

Tasmanian Quaker Newsletter

December 2024

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Tasmanian Quaker Newsletter

Tasmania Regional Meeting
The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia

Cradle Mountain.

November 2024

Photo: Sue Headley

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The image adopted as the logo for Quakers in Australia represents the Aurora Australis, a natural phenomenon of the southern hemisphere, associated with Antarctica, a fragile and magnificent part of the planet. The Aurora Australis is considered an appropriate logo because of its association with:

- pure light, the centrality of the Light for Quakers

- beauty, a quality 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 UN
- the ephemeral and intangible, a reminder that language is inadequate to describe God, the truth or the Spirit within.

Letter from Ros and Raymond Haynes

DEAR FRIENDS,

We miss Tasmania Regional Meeting and our F/friends of many years, and we would love to keep in touch with you. Jenny Seaton suggested that we write something for the newsletter, so here is a brief account of our year in 2024.

Last November we returned from a fascinating tour of Japan with unwelcome luggage – Covid, acquired on our second-last day there. Our Australian vaccinations were of no use against the Japanese strain, and we were really sick for weeks. Ros had multiple clots in her lungs and had great difficulty breathing. It really shocked us and sapped our confidence. We did recover but for a long time felt more tired than usual. We had to cancel our application to be foster parents again.

Then, in April Raymond had a bad fall, tearing the quad muscles and associated tendons of his right knee. Not only was it extremely painful before and after surgery, but for months he was unable to do almost anything without assistance. Ros gained enormous respect for carers for whom this role was not temporary.

Despite these setbacks we are so much more fortunate than many people, and we have the best doctor – our daughter Rowena.

There have also been many good things happening this year.

For decades our daughter Nicky has struggled with sight problems resulting from keratoconus. But this year, after many trips to an ophthalmologist at Westmead Hospital (five hours each way from Orange!) she finally has the best contact lenses ever. So all the travel was well worth it.

In August we had a two-week holiday at a time share in the Gold Coast hinterland, from where we made forays into Brisbane, to the canopy airwalk, and to Binna Burra, which had special memories for us as a place where we went on several family holidays about 40 years ago, when we did long bush walks and abseiling. Not so this time, with Raymond's injured knee.

Other happy news: we got a new puppy, Tessa, a groodle, who is feisty, fearless and a bundle of happy curiosity. She fancies herself as a gardener, specialising in digging and pruning our special plants. In between she captures and hides keys and mobile phones. But she is also very affectionate and reminds us to have fun.



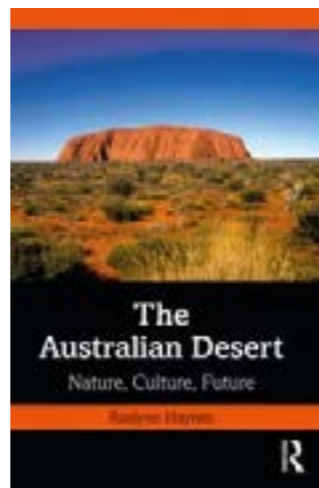
Ros's new book, *The Australian Desert: Nature, Culture, Future*, was published by Routledge in November. She is very happy with the production – so many beautiful colour plates and QR codes to access extra paintings in galleries.

We also joined the local RAR (Rural Australians for Refugees) and hope to sponsor and support some refugee families next year.

Our fairly extensive garden continues to be a great joy (as well as a lot of work) and keeps us active.

Family news: Nicky has had a good year, finding a new and supportive church and friends, cultivating a lovely garden around her unit and enjoying the companionship of her little dog Lily.

Rowena and Joel continue to balance work (the booming Colour City Medical Practice), their church (Open Heavens), family, friends, garden and a rigorous exercise regime. Rowena even goes in Iron



Man events. Their elder son, Zimmy (19), has just completed first-year engineering at the University of

New South Wales, but also manages to keep up with his music; a song he composed was recently accepted for publication. His younger brother, Zachy (18), has just finished school and plans to begin Medicine at Charles Sturt Uni next year.

The international news is too terrible to comment on. We feel so fortunate to live in a country that is not a war zone, that has a relatively stable climate (certainly here in Orange), that we have a comfortable home, a loving family and dear friends.

We hope your year has had much inner sunshine and that 2025 will bring you many blessings.

