

J&P Minutes February 20 2022

Present:

Peter Jones, Jo Petrov, Maxine Barry, Jenni Bond, Sally McGushin, Felicity Rose

Apologies: Katherine Purnell

Treasurer's report: Peter

P&J funds are now part of the RM treasury and will be disbursed by Rick Tipping when we require them. We still have an allocation and Peter will keep a record of our expenditure.

Peter reported that there is \$200 in the old account with MyState, for which we have had a cheque account over the years.

Our meeting discussed disbursing the \$200 in order to close the MyState account. We decided to donate \$100 each to Medecins Sans Frontieres, and \$100 to the UNHCR, both of which we have supported over the years.

We also resolved to ask Rick to provide from our funds, \$200 to IPAN in response to their request for funding to assist with the publication of the Report on the People's Enquiry recently completed.

Business arising.

- Discussion on the motto for a banner to display once the election is called (as decided last year). The meeting agreed to strengthen the wording to say "Quakers all for Climate Justice" rather than the more 'passive' "Quakers Support Climate Justice".
- Jenni noted that all the car stickers have been taken. Question - should we get more printed? The printers can adjust the wording easily.
- Maxine received a concern from Jason McLeod regarding a proposed rifle range at Maggs Mountain. This has been rejected by the local council. Jason recommends watching this issue in case it is appealed. As a committee we will write to oppose such a development if it is revived.
- Janice Blakeney sent a copy of a letter she and Steve received in response to urging Senator Abetz to support the Voice to Parliament, part of the Uluru Statement from the Heart proposals. His response was (in summary) that it was an unnecessary body because Indigenous people can elect representatives to the federal parliament. (see below for the correspondence).
- The meeting resolved to write to him and the other Liberal Senators in support of the Uluru Statement proposals. Maxine suggested including Malcolm Turnbull, urging him to correct his statement when in government, that the Voice would constitute a 3d Chamber of Parliament.
- Maxine recommended the **Our Democracy** project which was explained in a recent webinar, on State Capture. This recorded webinar can be viewed at the oOur Democracy website, and was summarised in an interview by Phillip Adams with authors Saffron Zomer and Scott Ludlam, on the Late Night Live ABC RN radio program. Our Democracy has been formed by the ACF, ACROSS and a Lawyers' group concerned about the state of our nation's political life. A change of government will not undo this insidious State Capture situation given that the main influencers also contribute to both

major parties (e.g. Woodside Petroleum has Platinum Membership of both Liberal and Labor party , cost \$110K)

- Maxine has taken the opportunity to participate in **Jacqui Lambie's** online calls for submissions on various subjects - it seems she is helped by gleaning expertise from us in the electorate, given that she hasn't the resources that other politicians have. She takes notice of feedback, e.g. changing her stance on the Cashless Debit Card. Maxine also put in a submission on Nuclear Power. Recommended to keep an eye on her Facebook page. Hopefully her support for an ICAC with teeth will assist after the election/change of government.
- **Integrity Project:** Maxine has been drawn into a small working party with Sue Ennis (VRM) and Wies Schuringa (NSWRM). Taking the opportunity presented by a large bequest, they were keen on the idea of having skywriting at a time just before the election, emphasising the need for integrity in Federal politics. Research continues on the best way to further this proposal. ***Postscript!** Jo just sent me an email - she has read that Clive Palmer is going to spend \$8 MILLION on election campaigning. How can this be allowable? Last election, he expressed that he didn't care that his party won no seats, just pleased that he had prevented the labor Party from winning some.*
- Sally told us of a local initiative at **Zafira:** the Bolani cooking class. Daytime and evening classes are being run . Each class is around 90-120 minutes: preparing the bolani, cooking and eating. Highly recommended. Contact Zafira, 36 Gormanston Rd, Moonah, **62896633**., or follow the Zafira facebook page.
- There was an idea of having a **local Aboriginal Tent Embassy**, suggested by Aunty Rissah Vox, to mark the 50 year anniversary, on a site of important history for local indigenous people (small park opposite Elizabeth College). Aunty has been a long-time participant in the Canberra Tent Embassy. We had discussed applying for some funding from RM to help with provision of a marquee and portable kitchen facility. Unfortunately this project was not proceeded with due to COVID considerations.
- For next meeting: consider providing funding support from J&P to the **Environmental Defenders Office**, lawyers doing very important work - for example, litigation opposing the Burrup Peninsula project of Woodside Petroleum.
- Maxine will prepare a submission to MfWfB for a donation to Aunty Jean Phillips' mission work/ **Common Grace** - see below

Recommended viewing/listening:

- **TOMORROW: AUKUS webinar** at 7 pm (24/2) Speakers are Richard Tanter, Dr Margie Beavis from MAPW, MC Dave Sweeney, ACF. Registrations at noaukusvic@gmail.com
- Series of 7 online small group meetings across many countries run by Conversations at the Crossroads. Issue and action oriented. They will take place on Tuesdays 7-9 pm. The first will be on Tuesday, April 26th. Register at crossroadsconversations.com.au There is a registration fee of \$135, concessional fee \$95.

