

# The Australian Friend

ISSUE 0622 JUNE 2022 ISSN 1326-0936

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## Discerning political issues



# Editorial

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**W**e are told that in our spoken ministry we should not be political, but from the beginnings Quakers have not been afraid to become involved in politics if that was needed to further moral and spiritual goals. Michael Corbett reminds us in this issue that Margaret Fell corresponded with both Oliver Cromwell and King Charles II to gain greater freedom for Quakers. Certainly, the Friends involved in the abolition of slavery were deeply involved in politics. So it has continued up until the present.

Before the recent election, the Quaker Peace and Legislation Committee presented a webinar in which Friends gave brief presentations on topics that all voters needed to consider before voting. Summaries of some of these talks are included in this issue of *The Australian Friend*.

As the political acceptance of the Uluru Statement from the Heart comes closer, we hope, we are pleased to read of QSA's work with Indigenous groups, and Lindsay Vieth's uplifting story of the work done by good people, despite oppressive laws.

Andrew Glickson and Aletia Dundas have also written on aspects of peace. Tim Gee, Secretary of FWCC, tells us about the efforts of the Quaker United Nations Office in international politics, and reminds us that these efforts spring from the spiritual basis of our Society. He quotes from the Epistle of James: 'Those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness'.

We hope to meet some of our readers at the Australian Friend Show and Tell at Yearly Meeting (3 pm on 7 July), and to hear what they hope to get from, and perhaps contribute to, our magazine in future

*The Australian Friend* Committee were saddened to learn of the recent death of Peter Williams, one of our members. Peter was an active member of Quakers in Canberra and later in Victoria. The results of his Australian National Quaker survey were summarised in the March, 2015 *Australian Friend* (still online), and a more complete report can be found here.<sup>1</sup> The committee will miss his thoughtful insights.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.quakersaustralia.info/sites/aym-members/files/pages/files/Australian%20Quaker%20Survey%202014.pdf>

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Cover: Discerning political issues  
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# Diplomacy:

## *Is it a Sign of Weakness?*

DAVID PURNELL | CANBERRA AND REGION QUAKERS

This article is based on a talk given at the QPLC webinar on 30 April, 2022

There was a news headline in *The Canberra Times* on 27 March 22 saying ‘Diplomacy - a message of weakness’. This referred to the Prime Minister’s refusal to meet the new Chinese Ambassador because of ongoing tension in the Australia-China relationship. This shows a very limited view, but what is diplomacy and how relevant is it today? *The Macquarie Dictionary* says that diplomacy is ‘the conduct by government officials of negotiations and other relations between states’ and ‘skill in managing any negotiations’. Note in particular the use of the word ‘skill’, and keep it in mind.

There have been some outstanding examples of diplomatic work. One is Giandomenico Picci, an Italian diplomat who worked as a UN Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs in the 1980s and 1990s. He travelled the world determined to address all sides in conflicts, and was successful in liberating many hostages, western and otherwise, including those well known to us (e.g. Terry Waite, Terry Anderson). He was also instrumental in the Soviet departure from Afghanistan and the settling of the Iran-Iraq war. He was called by the UN Secretary General (Perez de Cueller) ‘an unarmed soldier for diplomacy’.

Many years earlier, at the end of WW2, a Swedish diplomat called Raoul Nordling is credited with having saved Paris from burning, after arguing successfully with the German military governor of occupied France to ignore Hitler’s instructions to destroy the city as the Nazis withdrew in the face of the Allied advance. There is a film about this called ‘Diplomacy’ (2014).

Quakers have had as longstanding commitment to diplomacy. The Quaker United Nations Office, with branches in New York and Geneva, describes its role as (a) working with people in the UN, multilateral organisations, government delegations and NGOs, to achieve changes in international standards and practice, (b) putting into practice the Quaker testimonies of peace, truth, justice, equality and simplicity in relation to social political and economic

relationships, (c) providing a place where diplomats, staff and NGOs can work on difficult issues in a quiet, off-the-record atmosphere away from the public eye, (d) hosting seminars, workshops and meetings about, and (e) publishing reports by experts on areas of interest and UN-related concerns. Areas where Quakers have helped influence the international agenda include – child soldiers, conscientious objection, sustainable development, disarmament, peacebuilding, reconciliation and dialogue.

Article 99 of the United Nations Charter gives the Secretary-General power to anticipate possible crises, gather relevant information, and initiate preventive diplomacy, such as talks with states involved on how to head off armed conflict. The UN now has a number of regional conflict prevention centres around the world, and commissions special rapporteurs and advisers to help prevent war. Regrettably, the UN’s diplomatic role is compromised by the Security Council rules that allow a veto for each of the five permanent members – US, UK, China, Russia and France. Although on some occasions those five have adopted an abstention rather than a veto, the structure needs reforming.

Looking at Australian diplomacy, it has been very active in the past but seems to have lost its shine in recent years. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has many committed and skilled staff, and has

undertaken valuable work in supporting the United Nations conventions and principles and peacekeeping in such areas as Cambodia, Bougainville, the Solomons and East Timor. It has also helped develop the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Law of the Sea. But in recent years, as GDP has tripled and defence spending likewise, aid has been cut by a third, and DFAT's budget in 2022 is smaller than 15 years ago.

However Bruce Haigh, a former diplomat and now a political commentator, wrote an article in *Pearls and Irritations* blog (12 January 2022) giving his assessment of Australian diplomacy over the years. He sees 1972 until 1996 as the time when Australia displayed 'diplomatic creativity and originality'. In summary, it was a time when Australia moved away from dependence on Britain, opposed apartheid, built bridges with its Asian neighbours, and worked hard on the law of the sea, disarmament, and human rights. DFAT strengthened its range of overseas posts, language training and management skills, and enhanced its analysis and information capabilities. However since 1996 the leadership from government has emphasised traditional western values, prioritised the US Alliance, adopted cruel refugee policies, and redefined foreign policy in terms of trade, war and defence. As a result, DFAT has struggled to adapt. He says: 'Under the Morrison government foreign policy has become increasingly

militarised'. Hence AUKUS and more defence spending.

Frances Adamson, who retired as Secretary of DFAT in 2021, spoke in an interview with Michael Fullilove of the Lowy Institute (March 2021) about her life in diplomacy. She served for over 35 years and held posts in London, Hong Kong, Taipei, and Beijing, as well as working for Foreign Minister Stephen Smith (Labor) and Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull (Lib) in Parliament House. She spoke of serving as a diplomat in a time when Australia had a diplomatic service actively engaged in multilateral diplomacy and making an impact. By contrast, the new Secretary of DFAT, Kathryn Campbell, has a different background. She was Secretary of several other departments immediately before moving to DFAT – notably Human Services and Social Services. Earlier she worked in the Departments of Finance, Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. She was also an Army Reserve Officer from 1989 until July 2021. Her academic background is in accountancy, applied mathematics, business administration and information science. The transition to heading Australia's diplomacy agency will indeed be something of a challenge.

Where do the political parties stand? Penny Wong, as shadow foreign minister, in an interview with Katharine Murphy (*The Guardian* podcast, 11 March 2022) affirmed that foreign policy must not be determined by domestic political interests, and must have a stronger

role in strategic planning, and more resources accordingly. DFAT needs to have experienced and skilled people to shape our engagement with the world. There are too many overseas diplomatic posts occupied by political appointees. The Greens have a series of detailed policies around international relations. They say that Australia must (a) use diplomacy to promote peace, democracy, ecological sustainability, equity and justice (b) contribute through aid to a just and equitable world, (c) seek nonviolent means to resolve conflict, insist on UN mandates for any military action, (d) accept refugees and reunite families, and (e) respect universal human rights for all. The Liberal Party has an overall focus on keeping Australians safe and protecting our way of life, freedom and values through (a) a stronger defence force and border protection, (b) counter-terrorism and boosting security agencies, (c) joining the AUKUS partnership, (d) tackling foreign interference, (e) tackling illegal drugs, and (f) fighting crime. There is no separate foreign policy statement.

John Langmore, former ACT federal MP and now at Melbourne University, wrote a book called *Security through Sustainable Peace* (2020) in which he advocated the revival of Australia's potential for diplomacy to achieve political rather than military solutions to crises. He identified several steps that would support this – (a) creating a Ministry of Peace, allowing the

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# Climate change, biodiversity conservation and pollution

DAVID SHORTHOUSE | CANBERRA AND REGION QUAKERS

This article is based on a talk given at the QPLC webinar on 30 April, 2022

*'We are called to consider the world as an enspirited whole, to accept no boundary to repairing and sustaining the Earth for the future, and to appreciate more deeply the creative energy in all living things and life processes. We seek to mend what has been hurt, and to strengthen our courage to discern and bear witness to this spiritual care for the Earth.'*

(Extract from the Australia Yearly Meeting Quaker Earthcare Statement, January 2008)

Our Australian Quaker Earthcare statement was adopted at a time when Canberra Friend and climate scientist, Andrew Glikson, wrote *'Climate Change is tracking toward levels which transcend the planetary boundaries which allowed the development of humans over the last 3 million years.'*<sup>1</sup>

Now, at a time when action on climate change is a politically (but not scientifically) disputed policy area, we regularly hear from our politicians that Australia will play its part by implementing policies directed to reducing carbon pollution to net zero by 2050 (Liberal/National), or 43% by 2030 (ALP), or perhaps 60% by 2030 (some Independents). This seems to me to be inadequate, simplistic and suggesting gradual linear trajectory towards net zero.

