

Quaker

Tasmanian
Newsletter

July 2024

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Frog in the Peace Garden at Hobart Meeting House.
Photo: Alex, Friends' School gardener.
See page 2 for more photos and a report on the garden working bee.

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

Contributions:
Copy for TQN should be sent to the editor: rmtasnews@quakersaustralia.info

To be added to the mailing list,
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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.

Garden working bee

THE GARDEN working bee was a great success. There were ten of us. Was a cold morning but the sun came out as we were working.

Two square yards of gum bark mulch were spread over areas in the garden where weeds were removed. Thanks to Ali, Adrian and Robin.

Sally, Maggi, Gill, Mary, Hilary and Margaret pruned, and weeded selected areas in the garden. The pathways were swept.

Madeleine prepared morning tea at elevenses. Well deserved break for the volunteers.

Great work by all who attended.

Thanks to all,

Robin Kent





Letters to the editors



THANKS SALLY & Sue,
Great photo on the cover! I couldn't help but notice that although it's dated 1st January, everyone looks pretty well rugged up! Another chilly Hobart day? (no doubt one could probably look the Bureau of Meteorology statistics up for the day!) One also wonders about what violent conflicts were happening at the time - too early for Vietnam. Possibly Korea? Indonesia? Cold War (Berlin Wall? Cuba?) ...
In friendship,
David Tehr (QA Coordinator)
[edited content]

DEAR FRIENDS, Looking at the photo I'm thinking perhaps the gathering in Franklin Square around the time of "General Meeting" in January 1962, in the first years of what became AYM, the annual gathering was known as General Meeting. Also it can be quite cold and blustery sometimes

in January so that would account for the Friends looking warmly clad in overcoats. I recognise a few Friends, but it is a bit blurry, and 62 years have passed since this photo was taken. Likely a photo taken by the *Hobart Mercury* as publicity for the General Meeting.

Margaret Bywater

DEAR SALLY and Sue
Thanks for the variety of material assembled in *TQN* for June.

I'm interested in the photo of the vigil in 1962. There are some people in the photo who are shown clearly enough to possibly be identified – the man front left, the woman behind the easel, the young(?) man in the jumper at the right, the woman in the hat, the upright woman in the raincoat ... I'm sure that some Friends know some of these people.

I ask/challenge Friends to name anyone they can identify in the photo. Perhaps answers can go to RMTasNews@QuakersAustralia.info for next month's *TQN*???

Julie

DEAR FRIENDS,

I am responding to Julie's challenge to identify Friends in the photo in the June *TQN*. I think Pat Mavromatis is probably best able to identify individuals, and also Stephanie Farrall.

I think the man on my far left, in the front, is Dudley Parkinson and next to him is Bill Oats (I think). Then I wonder if the woman behind the easel poster is Enid Eley, and if it is, would that be her son with the v-necked pullover? I think his name was (is) Kenneth.

I wonder if the fellow with white hair, 2 or 3 rows back, sort of to the L of centre, is Bob Mather?

Is that Richard Meredith in the front row with the light coloured blazer and hands held together in front of him? And if it is, then I reckon that would be one of the Meredith boys behind the woman with the light-coloured hat.

I only turned 3 in 1962 and still lived in the UK so this is all guess work but I have enjoyed studying the photo and I have enjoyed the whole newsletter.

Many thanks

Warmly,

Sally McGushin

DEAR SALLY,

Just wanted to say we appreciate the TRM Newsletters and how much we like reading

them. You and other contributors deserve to be commended for news in good variety, making us think about issues outside the usual, and sharing insights within our community.

Keep up the good work, you have fans!

In Peace,

Jan & Steve Blakeney

DEAR CO-CLERKS

It is my privilege, as the Queensland Quaker correspondent to receive and read messages from other Meetings. I wanted to thank the editors of this month's newsletter for the many 'good reads' in the articles they have included.

