

Yearly Meeting 2018 Junior Young Friends' Epistle of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia

On Saturday 7 July 2018, the Australian Yearly Meeting Junior Young Friends came together at Avondale College, in Cooranbong, NSW.



We arrived by planes, trains and buses from around the country. The program commenced with a parents' children session and JYFs getting together with old friends, reuniting and making new friends with several first-time JYFs. On Sunday, we headed off to Winter School on a farm in Morisset, to learn the Permaculture principles: care of the earth, care of people and sharing surplus. We were hosted at Robyn Crosland's property, and led by permaculture Friend, Rowe Morrow, author of "Earth Users Guide to Permaculture". We saw Robyn's chickens, bees and worms; learnt about her egg shell drying process, recycling and sieving coffee grinds, prepared a new kitchen garden bed area and learnt how to make hessian logs. We got grubby pulling weeds, planting potatoes, moving a mountain of mushroom compost and took away new found skills, honey and pumpkins.

On Sunday evening we began to think about the theme - "I have a Dream", inspired by Martin Luther King Junior, who was killed 50 years ago this year. We heard from Friend, Anne Udy who had met Martin Luther King Junior only months before his assassination, when her husband hosted him at the Ohio University. She was not disappointed.

Monday featured a Quaker Q&A (Question and Answer) Panel with five Friends. We learnt about their journeys in Quakerism, i.e. how they came to Quakerism, what they believe and why. In free time we cooked, played Scrabble, and had afternoon tea with Penn Friends. We visited the Childrens' Program session, and some of us went on a bush walk. On Monday evening, we attended the Backhouse Lecture. The JYFs were enlightened by hearing Cho-Nyon Kim speak about the connections between various religions as well as hearing his life story.

After All Age Worship on Tuesday morning, we set out for a three-day camp, at Callicoma Hill. On our way, we went to Baiame Cave, to see the Aboriginal creator cave painting, and to listen to Uncle Warren from the Wonnorua People. St Claire Mission followed, to meet Laurie, who discussed intergenerational trauma experienced by the Stolen Generation. How do you tell your grand-daughter about such things?

The camp site set up came next, in a pocket of wilderness surrounded by trees. Martin took us on a guided bushwalk around the property. Some of us also had a tour of Martin and Jan's eco-home. On Wednesday as Service, some of us carried out fencing activities, and others learnt from Wilma to crochet string bags from string.

On Thursday, we said goodbye to Callicoma Hill and headed to Newcastle. On our way back, we met George and Jo, Australian coal Activists, who gave a talk about the "Lock the gate" campaign against coal seam gas fracking. We feasted on pizza and garlic bread at the Foreshore Park next to Newcastle Harbour - a busy Port with Coal ships coming and going. A visit to the Newcastle CSIRO followed, to view solar thermal radiation generation, using heated molten salt. They also had photovoltaic cells, wind turbines and powerful batteries to store the energy.

Thursday night a tired team watched "WALL:E" a science fiction movie about reversing climate change and the problem of pollution on Earth. Friday morning featured a JYF led All Age worship, a lesson in letter writing to Members of Parliament, with Michael Searle, and preparing for the evening concert which featured some of us explaining the story of 'Danny Boy' and playing flute, violin, trombone, piano and juggling!

Our *Highlights* were meeting new people, seeing the stars, the campsite including the campfire, going to the Baiame cave, sharing music and circus tricks, the crochet with Wilma, bike riding, just being together and reconnecting and connecting with other Quakers, and making and eating pancakes with the older Young Friends.