This seems also to be somewhat disconnected from the scientific community's increasingly urgent calls for deep cuts to carbon emissions, massive use of renewable energy, extensive land restoration, and carbon sequestration (when or if ever feasible and sufficient).

The call to consider *'the world as an enspirited whole'* reflects an

understanding of planet earth as a naturally complex system resulting from evolutionary processes whereby all living things have a place and role to play within the limits of the living biosphere. As well scientists, also working from a whole of planet perspective, have proposed a model that recognises a 'safe operating space' within a 'closed' biosphere. However, when a boundary of this system is exceeded, then remedial action is urgently required (Stockholm Resilience Centre<sup>2</sup>).

Already in 2022 scientists are reporting that two of the nine planetary boundaries have already been crossed: (1) greenhouse gases (CO<sub>2</sub>, methane, nitric oxide) and (2) extensive loss of species and disruption of biosphere integrity.

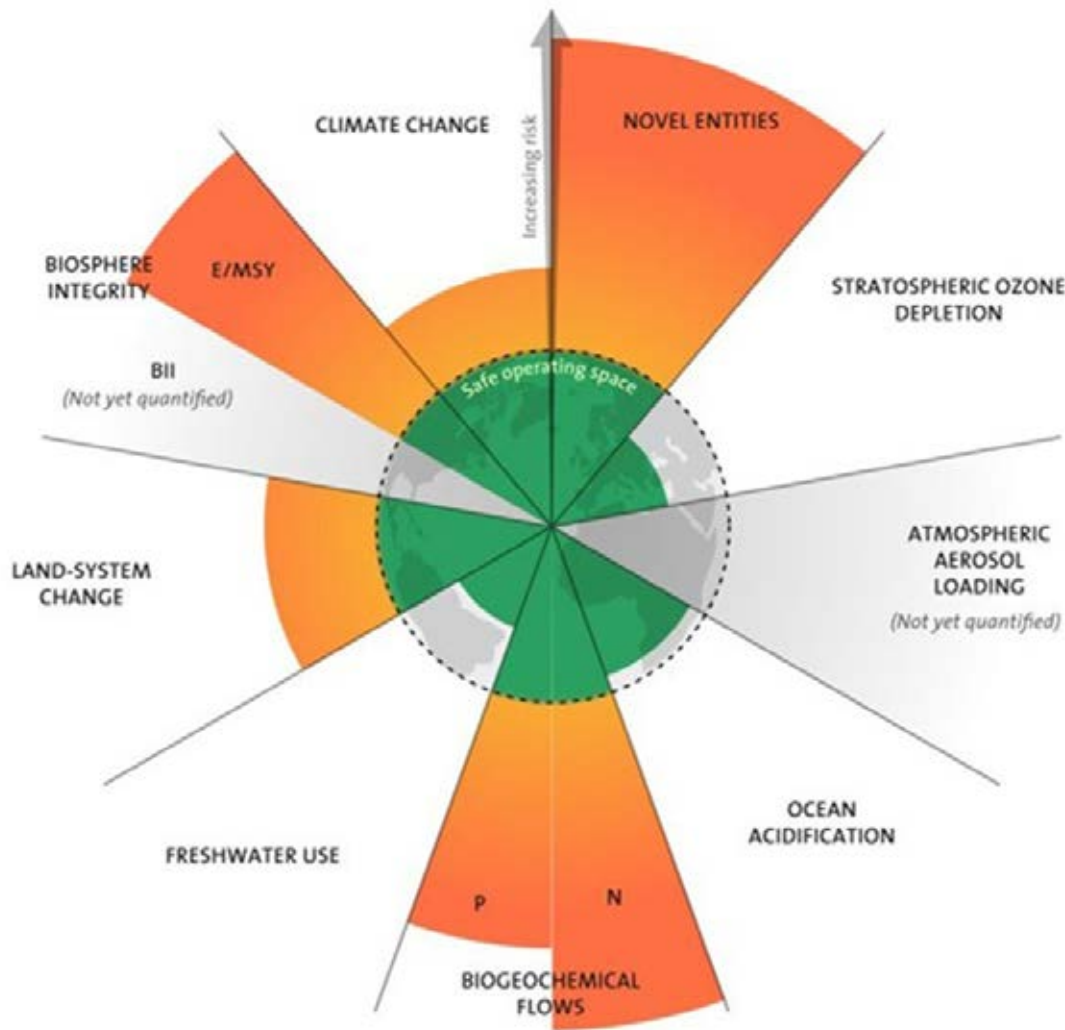
Worse still, they expect other boundaries have been crossed or are likely to be crossed soon, including: (3) land system change, mostly conversion of natural forests to cropland, e.g. the Amazon; (4) availability of freshwater; (5) biogeochemical flows (primarily phosphorous and nitrogen); (6) ocean acidification leading to collapse of coral reefs and the marine food chain; (7) atmospheric aerosol loading; (8) ozone depletion; and (9) novel or synthetic

entities (chemical pollution by metals, micro-plastics, radioactive nuclei etc.)

The ninth boundary includes all these industrial and manufactured products we use or mis-use every day, and discard through our waste systems. Our Australian way of life is heavily dependent upon them: pharmaceuticals, food containers and packaging, clothes using synthetic fabrics, building supplies, asbestos.

It is almost impossible to avoid using novel entities as they are embedded in our manufacturing processes, are part of the medicines and foods we use, are widely used in agricultural systems for weed and pest control and are breakdown products of these substances. In spite of garbage and recycling collections there is no guarantee that these wastes are disposed of appropriately or with certainty that they will be recycled.

Recently I was glad to attend a webinar produced by the Australian Earth Laws Alliance, which featured a talk<sup>3</sup> on planetary boundaries by ANU Prof Will Steffen (author and reviewer of five IPCC reports, member of the Climate Council and Senior Researcher with the Stockholm Resilience Centre). He explained the whole concept of the Planetary Boundary model and its nine



elements, emphasising that the next report (later in 2022) will confirm the crossing of several boundaries.

When asked at the end of the webinar what were the most urgent changes we need to take Will Steffen paused, thought carefully and then responded: (1) asking ourselves who we are and our relationship with life on the planet; (2) putting effort into social tipping points in addition to dealing with planetary tipping points; and (3) putting a ban on all novel entities, unless recycling of them is in place (an effective circular economy).

I found that each of these points resonates with the extract from our Earthcare statement (above). Who are we, and how do we relate to the ‘other than human’ in the *world as an enspirited whole*?

When we bear witness on climate change action can we also focus on social and economic tipping points? In

our everyday living, can we do much more to avoid using novel entities (see description above) unless we are sure they are being recycled or are part of the circular economy?

Our Quaker Earthcare statement ends with:

*We commit to the demanding, costly implications of radically changed ways of living. Let us do so out of joy, celebration, reverence and a deep love of life.*

1. Andrew Glikson, Australian National University. Planetary Boundaries: The 350 ppm atmospheric CO2 limit of human habitats. Pdf dated 16/10/09.
2. <https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries/the-nine-planetary-boundaries.html>
3. <https://www.earthlaws.org.au/event/planetary-boundaries-with-prof-will-steffen/>

## Legend for capital acronyms

- E/MSY Rate of Extinction
- BII Biodiversity Integrity Index
- P Phosphorus
- N Nitrogen
- Dotted line: Biosphere enclosing safe operating space
- Dark Grey: operating within planetary boundary
- Mid-Grey: operating outside planetary boundary
- Lighter Grey: not yet quantified
- Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm University

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# Climate and security

DALE HESS | VICTORIA REGIONAL MEETING

This article is based on a talk given at the QPLC webinar on 30 April, 2022

**N**ational security has been a key issue in the federal election. The government tells us, 'We are seeing escalating strategic competition occur in our region and globally, particularly with an increasingly assertive China.' The government warns us that the rules-based international order is 'under threat'.

How does the government respond to this challenge? It responds by defining security through a military lens. Under the heading of 'protecting our interests in an uncertain world' the recent budget outlines three main areas for priority: <sup>1</sup>

- Investing in our strategic partnerships, i.e. military alliances, including the establishment of AUKUS and support for Ukraine.
- Expanding and equipping the Australian Defence Force. (Increasingly Australia is being drawn into the United States military and foreign policy system with consequential loss of sovereignty)
- Keeping Australians safe, with investment in our cyber capability, Operation Sovereign Borders and the prevention of terror threats and serious crimes. (Australia's policies of following the United States into wars creates refugees.)

Implicit in this response is the government's commitment to the goal of Australia becoming one of the world's top ten arms suppliers.

