners have made their declaration the Friends' Certificate of Marriage/Commitment shall be signed by them and the two witnesses, and subsequently read audibly by the Registering Officer or some other suitable Friend. There is no fixed time for the signing and reading of the certificate except that both must be done during the Meeting for Worship. It is, however, advisable to agree beforehand whether both the signing and reading are to be done immediately after the declarations have been made, whether they are both to be left till near the close of the meeting, or whether they are to be done at separate times.

f) If the couple desire to give or exchange rings the matter is discussed with the Registering Officer. It has been found that one appropriate time is while the certificate is being read.

g) After the close of the Meeting, all others present who have heard the declaration are invited to add their names to the Friends' Certificate of Marriage/Commitment as further witnesses. At this stage, if the couple is seeking legal recognition of their marriage or committed relationship, the certificates required under the *Marriage Act 1961* (Cwlth) or relevant legislation for the recognition of relationships are signed under the guidance of the Registering Officer.

iii) Typical Quaker Certificate of Marriage/Commitment

A. B. of (1)

and C. D of (2)

have made known their intention of marriage/commitment to each other and due public notice of that intention has been given. The proceedings have been allowed by the proper representatives of
Regional Meeting of the Religious Society of Quaker Friends in Australia Inc.

This is to certify that, for the solemnisation and celebration of their

marriage/commitment, A. B. and C. D. were present at a duly appointed public Meeting for Worship at (3).
on (4). Taking each other by the hand,
A. B. declared

Friends, in the presence of God and this assembly, I take this my friend C.D. to be my life partner/husband/wife, trusting with divine assistance to be loving and faithful as long as we both on earth shall live (5), and C.D. made the same declaration, referring to A.B. In confirmation of these declarations, they have signed this certificate in this Meeting.

A. B. (6)

C. D. (6)

We, the following, have been present at this occasion and have signed our names as witnesses on the date written above (7).

Footnotes

(1) Here inscribe the address and parentage or other sufficient description of the agreed first speaker.

(2) Here inscribe the address and parentage or other sufficient description of the agreed second speaker.

(3) Here insert the address of the Meeting House or other place at which the ceremony was held.

(4) Here insert the full date of the ceremony.

(5) Here insert the exact words of the chosen Declaration, in place of the typical example given above. The Declaration is devised and written out beforehand by the couple, in consultation with the Registering Officer.

(6) This is the signature used before the ceremony, in the event that one or both of the couple change their name at this commitment celebration.

(7) Here there is space for everyone present who so desires to sign their names.

iv) Requirements for a legal marriage

For legal recognition of a marriage, the provisions laid down in the federal *Marriage Act 1961* must be observed. These apply throughout Australia. When the name of a Quaker Registering Officer is added to the Register

of Ministers of Religion, the Officer is provided with the required forms for the solemnisation of marriages in Australia, and a *Handbook for Marriage Celebrants*. The Registering Officer will also receive notification of any subsequent amendments to the Act and the associated Regulations.

Under the *Marriage Act*, marriage is prohibited between parties within certain relationships. The Act also prescribes a uniform marriageable age for all Australia — 18 years for males and females. Further information relating to these matters can be found in the *Handbook for Marriage Celebrants*.

(The following paragraphs describe the formal procedure, involving forms available from the Regional Meeting's Registering Officer.)

Notice of intended marriage on the prescribed form is provided to the proposed celebrant at least one calendar month before the date of the wedding. Each person must provide evidence of age, such as a birth certificate or passport. If either party has been previously married, evidence of termination of that marriage must be provided: a decree absolute or a death certificate for the former spouse.

The notice of intention is signed by the parties in the presence of a qualified witness, who also signs the notice. (An authorised celebrant may be the qualified witness; other qualified witnesses are listed on the form.)

The Registering Officer then gives the parties copies of the official 'Document outlining the obligations and consequences of marriage and stating the availability of marriage education and counselling'.