Ros and Raymond



Family photo last Christmas. Back: Zimmy, Rowena, Joel. Front: Nicky, Ros, Raymond, Zachy

Editorial

SALLY AND Sue are both carrying injuries so please excuse the late publication of this issue. We will both recover, but our styles have been cramped.

Nevertheless there are many great articles in this issue, including the above letter from our much-missed Friends, Ros and Raymond.

Find more to pique your interest in a Quaker perspective on the Middle East, gambling and harm

minimisation, and travel (or not).

Also Sally caught up with another of the Tasmanian Americans during December, and asked him for his reactions to the Trump victory.

Robert Rands said:

“The good news is that it's on the other side of the world. The bad news is, the world is very small.”
Happy reading!

Letter to the editor

HI SALLY,

What an interesting thing to do – seek out the thoughts of those members who have connections with the US on their recent election. I think it is instructive to look at what happened in that election.

If you look at the total vote count and compare it with what happened in 2020. This year Trump received about 77 million votes which was indeed up on his 2020 count of 74.2 million. However the striking change was that Harris received 74.4 million votes compared to Biden's 81.3 million. I'm using the *New York Times* count. People stayed at home is for me the big takeaway. Why did they stay at home – well a lot of the commentary post election appears to be about how worse off people felt, how housing is a big problem, how access to medical care is still an issue.

Talking to my friends in the states I think a lot of people are fed up and no longer prepared to go with the same old same old. In one sense I think this

election was between Democrats and MAGA not between Democrats and Republicans. And if you think Trump is a problem look at what is happening in European elections.

All of which I think is a salutary warning to us in Australia. Do we have a government that is doing anything for us. Personally I think our current PM is useless, however I am unlikely to vote for the other side as long as they are broadly representative of the government of liars we despatched three years ago. However, how many other Australians may take the view that they are just fed up with both sides and vote for change to send a lesson to the parties.

That for me is the concerning thing about the US election – the loss of faith in our system that is at base a loss of faith in our political parties.

Kind regards,

*John
John T W Hayton*

Answering the call: Voices from Palestine, Lebanon and Israel

Answering the call: Voices from Palestine, Lebanon and Israel is a webinar that was recorded by the Quaker Peace and Legislation Committee last month. It is very different to the headline stories with which we have been faced such as Hamas threatening to neutralise hostages and dozens killed in Israeli attacks on a Gaza refugee camp, hospital area. These stories are happening, but *Answering the call* brings forward the voices of resilience, hope and humanity. These are the real stories of real people. It is a positive experience and, if you are able to access it, I recommend that you do just that.

I can give you a brief review, but really you need to watch it to feel and appreciate it.

The voices include the Clerk of the Board of Ramallah Friends' School in the West Bank and Rania Maayeh, Head of School at the Friends' in Ramallah.

There is Darwood Famuda, the American Friends Service Committee's Manager for its Palestinian Programme, and Haradi Mujjar, the AFSC country representative for Palestine and Israel, currently based in Amman, Jordan, because Israel has not let her, or many other aid organisation personnel, re-enter for two years. In Lebanon we meet Rhea Abu Khalli from Brummana Meeting and Sammi Cortez, also from that Meeting as well as David Gray the Principal of Brummana High School, the Friends' School in Lebanon.

The Ramallah Friends' School has a 155-year tradition of accepting students of all faiths and seeking to provide a safe haven for free expression and thought. Their daily routine has been disrupted by escalated security measures, but by continuing with the school, they strive to achieve a sense of normalcy.

AFSC started work in Palestine at the request of the UN in the post World War Two period in order to support Palestinian refugees in Gaza. AFSC was chosen because it has a representative office in the United Nations in New York, and it also had experience managing refugee camps in Europe. It has taken a long-term development approach, with 10-year plans, that have been reviewed and updated according to community needs, but have resulted in the creation of new self-supporting structures in Palestine, while AFSC has moved on to its next programme – working with the communities where



The Ramallah Friends' School has a video of children singing a Christmas carol asking for the war in Gaza to end: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tmlgl-zcILc>

they live. For example, in the 1970s, work with prisoners resulted in the emergence of Jerusalem Legal Aid. These days there are three offices: Gaza, Ramallah and Jerusalem although the Gaza office was destroyed very early on in the current conflict, yet the office keeps going. Continuing to work is the lifeline that keeps them going.