In peace

Judith Pembleton, Correspondence Friend

DEAR SALLY and Sue

Thanks as ever for the Newsletter, I always enjoy reading it. Do you have a copy of the front photo with better resolution? I would love to see who I can identify in it. I think it is Enid Eley in glasses behind the sign, and the short dour looking woman in the centre could possibly be Lilian Foxcroft

In grateful friendship

Liz

PS I enjoyed the article on Jenny Seaton. I also recall her and Delton's hospitality. I stayed overnight with them a couple of times in the delightful converted church, when I was working in the area. You and family came one of the times when the boys were small, and we enjoyed a book which was book of records: The ten tallest ... The ten most famous ... etc.



View from Meehan Skyline Trail, which is the home of the orchids pictured on page 6.
Photo : Ali Cummins

Listening into Being report

WHAT IS it to listen? We listen at many levels – out of courtesy, to acknowledge, and to enable others.

Thirteen listeners gathered at the Meeting House on Saturday 25 May to explore what can be called ‘sacred listening’ – the listening of enablement. Our workshop was built around writing of Douglas Steere :

To ‘listen’ another’s soul into a condition of disclosure and discovery may be almost the greatest service that any human being ever performs for another.

And further built around the access each of us has to our Inner Teacher and creating safe space for it to emerge.

We spent the day exploring elements that build our capacity to offer this service to others. We explored creating safe space, the importance of deep confidentiality, and the vital importance of listening without advising, saving, fixing or correcting – each a temptation for listeners. Open, honest questions offered us a tool for drawing out the invaluable wisdom of our Inner Teachers.

Our day was a mix of brief inputs and practice. We practiced ‘walk and talk’ an alternative to sitting face-to-face to listen. As the day progressed, Siobhan Harpur created a visual record.

We closed with a sense of the value of the practice of sacred listening to building our Quaker community.

From one participant, new to our community: *I will hold this way of being in my heart and continue to practice. Everything, from the poem, the invitations, the activities, the handouts and quotes, the flow, the deep listening walk, the triads, Siobhan visualising, made space to deepen. It was lovely, and like an unfolding. By the end of the day, I noticed a dropping-in, like a much longer retreat had occurred! I loved that it was broken down into practical tangible morsels.*

Ministry is intending to move forward from this to inviting you to a weekend workshop on Meetings for Worship for Clearness, which utilise sacred listening.

Drew Thomas and Tara Ulbrich

Gratitudes

I offer great gratitude to those who supported us out-of-towners in delivering our workshop. To Sally for accommodating us, Felicity for eldering us, Siobhan for illustrating us, and Siobhan, Jen and Margaret for being our feet on Hobart ground.

I especially acknowledge the gift of working with Tara, only recently among us, whose wisdom and clarity, and shared leadership were invaluable.



Greenhood orchids on the Meehan Skyline Trail. Photos: Ali Cummins

Fritz Eichenberg – Quaker Artist

IN THE latest issue of *Block and Burin*, printmaker Kevin Clinton says this of the influence of Eichenberg:

I was transfixed by the richness, the scale, the detail, the movement and energy, and the unique visual character of the medium.....I fell in love. I love the history of wood engraving, the context and connection with literature ...

Eichenberg had an amazingly long career in the twentieth century (b.1901 – d.1990). He also had a 40-year association with the Catholic social activist Dorothy Day, co-founder of the “Catholic Worker Movement”. Day was reaching out to many who were illiterate, who were working in appalling conditions in mines, factories and sweatshops. She needed someone to illustrate the Catholic Worker Newspaper and found in Eichenberg a social conscience to match her own.

My favourite among his prints is *The Grand Inquisitor* from Dostoyevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*. Here, Eichenberg departs from the written text to give a profoundly thoughtful interpretation: Firstly he has the inquisitor in a state of despair instead of the haughty dismissive arrogance of the text, thus hinting at the possibility that the Inquisitor and indeed anyone, can change. Secondly, Eichenberg positions the confrontation taking place in a kind of cellar, alluding to a Tartarus dark level of consciousness. The Christ figure is shown, at the end of the written scene, ascending the stairs out into the light. The unspoken invitation is: “Follow me”.