Prior to the solemnisation, preferably a few days before the ceremony, each party must make a declaration before the Registering Officer, as to their conjugal status and to the party's belief that there is no legal impediment to the marriage. The forms for these declarations are printed on the back of the registration certificate of marriage.

The Registering Officer prepares three legal certificates of the marriage: an official certificate for registration purposes; an entry in the Meeting's marriage register that is identical to the registration copy; and a certificate for the couple. These certificates are prepared before the ceremony. After the ceremony the couple, two witnesses and the celebrant must all sign all three certificates.

The registration certificate and the notice of intended marriage is forwarded to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registry of the State or Territory where the marriage was solemnised within 14 days of the marriage. It is the responsibility of the Registering Officer to do this.

Appendix D. AYM STANDING COMMITTEE (5.3.2)

Standing Committee appointments are made annually, except for members belonging *ex officio*. One of the two representatives of a Regional Meeting on Standing Committee is usually, but not necessarily, the RM Clerk (2.5.1). The two YF representatives are proposed by the YF Nominations Committee (3.9) and their names brought to Yearly Meeting for approval. If either of the approved YF representatives is not a Member of the Society, the Presiding Clerk sends a letter of invitation to that Young Friend to attend.

All Friends appointed need to be concerned for the spiritual life of the Society as well as the practical application of Quaker principles. Appointees to Standing Committee make every effort to attend its meetings. If an RM representative cannot do so, the Regional Meeting appoints an alternate.

The travel and accommodation costs for all members of Standing Committee attending a mid-year meeting are made available from AYM funds, so as to ensure attendance from all Regional Meetings, without regard to distance.

The quorum for a meeting of Standing Committee is six members, from at least three different Regional Meetings. The AYM Presiding Clerk, if in attendance, acts as Clerk of Standing Committee; otherwise, those present appoint one of their number to act.

When urgent matters arise, the Presiding Clerk can call special meetings of Standing Committee with at least 14 days' prior notice. More usually, issues of urgency are dealt with jointly by the Presiding Clerk, the AYM Secretary and one other member of Standing Committee (plus the AYM Treasurer if appropriate), acting on behalf of Australia Yearly Meeting. Such action is reported to the next meeting of Standing Committee.

One task of the SC meeting is to approve the agenda for Yearly Meeting (6.2.7), ensuring that all Concerns arising in AYM committees and from Regional Meetings are brought to Yearly Meeting for consideration and decision. After the mid-year Standing Committee, its members are expected to report fully to their Regional Meetings. The minutes of Standing Committee are available to all Australian Friends, unless confidentiality is necessary.

Appendix E. BACKHOUSE LECTURES (5.5.6)

- 1964 *The Evolutionary Potential of Quakerism* by Kenneth Boulding.
1965 *The Shaping Spirit* by Clive Sansom.
1966 *Seeking in an Age of Imbalance* by Rudolph Lemberg.
1967 *On Being Present Where You Are* by Douglas V Steere.
1968 *In the Spirit of the Family* by William N Oats.
1969 *Toward a Multi-racial Society* by A Barrie Pittock.
1970 *Security for Australia?* by Keith AW Crook.
1972 *The Quaker Message* by L Hugh Doncaster.
1973 (January) *Friends and Other Faiths* by Otto van der Sprengel.
1973 (August) *Pilgrimage toward the Fountainhead: Quakerism and Zen Buddhism today* by Yukio Irie.
1975 *Retirement: a Time to Reap, a Time to Sow* by WA McNaughton.
1976 *Imperialism Without Invading Armies* by Charlotte and Stewart Meacham.
1977 *Papua New Guinea: Third World on our Doorstep* by Mary Woodward.
1978 *Wisdom: the Inward Teacher* by Margaret Wilkinson.
1979 *Quakers in the Modern World: the Relevance of Quaker Beliefs to Problems of the Modern World* by J Duncan Wood.
1980 *Quakers and Sacramental History; Reflections on Quaker Saints by a Quaker Sinner* by Hector Kinloch (unpublished).
1981 *What Jesus Means to Me: Jesus as the Liberator* by Roger C Wilson.
1982 *Celebration: A Missing Element in Quaker Worship* by Ormerod Greenwood.
1983 *An Adventure into Feminism with Friends* by Sabine Willis.
1984 *Pilgrims for Justice and Peace* by Peter Jones.
1985 *For All the Saints* by Gerald Priestland.
1986 *Looking for Meanings of My A-Bomb Experience in Nagasaki* by Susumu Ishitani.
1987 *The Vision that Connects* by Carol and Dougald McLean.
1988 *Creative Conflict* by David Purnell.
1989 *A New-born Sense of Dignity and Freedom* by Erica Fisher.

