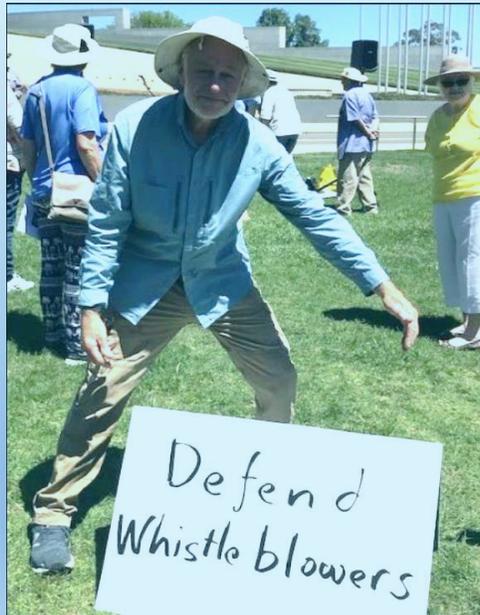




## NOVEMBER 2019

*This is the last edition of the newsletter for 2019. Thanks to Friends who have contributed articles and news, and all Friends for their continued support for the newsletter. Please email contributions to [rmcanberranews@quakersaustralia.info](mailto:rmcanberranews@quakersaustralia.info)*



### FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW!

At a Friends' Friday on 11 October at the Turner Meeting House David Purnell led a conversation about freedom of speech. It followed briefings sent out by the Quaker Peace & Legislation Committee about Protecting Whistleblowers, and Foreign Fighters legislation. (see QPLC briefs and action alerts [here](#)) The AYM Presiding Clerk also wrote a letter of concern about the fate of Julian Assange. Many Friends were alarmed by the raids by the Australian Federal Police on the ABC and News Limited journalists. Friends discussed the prosecution of Canberra lawyer Bernard Collaery and his client Witness K, and David McBride, which are “a gross injustice and a serious danger to our democracy”. Friends have participated in public demonstrations, including the rally at Parliament House on Thursday 24 October. The speakers included Senator Rex Patrick (Centre Alliance), Andrew Wilkie MP, Senator Sarah Hanson-Young (Greens), Sister Susan Connelly (Sisters of St Joseph), Bernard Collaery, David McBride, and Jack Waterford (Journalist). Michael Searle was there, and [here are more photos of the event](#).



## **Erica Fisher (1935-2019)**

Erica's eldest son Hugh wrote a moving eulogy which testifies to his mother's enduring influence on him, and her encouragement to improve the world in ways that we are led. Read the eulogy [here](#).

Erica was interested in how Quakers show up in the world and produced an interesting graphic for Friends to contemplate during the 350th anniversary of the beginning of Quakerism. "Where is the Light leading Friends?" is [here](#) for your contemplation.

A memorial gathering was held of Erica on Sunday 20 October at the Turner Meeting House.

*[Here](#) are some photos of the event.*



### **John Symond (1944-2019)**

On 23 October, John's funeral was held at the Turner Meeting House. His longtime friend Michael Searle reflects on his experience:

“John had a hard life. His family was severely disrupted by both world wars ... Latterly, he has been a vigorous campaigner for many justice causes and especially climate catastrophe concerns. He was a faithful friend. John's three daughters and step-daughter came from interstate—I think they found his funeral was fitting to their experience of John.”

*Bronwyn Perry, John's youngest daughter, contributed the biographical details to the service program which is [here](#).*

## UPDATE Yearly Meeting 2020 Avondale

The Hosting Group based in Canberra continues to meet regularly to plan YM2020. One of the changes which has been agreed with the Presiding Clerk and the Secretary of AYM is a reduction in the program from 7 to 6 days. This means that YM will commence on Saturday 4 July 2020 and conclude at lunchtime on Friday 10 July.

