

Report to YM20

Share & Tell: Online Meetings

Tuesday 7 July 2020 1.00-2.30 AEST

Facilitators Jennifer Burrell and Geoff McLean, supported by Peter Hillery

Tech host Mardi Naulty

Report: Let's recognise an online Meeting as a valid Worshipping Group or Local Meeting

About 25 Friends attended this virtual Share & Tell, and we shared a lively discussion. Threads from this discussion are drawn out below.

- After initial reservations, most Friends present had found that an online meeting for worship worked well for them. One Friend, who is very tech-savvy, felt that it did not suit them; which demonstrates that online meetings are not suited to all occasions or for all Friends
- Pros include: the time is convenient, there is no carbon footprint from travel, there is no time spent in travel, it may be the only choice for Friends prevented by illness or remote location from attending an in-person meeting for worship, it is good to connect (re-connect) with Friends you would not otherwise see
- This is not just a COVID phenomenon – online meetings have been running well before COVID and will continue after the pandemic
- The length of time in an online meeting for worship is important to Friends, but perception of the 'correct' length of time differs
- It needs to be / become a spiritual community
- Hybrid meetings for worship (some Friends in -person, some online simultaneously) can be problematic.

We split into 2 groups, one of which discussed the spiritual community of an online Meeting, one of which focused on hybrid meetings.

Spiritual community:

- Works well if Friends know each other anyway (e.g. SWQC online meeting); experience indicates that the sense that 'I belong' also grows over time in a more random online community as Friends meet regularly
- Elder(s) as well as a host (as well as a tech host) would be ideal, to help establish mutual trust and the capacity to share and do together
- Smaller size meetings (faces fit on one screen) are probably preferable.

Hybrid meetings:

- Meetings for worship for business work better than meetings for worship.

Follow up actions

1. We will set a Zoom meeting after YM20 in which to continue this discussion. We will invite all Friends who registered for this Share & Tell.
2. We will seek to establish an online Worshipping Group under the aegis of a regional meeting for a trial period.