- 1990 *Quakers in Politics* by Jo Vallentine and Peter Jones.
- 1991 *Loving the Distances Between: Racism, Culture and Spirituality* by David James and Jillian Wychel.
- 1993 *Living the Way: Quaker Spirituality and Community* by Ursula Jane O'Shea.
- 1994 *As the Mirror Burns: Making a Film about Vietnam* by Di Bretherton.
- 1995 *Emerging Currents in the Asia-Pacific* by Donna Kyle Anderton and Barbara Baker Bird.
- 1996 *Our Children, Our Partners: A New Vision for Social Action in the 21st century* by Elise Boulding.
- 1997 *Learning of One Another: The Quaker Encounter with Other Cultures and Religions* by Richard G Meredith.
- 1998 *Embraced by Other Selves: Enriching Personal Nature through Group Interaction* by Charles Stevenson.
- 1999 *Myths and Stories, Truth and Lies* by Norman Talbot.
- 2000 *To Learn a New Song: A Quaker Contribution to Real Reconciliation with the Earth and its Peoples* by Susannah Kay Brindle.
- 2001 *Reconciling Opposites: Reflections on Peacemaking in South Africa* by Hendrik W van der Merwe.
- 2002 *To Do Justly, and to Love Mercy: Learning from Quaker Service* by Mark Deasey.
- 2003 *Respecting the Rights of Children and Young People: A New Perspective on Quaker Faith and Practice* by Helen Bayes.
- 2004 *Growing Fruitful Friendship: A Garden Walk* by Ute Caspers.
- 2005 *Peace is a Struggle* by David Johnson.
- 2006 *One Heart and a Wrong Spirit: the Religious Society of Friends and Colonial Racism* by Polly Daksi Walker.
- 2007 *Support for Our True Selves: Nurturing the Space where Leadings Flow* by Jenny Spinks.
- 2008 *Faith, Hope & Doubt in an Age of Uncertainty: Combining the Realms of Scientific and Spiritual Inquiry* by George Ellis.
- 2009 *The Quaking Meeting: Transforming our Selves, our Meetings and the More-than-human World* by Helen Gould.
- 2010 *Finding Our Voice: Our Truth, Community and Journey as Australian Young Friends* by Australian Young Friends.
- 2011 *A Demanding and Uncertain Adventure: Exploration of a Concern for Earth Restoration and How We Must Live to Pass on to our Children-and their Children and all Living Things-an Earth Restored* by Rosemary (Rowe) Morrow.

Appendix F. DONALD GROOM FELLOWS and their projects (5.6.5)