Left permanently behind is a large “shroud of Turin” face. Keith Snyder in *Friends Journal* 1988 interprets the whole image as one of compassion: “... compassion for the sworn enemy of the true Christ, The Grand Inquisitor and by extension for those casual and current enemies of Christ, namely ourselves”.¹

¹ <https://www.friendsjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/1988/07/Fritz-Eichenberg-in-Retrospect.pdf>



I am an admirer of Fritz Eichenberg’s art and his life story, but (and yes, here is a but!) I disagree with his negative attitude to non-representational art.² When visiting an art gallery I always search out any “Colour Field” works – usually large, very flat expansive fields of solid colour. Is not colour a manifestation to our limited senses, of light, and do we not need a way out of this present manifestation of the “ancien regime” into new more revolutionary ways of thinking and being?

Steve Louis Smith

² <https://pendlehill.org/product/art-faith/>
Quaker Pamphlet #68 Art and Faith by Fritz Eichenberg

News of Friends

- Tasmania Regional Meeting was saddened to lose three Friends this month:
Stan Read
Sheila Given
Katherine Purnell
- Several Friends have been unwell with Covid, including maggi storr and Julie and Robin Walpole.
- Jenny Seaton is travelling on the mainland.
- Esther Hill, Kerstin Reimers, Margaret Bywater, Bea Farquhar-Jones, Maree-Rose Jones, Linda Pittard and Sally O’Wheel attended YM in person. Drew Thomas, Felicity Rose, Kay Allport, maggi storr, Mark Macleod, Robin McLean, Madeleine Ball, Julie Walpole and Janice Blakeney attended online.

Yearly Meeting 2024



It was exhilarating to see friends many of whom we hadn't seen since 2019.

Over our week together we shared YM Sessions, dealing with the serious business of learning about the work of our committees,

Yearly Meeting ... A precious blend of challenges and joys. Inspiring stories and ministry. Shared struggles. Songs and laughter. Nurturing our community and boldly stepping out in faith.

Kerstin Reimers



making decisions about ways to help mitigate the worst aspects of climate change, to further the cause of peace in the world, and much more.

Returning home, we begin to consider what might be possible for YM 25 and YM 26.

Margaret Bywater



Going among Quakers for over 40 years and a Member for 30, AYM always nourishes and challenges me to fresh personal goals. This year is to nurture Young Friends into mentored roles with a stipend supported by other Elders.

Maree-Rose Jones



I loved being at Yearly Meeting. The embroideries looked fabulous on the stage. I was very challenged by being on the Epistle Committee and at first I was wishing I'd never said 'yes' when I was nominated. What was I thinking? But in the end we cobbled it together and it was so gratifying when Friends laughed at points during the reading. I had the Best shack mates, both Adelaide Friends. I left my lap top charger behind (as usual) but someone tracked me down to Adelaide Local Meeting on Sunday morning and it was returned to me after the meeting. An act of God. Missing home and now away for the rest of July, with a visit to Broken Hill at the end to progress another FIS panel.

Sally O'Wheel



YM, What an awesome time! How do I put all the things I learnt & absorbed, the experiences that moved me and the Friends I met and made into a few sentences ...? And so, I will just express my gratitude. Would I go again? Absolutely.

Linda Pittard



Bea Farquhar-Jones



From left: Konstantin, Jacob and Miles. These Friends' School students spoke at the Friends' School Presentation.

Miles: I'm glad to be able to meet Quakers because it helped me to reconnect with the community.

Konstantin: Being at the Quaker meeting I met a lot of new people that helped me further my understanding of Quakerism. Overall the meeting had a lot of interesting discussions which were entertaining to participate in.