Another way to look at the current situation is to adopt a more inclusive viewpoint of security. The Commission for the Human Future at the Australia National University (ANU) has identified 10 catastrophic threats facing humanity in its report, *Surviving and Thriving in the 21st Century*. <sup>2</sup>

Let's consider one of these threats, climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued its comprehensive 6th Assessment Report. <sup>3</sup> But climate change is being ignored in the federal election. <sup>4</sup> This suits both the Coalition and Labor.

The IPCC report for Working Group I is the work of 234 climate scientists who examined and reviewed more than 14,000 publications. They predicted hotter temperatures, more dangerous fire weather, more droughts and floods, higher sea levels. <sup>5</sup>

We can see these effects in the recent floods devastating Queensland and NSW, <sup>6</sup> the massive bushfires of 2019-2020 burning up to 19 million hectares, <sup>7</sup> and the 2017-2019 drought in the Murray-Darling Basin and NSW. <sup>8</sup>

The IPCC has prepared a regional report for Australasia, and I invite you to read it. <sup>9</sup> I will mention just two points:

- Australian land areas have warmed by around 1.4°C and Aotearoa/New Zealand land areas by around 1.1°C between ~1910 and 2020.
- Global emissions must peak by 2025 to keep warming at 1.5°C.

**There are wide-ranging consequences:**

- The IPCC predicts there will be increased stress on the ecosystems, towns, cities, infrastructure, health, and the economic sector, including agriculture, finance, and tourism. <sup>10</sup>

- According to the Australian Climate Council, climate change will reduce security in our region and increase the risk of conflict and Australia will not find lasting national security without adequately addressing it. <sup>11</sup> Their report on climate and security states:

- 'Australia's failure to address climate change is already leading to a loss of our geopolitical influence, particularly in the Pacific.
- Pacific Island Countries as well as Bangladesh, China, Vietnam, India and Indonesia face significant threats from sea level rise, which is likely to increase displacement and forced migration...'

**What can be done? There are actions and policies that need to change.**

The Budget is reducing spending in agencies tasked with investing in renewable or low emissions technologies. 'Australia is spending public money in ways that exacerbate climate change, including handing out billions of dollars in fossil fuel subsidies.' <sup>12</sup>

The IPCC study indicates that as a first step, Australia must at least halve our emissions (below 2005 levels) by 2030. 'To have a 50% chance of keeping global warming to 1.5C by century's end, global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions must halve in a decade, reach net zero in the 2050s



and go net negative thereafter.

Methane emissions would also have to halve by 2050 in these scenarios.

Halving global emissions by 2030 is viable and achievable, the IPCC says. But it requires an immediate step-change in climate policy across all sectors, countries and levels of government.<sup>13</sup>

I invite Friends to read the new vision of security by AFSC and FCNL, called *Shared Security*.<sup>14</sup>

Both Washington and Canberra base their 'national security paradigm' on an 'us vs them' strategy. Enemies must be identified and destroyed. The AFSC and FCNL suggest new policies are needed, ones based on integrated problem-solving approaches that advance human dignity. They urge adoption of a new 'human security' model that focuses on safety and wellbeing for individuals and communities rather than nation-states. This approach recognises non-traditional challenges, such as environmental stress and economic and public health crises.

A second dimension is the idea of 'global security' which replaces the traditional notion of the primacy of state sovereignty, with a focus on building more cooperative and effective international institutions. This approach strengthens international law and cooperative problem-solving at a global level.

Combining human security and global security approaches results in 'shared security', a concept which recognises the interdependent nature of our world and the need for both global and local solutions for today's problems. It rejects the militarised and fear-based underpinnings of current policies, and instead upholds human dignity, and helps resilient communities solve problems non-violently.

## Notes

1. Leigh Tonkin, 2022, 'The budget gives an insight on how Ukraine war and global uncertainty might affect Australia. This is what we learnt', ABC News 30 March 2022. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-03-30/budget-ukraine-global-uncertainty-war/100949152>

2. John Hewson, et al., *Surviving and Thriving in the 21st Century*, Canberra: Australia National University, March 2020. [https://humanfuture.net/sites/default/files/CHF\\_Roundtable\\_Report\\_March\\_2020.pdf](https://humanfuture.net/sites/default/files/CHF_Roundtable_Report_March_2020.pdf). These threats include the threat of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, global warming and human-induced climate change, pandemics of new and untreatable disease, the rising food insecurity and failing nutritional quality, the decline of natural resources, particularly water, the collapse of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity, chemical pollution of the Earth system, including the atmosphere and oceans, human population growth beyond Earth's carrying capacity, the advent of powerful, uncontrolled new technology, and national and global failure to understand and act preventatively on these risks.

3. David Karoly, 2021, 'Monday's IPCC report is a really big deal for climate change. So what is it? And why should we trust it?', *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/mondays-ipcc-report-is-a-really-big-deal-for-climate-change-so-what-is-it-and-why-should-we-trust-it-165614>.

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tools to stop catastrophic climate change are in our hands. Here's how to use them', *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/ipcc-says-the-tools-to-stop-catastrophic-climate-change-are-in-our-hands-heres-how-to-use-them-179654>. Thomas Wiedmann, et al., 2022, 'IPCC finds the world has its best chance yet to slash emissions – if it seizes the opportunity', *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/ipcc-finds-the-world-has-its-best-chance-yet-to-slash-emissions-if-it-seizes-the-opportunity-179653>.

4. Bernard Keane, 2022, 'Climate is being ignored, especially by the ABC — and the loudest voice is of denialists', *Crikey*. <https://www.crikey.com.au/2022/04/22/climate-change-ignored-2022-election-abc/>

5. IPCC ARG WGI Regional Fact Sheet Australasia, n.d., [https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/factsheets/IPCC\\_AR6\\_WGI\\_Regional\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_Australasia.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/factsheets/IPCC_AR6_WGI_Regional_Fact_Sheet_Australasia.pdf); 'Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis'. Climate Council. [https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/IPCC-6AR-WGI-Explainer\\_updated.pdf](https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/IPCC-6AR-WGI-Explainer_updated.pdf).

6. Conal Hanna, 2022, 'Floods in Queensland and NSW: what we know about areas affected, and what's likely to happen next', *The Guardian* 28 February 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/feb/28/queensland-floods-2022-nsw-flood-weather-forecast-brisbane-lismore-grafton-qld-flooding-what-we-know>

7. 'Australian Bushfires'. WWF Australia. <https://www.wwf.org.au/what-we-do/bushfires#gs.w041vb>

8. 'Previous Droughts', Australian Bureau of Meteorology. <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/drought/knowledge-centre/previous-droughts.shtml>

9. IPCC ARG WGI Regional Fact

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# Raising peace

## *Taking away the occasion of war*

ALETIA DUNDAS | NEW SOUTH WALES REGIONAL MEETING

This article is based on a presentation given at the Raising Peace event, on ANZAC Day, 25th April 2022

On this ANZAC Day like every other one, I remember all soldiers who have lost their lives, their innocence, their hope in humanity and who have courageously borne the unrecorded, emotional cost of war.

I grew up a Quaker, and so was exposed to pacifism from a young age. The Declaration of Friends to Charles II in 1660 has motivated me to explore what it means to refuse all outward weapons for any end. I have always wanted to challenge the idea that pacifists are passive and explore what a testimony to peace meant in practice. I have always been guided by George Fox's intention to 'take away the occasion of war' and the idea that significant work is needed to prevent and repair from war.

In my early twenties I became involved in the Alternatives to Violence Project, which was begun in prisons, offering inmates tools to respond nonviolently to conflict in their lives. I found the principles of balance really helpful – respect for self, balanced against caring for others; the idea that the best way to find a nonviolent path was not to be passive, or aggressive, but to be assertive, and to use creativity, humour and compassion to transform difficult situations.

The prison program was so successful that it was then run in communities



where I became a facilitator, and also in schools, where it was known as HIP (Help Increase the Peace). The Friends Peace Teams have been involved in similar workshops in Rwanda, Burundi, Indonesia etc., adding trauma healing concepts to AVP to make it applicable to communities affected by violent conflict.

In my late 20s I studied a Masters in Peace and Conflict Studies. I learnt about Johan Galton's definition of 'positive peace' – the integration of human society, as opposed to negative peace – the absence of war, and realised that this was what George Fox and so many Quakers were also saying. We need positive, active peace – with justice! I was also taken with Ghandi's principles of nonviolent direct action and the salt march as a concrete example of active nonviolence in the pursuit of peace and justice.