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|------|--|-----------|--|
| 1975 | Marjorie Sykes; spoke about Asian perceptions and concerns. | 1992 | Swati Desai; worked with Indian tribal people. |
| 1975 | Lilla Watson (Aboriginal activist); <i>Minority Groups in America: Their Struggle and Ours</i> . | 1993 | Simon Weber; mediation in US and Europe. |
| 1975 | David Martin; work at Kendall River with Aboriginal people. | 1994 | Niramon Prudahorn (Thailand). |
| 1975 | Jann Bennett; shared her experiences with Movement for a New Society in Philadelphia. | 1996 | Victoria Rigney; <i>Peace Comes Walking</i> . |
| 1975 | Charlotte and Stuart Meacham (American Friends Service Committee); <i>Listening to Aborigines</i> . | 2001 | Peace Brigades International training in Victoria. |
| 1976 | Ibu Gedong Bagoes Oka; Indonesian translation of Mahatma Gandhi's <i>The Story of My Experiments with Truth</i> . | 2000 - 03 | Jason McLeod; worked in West Papua. |
| 1978 | Peter Jones (Tasmania Regional Meeting); worked on non-violent change, nuclear issues, Aborigines and land rights. | 2004 - 05 | Louise Cook-Tonkin; worked in Aceh, Indonesia. |
| 1979 | Rosemary Morrow; non-violent actions in Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific. | 2006 - 07 | Jarrod McKenna; <i>Empowering Peacemakers</i> . |
| 1980 | Rachel Bloomfield; non-violence training workshops in New Zealand. | 2008 | Hannah Middleton; Guahan project. |
| 1981 | Diana Pittock; built non-violence training network (Franklin River, Pine Gap, Roxby Downs). | 2009 - 10 | Robyn Slarke; recording women's non-violent action for change in Papua New Guinea. |
| 1982 | Noriko Toyama (Japanese anti-nuclear activist); visited in Australia and New Zealand. | 2011 | Maggie White; prevention of violence to women and children in the Kimberley. |
| 1986 | Joanna Hayter (People for Nuclear Disarmament); visited Japan with Noriko Toyama. | | |
| 1987 | Penny Duckworth; Indian trip. | | |
| 1987 | Gracelyn Smallwood (Aboriginal activist). | | |
| 1988 | Anne Pattel-Gray; worked for the first National Aboriginal Women's Conference. | | |
| 1988 | Sulak Sivaraksa (Thai Buddhist peace and social justice leader); toured Australia. | | |
| 1990 | Erwina Darmajanti (environmental activist); worked for Pesticide Action Network in Indonesia. | | |

Appendix G. GLOSSARY

In general, Friends prefer plain English, in accordance with the testimony to simplicity. However, special Quaker terms are sometimes encountered which require explanation, as in the following Glossary. Other explanatory publications are by Gillman 1994, Heron 1994, Smith 1985 and Ponting 1956 (see Appendix A for the full references).

Advices & Queries: recommendations and spiritual guidance for Quakers, resulting from discussions over the years, with thought-provoking questions. They represent one aspect of the accumulated wisdom of Friends.

Affirm: to attest to a truth by a positive statement, granted legal status in Britain from 1722 and therefore in Australia. An affirmation is an alternative to swearing an oath.

Attender: someone who attends Meetings for Worship regularly although not a Member of the Society, and who in many cases contributes appreciably to the life and support of a Meeting. Attenders are listed (with their permission) in the publication *Australian Quaker Meetings, Office-holders, Members, Attenders and Children*, with the Attender's given name printed in mixed case.

A non-Quaker who attends only a few times or irregularly may be called an Enquirer.

Australia Yearly Meeting: either the national body of Friends in Australia, or the annual Yearly Meeting gathering, as explained in the Preface. Australia Yearly Meeting consists of all Friends in the Regional Meetings of Australia and is legally incorporated in Canberra.

Backhouse Lecture: an annual lecture, usually delivered at a Yearly Meeting by an Australian or overseas Friend. Published versions present perspectives on contemporary and Quaker issues in Australia. (The British equivalent is the Swarthmore Lecture.)

Birthright Friend: a historical label for Quakers entitled to Membership of the Society on account of their parents' belonging. Such inherited Membership is no longer common in Australia.

Britain Yearly Meeting: the body, then known as London Yearly Meeting, to which Australian Quakers belonged until 1964.

Business Meeting: a Meeting for Worship for Business, at which decisions are made corporately by the members of a Meeting, in seeking to discern God's will.