Jacob: I enjoyed being at the Quaker camp because it taught me a lot about Quakers after knowing very little.



From left: Tessa Bremner-Macdonald, Kyrstie Crane, Tessa Spratt and Row Morrow.

Epistle from Yearly Meeting 2024

FROM JULY 6th to 13th 2024 we gathered at West Beach, a suburb of Adelaide on Saint Vincent's Gulf, South Australia. We send greetings to Friends everywhere. We meet on Kurna land beside the white sands of Holdfast Bay, the eroding sand dunes held together by native plantings.

This was a hybrid meeting. We were able to gather together in-person in large numbers for the first time since 2019, to hug one another, to share a meal, sit talking across the table into the night. Friends came from all parts of Australia and beyond via car, train, plane, bicycle (perhaps) and ferry to be here, under the flight path of Adelaide Airport. Our technological skills have developed over the COVID-19 years and we are now able to include online Friends almost seamlessly, with occasional blips.

The meeting was opened in Kurna language by the Kurna Elder Uncle Rodney Midlah O'Brien who had to leave early to attend a NAIDOC (National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee) ceremony.

A wide variety of Friendly Schools was offered, some creative, some pacifist, some environmental, some spiritual. These themes were followed up by Share & Tell sessions. Some of these looked at nurturing our Society.

We heard in Bev Polzin's State of Society Address that even as we acknowledge the ageing of our members and the difficulties of filling roles, we rejoice that our use of technology has played a part in connecting each other across our big country. Isolated Meetings and Friends are brought into the centre. We express UBUNTU. 'I am because you are.' Following the disruptions of the pandemic we rebuild our community and grow from the challenges of COVID-19.

The theme of Australian Yearly Meeting 2024 is 'Quakers in times of conflict and change'. We live in an 'Ocean of Darkness'. War and environmental catastrophe beset our world on every side. We were awestruck to learn how Friends are finding that Infinite Ocean of Light and Love within and are led to varied involvements in groups such as Friends Peace Teams, Raising Peace, World beyond War, Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP), to name a few. We understand the importance of building partnerships and ultimately mass movements because

we know we are a small Society and we cannot do it alone. We welcomed the newly employed Peaceworker, Jessica Morrison. The QPLC prepared a public statement focused on the following: First Nations' peoples, the climate emergency, Palestine/Israel, integrity, militarism and nuclear weapons.

The Australian Yearly Meeting endorsed The Climate Emergency and Species Extinction Working Group's travel guide and action plan. The CESEWG was established in 2021 for a two-year term, later extended for another year. A new committee will be formed called 'Quakers Australia Earth Witness and Action Committee'. As the working group completes its task, they ask how the Regional Meetings and individual Friends will proceed with the implementation of this plan to reach wider society. This is the beginning, not the end, of this urgent work.

The 2024 Backhouse Lecture was presented on the birthday of James Backhouse by Jackie Leach-Scully, a bioethicist. The lecture was entitled 'God's ways, not our ways: a dissident Quaker response to disability'. Jackie brings over 60 years of experience to her subject and 30 years as a disability activist. She asks the question: 'What might disability, difference and normality mean for Friends today?' as we enter a world where medical science now provides knowledge which allows us to decide who should be born and when they will die. We need to address the spiritual as well as the moral and socio-political aspects of these questions. We are all limited, different and vulnerable, dependent on our communities.

We were lifted up to learn of the work of the Friends' School and to meet the new Principal, Esther Hill. She told us how Quaker values and practices are incorporated into the daily life at the school, addressing the prickly issue of privilege and the role of a private school to model a different kind of curriculum and do things that a government school could not attempt. We were pleased to hear of the large numbers of scholarships offered to children whose families could otherwise not afford to send them to Friends' School. She was joined by Friends from the Quaker Values Committee and by some inspiring Year 11 and 12 students who spoke lovingly about their school.