In Brumanna, Rhea Abu Khalli, from Brumanna Monthly Meeting, gave an account of the uncertainty that has been emerging over the last few years with a series of devastating crises including the massive Beirut port explosion, inflation and currency devaluation. Sammi Cortez described the history of the Brummana High School to become the multifaith educational approach that it represents today. And against this background, David Gray, the current Principal at Brumanna High School, spoke of the school community's warmth and courage to get on with their lives regardless of their suffering. Brumanna High School offers a broadly based liberal education, celebrating freedom of thought, action and speech. Students come from all backgrounds. There is no religious or political instruction and the school welcomes children from all faiths and none. It is a place of normality, and act of defiance against the war. One of its main purposes is to prepare children (who will survive) to develop the strength to re-build, in spite of all conflicts and divisions on going around them, by encouraging the development of critical faculty to come up with peaceful resolutions and solutions. The school runs a Model United Nations programme and students learn that there are many different points of view, and if one is to negotiate, one has to empathise and break down problems so that conversations and debates can develop from which peaceful resolutions can result.

This webinar puts a new and hopeful perspective on the Middle East. It brings home that fact that Palestine is a multicultural and multi-religious country with very substantial Christian and secular institutions including educational institutions from preschool to postgraduate. It is not a totally Islamic country with Hamas controlling all activities within Palestine.

Many thanks to QPLC, in particular Aleita Dundas and Jess Morrison for coordinating this

webinar. It certainly leaves you in a much more positive space than the daily news media.

I wholeheartedly recommend this webinar recording to you. It was easy to operate. I could pause and then go back and repeat things.

Here is the link to the webinar:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lbqDmX8bqWo>

Sally McGushin

Co-Convenor Quaker Peace and Justice, Tas.

Gambling and harm minimisation

ALTHOUGH QUAKER Peace and Justice (Tas) is on record as having spoken out against the scourge of electronic gaming machines or pokies in Tasmania's pubs and clubs, we were prepared to compromise this stand by supporting the mandatory player card that the then Treasurer, Michael Ferguson, advocated in September 2022. Michael Ferguson directed the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission to develop and implement a state-wide player card gaming system with pre-commitment for electronic gaming machines in hotels, clubs and casinos.

This scheme would require anyone playing on EGMs in Tasmania to register for the mandatory card which would have a daily default limit of \$100, a monthly limit of \$500 and an annual limit of \$5000. Once you reached your limit, the card would not have worked until the next day, month or year. Players who wanted to reduce their limit would have been able to do so, and the reduced limit would have taken effect immediately. Players who wanted to increase their limit above the default would have been required to prove financial capacity, and that would be reviewed annually.

Given the continued existence of EGMs, this seemed a realistic way of ensuring harm minimisation to players, their families and the wider community. Tasmania was leading the way in harm minimisation.

So it was very disappointing when Jeremy Rockliff announced that any introduction of the scheme was to be postponed indefinitely.

As a committee, QP&J has expressed its concern to every Member of the State Parliament and it encourages other Friends, who feel moved to do so too. The names and contact details (postal, phone and electronic) of Members of the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council are available through the State Parliamentary website: <https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au> It is worth talking to or contacting any or all of them. Those who support harm minimisation will be pleased to hear from you, and those who don't, need to hear from you.

Sally McGushin

Co-convenor, Quaker Peace and Justice

Farewell to Devonshire Street Meeting House

Reprinted from NSW Regional Newsletter

A MEETING for Worship to give thanks for the grace of God in the life of the Devonshire Street Meeting House was held on 13 October. Over 50 people attended in person, and around 15 online. The following testimony was read by Sheila Keane.

Friends,

We gather today to give thanks for the grace of God in the life of this Meeting House. A Quaker Meeting House is not a “steeple house”, as George Fox would have said, but a place for Friends to gather to seek the light within, to join with others “in expectant waiting [to] discover a deeper sense of God’s presence, and to ask for and accept the prayerful support of others joined with [us] in worship” (A & Q, 9, 11). And this Meeting House has also been more than that: it has been a place where the community of Quakers offers to others the spiritual and practical nourishment that the Religious Society of Friends has always provided.

The Meeting House at 119 Devonshire Street has been in constant use by Friends since 1903. It is the second oldest Meeting House in Australia. Many of the names of Friends who have gathered here since 1903 are now forgotten, while others shine still in our memories, remembered for their spiritual light, for their work, for their joyous contributions to what this Meeting House represents.