Carers: either the same as Overseers, or people specifically responsible for the safety of children in their charge.

Centre down: to use silence to find an inward stillness, a sense of community and freedom from merely intellectual activity, to become open to the leadings of God together.

Child membership: the attachment of a child to a Meeting of the Society until the age of 16, with the concurrence of the child's parents. The name of such a 'child of the Meeting' is listed among those of Friends and others.

Christian Faith and Practice in the experience of the Society of Friends is an anthology of Quaker inspirational writings and guidelines that was approved by London Yearly Meeting in 1959. The 1995 version is called *Quaker Faith & Practice*, a single volume of 667 pages. The equivalent in Australia is the combination of this present handbook and *this we can say: Australian Quaker life, faith and thought*.

Clearness Meeting: a special gathering of Friends asked to help a person or persons discern the way forward in some matter. The Friends involved may be selected jointly by the person and the Regional Meeting's Overseers.

Clerk: each Local Meeting, Regional Meeting and the Yearly Meeting has a Clerk or co-Clerks. The role of a Clerk is to handle correspondence, and prepare for and facilitate Business Meetings. During such a meeting, the Clerk drafts a minute immediately after discussion of any point, summarising the sense of the Meeting, for immediate consideration and amendment by the gathering until there is unity. In short, a Clerk combines the duties of a non-directive chairperson and a secretary. Subsequently, the Clerk supervises the carrying out of actions arising from the recorded decisions. In addition, the Clerk represents the Meeting in contacts with other people or bodies.

Concern: a weighty matter that disturbs the conscience and impels the concerned person or Meeting towards action, i.e. 'the promptings of love and truth in the heart' (London Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings, 1986). A Member or Attender brings the matter to Regional Meeting through their Local Meeting, or relevant RM Committee, preferably after consultation with experienced Friends (possibly by convening a Clearness Committee, see 4.4). This is quite different from 'concern about' which implies action by someone else. See p. 96 in *this we can say*.

Convincement: a spiritual acceptance of the Quaker Way as a means of being closer to God (Hubbard 1985).

Correspondent: a representative of a group of Friends, either a Worshipping Group, Recognised Meeting or Regional Meeting, who provides a link to a Regional Meeting or Yearly Meeting committee.

Discernment: 'the faculty one uses to distinguish the true movement of the Spirit to speak in Meeting for Worship, from the wholly human urge to share, to instruct, or to straighten people out' (Loring 1998). Group discernment (of God's will) is the aim of a Business Meeting or Clearness Meeting, for instance.

Documents in Advance: a compilation of reports by the committees and office-holders, collated for consideration at the next Yearly Meeting.

Documents in Retrospect: a publication issued since 1998 after each Yearly Meeting to record the events and decisions there and at the preceding Standing Committee. It contains reports of the various sessions, current office-holders and committee members; along with a list of people attending the Yearly Meeting.

Elders: members of a Ministry Committee (2.3.6), whose task it is to nurture the spiritual life of a Meeting and its members. This includes seeing to the right holding of Meetings for Worship.

Eldering: the encouragement or respectful guidance of someone by an Elder, to foster Spirit-filled ministry in a Meeting for Worship.

Enquirer: see Attender.

Epistle: a letter addressed 'To Friends everywhere' at the end of a special occasion, such as a Yearly Meeting.

Evangelical Friends: Quakers particularly affected by the movement which swept through Protestantism in the mid-19th century, concerned less with social action than church growth and Christian mission. The movement effectively ended the Quietist period of Quakerism in Britain. The evangelical branch of the Quaker movement prevails in parts of the USA and in developing countries, as the result of missionary activity.

Experimentally: a significant word used by George Fox in his saying 'and this I know experimentally', meaning through personal experience rather than hearsay.

Feeling out a question: tender exploration of an issue by group discussion.

Friends: the term is used in this handbook to refer to individuals who have been formally accepted as Members, and embraces Attenders who have shown commitment to the aims, principles, procedures and welfare of the Religious Society of Friends.