During the Meeting for Remembrance we were distracted by the fluttering movement of a Willy

Wagtail bird. Michael Leunig, an Australian poet, likens talking to God to talking to a bird. Attempts were made to encourage the bird to leave the room, but the bird could not find its way out until later. No-one saw it leave.

On Wednesday afternoon we left the West Beach and travelled to destinations of Quaker interest around Adelaide. The Quaker opportunity shop, which has been operating since the 1968, was a popular destination.

We heard about the ongoing work of Silver Wattle involving land care, sojourning and learning opportunities. We are grateful for the vision and the struggle of the founders of Silver Wattle and rejoice in the growing realisation of the dream to create a centre of learning and spiritual nourishment for our community.

Quaker Service Australia (QSA) has a new constitution and encouraged us to become members of the company and to donate to their projects to build positive peace.

We look around the meeting at the high proportion of white-haired Friends and we know we need to rebuild our young community. Young Friends and JYFs told us about their urgent need to meet in person regularly at AYM to build their own community and learn from older Friends. They want to remember cooling off in water fights as well as experience Quaker processes. We continue to discern the right timing of Yearly Meeting.

We were surprised by a visit from George Fox and some of the Valiant 60, and celebrated his 400th birthday with cake and singing the George Fox song. Later there was an enthusiastic concert.

‘How can we make impactful action?’ has been a reoccurring question and theme across this Meeting. What do we need to do now to continue to uphold our values of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship?



This photo features Karkalla growing on the sand dunes at West Beach, the site of Yearly Meeting 2024. Karkalla is the name given to this plant by the Kaurna People of the Adelaide Plains and adjacent areas, its botanical name is *Carpobrotus rossii*. It occurs around Australia's coast (including Tasmania), and in mallee and salt lake landscapes from Shark Bay to Kaurna Country to Rockhampton, reflecting the wide extent of Quakers in Australia.

The flowers, fruit and leaves are widely used and eaten by Original Australians. The fruit is left on the plant to mature and sometimes to partly dry. The fresh fleshy leaves are edible, either raw or lightly heated on coals. Besides food fibre and minerals, Karkalla can be a significant source of water, vitamin C and antioxidants. The undiluted juice from a broken leaf soothes itches, insect bites or stings, and burns. The juice of several leaves finely chewed can be used as an oral swish for throat and mouth infections.

Photo: Harald Ehmann

Jane Walker Bequest Fund

JANE WALKER was a Member of Tasmania Regional Meeting (TRM) and, recently, generously bequeathed funds to enable TRM to address local needs and foster positive change.

The guidelines for Jane's bequest have been established to support projects aligned with her lived values and concerns. The fund aims to enable Tasmania Regional Meeting (TRM) to address local needs and foster positive change within the community.

Key Focus Areas: The fund makes grants of up to \$3000 to support people and organisations with projects related to Jane Walker's key concerns – including but not limited to:

- Girls' Education
- Refugees
- Peace
- Quaker concerns
- Carers' respite
- Gardening
- Music

The application process is quick and simple. There is a two-page application form which asks for basic details of the applicant(s) along with a brief description of the project.

Applications are open to projects executed primarily in Tasmania and can be submitted at any time. Applications are considered quarterly by the TRM finance committee, at the end of March, June, September and December.

The fund has been running for a short time now and we hope to be able to approve two or three applications each quarter.

We are delighted to share that the following projects have already received support from the fund:

Mark McLeod \$2,224

Mark's grant supports him to participate as a speaker at the Global Tipping Point Summit 2024 in India, in December. The theme of the project-based Summit, for educators and students, is INNER PEACE FOR OUTER PEACE FOR GLOBAL PEACE.

Mark will use the experience, and the knowledge gained, to offer workshops in Tasmania and on the mainland to support students campaigning for peace.

Waste to Wonderful: \$3000

The bequest has granted funds to 'Waste to Wonderful'. This is a project many Friends will

know and which provides support to refugee women and their families in Hobart. W2W brings refugee women together for support and social connection.