This building and the Quaker community have offered strong support to the local and wider communities across a broad range of social welfare and social justice matters. Starting in the early years of the 20th century, this Meeting House has seen free kindergartens, mother’s groups, girls’ and boys’ clubs, adult schools, children’s library and craft movements, lunch and rest rooms for factory women, refugee assistance, afternoon homework sessions for local students, anti-Vietnam War groups and assistance for conscientious objectors, the Metropolitan Community Church, LGBTIQ support groups, Aboriginal Land Rights Meetings, Consultations and Conferences, and in more recent decades, a monthly second-hand goods stall in aid of Quaker Service Australia and hosting the QSA office, Alcoholics Anonymous, the Alternatives to Violence Project, dance, drama and drumming groups, Toastmasters, GetUp, meditation groups, Rising Tide, and many more. Many of these organisations were marginalised and not welcome elsewhere, but in keeping with our testimonies of Equality and Peace, they found a safe haven here with us.

We give thanks for the grace of God at work in all the Friends whose lives have been lived in and through this Meeting House, for God has no hands but ours.



Photo: Mary Pollard

Much of the ministry offered during the Meeting celebrated the people who have loved and served in that physical space and also the many important personal events held there; coming into membership, marriages, memorials and celebrations.

At the conclusion of the Meeting we were reminded that the Meeting House is a place of Worship and that spirit is the thread that weaves through all those relationships and activities. That spiritual reality can be found anywhere ... but the Devonshire Street Meeting House has provided an extraordinary home for the past 121 years.

The final Meeting for Worship at Devonshire Street was held on 17 November. We were led into the silence with a fitting reading on endings and beginnings from the words of priest and philosopher John O’Donohue.

Endings are a natural part of life and can lead us on a new journey.

A new beginning may be one which once we never would have anticipated, but one which, if we are open, will engage our hearts. Beginnings often frighten us because they can seem like a voyage into the unknown. But they are an invitation to move forward and to seek out the gifts within us.



F/friends came from far and wide and for many different reasons. Many of them held the Meeting House in a special place in their hearts from earlier in their lives. Devonshire Street Friends have now begun meeting

on level 2, Pilgrim House, next door to the Pitt Street Uniting Church. The room is light and sunny and the reflection on the ceiling of leaves and shadows from the enormous tree outside adds to the ambience. The acoustics are excellent, the building is quiet and concerns that the Meeting may not work so well in such a different space seem to be unfounded. An arrangement of flowers from the Uniting Church helped us feel very welcomed and at home on our first day.

Pilgrim House is within easy walking distance of buses, trains, the light rail and the newly opened metro. All are welcome to join us at 10.45 each Sunday.

The new postal address for Devonshire Street LM is PO Box 479, Broadway NSW 2007.

Prior to our relocating, Jess Arthur and Sarah Hadley interviewed F/friends on video about their experiences and memories of the Meeting House. They were very moved by some of the memories shared. Friends have been very grateful for the presence of Pete Nickell and Jess Arthur, wardens since early 2022, and for their support and superb assistance during the move. They were farewelled at another Sunday event in November. We wish them well as they settle into a new life in Melbourne.

Quakers and Christmas

BEFORE CONSIDERING whether or not Quakers celebrate Christmas, it’s worth looking at the origins of the festival which goes back to Roman times or in the north of Europe, Yuletide. The date was a mistake by the Roman Emperor proclaiming the Day of the Birth of the Sun (or Winter Solstice) as December 25th because their calculations were not quite exact back then. The Church later decided that people could no longer celebrate this pagan festival so opted for the birth of the Christ child instead, given that no-one knew when he was born.

Fast forward to 1647 when the Parliament in London decided to abolish Christmas because it smacked of popery and led to unseemly behaviour – like dancing and excess drinking – though many people still celebrated it in private although there were no church services. The Restoration (1660) brought it back while other additions like Christmas trees and Santa came later. Santa’s official day in the church calendar is December 6th (Saint Nicholas) but it got blended into Christmas given the proximity of the dates.

Quakers were not Puritans, but they considered every day was a holy day so declined to celebrate any special days like Christmas or Easter. Days of the Week and Months of the Year were changed too, given their pagan origins – hence First Day and First Month, still visible on the oldest gravestones in Friends’ Park in West Hobart. Their schools and shops remained open on Christmas Day – indeed early Friends were punished for keeping their shops open – but slowly Friends dropped this practice: Quaker schools in England stopped staying open over Christmas in the late nineteenth century.