Friends of the Truth: a name adopted by early Quakers in gradual replacement of Children of the Light. The Truth, they believed, was that Christ had come to teach his people himself, revealed through the Inward Light of his Spirit.

Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC): the international organisation linking Quakers around the world.

Gathered Meeting: a Meeting for Worship once it has reached a depth of stillness that touches each person present and may provide the basis of spoken prayer or other ministry.

Holding someone in the Light: supporting someone by prayerful remembrance.

Holy Experiment: the plan of William Penn for a Jesus-based government of Pennsylvania. It started in 1682 but ended in 1756 when the non-Quaker governor declared war on the Delaware Indians, who were allies of France.

Inner Light: the central concept of the Quaker Way; the belief in divine truth nourishing the conscience. The latter alone is also subject to human fallibility, so inner promptings are to be voiced only with humility and tested by sharing with the larger group, e.g. a Clearness Meeting or Business Meeting. Other names for the Inner Light are ‘the Seed’ or ‘that of God within’ or ‘the universal Spirit that creates, sustains and heals’.

Lay down: to end the existence of a committee or *ad hoc* body whose work has ceased, or to end a task to which a Friend was committed. It is a step not taken lightly.

Leading: a tentative feeling of being guided by the Spirit to act in a particular way. If the leading becomes more certain, it becomes a Concern.

Letter of Introduction and Greeting: a signed document given to a Friend by the Clerk of the Local or Regional Meeting, to facilitate acceptance by Quakers encountered in the course of private travel and to strengthen the bonds between Friends.

Light: the Light is a metaphor now commonly used by Quakers to describe an inner awareness of religious truth and moral values, of the power to act accordingly, and of unity with others (Brinton 1955).

Local Meeting: a substantial worshipping group involving active Quakers who regularly hold a Meeting for Worship and a Business Meeting after the manner of Friends. It is part of a Regional Meeting but responsible for its own local affairs.

Meeting: a word with two meanings, either a group of people or the occasion of their coming together.

Meeting for Worship: a time of corporate waiting to sense God’s presence and will. It is a basic element of life as a Quaker.

Member: one of a group such as a Local Meeting, a committee or the Religious Society of Friends. To distinguish between such alternatives, the word needs to be followed by the name of the group and the use of either lower-case ‘member’ or capital-case ‘Member’. The latter is a person formally accepted as a Member by a Regional Meeting. The term ‘member of the

Meeting’ embraces all the Members, Attenders, Young Friends, Junior Young Friends and ‘children of the Meeting’ within the fellowship of a particular Local or Recognised Meeting.

Memorial Meeting: a Meeting for Worship after the death of a Member or an Attender closely attached to the Society. Also known as a Meeting for Thanksgiving for the Grace of God in the life of that Friend. The purpose is to celebrate the evidence of God’s working in the life of the departed. It may be combined with the funeral.

Ministry: the expression of a spiritual insight that the speaker feels impelled to share during a Meeting for Worship.

Ministry of Listening & Care: an AYM program of courses of study to deepen spiritual awareness.

Minute: a summarising written statement at the end of a period of discernment, accepted by all present. It results from an initial tentative draft composed by the Clerk of the Meeting and subsequent discussion until there is unity on the wording.

Monthly Meeting: a term used until recently in Britain but replaced in Australia by ‘Regional Meeting’, though Business Meetings of the latter may well occur monthly.

Mysticism: the tradition of an immediate spiritual intuition of truths felt to transcend ordinary understanding, or the pursuit of an integration of the self with ultimate reality. In Quaker terms, it can be ‘the awareness of (or belief in) God’s presence individually and in the corporate Meeting for Worship, an awareness that results in a changed perception of the world and a willingness to be guided by the Spirit, the Inward Light, the Christ Within’ (Abbott 2004).