The grant supports the project by enabling it to continue to rent a suitable meeting space at the Baptist Church Hall.

Women's Health Tasmania: \$3000

WHT applied for a grant of \$3000 to support their 'Undies Project' which aims to provide environmentally sustainable and affordable period underwear for women living on low incomes. (Read more about the project on page 13.)



Two Women's Health Tasmania staff (Sophie and Lucy) showing off a pair of the Undies! Image: Women's Health Tasmania.

Sunlight Kitchen: \$3000

Sunlight Kitchen is a project which works with refugees from Afghanistan. The Kitchen has applied for a grant of \$3000 to enable participants to undertake an 'Introduction to Hospitality' course.

If you, or someone you know, needs a small amount of support for a project which addresses one or more of Jane's concerns, we'd love to hear from you.

You can find the application form here:

<https://www.quakersaustralia.info/organisation/regional-meetings/tasmania-regional-meeting/jane-walker-bequest-fund>

If you have any questions or problems with the form, you can contact TRM treasurer, Rick Tipping via email: rmtastreasurer@quakersaustralia.info, or phone: 0400 246 597.

Together, let's continue Jane Walker's legacy of making a positive impact on our community.

Rick Tipping

Jane Walker Bequest Fund supports the 'Undies Project'

THESE ARE some stories that Women's Health Tasmania has collected from people who have received the Undies in the Undies Project:

On the recommendation of an Occupational Therapist I was able to get two pairs of period undies through my National Disability Insurance Scheme plan. However, because I wanted period undies not continence aids and because I couldn't afford the upfront cost out of my own pocket (to be reimbursed later) it became this huge process of needing OT letters etc. It was embarrassing. Plus, I was only allowed to get two pairs. Not nearly enough when I really need two pairs a day. One for the day and one for the night. When it comes to actually using them for my period they make it soooo much easier and cheaper. I am so excited about this project and so so grateful! Thank you all.

I am a single mum on a pension and feel very embarrassed about not being able to provide for my daughter adequately. I am grateful that I was told about this service. I have ordered a set for my

14-year-old daughter. This will allow her to be more confident and able to not feel insecure. I can also now feel that I'm not damaging my daughter's self-esteem and mental health by not being able to provide. I am working on changing my situation. For now, this is a blessing beyond what I thought possible. Very grateful. Thank you.

I have wanted to switch to undies rather than pads for a long time, but haven't had the money to cover the initial cost to benefit both my funds and the environment in the long run.



Women's Health Tasmania staff member Sophie showing off a pair of the Undies in front of our Lefroy St wall mural.
Image: Women's Health Tasmania.

TRM 'Charity Works' Fund

DID YOU know that the Meeting holds a small fund which can be used to provide support and charitable donations to organisations (and people) where a Member of our Meeting is actively involved as a volunteer?

In the past we have supported organisations including:

- Riding for the Disabled
- Wintringham Residential Aged Care facility (for older men and women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness)
- Waste to Wonderful Refugee Support Group
- The Australian Refugee Action Network

Our funds have also supported individual refugee families to:

- purchase a much needed computer
- pay soccer club fees for their children.

If you are a regular volunteer with a charitable organisation and would like our Regional Meeting to

support it with a small donation, please contact the Meeting Clerk with a request that can be considered by Meeting for Business.

You can also contact Rick (Meeting treasurer – see article on Jane Walker Bequest) for more information.

'Friends in Need' Fund

This is also a good opportunity to remind Friends that TRM has limited funds available to provide short-term, small-scale, financial support to Friends or Attenders in need of assistance.

You can contact our Meeting Clerk, Margaret Bywater, for support for yourself, or you might suggest someone else is in need of short-term financial assistance.

We will help if we can. All questions and/or requests for assistance will be managed in-confidence.

Rick Tipping