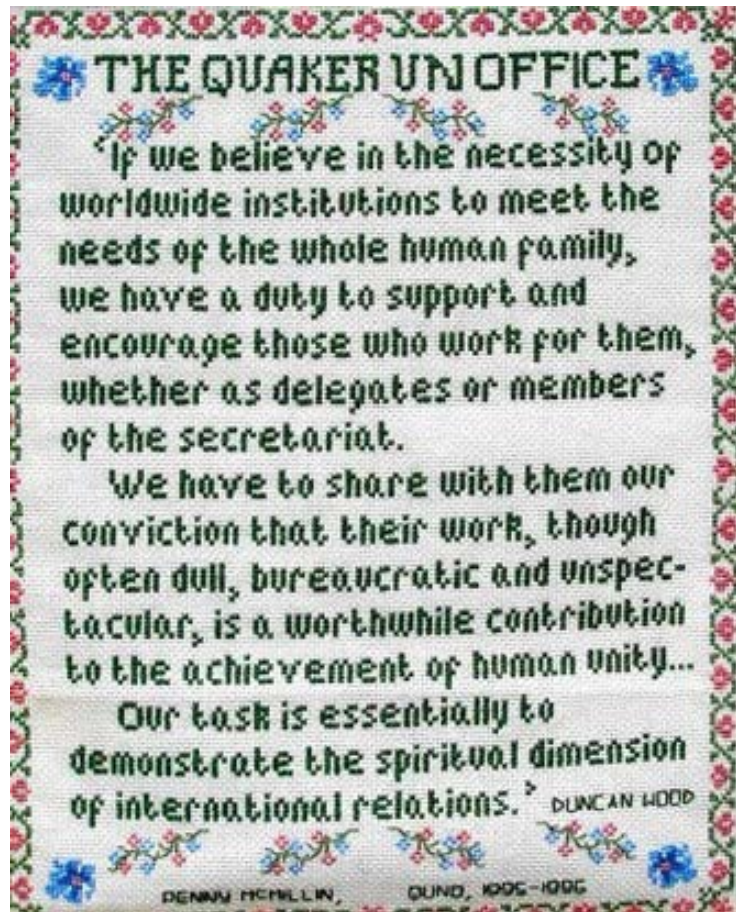
I wanted to offer examples of active nonviolence in response to criticisms that pacifists are passive, cowards. I was in awe of those who went as Human

Shields to Iraq, and began to explore examples of nonviolent direct action in Afghanistan in response to the occupation there.

I also became involved in civilian peacekeeping and was fascinated by the different models being trialed by different organisations. The idea of protective accompaniment put forward by Peace Brigades International talks about three areas of influence:

- The presence of international volunteers protects threatened activists by raising the stakes for potential attackers.
- It provides moral support and international solidarity for civil society activism by opening space for threatened organisations thereby giving them the confidence to carry out their work.
- In addition it strengthens the international movement for peace and human rights by giving accompaniment volunteers a powerful first-hand experience that becomes a sustained source of inspiration to themselves and others upon their return to their home countries. ([https://www.peacebrigades.org/en/about-pbi/what-we-do/protective-accompaniment#:~:text=Protective%20accompaniment%20is%20a%20strategy,communities%20in%20areas%20of%20conflict\).](https://www.peacebrigades.org/en/about-pbi/what-we-do/protective-accompaniment#:~:text=Protective%20accompaniment%20is%20a%20strategy,communities%20in%20areas%20of%20conflict).)

I served in a similar role through



the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel and was able to witness first-hand the everyday challenges of living under military occupation. I was able to offer support to both Palestinians and Israelis working nonviolently to end the occupation and achieve justice.

After completing my Masters, I was offered a Programme Assistant position at the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva, focussing on Peace and Disarmament. This was an opportunity to see how Quakers put our convictions about peace into practice at the international level.

In 1947 Quakers won the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts following World War II, and in 1948 the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) became an accredited NGO at the United Nations, allowing Quaker United Nations Offices to open in New York and Geneva. These offices have been active for 75 years, seeking to convene quiet, diplomatic conversations, and living out the belief that countries should resolve disputes through dialogue. I like the quote by Duncan Wood, who was a Representative in the 1990s.

### The Quaker UN Office

QUNO is another way in which Quakers live out a commitment to

prevent war and encourage positive peace. Through convening quiet conversations between diplomats, UN officials, representatives of NGOs and those directly affected by war, trust is built, meals are shared, and possibilities for agreement open up. One historical agreement was the Mine Ban Treaty, formalised in 1997 as a result of many years of similar meetings and discussions.

My colleagues on the Human Rights desk at QUNO Geneva focused on Women in Prison, and the impact of parental imprisonment on children of imprisoned mothers. In parallel with Quaker Service agencies and smaller initiatives such as Friends Peace Teams, QUNO has offered solidarity with communities in Asia, Africa, South America, and the Middle East.

QUNO has been able to bring civil society perspectives to UN discussions and ensure that those perspectives shape agreements made. QUNO has also responded to recent crises – exploring and advocating for the human impacts

of climate change, and the inequalities that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

In recent months with the eruption of the crisis in Ukraine, there is a deep desire for a Quaker response. However, while Quakers are involved in humanitarian assistance, and sowing seeds of reconciliation, the opportunities for QUNO's specific engagement are limited once a crisis has erupted. QUNO will continue to focus on long term efforts where it can have the most value.

Despite the significant challenges facing us with the global pandemic, the climate crisis, and increasing natural disasters affecting those least equipped to bounce back, I am still hopeful about the next 75 years, knowing that there are so many people and groups working to build a positive peace and take away the occasion of war. Let's not forget, and let's not stop working for the change we want to see in the world.

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# Reflections on a train from Geneva

TIM GEE | GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE FRIENDS WORLD COMMITTEE FOR CONSULTATION

I write from a train, on the way from Geneva, following the Quaker United Nations Committee in support of the teams who speak up in the name of Friends about climate justice, human rights and refugees, peace and disarmament and sustainable and just economic systems.

There's no doubt the work is inspiring. In parallel with the meeting, Quaker representatives at the UN's major migration conference shared news of an agreement just reached – and encouraged by Friends – to review migration policies as a step towards eliminating systemic racism as well as commitments to increase participation of migrants in decisions that affect them.

Others explained how Quaker conversations and interventions are encouraging a just transition to a circular plastics economy, and catalysing progress towards a stronger political declaration on protecting civilians from the humanitarian harm arising from explosive weapons – with Quakers calling for an end to their use altogether.

Reflecting the strength of concern in Quaker communities about global heating, there have been more than 60 Quaker interventions made so far this year during intergovernmental negotiations, helping ensure legally significant texts reflect important findings on the environment and conflict, climate justice, human rights, gender equality, meaningful participation in decision making and the role of sustainable diets in maintaining a liveable planet.

Looking forward a little, by the time this piece is published, Quaker representatives will have worked with the UN's Peacebuilding Support Office to get climate change and conflict on the agenda at a major international conference on peacebuilding and development, drawing attention to several country cases in Africa.

My sense is that the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) in Geneva and New York is well known among Friends in general terms, as a body that does good at the international level, in which we place a great deal of trust to do what they can when opportunities arise, especially through quiet diplomacy. That was roughly my perception before starting this role.

Now I have more of an insight on the detail, as the Friends World Committee agrees statements to be made in multilateral meetings, arranges passes to allow access to the UN buildings, and supports Quakers from Africa, the Americas, Asia-West Pacific and Europe & the Middle East to feed in to and shape the work.

It's tempting to see the people Friends send to speak at the UN as something like 'Quaker ambassadors' to the world's governments, on behalf of the institution of Quakerism. There's something in that, but somehow I feel there is something more spiritual going on too, in the ways that they, with the support of others, also seek to channel and discern the spoken and silent prayers of the world Quaker family, and try to translate that in to 'UN language' to make a difference.

This isn't the whole picture of how

Quakers seek change. QUNO isn't big, neither in Geneva nor New York. In committee meetings I remind myself of the 'serenity prayer' – 'God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference'. Then I add what that prayer seems to miss – the strength to keep dreaming for large-scale change, even if I don't know exactly how it will come about, accepting that different people and institutions are best able to do different things.

In linking Quaker work at the United Nations to the wider witness of Friends, I often think of Jesus' Parable of the Sower, pithily summarised – or perhaps clarified or emphasised – by his brother James; 'Those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness'.

The seed having been planted 75 years ago, QUNO seems to me like a green-shoot of peace and justice. For tender plants to grow and thrive though they need fertile soil, which the richly diverse world Quaker community represents.

I truly believe that our local, monthly, yearly, and international meetings, our shared moments of unity like World Quaker Day, and the many different ways we work and pray for peace are all part of the groundwork for change.

As my train approaches Paris then, I feel my heart full of gratitude, for the people who use their gifts to make change in our name, and to the faithful community of Quakers which makes all of it possible

AF



# Know thy Friend

*Diana Pittock*

DIANA PITTOCK | VICTORIA REGIONAL MEETING

**P**elicans! The beginning of my river of life. My life ahead was not planned but evolved, perhaps from an awareness which began at 5, when I saw for the first time the pelicans on the Coorong at the River Murray mouth. My view was from the front seat, sitting on a cushion between my grandparents, in their small car, luggage on the back seat. Birds, reeds, clouds seen in the water. Ngarrindjeri country, as I now know. The road to Robe a dusty, sandy track then. It was a beginning of my interest in the environment and the Murray River.

I had left Port Pirie, my 1939 birthplace, after my mother's death in 1944. I left behind my fear of the planes flying over which could bomb me! Was that the beginning of an interest in peace?