George Fox is recorded as saying early on in his youth:

When the time called Christmas came, while others were feasting and sporting themselves, I looked out poor widows from house to house, and gave them some money.

Today, Friends have mixed reactions to Christmas, with many of us taking a stand against its commercialisation, though we still do not hold a special Meeting for Worship on December 25th.

Peter D. Jones

Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address

In *Streamlines* 29 November 2024 , Holly Dynes wrote:

Hello Friends,

Today in the United States it is Thanksgiving. I want to take a moment to express my gratitude to each of you in this community and reflect on the interconnectedness that sustains us all.

*This holiday, inspired by the wisdom shared through the program *Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples* (a program of Friends Peace Teams), I was reminded of the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address.*

Greetings to the Natural World

The People

Today we have gathered and we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. So now, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as people.

Now our minds are one.

The Earth Mother

We are all thankful to our Mother, the Earth, for she gives us all that we need for life. She supports our feet as we walk about upon her. It gives us joy that she continues to care for us as she has from the beginning of time. To our mother, we send greetings and thanks.

Now our minds are one.

The Waters

We give thanks to all the waters of the world for quenching our thirst and providing us with strength. Water is life. We know its power in many forms—waterfalls and rain, mists and streams, rivers and oceans. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to the spirit of Water.

Now our minds are one.

The Fish

We turn our minds to the all the Fish life in the water. They were instructed to cleanse and purify the water. They also give themselves to us as food. We are grateful that we can still find pure water. So, we turn now to the Fish and send our greetings and thanks.

Now our minds are one.

The Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy teach us to offer greetings and thanks to the natural world – not just on special days, but every day.

May this spirit of gratitude bring peace, love, and joy to you and inspire us to nurture the relationships that sustain us.

In gratitude,

Holly Dynes

We have reproduced the address below:

The Plants

Now we turn toward the vast fields of Plant life. As far as the eye can see, the Plants grow, working many wonders. They sustain many life forms. With our minds gathered together, we give thanks and look forward to seeing Plant life for many generations to come.

Now our minds are one.

The Food Plants

With one mind, we turn to honor and thank all the Food Plants we harvest from the garden. Since the beginning of time, the grains, vegetables, beans and berries have helped the people survive. Many other living things draw strength from them too. We gather all the Plant Foods together as one and send them a greeting of thanks.

Now our minds are one.

The Medicine Herbs

Now we turn to all the Medicine herbs of the world. From the beginning they were instructed to take away sickness. They are always waiting and ready to heal us. We are happy there are still among us those special few who remember how to use these plants for healing. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to the Medicines and to the keepers of the Medicines.

Now our minds are one.

The Animals

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to all the Animal life in the world. They have many things to teach us as people. We are honored by them when they give up their lives so we may use their bodies as food for our people. We see them near our homes and in the deep forests. We are glad they

are still here and we hope that it will always be so. Now our minds are one

The Trees

We now turn our thoughts to the Trees. The Earth has many families of Trees who have their own instructions and uses. Some provide us with shelter and shade, others with fruit, beauty and other useful things. Many people of the world use a Tree as a symbol of peace and strength. With one mind, we greet and thank the Tree life.

Now our minds are one.

The Birds

We put our minds together as one and thank all the Birds who move and fly about over our heads. The Creator gave them beautiful songs. Each day they remind us to enjoy and appreciate life. The Eagle was chosen to be their leader. To all the Birds—from the smallest to the largest—we send our joyful greetings and thanks.

Now our minds are one.

The Four Winds

We are all thankful to the powers we know as the Four Winds. We hear their voices in the moving air as they refresh us and purify the air we breathe. They help us to bring the change of seasons. From the four directions they come, bringing us messages and giving us strength. With one mind, we send our greetings and thanks to the Four Winds.

Now our minds are one.

The Thunderers

Now we turn to the west where our grandfathers, the Thunder Beings, live. With lightning and thundering voices, they bring with them the water that renews life. We are thankful that they keep those evil things made by Okwiseres underground. We bring our minds together as one to send greetings and thanks to our Grandfathers, the Thunderers.

Now our minds are one.

