

## Canberra and Region Quakers (CRQ) Responses to Recommendations in Documents in Advance for Yearly Meeting, July 2024

This document records the CRQ responses to matters for consideration by Yearly Meeting in July 2024. We considered these at two Meetings for Worship for Business on Sunday 19 May and Sunday 9 June 2024. The Quakers Australia (QA) website page had 10 reports with a Part B with matters for consideration by Yearly Meeting and another 20 reports without a Part B. See: <https://www.quakersaustralia.info/yearly-meeting-2024-july/documents-advance-log-required>

### Reports with a Part B

#### Archivist's Report

1. CRQ supports AYM/QA laying down the role of QA Archivist, noting that all the current duties of this role are now being undertaken by the new roles of the QA Coordinator, QA Probity Officer and the QA Communications & Publicity Manager. We thank Saadia Thompson Dwyer for her contribution in this role.
2. We support AYM/QA creating a new role of QA Historian and hope that one or two Friends may be found to take on this role. We note that the role could be filled by a Friend who has a passion for the history of the Society, an ability to undertake robust historical research and an ability to write for publication on historical aspects of the Society and relevant family and local history in Australia. We note that articles could be publicised in a variety of ways including through the support of the QA Communications & Publicity Manager.

#### Associated Bodies

Background: Alan Clayton proposes three terms: “affiliated bodies”, “associated bodies” and “allied bodies” to refer to differing degrees of connection with AYM/QA of related bodies which are not AYM committees or working groups:

- (a) organisations which, notwithstanding a significant degree of independence from direct QA oversight, maintain a close governance connection with QA, particularly though coverage under the QA master insurance policy (such as QSA Australia Ltd and Kangaroo Valley Friends Properties Pty Ltd) as **affiliated bodies**;
- (b) organisations whose organisational and operational structure demonstrate a significant degree of independence from QA (for instance through separate incorporation or where appointment to controlling positions within the organisation is largely in the hands of the body itself with no, or relatively little, involvement from AYM and, importantly, assume responsibility for dealing with its risk environment through insurance and other means) as **associated bodies**;
- (c) organisations that have had an historical connection with QA, but that, notwithstanding that this direct connection has diminished over time, there is a desire to maintain an acknowledged ongoing link, as **allied bodies**.

1. CRQ commends Friends to read Alan Clayton's full paper for the historical perspective and insights it offers. We appreciate his work to explore three terms that could usefully distinguish

the relationship between AYM/QA and other bodies that might be described as “affiliated”, “associated” or “allied”. We anticipate the need for further discussion at the Preparatory Session.

One Friend wonders which term would apply to Regional Meetings which benefit from the QA insurance policy and need to comply with safety policies relevant to that insurance cover, but are otherwise independently incorporated, appoint their own office bearers and are not subject to “oversight” by AYM/QA.

2. We note the call to reinstate the Handbook entry for QSA to that of the 6<sup>th</sup> edition, recognising that QSA may bring a suggested revision of this entry to another Yearly Meeting. We anticipate the need for further discussion at the Preparatory Session.

### **Child Protection Committee**

1. We support the adoption in principle of the revised draft Child Safety Policy and Procedures. We appreciate the work of the Child Protection Committee and Holly Dhynes making the policy and procedures easier to understand. We note that Friends are still providing feedback on the draft (see link below) and are asked to do this via the QA website using the feedback button. We anticipate further discussion at the Preparatory Session.

Link: <https://sites.google.com/quakersaustralia.info/qa-child-safety-policy>

### **Children and JYFs Committee**

Background: A [report by Fiona Gardner](#) written in 2024 has many suggestions for bringing children, JYFs and their families into the heart of the Quaker Community. The recommendations to be considered by Yearly Meeting are those involving funding and policy.

CRQ supports the recommendations below in principle and hope that a range of funding sources will be explored to further these as needed. For example, bequest funding is being used for Yearly Meeting in July 2024 to cover the costs of the children and JYF’s accommodation, lunches, dinners, JYF activities and child carers.

1. We support providing funding for the Children and Junior Young Friends (JYFs) Coordinator to be appointed by the QA Children and JYFs Committee for a three-year term. We note that the coordinator would work across Yearly Meeting to foster inclusion of children, JYFs and families. This would include resourcing Local and Regional Meetings to provide activities as well as to encourage communication and mutual support between them. The Coordinator would be responsible to the Children and JYFs Committee, working an average of one day a week, at a suggested salary of \$20,000 per year.