## Peace and nonviolence

A stepfamily became a reality when I was nine and thanks to a wise stepmother, came lessons in learning to adjust to others and trying to deal with tensions. Her wisdom resulted in the five children still being family now as ageing adults. Dealing with various tensions became a thread of my life. Sunday school was a learning environment, being asked to be the Sunday School kindergarten leader, then having roles in the Presbyterian youth group (PFA). One thing flowed into another leading to my becoming an infant teacher.

An interest in not knowing how to deal with organisational tensions led to me nonviolence social change training in USA where we lived with our three sons in the late 1970s. From 1980, working in nonviolence back here

involved me in assisting community organisations to become more efficient and more effective in dealing with conflict. Nonviolence training for campaigns, such as the Franklin River dam blockade, was important to me as well as mediating in organisational disputes.

Mediating in conflicts and training mediators developed too, together with awareness of cultural differences needing varied approaches. Quaker mentors assisted these opportunities.

## Indonesia

In my student days and early teaching years I met up with Indonesian students and Herb and Betty Feith. They had the vision of a volunteer graduate scheme to assist after the war when Australian graduates could get jobs in Indonesia at local salaries. It is now the Australian Volunteers International. Many connections eventuated, leading me to go to Indonesia in 1961 at 21 by myself to find out more.

Travelling was to take items to students' families in Sumatra and to meet my friend Sophy Patty from Ambon who worked with the Indonesian Council of Churches in Jakarta. Sadly, Sophy is no longer with us, having worked in West Papua for some years, as did her brother.

In 1962 I returned to Indonesia in a delegation of the Australian Council of Churches at the invitation of the Indonesian Council of Churches. In both journeys I stayed at a maternity and baby hospital in Surabaya. It was such a shock to see the poverty and malnutrition of some babies and of women lining up outside for hours. The doctor in charge and the care was

impressive. Some of us established a 'Friends' of the hospital group of which as secretary, I was sending medicines and money we collected.

A lifelong love of Indonesian friends and culture continues. Distress at some political matters worries me.

## Indigenous awareness

My first experience of being with Aborigines had been when at 18 I had a holiday job in Alice Springs. A friend and I boarded the old Ghan train in Adelaide and during the journey got to know some of the Albrecht family members who were returning to Alice Springs for a family wedding. "We are going to the places where we grew up. Would you like to come with us?" So began our trip in the back of a truck to the APY lands: Hermansberg, Haast's Bluff, Areyonga, Yuendumu and Papunya. Sleeping in swags in the dry creek beds, eating kangaroo cooked all night in the earth oven and having a glimpse of this wonderful culture was overwhelming to a naïve city girl. However, there were my concerns at seeing the government intrusions into their lives.

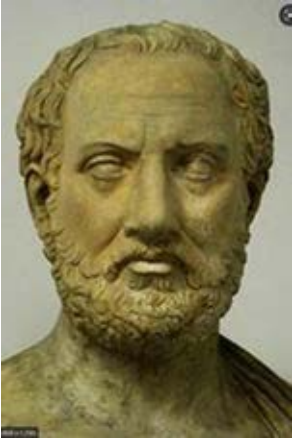
Another turn in my life's flow led to my being on the Australian Christian Youth Council and who should also be there but Barrie Pittock, representing Quakers. A serious young man belonging to a group I didn't know! At Easter 1965, when I was an observer from PFA at the Federal Council of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) in Canberra, he turned up again! This time as the speaker, newly back from climate and land rights

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

# The Thucydides Trap

*Stumbling blindly into nuclear war on a rapidly warming Earth*

ANDREW GLIKSON | CANBERRA AND REGION QUAKERS



Thucydides

**O**n a rapidly warming planet engulfed by bush fires, collapsing glaciers, floods and rising oceans, the last thing needed is the growing threat of a nuclear war between superpowers possessing fatal nuclear arsenals capable of poisoning the atmosphere, the water and billions of living organisms. The current impasse between two superpowers, the US vs Russia + China, threatening to grow into a nuclear war, endangers the future of civilization and much of nature.

The situation echoes the Peloponnesian wars between Athens and Sparta for control of the Aegean world witnessed by Thucydides<sup>1</sup>, the Greek general and historian. Throughout history when a great power was threatened by the rise of another, with few exceptions the stronger adversary would try to arrest the growth of the new one, a strategy labelled 'Thucydides Trap'. As Thucydides, wrote:

*It was the rise of Athens and the fear that this instilled in Sparta which made war inevitable.*

But In the nuclear age such confrontation amounts to a global suicide, as stated by Albert Einstein.

*The splitting of the atom has changed everything, bar man's way of thinking, and thus we drift toward unparalleled catastrophes.*

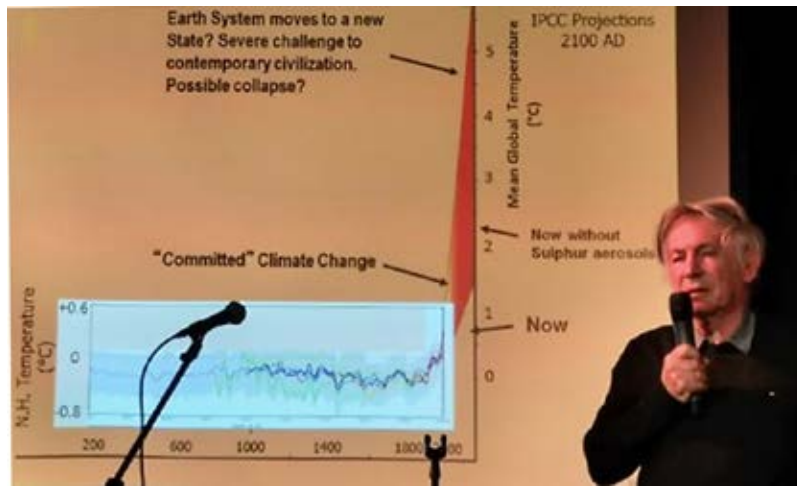
An analogous situation has emerged in the wake of World War II when the superpowers, the US vs Russia + China, are trapped on a collision course on the rapidly warming Earth. To date the mutual nuclear threat of the MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction) has prevented a direct war between the

superpowers, while proxy wars abound. But memories are short and 'the first casualty of a war is the truth'. Double standards prevail. The more aggressive a force the more it asserts it is acting in 'self-defence'.

A generation has passed since the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombs and, as the collective memory of their horrendous consequences is fading, a global suicide machine of some 13,000 atomic and hydrogen missiles has emerged. The young and the middle aged may perceive a nuclear holocaust as a surreal nightmare, overlooking the gruesome evidence all around including the testing grounds of New Mexico, the Marshall Islands, Novaya Zemlya, Kazakhstan, Moruroa Atoll, Nevada, Gobi Desert, the Nullarbor and elsewhere.

Planetary consciousness is rare. Media cover-up blinds too many to this hair trigger in the background of the rapidly accelerating global warming. As observed by Noam Chomsky (1998)<sup>2</sup>

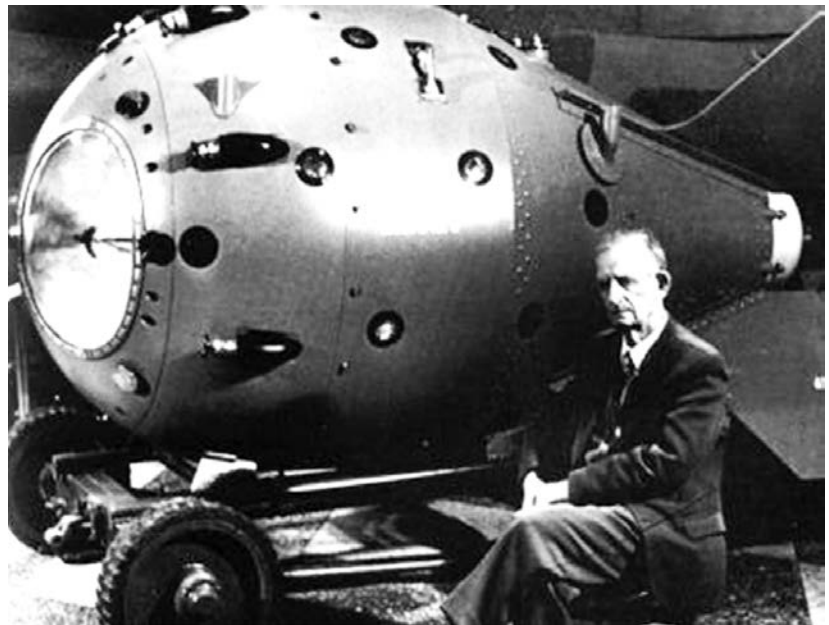
*The smart way to keep people passive and obedient is to strictly limit the spectrum of acceptable opinion, but allow very lively debate within that spectrum.*



Andrew Glikson



The Peloponnesian wars



Yuliy Khariton, Father of the Soviet atomic bomb

And while the atmosphere is progressively poisoned by carbon and by radioactive isotopes, sport circuses abound, fluorescent screens are replete with expressions of inhumanity. Orwellian 'alternative facts' and double standards prevail.

