



13 July 2016

Dear Friends,

One hundred and eighty-two years ago James Backhouse and George Washington Walker came to Hobart Town with a concern for the just treatment of convicts and Aborigines. This week we have come from all states and territories of Australia and beyond to meet at The Friends' School, Hobart.

Our Winter School asked us:

"How can our faith and action inspire?"

The State of the Society address asked us to consider:

"How has the Spirit moved through me this last year?"

As a Yearly Meeting we face challenges and changes. The most evident this year was the change to a winter YM.

Our Earthcare Committee encouraged us to "walk country" in the manner of indigenous people so we can have a sense of belonging and a right relationship with the land. We need to pray/ read/ act/ celebrate the earth to begin the healing process in our "three minutes to midnight" world. An Indigenous Friend acknowledged the importance of right language, but impressed upon us the reality of poor health, despair and suicide in his remote community.

Our Membership is getting older; our children, Junior Young Friends and Young Friends wish to be engaged but face the difficulties of finding their own path. We celebrate the wealth of experience and wisdom in our elders and the freshness and enthusiasm of our Younger Friends. We are enjoined to accommodate both.

Ministry in the All Ages Meeting for Worship affirmed our unity in diversity - and diversity in unity - reinforcing the importance of including children, Junior Young

Friends and Young Friends in all aspects of the life of our Meetings. Young Friends remind us of our disquiet about Australia's decisions and policies in our local regions - which have directly affected human rights and freedoms, not only of refugees but also of all of us.

We are reminded in the Backhouse Lecture that the base and the nourishment for our social concerns come from the inward Light.

Faith in action is evident in the breadth and depth of peace and social justice work done by Australian Friends. We recognise the need for longer-term projects in areas of

Australia Yearly Meeting

The Religious Society of Friends
(Quakers) in Australia Inc.
Incorporated in the ACT
119 Devonshire Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
Australia

Tel
Fax
Email ymsecretary@quakers.org.au
Web www.quakers.org.au
ABN 16 036 715 933



ongoing concern. We value the links we maintain with Friends in the Asia Pacific Region and the wider world. As always, we are enriched by visiting Friends from overseas.

"Everyday prophets" in our midst demonstrate courage and heroic action in answering their leadings. This requires of us willingness to change, and being prepared to go in indirect and unforeseen directions, like the sailor tacking into the wind to move forward.

Isaac Pennington said:

"When the life is at any time lost, the only way of recovery is by retiring to the invisible, and keeping there, and growing up there."

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julian Robertson".

Julian Robertson
Presiding Clerk
Australia Yearly Meeting