2. We support providing funding of \$2,000 for the Children and Junior Young Friends Coordinator to visit Regional Meetings.

3. We support providing funding of \$2,000 per year to contribute to the employment of registered child carers for activities such as the Easter Family Gathering and Yearly Meeting and Meetings for Worship.

4. We support providing funding of \$8,000 per year to subsidise Children and JYFs accommodation at Yearly Meeting.

We support increasing the proportion of all-age activities at Yearly Meeting as practicable.

5. We support AYM/QA working towards merging policies for Safe Quaker Communities and Child Protection/Safety into a unified policy framework.

### **Climate Emergency and Species Extinction (CESE) Working Group**

Background: This report brings forward two documents for adoption, proposes to establish a QA Earth Witness and Action Committee, and seeks payment of an annual subscription to the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC). See the full report for more detail.

The draft Travel Guidelines were adopted by Standing Committee at its meeting in September 2023: <https://www.quakersaustralia.info/speciesandclimate/guidelines-travel-australia-yearly-meeting>

The Action Plan was adopted by YM23. Since then the CESE WG has amended the Action Plan and for each of the seven Action Statements added more detailed actions that can be taken by Meetings and individuals. "Action Plan – For Our Home":

<https://www.quakersaustralia.info/speciesandclimate/climate-action-plan-australia-yearly-meeting>

CRQ is concerned for the urgency of action on climate change by individuals, and Local and Regional Meetings. We refer Friends to the book "Living Hot" by Clive Hamilton and George Wilkenfeld. We are aware that methods of joining Yearly Meeting 2024 are ways that individuals can make choices to reduce their impact on climate change while participating in our national gathering.

We agree to a weekend event for CRQ to consider action we can take. We ask the Clerks to discern appropriate event(s) and timing.

1. CRQ supports the adoption of the draft AYM/QA Travel Guidelines.

2. We support the adoption of the draft AYM/QA "Action Plan – For Our Home".

We encourage Friends to attend the Preparatory Session on Monday 8 July at 12 pm AEST (11:30 am ACST) to learn more about action that can be taken by Meetings and individuals.

3. We support the establishment of an AYM/QA Earth Witness and Action Committee. We hear that the focus of this Committee will be on how Friends and Meetings are addressing and carrying out the Action Plan and drawing Friends attention to the wider implications of our impact on the whole Earth community.

4. We support AYM/QA paying an annual subscription to the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) and any arrears that are due.

### **Handbook Revision Committee**

Background: The report outlines progress in 2023 and plans for the future. The committee tells us, "We have found it almost impossible to meet together since the AGM - a result of health issues in our group".

1. CRQ is concerned for our Friends on the Handbook Revision Committee (HRC) and hope that they will receive the support they need.
2. We encourage Friends able to assist the HRC with their work to offer support.
3. We note that the HRC does not anticipate offering a Preparatory or Information Session at this July Yearly Meeting.

### **Thanksgiving Fund Report**

Background: The report lists 10 funded projects. Friends are encouraged to find out more about these projects by attending the online Preparatory Session on Sunday 23 June at 3:30 pm AEST. The Committee proposes two pages of replacement text for the Thanksgiving Fund entry in the QA Handbook to: bring up to date the description of the processes followed by the Committee, encourage Friends groups supporting applications to continue their support during the project, and draw future members of the Committee from throughout Australia, not just SANTRM.

CRQ is glad to hear that the text changes related to funding proposed by the Thanksgiving Fund Committee are supported by the Undirected Donations and Bequests Working Group – see their report below.

1. We accept the report from the Thanksgiving Fund Committee (TFC);
2. We support the proposed changes to the Handbook entry concerning the Thanksgiving Fund – see Appendix A below.
- 3(a) We support the TFC asking Friends groups which support applications to the Thanksgiving Fund to continue their interest in and support of the work done during (and after) the life of the project.
- 3(b) We support appointments to the TFC being sought from the whole AYM membership through the AYM/QA Nominations Committee.