It appears that inherent in civilization, throughout history and more recently, is the phenomenon of war, large bloodsheds performed under a range of false slogans. Now that the powers that be have constructed a fleet of some 13,000 nuclear missiles, a myriad species, including *Homo sapiens* are placed on a hair trigger Damocles sword, consistent with Fermi's Paradox.<sup>3</sup>

According to Fermi's Paradox,

the failure to date to achieve radio communication between Earth and extra-terrestrial civilisations can be attributed to their inevitable short-term self-destruction due to uncontrolled dispersion of toxic substances, contamination of air, water and land, and construction of deadly weapons.

On Earth this includes saturation of the atmosphere by greenhouse gases and production of nuclear weapons.

Where does responsibility lie, for losing the sense of reverence which stone-age humans possessed toward nature and its wonderful creatures, for allowing ourselves to join a rat race where everyone can be a millionaire, for electing the mouthpieces of criminals,

snake oil merchants and turncoats to control our lives?

The only hope is in a reawakening of human consciousness, as the school children under the leadership of Greta Thunberg have done.

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thucydides>
2. <http://web.mit.edu/~yandros/phil/Chomsky>
3. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fermi\\_paradox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fermi_paradox)

AF



# QSA Notes

## Working with Indigenous groups

JACKIE PERKINS | QSA EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR



Many meetings, TV news presentations, forums and conventions now begin with an acknowledgement of country, paying respect to First Nations Elders past, present and emerging. This is a relatively recent innovation, encouraged no doubt by the Uluru Statement From the Heart<sup>1</sup>, and recognising knowledge so long denied. Working alongside and supporting First Nations communities was a feature of QSA's initial work. QSA was created in 1959, by a small group of dedicated Friends, determined to see that Quakers have a visible presence in making the world a better place, beginning in their own backyard, and this continues after 62 years.

Each area of QSA's support to First Nations communities has ideas in common. The financial support is not large, and it is usually given in stages as progression occurs and ideas evolve. With all projects supported by QSA, the idea and expression of the need come from the communities themselves. Sometimes QSA is made aware of a community's need by a Quaker who has visited the area and learned what they are planning to achieve. Similarly, all ideas from First Nations communities come to QSA via Friends or through the Yearly Meeting First Nations Peoples' Concerns Committee, with which QSA has been involved for many years. Throughout QSA's history of community support, a working relationship has been considered key, and these relationships continue beyond the life of funding support. However, there is a critical difference between QSA projects in Australia and those overseas in how relationships are formed. For projects overseas, the relationship evolves as the project evolves, and for this reason, support for project partners tends to be

long term. In our work with First Nations communities, the relationship must develop first.

In an interview with Heather Saville, working on her book *Friends in Deed*<sup>2</sup>, written to celebrate 50 years of Quaker Service Australia, Sue Doessel (Queensland Regional Meeting) commented,

*... relationship-centred orientation of Aboriginal culture, in which it is seen as more important that things happen in their proper order than by a certain time'*

She then goes on to say,

*That what is gained cannot be measured simply in terms of achievement of concrete objectives, but must also include what has been learned, that has made us wiser, and less likely to repeat the same mistakes, what has been healed, what difficulties and belly laughs have been shared, and what heart we have given one another to continue this work.<sup>3</sup>*

This quote helps explain a project which, after many months of conversations, was agreed and commenced in December 2021 to support the Jundi Mibunn Beenleigh Housing and Development Company Limited (BHDC)<sup>4</sup>, based in Queensland. Its chief executive officer, Will Davis, and advisor and supporter Norm Sheehan have gathered together a team, including some university students, to work with local Indigenous groups to research a better way to define community needs and key performance indicators that use deep learning culturally-based circles and connective art, and that can be replicated. From this work comes an understanding of how this approach can relate to donor criteria. The frustration experienced by Will and Norm in securing funding to achieve significant changes

for First Nations groups via BHDC led to conversations firstly with Queensland Regional Meeting and then with QSA. Connecting to traditional lands and culture is a common theme in QSA projects with First Nations communities. A lack of connection can lead to self-harm among young people and violence and domestic abuse among adults. Another QSA project entitled "Healing Our Way Together" started recently in South Australia and will run for much of 2022 led by Tod Stokes, known to QSA for several years from a former project with Korner Winmil Yunti in South Australia, where he undertook similar work. It consists of a social and emotional well-being therapeutic program using a narrative therapy group format in a culturally appropriate way to support positive and strong cultural identity and connection. Local Elders have a significant role in this project, working with Tod and First Nations trainees to expand the reach of this work. Some First Nations communities have requested resources from QSA rather than funding for a time-framed project. QSA has provided industrial strength washing machines to two Men's Sheds in the Northern Territory, a vehicle to collect students to attend school, cyclone proof sheds for the Doomadgee Aboriginal Community in the Gulf region of north west Queensland, and water tanks, to name a few. QSA has also supported training courses and schools, including the Yipirinya School in Alice Springs, the ecumenical Nungalinya College in Darwin offering vocational training, TAFE courses and theological studies, support for student nurses through the Eleanor Duncan Clinic on the Central Coast of NSW, and support for students attending





Bush camp, Balgo Community, Western Australia: Photo credit: Balgo Community

Cunnamulla High School in Queensland. Sometimes the support is smaller and more personal, such as catering equipment for a café (with training for a few young people) located near to the courts in Brisbane, and personal toiletries and a range of clothing from a local op shop enabling people appearing before the courts to make a better first impression. Some projects are of longer duration. Many Friends, I am sure, will remember the Purga Native Plant Nursery near Ipswich in Queensland. Support began in 2001 and lasted for a number of years. We saw the initiative mature from a simple shed to an established plant nursery with a watering system, shade cloth covered areas and vocational training to teach valuable skills. QSA learned some valuable lessons from the Purga nursery project, a project started by one person with the support of others. What happens when that person is no longer around to provide the enthusiasm and drive? What happens when the family of Elders changes in a community? From other projects, QSA has learned

that speaking and writing in English is not a strong feature in many remote communities, so when the correspondent moves on, there is often no way of knowing the situation they have left behind or if QSA's help is still needed. From the Federal Government, we have learned about many issues surrounding the introduction of GST, and the rationalisation of banking outlets has made the transfer of funds more complex. There is never a dull moment. The issues surrounding the Purga project are quite well known among First Nations communities in the region. This is evident in a recent conversation with two Elders from the Djungan People who are keen to discuss income generating ideas for the Kondaparinga Station in Queensland. They want to start a plant nursery, but are firstly seeking financial support from QSA to draft a business and marketing plan, and then to select the best site with sufficient water resources before setting up an indigenous plant nursery. QSA is still discussing this idea with the community, and they are keen to learn from what

they know of the situation for the Purga nursery and create a venture providing employment, stewardship of the land and its water resources, and income for the community.

I urge Friends who wish to learn more about QSA's support of First Nations projects to read Chapter 3 (pages 65-92) of *Friends in Deed* by Heather Saville or contact the office to learn more about current projects. I will leave the last few words to Heather:

*... connection to traditional lands and spiritual roots... provide a place of healing for the harm caused by so many years of dislocation and forced assimilation.* Heather Saville, *Friends in Deed*, p. 81

#### Notes

1. Uluru Statement From the Heart, 2017 <https://ulurustatement.org/>
2. Heather Saville, *Friends in deed: 50 years of Quaker Service Australia, Quakers Australia*, 2009
3. Heather Saville, *Friends in deed*, pp 90-91
4. Jundi Mibunn Beenleigh Housing and Development Company <http://www.bhdc.org.au/cms/index.php/jinndi-mibunn>

QSA is a member of the Australian Council for International Development and is a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct. The purpose of QSA 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 their quality of life with projects which are culturally sensitive, as well as being economically and environmentally appropriate and sustainable.

Find us on Facebook for more photos and stories: [facebook.com/quakerserviceaustralia](https://facebook.com/quakerserviceaustralia).

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ACFID  
MEMBER



# A brief journey back in time

MICHAEL CORBETT | QUEENSLAND REGIONAL MEETING

**M**y association with Friends at the Kelvin Grove Meeting House goes back over 40 years. During that time there have been many different scenarios by which we have read and studied the Advices and Queries [A&Q]. I have formed deep feelings for these wondrous small windows into our Quaker faith and over the years I have concluded that the A&Q form the bedrock – the very foundation of our movement.

Thanks to our Pastoral Care Committee, over the past few months we have been having readings during the Meeting or Worship from the Advices and Queries and they have contributed to a new depth of thought, reflections and Ministry. Over the 60+ years I have been a Quaker, two things have struck me about the A&Q – I do not know of any faith or religion that gives you choices, other than of course Quakers. Advices – you can take them or leave them – they are only A&Q – we are allowed to question the questions! Remarkable but true.

Remember the epistle by the elders at Balby in 1656 *these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by...* Quakerism at its very best. But it did occur to me that they were probably a collection of inspirational thoughts and leadings that just grew into what we now know. I have a feeling that at least one of origins could have been one very remarkable woman.