Opening: a fresh and major insight, perceived as the will of God. Quakers test the validity of such a perception by submitting it to the Meeting in order to seek divine guidance as to whether it is ‘in right ordering’.

Outreach: activity aimed at enhancing public awareness of the Quaker message. It may be in the form of leaflets, newspaper advertisements, personal contact, special public meetings or operating a website.

Overseer (or Carer): a member of the Oversight Committee of a Regional or Local Meeting. The committee is charged with caring for the welfare of all members of the Meeting, i.e. Members of the Society, Young Friends, Attenders, and their families.

Pacifism: the application of love in times of violence, extending beyond rejection of war as a means of resolving conflict. It is one of the Quaker basic testimonies, stemming from the Sermon on the Mount and expressed in a declaration to the English king in 1660.

Peculiarities: discarded testimonies, such as refusing to doff the hat, even in common courtesy.

Pendle Hill: a prominent hill in northern England, from the top of which George Fox had a vision of a people to be gathered, and the name of the Quaker study centre at Wallingford, Pennsylvania, USA. Also a suburb in Sydney named after a Quaker family who originally settled there.

Plain speech: talking without ornament or social differentiation. Most people in the 17th century said 'you' when addressing a social superior, and 'thou' or 'thee' to the rest. Quakers avoided discrimination by using 'thee' for everybody.

Prayer: intimacy with God.

Programmed Meeting: a style of Meeting for Worship involving a prepared order of service, usually conducted by a pastor. It may include hymns, congregational prayer and a sermon, as well as a time of silent worship. Such Meetings are common in parts of North America and countries influenced by American Quaker missionaries, notably in Africa and Central America. Programmed Meetings are unusual in Britain and Australia.

Proselytising: attempting to persuade people away from existing denominational attachments. Friends avoid proselytising.

Puritans: members of a reform movement within the Church of England during the late 16th and the 17th centuries, dedicated to eradicating traces of earlier Roman Catholicism and to focusing on the Bible. Puritans were essentially Calvinist and hence intolerant of Quakers.

Quakers [plural]: The Religious Society of Friends as a community, either Australian (i.e. AYM) or worldwide.

Quaker Service Australia (QSA): the Quaker aid and development organisation in Australia that works with communities in need to improve their lives by means of projects that are economically and environmentally appropriate and sustainable. See 5.4.1.

Quaker United Nations Offices (QUNO): these are offices under the auspices of the Friends World Committee for Consultation, and accredited by the United Nations in Geneva and New York, to foster activities in line with Quaker testimonies. One example is the providing of neutral premises where diplomats can discuss contentious issues informally.

Queries: part of *Advices & Queries*, being a set of questions for Friends and Meetings to put to themselves periodically, as challenge and inspiration. One or two might be read out early in a Meeting for Worship or Business Meeting.

Quietist period: the time between about 1725 and 1825 when the Society consolidated after decades of persecution that had greatly reduced Quaker numbers.

Quota: a sum asked annually from each Regional Meeting to cover the costs of AYM activities. It is calculated by dividing the costs between the Regional Meetings according to the number of adult Friends in each, as reported in the most recent tabulation in *Documents in Advance*.

Ranters: one of many sects arising alongside the Quakers in the 17th century in England. The Ranters believed in unchecked individual freedom to follow any interpretation of the leadings of the Holy Spirit. That resulted in illegal irresponsibility and dissension. Many became Quakers instead.

Recognised Meeting: a group that meets at least monthly to worship in the manner of Friends, and that appoints a correspondent to maintain contact with its Regional Meeting.

Regional Meeting: a religious and administrative unit for Australian Quakers, with one Regional Meeting in each region, mostly within state boundaries. Each conducts regular Meetings for Worship for Business, subject to the guidance of Yearly Meeting as expressed in this handbook but with significant autonomy.

Right ordering: a manner consistent with the accumulated experience, insights and customary practices of the Society.