### **Transition Implementation Working Group (TIWG)**

Background: In this report we learn that the Quakers Australia (QA) Office team now includes:

- David Purnell, Probity Adviser, from January 2024
- David Liversidge, Staff Oversight & Support Friend (subject to YM approval, from July 2024 for a 3-year term of service).

TIWG will lay down its service at YM25, anticipating that by that time, the new QA Office structure will be working effectively and efficiently in the service of us all.

1. CRQ supports a change in the AYM/QA role title from “Staff Oversight & Support Friend” to “Staff Liaison Friend”.
2. We support Yearly Meeting approving an extension to Holly Dhynes’ contract for a further two years, until 31 July 2026 in the position of QA Communications & Publicity Manager.

3. We support the QA Probity Adviser duties, which we hear are not onerous, becoming a part of the QA Public Officer's duties into the future. We hear that David Purnell is willing to take this on as part of his lifetime appointment as Public Officer.

### **Undirected Donations and Bequests Working Group**

Background: The working group was asked to consider:

- the use of undirected donations or bequests over \$75,000 to AYM;
- any restriction or cap on grants made by the Thanksgiving Fund; and
- (implied) a possible need for funds to support the work of QA.

1. CRQ supports undirected donations or bequests of any size continuing to go into the Thanksgiving Fund.

2. We support the removal of the limit for individual grants from the Thanksgiving Fund. We support a closer relationship between the Thanksgiving Fund Committee (TFC) and the QA Treasurer and Finance Committee by having one Friend on both the TFC and the QA Finance Committee.

3. We hope that there will be clear communication to invite Friends to consider bequeathing or donating money for the administration of Quakers Australia. We support there being prominent 'Donations' buttons on the QA website, noting these could be in the 'Funds of Australia Yearly Meeting' section and on the 'Thanksgiving Fund' page. We suggest that these buttons could specify the allocation of the donations.

4. We support proposed changes to the Handbook being considered further at the Preparatory Session – see Appendix B below.

### **Yearly Meeting Organising Committee**

Background: The report describes the work of a small dedicated SANTRM committee and the QA Yearly Meeting Organising Committee (YMOC) with the support of many other Friends around Australia who are organising our next Yearly Meeting. This will be held in Adelaide and online in July 2024.

1. CRQ hopes that some Yearly Meetings in the future will be held hybrid, that is, both at a venue and online. Otherwise, we understand that some Yearly Meetings may need to be fully online.

2. We are considering if we might host or cohost a Yearly Meeting in the future.

We ask our Clerks to consult with CRQ Friends to consider if CRQ might offer to host or cohost a Yearly Meeting.

## Appendix A

Proposed text for the Handbook put forward by the Thanksgiving Fund Committee.

### 5.6.8 Thanksgiving Fund

The Thanksgiving Fund was established in 1979 to help Friends implement appropriate Concerns. Contributing to the Fund allows Friends and others to give practical expression of their thankfulness on specific occasions, such as births or anniversaries, or to mark the contribution that has been made by the Grace of God in the life of a much-loved Friend.

The Thanksgiving Fund is administered by the Thanksgiving Fund Committee and monies are distributed by the AYM Treasurer on its recommendation.

For details on the Thanksgiving Fund Committee and its purpose and grants, please see: below and at <https://www.quakersaustralia.info/Thanksgiving>

#### **Purpose of the fund**

Distributions enable Friends to pursue Concerns (1.5) of the Society, such as education, historical research, publicity, social welfare, spiritual healing, international order and refugees, children's issues and such other matters as the Society becomes involved in as a form of work and witness. Outside groups with similar Concerns also may be supported. Typically, payment is made for administrative equipment and expenses, publications and conference costs, and assisting with honoraria and travel costs. The fund will not normally be available for the purchase of land or buildings or vehicles.

**Fund Income** derives partly from bequests (5.6.5). Bequests or donations of money to Australia Yearly Meeting are normally added to the Thanksgiving Fund's income, unless the donor specifies otherwise.

Note that the rest of 5.6.8 applies equally to the **Peace & Social Justice Fund** (5.6.7). The Thanksgiving Fund Committee takes into account any conditions or requests associated with a bequest to the Fund. Should there be difficulty in meeting such conditions, the committee may ask Yearly Meeting to allocate the funds elsewhere.