## So this was the beginning of my brief journey back in time.

Almost 370 years ago, two major forces met, and we would not 'be' if it were not for this. In June 1652, George Fox was doing his usual evangelical travelling around the Midlands of England, it was during an intense storm when he arrived Swathmore Hall, at the estate of the Lord Chief Justice Thomas Fell. The Swathmore estate was very large, and part of the building is still standing today. It had land for farming, orchards, vegetable gardens, stables, with many employees to look after the property, including maids and cooks.

Justice Thomas Fell was a 'man of substance' both in the legal sense and position in society. As it was late, George Fox and his travelling companion were offered a meal and a room to sleep. This was a customary practice that often took place at Swathmore Hall, visiting judges and priests would 'stop over' on their journey.

On the day that Fox arrived, Judge Fell was away at an assizes in Wales, holding court appearances. Mistress Margaret Fell was very capable of running the estate during her husband's absences. She was the mother of 9 children – 8 daughters and 1 son. There is no doubt that Margaret was a devout follower of the Church. She led daily evening prayers 'above stairs' whilst the servants held their prayers 'below stairs'. The estate also had its own private

chapel which would be used when a travelling priest came through.

There was no peace at this time, there was a civil war between the Royalists and the Roundheads. In 1649 King Charles was executed and Oliver Cromwell became the Military Protector and Dictator. Many fierce battles took place and in 1653 Cromwell dissolved parliament. Apart from this chaos, there was a slow spiritual awakening beginning. Martin Luther and others had begun translating the Bible, starting with the Old Testament, and the Bible was published in English in 1523. More and more people were learning to read and, horror of horrors, people like Fox were able to challenge the clergy's 'self-serving' sermons that came from the pulpit, so the priests felt their authority under threat. Fox and Friends rose to the fore and suffered for many decades for preaching to *that of God in everyone* and to *follow the inward Light*.

During Fox's stay in Swathmore Hall, Margaret Fell started conversations with Fox and she was struck by his 'presence', his testimony of the inner Light and his preaching. Despite her misgivings – not able to understand why – she became 'convinced' in a very short time after meeting George.

It is to Justice Fell's credit that he accepted her commitment and supported her and their children as all

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Margaret Fell

8 girls became 'convinced', along with many of the people who worked for the Fell household. Slowly but surely Swathmore Hall became the centre of our movement. Large numbers of Friends were sent to prison. George was famous for not removing his hat in front of judges and priests and refusing to take an oath, and as a result went to prison many times.

Many of our Testimonies were also born at this time – Simplicity and Truth etc., phrases like *what canst thou say and we marry none; it is the Lord's work. The words we do utterly deny, with all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons... this is our testimony to the whole world.*

This declaration to King Charles II in 1660 became our Peace testimony. In the testimonies lie the seeds of the Advices and Queries we use today.

Margaret took to visiting the jail closest to her and became distressed about the conditions that she found, particularly the number of children imprisoned with the parents. She was able to use the fact that she was married to Justice Fell to enter jail, was able to offer prayers and pastoral care, as well as practical help. She once met a convicted poacher who had one of his hands cut off as well as being imprisoned, she sent him one glove and a mitten, another time she was visiting a young child who had been sentenced to the gallows, and during prayers received the message

that *all he has is thee* and so accompanied him to his execution.

Margaret started writing letters to distant Friends' meetings asking for news of 'those of your meeting who are in prison'. It is recorded that in 1653, Margaret Fell wrote her first epistle.

She wrote *Dear Friends, this meeting has a concern about those who find themselves imprisoned for Truth's sake* and signed the letter *Margaret Fell, Recording Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings.*

In another epistle, written around 1655, she wrote *now search with the light, which is eternal, whether ye be established in righteousness and purity; if ye be not, ye deny the teaching of the Lord.*

During Yearly Meeting in 1682, Friends were moved to write to distant Meetings asking:

*What Friends in the ministry, in their respective counties, departed this life since last yearly Meeting?*

*What Friends imprisoned for their testimony have died in prison since last yearly meeting?*

*How the Truth has prospered amongst them since the last yearly meeting, and how Friends are in peace and Unity.*

This was the first of the Advices & Queries. These three queries were expanded into six in 1694 and amended further in the early 1700's. Their purpose was to gain factual information about the state of the Society; later the advices were included to give spiritual nurturing and growth to the different

Meetings.

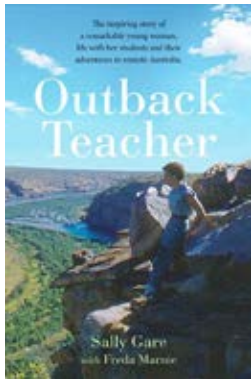
On a personal level, I have always felt that Margaret Fell was the 'first' of all Clerks in our history. Whilst George Fox was doing a wonderful job in 'convincing' with his sermons and setting up Meetings all over England, Ireland, and Wales, it is Margaret who, with divine assistance, started knitting together the organisational structure of our movement turning Swathmore Hall into the headquarters of Quakers. She was a prolific writer of letters, many of which are held in the archives of Friends House in London as well as other places. Apart from personal letters, she also wrote epistles and Minutes as well as a number of books.

She wrote many times to Oliver Cromwell, as well as visiting him, always addressing him as Dear Heart, asking for the release of imprisoned Friends. In January 1661, some forty-three Friends were sent to prison from Swathmore Hall. At another time, four hundred Friends were held in Lancaster Prison at the same time. Margaret was faithful to those in prison, relentless in her communicating and visiting with Cromwell until he died in 1658. She then switched her approach to King Charles II [in 1660] addressing him in the same manner, and it would seem that both men accepted her words of greeting and were not offended by them. She visited the King at least

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

# Noted

**This is our regular feature in which we briefly record interesting publications and websites that have come to our attention. Inclusion of an item in this format does not preclude a possible longer review in a later issue. We welcome suggestions for inclusion.**



## **Outback Teacher**

Sally Herzfeld has brought to our attention a book that she has co-written (as Sally Gare) and that was recently published.

### **Sally says:**

My first teaching appointment in 1956 was to the Forrest River Mission which was up a river out of Wyndham in the far North of Western Australia. It was later known by the Aboriginal name of Umbulgurri.

My Quaker upbringing and the influence of other people like Mollie Skinner helped me during those first years in a wonderful, but sometimes very challenging situation. After two years there, I returned home and joined my parents in organisations like United Nations and Aboriginal groups while teaching in a local school.

In 1959 I asked for a more interesting appointment and was asked if I would go to Port Hedland where a group of Aboriginal children were going to be looked after near the town so that they could have an education. Their parents had been involved in the Pindan Strike of 1946.

Our Perth Friends had helped an Aboriginal man run a bush school for that group and I still have a letter written in 1948 from the teacher thanking us for clothes and equipment.

The government wouldn't support that school because Tommy had only gone as far as 4th standard when he was a child, so after two years there was no school until I arrived there in September 59. The school was a large, rusty, old railway shed and instead of the promised 20 kids between the age of 6 and 14, there were 39 and the

dentist said they were between 4 and 21. I was only 23.

They couldn't speak English and I couldn't speak their language. Can you imagine the amazing, eventful, cultural and educational time that those young people, their families and I had for the next two and a third years? How did I meet a young Public Works engineer in that shed? We have now been married for 60 years.

Freda Marnie, my co-author from NSW, is an ex-student of mine from a metropolitan school near Perth in the 70s. My mother kept the weekly letters that I wrote home and Freda has done a wonderful job in helping me put the most relevant information into book form.

AF



# Yuggera Boys Home

LINDSAY VIETH | QUEENSLAND REGIONAL MEETING

The gully on the Brisbane Meeting House land allows water to flow to Enoggera Creek, fed by Enoggera reservoir, and over a few ridges lies the Enoggera suburb. Enoggera is our clumsy White Fella way of acknowledging the eternal rights of the Yuggera people. At the centre of Enoggera is the Enoggera State School which is where I received all my primary education.

Up a steady grade from the school stood the Enoggera Boys Home, which was almost exclusively populated by aboriginal boys, some of whom must have been the future custodians of the Yuggera people. They called each other 'staties', state wards, rightly educated at our state school. We called them home boys, not a derogatory term and probably encouraged by the school to stop hurtful names being used.

I clearly remember the day that awful N word gained traction at school, a product of a popular children's rhyme. Next day the headmaster and local police sergeant came to each classroom and ushered the home boys out. We were told if we used the N word we would be sent to a children's corrective establishment until we were 16 and then go to Boggo Road Jail until we were 30.

## They might be home boys but they became our home boys.

The classroom setup was that academic merit was highest at the back and decreased toward the front. I thought I should be at the back but always seemed to be mistakenly placed in the front. The home boys were at the front because their education and home

life was so sadly compromised.

With desks built for 2, the home boys were split from each other by each sharing a desk with a European kid. It wasn't until my 20s, as the stolen generations became obvious, that I realised I'd spent my whole primary education sitting next to a child stolen from his family and his mob.