Schedule: the form sent out annually by the RM or LM Treasurer to adult Members and many Attenders (if they wish) in the region, for collecting money to meet the RM quota for AYM outgoings and to meet RM costs. The form guides the Treasurer in allocating donations to various aspects of the agreed budget.

Seed: a metaphor used by early Quakers to denote ‘that part of God’s nature, capable of growth, which was brought into the heart of man (and woman)’ (Isaac Pennington).

Seekers: independent groups of searchers for God’s will, arising in northern England in the early 17th century, eventually becoming the Religious Society of Friends.

Sense of the Meeting: the outcome of a collective attempt at discerning God’s will on an issue, for possible recording as an agreed minute.

Shakers: formerly an American celibate and communistic sect, formed in 1747 by an English ex-Quaker.

Spirituality: awareness of the nature and significance of one’s inner being, of what lies around and within the material universe and of one’s personal relationship to these things.

Standing Committee: effectively the executive committee of the Society. It takes decisions for the whole Religious Society of Friends in Australia between gatherings of the Yearly Meeting. However, major decisions by Standing Committee have to be ratified by the subsequent Yearly Meeting. Standing Committee consists of certain AYM office-holders, representatives of all Regional Meetings and of Young Friends.

Stop in the mind: an expression used by Friends when they feel unable to approve a proposed course of action.

Summer School: day or days of spiritual exploration through fellowship, discussion and activities relating to themes of interest to Quakers, taking place in conjunction with the holding of Yearly Meeting.

Tabular Statement: a table published in *Documents in Advance* prior to Yearly Meeting each year, showing the current number of Members in each Regional Meeting, along with the numbers of listed Attenders, Young Friends and children (including Junior Young Friends).

Testimony: the word has two meanings in Quaker parlance. First, there are the principles of conduct that characterise Quaker practice, e.g. Peace, Integrity, Equality. Second, there is a statement drawn up by the relevant Regional Meeting to record the evidence of God’s working in the life of a deceased Friend.

Threshing Meeting: a meeting held to discuss a controversial issue. Expressions of all points of view are heard but no decision is taken.

Travelling minute: the written endorsement a Regional Meeting can give to one of its members, about to travel ‘under concern’.

Under concern: as a result of an inner compulsion discerned as God’s will.

Universalism: a view of religion advocated by some churches and by the Quaker Universalist Group, founded in Britain in 1978. The idea is that there are many paths to God or truth, no single spiritual tradition having a monopoly. Quaker Universalists draw inspiration from many faiths (particularly their mystical aspects), as well as from secular humanism.

Unprogrammed Meetings: the style of Quaker Meeting for Worship originating in England and continued there and in Australia, for instance. It is characterised by a lack of a prearranged order of readings, hymns, sermons, etc.

Visitors: two Friends appointed by a Regional Meeting to meet an applicant to become a Member of the Society, to ascertain through discussion and worship whether the applicant is sufficiently familiar with the heritage and testimonies of Quakers and is in reasonable unity with them.

Weighty Friend: colloquial description of a Friend of long experience, good reputation and reliable judgment. Alternatively, a ‘seasoned Friend’.

Wider Quaker Fellowship: a mail network begun by Rufus Jones in 1936 to link isolated people and sympathisers of other denominations to the Society. There is a branch in Australia.

Woodbrooke: the Quaker study centre in Birmingham, England.

Worship: humanity's intuitive response to experience of the holy, of some sacred, transcendent and immanent power or being.

Worship Meeting: either a Local Meeting, a Recognised Meeting or a Worshipping Group.

Worshipping Group: an informal association of Friends and others, too few in number to be a Recognised Meeting, who meet from time to time to worship in the manner of Friends and who maintain contact with the nearest Local Meeting.

Worship sharing: the process whereby each member of a sympathetic group speaks from the heart, sharing spiritual experience with the others, usually on an agreed topic. There is no 'head-talk', interruption or discussion.

Yearly Meeting: either the national Quaker organisation (AYM) or the annual national gathering (YM).

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