**Administration:** The fund is administered by a committee of at least four Friends appointed for three years by Yearly Meeting. No member may be a paid officer of the Society nor serve for more than three consecutive terms. Committee members need a wide knowledge of the Concerns, workings and processes of Australia Yearly Meeting.

Should a vacancy occur on the committee, Yearly Meeting Nominations Committee recommends the appointment of Friends with relevant expertise to Standing Committee or Yearly Meeting. Since the committee meets by ZOOM, distance is not a consideration.

Grants from the Fund are made by the AYM Treasurer as directed by the Fund committee.

The Committee makes an annual report to Yearly Meeting with details of all grants made that year. The Finance Committee provides a summary of the transactions in the Fund during that period.

Grant application forms may be downloaded from the Society's website:

<https://www.quakersaustralia.info/Thanksgiving> under the heading [Applying for a grant](#).

The applicant submits to the committee convener a written outline of the proposal and a completed Application Form (see above ) accompanied by a minute of support and endorsement from a Local Meeting, Regional Meeting, Yearly Meeting, Standing Committee or AYM committee.

Such support would depend on a thorough investigation of the project by the supporting group especially in the light of Friends' testimonies (1.2), along with a commitment to provide ongoing support if the grant is awarded. A Clearness Meeting may be helpful.

#### **Steps in the processing of applications:**

1. The applicant submits relevant background material to accompany the application, e.g. biographical notes about the people involved or background of the proposed project, well in advance of requiring the funds for the proposal.
2. The committee may interview the applicant and/or ask for more written information about the application for funding.
3. The committee makes a decision as soon as practicable, and not more than four months from the date on which the application was lodged.
4. In some cases, the committee may offer the applicant a grant that is less than the amount requested and/or has conditions attached.
5. The grant recipient submits a written report to the committee on the use of the allocated money at the end of the grant period, or annually (whichever is the sooner).
6. The committee makes an annual report to Yearly Meeting with details of all grants made that year.

#### **Maintenance of the Fund**

The fund is maintained by reminding Friends on appropriate occasions of its existence and its purpose. Information for intending donors is available from the AYM website (5.6.9).

## Appendix B

Proposed text for the Handbook put forward by the **Undirected Donations and Bequests Working Group**.

### Donations:

The Working Group asks that the Handbook be revised so that the two sentences referring to donations are consistent and that the cap on Capital/Income expenditure is removed. **Blue = changes, Red = removal.**

At 5.6.5 it will state:

Bequests are an important source of income for carrying on the Society's work. Friends may direct bequests to their Local or Regional Meeting, to AYM funds or to specific AYM committees. *Gifts bequeathed simply to 'The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia Incorporated' go to the AYM Thanksgiving Fund, unless the donor specifies otherwise.*

And at 5.6.8 it will state:

**Fund income** derives partly from bequests (5.6.5). *Bequests of money to Australia Yearly Meeting are normally added to the Thanksgiving Fund's income, unless the donor specifies otherwise.*

### Capital and the Income:

We have also reviewed the issue of the Capital and the Income in the Fund. We understand the capital to be approx. \$92,011 while the income portion is approx. \$921, 832. Given that the capital is a very small amount and unlikely to be drawn down in the near future, if at all, the relevant section of the Handbook is redundant.

At **5.6.8 Fund distributions**, remove the first two paragraphs:

Allocations are usually made from the income portion of the fund, which is separate from the capital portion. The income portion is made up of interest earnings on the fund and any donations to the fund that are not specifically marked as being for the capital portion.

However, the Committee may in any one year make a single grant of up to 10 percent of the capital, provided there is agreement by the Presiding Clerk, the AYM Secretary and one Regional Meeting Clerk. Furthermore, the committee may make grants of more than 10 percent of the capital in any one year, provided Standing Committee agrees.

And remove reference to Capital and Income from step 6:

6. The committee makes an annual report to Yearly Meeting with details of all grants made that year and the income and capital in the fund. (replace with: amount?).

And that under the Purpose of the Fund, the sentence referring to the Peace & Social Justice fund needs to be changed as this no longer applies for the Capital

**Current:** Note that the rest of 5.6.8 applies equally to the Peace & Social Justice Fund (5.6.7).

**Suggested:** Note that *some* of 5.6.8 applies equally to the Peace & Social Justice Fund (5.6.7)