## I hope I was kind to them.

At lunch time a tiny little van with 3 tiny little wheels would roll down the hill from the Yuggera Boys Home into the school grounds, a door would open and there, laid out on the floor on wooden trays lined with butcher paper would be the home boys lunch. Lunch consisted of 2 thick slices of 2- or 3-day-old bread that looked like they'd been cut with an axe. These ragged slices were glued together with a thin ribbon of red jam. The food was consumed by flicking tap water onto the bread to make it palatable, I can't remember ever seeing any food wasted. There were no plump home boys.

Today this would be a scandal but our parents were children of the depression and jokes to us about bread and dripping for dinner were a grim reality for my father. I have dozens of home boys stories but this one has a happy ending.

The Yuggera Boys Home was owned and run by the Church of England and the home boys always came to Sunday school in our little wooden church on the hill, it wasn't compulsory but come they did. The parish ladies asked that each child bring a large nutritious sandwich and a piece of fruit. Sandwiches in grease proof paper or paper bags were

sent containing tomato, lettuce, cheese, eggs and often corned beef or silverside slices.

The ritual was that we'd team up with a home boy and present our food to a lady with a big knife. The sandwich was unwrapped and the paper flattened and folded and placed in our pocket for our mum to find when we got home. The sandwich and fruit was divided and we both took half, we'd sit and eat but the home boys would eat fast. We outnumbered the boys by at least 2 to 1, so they would get to go round 2 or maybe 3 times.

Every Sunday the curate would stand on a little wooden box and explain that this was fair because we could go home and have more but the home boys couldn't. If the curate said it, that's like Jesus said it, so it must be OK.

Thinking back, this may have been one of the few times in their young lives that these lost, first nation children were made to feel special.

Those boys loved our Sunday school and with full tummys they'd sing and dance, show off and have fun. I think they were sad when it was time to walk back to the Yuggera Boys Home.

## What can we take from all this?

I can offer nothing new except to say, if we have plenty, it's a golden opportunity to be generous and share, and if we share we enhance 2 lives.

But we should ask ourselves 'How can we ever help to restore the Dreaming to the sacred and eternal lands of Yuggera people?'

AF.

Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade to do more analytical work, and moving the Civil-Military Centre (which coordinates civil and military/police aid) to DFAT. Hugh Piper, a former diplomat, has also made a creative suggestion to strengthen Australian diplomacy – (a) Coordinate a national security strategy, (b) make DFAT a central agency (like Treasury and Finance), (c) commit to more flexible staffing of DFAT, and (d)

‘blow up the cable system’ and invent new ways to share information between head office and posts. (*The Interpreter*, journal of Lowy Institute, 13 April 2022).

Diplomacy has much to commend it as a nonviolent way of dealing with crises. DFAT has a Diplomatic Academy which trains staff in ‘international engagement craft’ including advocacy, negotiation, forecasting and strategic planning. We

need to use these people in ways that contribute to building peace rather than exacerbating the tendency to think of military approaches first. For example, why has the government moved to such an aggressive stance towards China instead of seeking common ground and cooperative action? And why has the government given so little weight to encouraging negotiation and mediation in the Ukraine crisis?

AF

## CLIMATE AND SECURITY— CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

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## KNOW THY FRIEND— CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

research in USA, he was comparing Aboriginal, Native American and Maori land rights. We spoke, connected well and were married in September that year. He talked of ‘that of God in everyone’, which met me at that time of my spiritual life.

Back in Dec 1964 at the Asian Christian Youth Assembly in the Philippines I met Joyce and Colin Clague. Joyce is a Yaegl woman from NSW. They were often also at the FCAATSI conferences and we kept in touch at times when Joyce and Colin were social workers in the NT, and stood for parliament there. They worked to get native title rights for Ulgundahi Island in the Clarence River,

her birthplace. Some of their family is now a part of our family.

Knowing Joyce was another turning point in my Indigenous awareness. Living with Barrie as he worked on land rights for years together with First Nations people was a key to further understanding.

Living in BoonWurrung country for me led to being on the Indigenous Affairs Advisory Committee of Bayside Council. It resulted in the Council’s acknowledgement of the BoonWurrung in Council statements, us organising the Indigenous sections of the four libraries and setting up displays for Reconciliation and NAIDOC weeks there. Along the way I did an art degree

and yearn to use my metalwork tools again and to complete ideas I had. Art is still a major part of my journey.

My heart is with our children and grandchildren. They carry the future like so many of their generations. Their awareness of people, environment, being humane and being positive is a part of my hope. Our Quaker Meeting sustains me, as does living with Barrie.

So many tributaries in a life. A life guided by the spirit, I hope, and sometimes, no doubt, by determination! And now, my river of life is happily winding to slower flows. Simplicity in activity results.

AF.

five times, pleading all the time for the release of prisoners *who were all people of peace* and not plotting against the King. All through the summer of 1672 two Friends in London, Ellis Hookes and George Whitehead, an early Quaker preacher and lobbyist, were involved in making a list of imprisoned Friends and a number of non-Quaker Dissenters. This was presented to King Charles II, it was a list of 500 people – including John Bunyan – and they were all released by year's end by Charles II by 'The Great Pardon'.

It is recorded that from 1673 to 1785, there was continuous and severe persecution of Quakers. Yet our movement grew, and people like William Penn, Robert Barclay, and Isaac Pennington became Quakers and spread the word. Many of the letters, books, minute books and epistles written, and many other documents have provided a great tapestry of our Quaker movement.

Justice Fell died in 1658 and this left Margaret open to persecution. In February 1664 she was arrested and sentenced to six years in Lancaster Castle jail. Margaret was released in June 1668. Friends kept her supplied with paper and she became a prolific writer of letters to both the King and other Quakers Meetings and Friends in prison.

In October 1669, George Fox and Margaret Fell were married in Bristol and it is recorded that after the wedding, George Fox travelled in the South and Midlands, whilst Margaret returned to Swathmore.

They both, along with many other Friends, were persecuted and were in and out of jail for many years. As if

prison was not enough for Margaret and other Friends, in 1670 a special Act the Second Conventicle (which was to be used against 'secret' or 'unauthorised meetings for religious worship') was passed. It not only imprisoned but impoverished people. A person preaching at a religious meeting was fined £20 for the first and £40 for any further offence and a person who allowed a meeting in their house was fined £20.

The Act also created a class of people – the informers – who made a living spying on meetings held by Quakers, and other non-conformists. This Act held till 1688 and it is noted in books compiled by the 'clerks' of local Meeting which throw great light on the suffering of Friends, and appears in the *Book of Sufferings of Lancashire Friends, from 1654 to 1700* at the Lancashire Meeting House. If you could not pay the fines, then the contents of shops and houses were commonly taken in lieu of fines.

Margaret never gave up talking to Royalty. When Charles II died, she 'interviewed' James II, always pleading for Friends' freedom to worship without punishment and it is her efforts, laying the foundations to our Society, that we enjoy today. The suffering and punishment that early Friends went through would have deterred many of us.

George Fox died in January 1691, Margaret Fox, nee Fell, lived till April 1702 when she died aged eighty-eight, at Swathmore Hall So, the next time you see or hear from the booklet, *Advices and Queries*, I trust you will remember the sufferings that early Friends went through and who gave birth to the A&Q.

## Note

I have used three sources of material. The first 'The Peaceable Kingdom' by Jan De Hartog - where I found the first reference to *Margaret Fell, recording clerk, Meeting for Sufferings*.

The second source was 'Quaker Faith and Practice' from Britain Yearly Meeting.

But my main source of information came from *Margaret Fell - the Mother of Quakerism* written by Isabel Ross - a seventh generation descendant of Margaret. A truly fitting title to 'the first of Clerks' in my humble opinion.

Any faults in this article are my own. I trust that I have done justice to the memories of the Friends who have suffered to create this pathway that I now travel.

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# The Australian Friend

*The Australian Friend* is published online at [AustralianFriend.org](http://AustralianFriend.org) four times a year, in March, June, September and December.

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Contributions (articles, poems and other items) are welcome as an email attachment to [CAustFriend@Quakersaustralia.info](mailto:CAustFriend@Quakersaustralia.info). Please ensure that images are sent as separate attachments, and not embedded in word files. We prefer images in jpg format, and a resolution of at least 300 dpi.

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Contributions should arrive no later than one month before the publication date:

- 1 February for the March edition
- 1 May for the June edition
- 1 August for the September edition
- 1 November for the December edition.

## Subscriptions

*The Australian Friend* is available free of charge online at [AustralianFriend.org](http://AustralianFriend.org). *The Australian Friend* is also available by post at no charge to members of Australian Yearly Meeting.

Libraries, other organisations and individuals not associated with Quakers can subscribe to receive *The Australian Friend* by post by contacting:

[CAustFriend@Quakersaustralia.info](mailto:CAustFriend@Quakersaustralia.info). The cost is \$40.00 per year for addresses in Australia and \$50 per year for addresses overseas.

**Coordinating editor:** David Swain

**Editorial panel:** Margaret Clark, Rae Litting, Wies Schuiringa

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**Mailing list** [CAustFriend@Quakersaustralia.info](mailto:CAustFriend@Quakersaustralia.info)

**Layout** Sheelagh Wegman, Hobart TAS

**Printing and distribution** National Mailing and Marketing, Canberra

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