The Sun

We now send greetings and thanks to our eldest Brother, the Sun. Each day without fail he travels the sky from east to west, bringing the light of a new day. He is the source of all the fires of life. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to our Brother, the Sun.

Now our minds are one.

Grandmother Moon

We put our minds together to give thanks to our oldest Grandmother, the Moon, who lights the

night-time sky. She is the leader of woman all over the world, and she governs the movement of the ocean tides. By her changing face we measure time, and it is the Moon who watches over the arrival of children here on Earth. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to our Grandmother, the Moon. Now our minds are one.

The Stars

We give thanks to the Stars who are spread across the sky like jewelry. We see them in the night, helping the Moon to light the darkness and bringing dew to the gardens and growing things. When we travel at night, they guide us home. With our minds gathered together as one, we send greetings and thanks to the Stars.

Now our minds are one.

The Enlightened Teachers

We gather our minds to greet and thank the enlightened Teachers who have come to help throughout the ages. When we forget how to live in harmony, they remind us of the way we were instructed to live as people. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to these caring teachers.

Now our minds are one.

The Creator

Now we turn our thoughts to the Creator, or Great Spirit, and send greetings and thanks for all the gifts of Creation. Everything we need to live a good life is here on this Mother Earth. For all the love that is still around us, we gather our minds together as one and send our choicest words of greetings and thanks to the Creator.

Now our minds are one.

Closing Words

We have now arrived at the place where we end our words. Of all the things we have named, it was not our intention to leave anything out. If something was forgotten, we leave it to each individual to send such greetings and thanks in their own way.

Now our minds are one.

This translation of the Mohawk version of the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address was developed, published in 1993, and provided, courtesy of: Six Nations Indian Museum and the Tracking Project All rights reserved.

Thanksgiving Address: Greetings to the Natural World English version: John Stokes and Kanawahienton (David Benedict, Turtle Clan/Mohawk) Mohawk version: Rokwaho (Dan Thompson, Wolf Clan/Mohawk) Original inspiration: Tekaronianekon (Jake Swamp, Wolf Clan/Mohawk)

Travelling – or not

Peace isn't the end, peace is the way. Gandhi
IT SEEMS to me that the ancient, sacred tradition of the spiritual journey, pilgrimage, has been corrupted by capitalism, by ecocidal economics. Pilgrimage always seems to occur “elsewhere”. Getting elsewhere requires consuming fossil fuels. If an annual, sustainable per capita carbon quota is 0.8 tonnes, and every passenger on a flight from Australia to Europe generates two tonnes, how can it be in any way ethical, let alone sacred, to fly to, say Spain, to walk the Camino? How can road trips to Indigenous sites in Australia be justified, when – just for starters – every car tyre over its lifetime, through traction with the road, dumps four kilograms of microplastics into soil, water, air? It's like an abusive marriage that embraces with one hand and strikes

with the other. Carbon offsetting is as delusory, as entitled, as the Medieval practice of buying indulgences for the remission of sins.

Any journey founded in sexism or racism would rightly be considered abhorrent. Yet Earthism – violating the planet, driving climate crisis and ecological meltdown – is discounted.

Perhaps a true pilgrimage – invisible, unsung, unheroic – lies on our own doorsteps: the quest to live within one's ecological footprint (the average Australian requires the resources of five planets to maintain their lifestyles): and learning to live like a biosphere, grappling towards an answer to Bill McDonough's prophetic question – “how do we love all the children of all species for all time?”

Eleanor March



A bountiful harvest of berries?

Here's Sally's go-to recipe,
and proof of concept!



Poems read at Meeting for Worship in Hobart

Don't Hesitate

by Mary Oliver

If you suddenly and unexpectedly feel joy, don't hesitate.

Give in to it.

There are plenty of lives and whole towns destroyed or about to be.

We are not wise, and not very often kind.

And much can never be redeemed.

Still, life has some possibility left.

Perhaps this is its way of fighting back, that sometimes something happens better than all the riches or power in the world.

It could be anything, but very likely you notice it in the instant when love begins.

Anyway, that's often the case.

Anyway, whatever it is, don't be afraid of its plenty.

Joy is not made to be a crumb.

Dear God,

We give thanks for places of simplicity and peace;
let us find such a place within ourselves.

We give thanks for places of refuge and beauty;
let us find such a place within ourselves.