- **World Beyond War:** this organisation has many excellent educational materials and webinars, a virtual film festival, and online book clubs.
See WORLDBEYONDDWAR.org
- **Common Grace:** Maxine attended an online prayer service led by Aunty Jean Phillips on the evening of 25/1. This is an Aboriginal evangelical interdenominational group that began with Aunty Jean in Brisbane. Its theology is probably not in line with most Quakers' thinking, being inclined to the literal Biblical. But it is a dynamic movement not afraid to call out the injustices suffered by First Nations People, and strongly urging acceptance of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. Maxine attended an online follow up "Conversation with Aunty Jean". Indigenous people from around the country spoke a Welcome to Country, including Alison Overeem from Iutruwita. Aunty Jean spoke of her keen desire to see Aboriginal pastors invited to preach/address congregations which so rarely see or hear from indigenous people. She was powerful in expressing her disappointment for the lack of support from most (all?) major denominations for the work of Aboriginal ministers, who labour without recognition outside their communities, not just ministering to spiritual needs but to the many practical needs injustice-based poverty creates. She issued a strong plea for financial support from Christians of this nation. The meeting shared the leading to apply to RM for a donation.
- Recommended read: an analysis (and critique) of Scott Morrison's understanding and practice of Christianity, by Robyn Whitaker in **The Conversation** recently.
- From our correspondent Sally: **QPLC updates February 2022.**

QPLC is currently watching the proposed Holocaust Museum in Canberra being mindful of the ongoing oppression of the Palestinians.

QPLC is keeping in touch with Friends in the Myanmar region.

It also continues to watch Julian Assange's situation and the action taken by MPs and community advocates on his behalf.

There was an Action Alert 22-1 on the National Plan for Women. Submissions to this plan close on 25 February; submissions received in a particular format, 50% of which is about the person making the submission. The subsequent questions address the draft National Action Plan to end violence against women and children but there is space for comment on each question.

One of the conclusions of the draft document to end violence was the need to better identify the risk of violence and the need to develop a strong base in primary prevention. I was

reminded that we can actually start doing practical things at a grass roots level, through a locally run training programme *Mentors in violence prevention, a bystander intervention programme*. Further information can be obtained through the Women's Health Centre in North Hobart. The course is open to anyone who is interested.

QPLC also provided a link to ICAN's series *Troubled Waters: Nuclear Submarines, AUKUS and the NPT*.

<https://icanw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Troubled-Waters-nuclear-submarines-AUKUS-NPT.pdf> This is a series of very readable short articles .

From Janice and Steve Blakeney:

On 28/01/2022 7:30 pm, Abetz, Eric (Senator) wrote:

Dear Mrs and Mr Blakeney,

Thank you for your email.

Indigenous Australians, like all Australians, already have a voice in the Parliament. They can communicate with their elected members, vote for them, and even run for elected office themselves.

We cannot change the past. So, when will reconciliation be achieved? Why should one group be more equal than others in the Constitution?

Much more is needed to improve indigenous outcomes, and consultation with indigenous groups is an integral part of that, but enshrining a specific group in the Constitution will not "reconcile" us but permanently divide and not improve material outcomes to indigenous Australians.

A fair go for Australians is for all Australians to have an equal voice, not one voice being elevated above others simply because they are of a different group.

Yours sincerely,

Eric Abetz

Liberal Senator for Tasmania

Dear Senator Abetz,

We have received your response to our concerns regarding the indigenous nations call for a voice to Parliament - amongst other proposals as articulated in the Uluru Statement from the Heart - and regret that you have maintained there is no merit in the first nations people's proposals. If everyone were indeed equal in this country, then there would not be a horrendous gap in indigenous health, education and opportunity, likewise refugees would not be treated as criminals and every Australian young or old,

disabled or sound of body would not be demonstrably disadvantaged and left at the end of the queue in your government's policies.

It is more regrettable that you have apparently NOT read the Uluru Statement nor been able to overcome the prejudices of colonial liberal thinking to see the overt injustice the current status of first nations people condemns them to suffer. Words are not enough. Dialogue is what is required - and truth telling. Indigenous people are more the rightful stewards of this land than white settlers. There is 60,000 years of history to back this claim.

Australia will get beyond this impasse. The thinking of the past has to be washed away and new inclusive dialogues take its place. That is our opinion and as people of faith (Quaker) we hold this is the right path.

In peace,

Janice & Stephen Blakeney

Weetah Tasmania