We give thanks for places of nature's truth and freedom,
of joy, inspiration and renewal,
places where all creatures
may find acceptance and belonging.

Let us search for these places;
in the world, in ourselves and in others.

Let us restore them.
Let us strengthen and protect them
and let us create them.

May we mend this outer world
according to the truth of our inner life
and may our souls be shaped and nourished
by nature's eternal wisdom.

Amen!

From: *When I talk to you: a cartoonist talks to god*, Michael Leunig (1945–2024).

Quakers Australia AGM agenda for JanYM25 + Open Meeting agenda

THE LINK to the Quakers Australia JanYM25 agenda is on this page: [JanYM25 Business](#)

Please note that the agenda is behind the Members only password protected section of the website for the sake of confidentiality.

However, anyone can log onto this [January Yearly Meeting 2025](#) page for more information.

Importantly, the [Keep&Share](#) calendar has a lot of information, as well as the zoom link details necessary to join us for any part of this wonderful online weekend together. The calendar is also open to everyone.

The Finance Committee Report and the audited Financial statement is due early in the new year and will be posted [here](#) when it is uploaded. I will re-send

Another Yearly Meeting! July 2025

OUR ENTHUSIASTIC and hard-working Yearly Meeting Organising Committee (YMOC) is beavering away, behind the scenes, with preparations for Australia Yearly Meeting 2025. Adelaide provided us with a wonderful place to gather, Friendship, Worship and spiritual growth in community. Victoria is really looking forward to hosting another hybrid meeting, welcoming Friends in person, or on-line, this coming year. Last year's July Yearly Meeting made us realise that we gain a lot in our relationships and spiritual lives when we meet together as a community, a sense that we had really missed out on over the Covid disruptions. We rediscovered the love and generosity of feeling of our Quaker foundations, engendered by gathering in person.

The next Victoria Regional Meeting will be 1st December at which we hope to appoint a 3-member team to be the Victorian organising committee and the lynchpin between YMOC and members of VRM seeking to help with organisational aspects, which are their interest or forte. At the same time, we hope to finalise a theme for the next yearly meeting. Once chosen this will help formulate the direction of Friendly school and perhaps some Share and Tell offerings. From this point, names will be sought for a person to give a State of the Society Address and another to do a Summary of Epistles.

A location has been chosen by the Clerking Team in Victoria and will be University College Parkville, part of the University of Melbourne. Centrally located, this campus is within easy reach from the tram, with links to train stations, and the airport. By then it is thought the new underground city train loop will be operational with a link at Parkville.

this email to inform everyone when this is done.

The collated RM Responses to all the reports with a Part B can be read here [QA Committee and Working Group Reports with Part B](#).

If anyone wishes an email attachment of the agenda or the financial statement, or more information, please email me at [QA Coordinator coordinator@quakersaustralia.info](mailto:QA_Coordinator@quakersaustralia.info)

Blessings to all and we hope to see you online 16–19 January 2025.

I pray this missive finds you all in good spirits, well rested, and walking cheerfully over the world.

In friendship,

David Tebr (QA Coordinator)

All our needs will be managed from within the one centre, with sleeping quarters, lecture rooms and catering provided. See more detail at the website unicol.unimelb.edu.au

We have hired the Leggatt Room as the conference Centre, a large space which can be modified into smaller meeting areas. There's a dedicated children's space and child-carers will be on hand to organise activities. There is a basketball court and external activity area/lounge area for JIFs or YFs. All areas in the building have Wi-Fi internet access.

Rooms will be offered per night as full board, or bed and breakfast. There are older style Heritage rooms (shared bathrooms) or newer mini ensuite rooms (shower and toilet), these two being the majority. There are some larger full ensuite rooms. All rooms have a double bed and desk. The cost per night is commensurate with amenities.

Meals are served in a lovely bright dining area with lunches likely to be offered around \$21:50 and dinners \$22:50. Tea and coffee will be available all day.

It should be another fabulous occasion for Friends to come together. It will be snug and warm in the building but if you're looking to go further afield, pull out your coats and winter woollies (it is July!) There is a large park just across the road (Royal Park) for those who love to exercise. Melbourne zoo is a 20 minute walk away. The city a 10-minute tram ride. We can't wait to welcome Friends to our next gathering and hope many of you will join us at University College, July 2025.

In loving Friendship,

Aileen Britton, Clerk, VRM