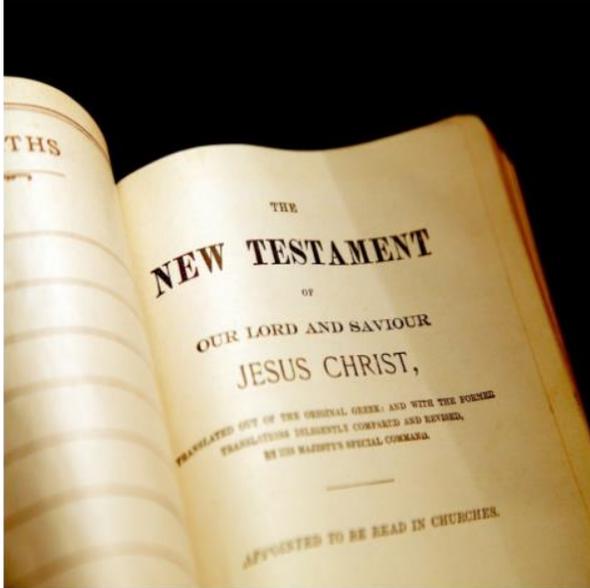
This will require some streamlining of business, without the loss of opportunities for community building and fellowship. It is also expected that YM2020 will be around \$100 cheaper for all Friends who attend than last time at Avondale.

Friendly School will be held on the morning of Sunday 5 July and will have a focus on individual infallibility and corporate discernment. This will have implications for all meetings in terms of process, quality of decision-making, and making room for the Spirit. In this way Friendly School will complement the Backhouse Lecture to be delivered by Fiona Gardner. Fiona's lecture will be about seeking union with Spirit, and experiences from spiritual journeys.



### **EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN DECLUTTERING AND SPIRITUALITY**

Originally intrigued by a radio program on the subject of decluttering, Carol Thornton then discovered a word used by the earliest Quakers to describe a "a block toward spiritual progress that creates a hindrance to achieving greater peace, justice, equality, and integrity". What is this word, and does it offer you inspiration to declutter? Read about it [here](#).



## Sayings of Jesus – Malcolm Whyte

Malcolm writes: John Cope lent me his Jesus Seminar book a few years ago. I went through my New Testament marking each saying with the suggested rating. I also checked my tally against what Google could serve up. So, the rating numbers and the top-rated sayings are those generally agreed upon by the JS. The only figure I have not seen anywhere else, and therefore is my 'unique'(!) contribution, is the number of total sayings attributed to Jesus in the Gospels: 973 (my count). But I have seen the rated number expressed as a percentage of the total.

Interestingly none of the top-rated sayings appear in John, but most of them do appear in the excluded fifth Gospel of Thomas.

[Here](#) is the link to Malcolm's research.

## COMMITTEE ON RACIAL EQUALITY SHARING STORIES: HELEN MORAN

Around 30 people attended the twelfth in the series of gatherings to listen and learn from First Nations speakers about their experience and concerns. The meeting was held on Sunday 29 September 2019 at the Friends Meeting House, Turner, ACT. Helen Moran herself acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land. The full report is [here](#).

The [Quaker Peace and Legislation Committee](#) published a Watching Brief in October on Sustainable Development Goals. The brief informs Friends (and others!) on the SDGs, and suggests topics for correspondence to, or meetings with, Members of Parliament. The brief is an updated report on how the SDGs are going, especially in Australia. [The full text may be read here](#).



### Have you completed the Children and JYF survey?

Our Yearly Meeting Children and JYF committee, led by tech-savvy Alex Brosnan, has developed a survey to help us understand how we can serve, inspire and grow young Quakers in Australia. You can access it either:

1. Through the link: <https://bit.ly/2FUfJwi>
2. By emailing us at <mailto:cjyfcoordinator@quakersaustralia.info>

Your responses will help us understand priorities for our committee, and for us as children and JYF coordinators - so please take the time to complete the survey if you haven't done so already!

*Tania Aveling and Gina Price Coordinators - Children and Junior Young Friends*

## WAGGA WAGGA NEWS



### Wagga Wagga Quaker Recognized Meeting

felt blessed when David Johnson visited with us recently. David attended Michael Bayles' 70th Birthday celebratory dinner with us on the Saturday night. Then on Sunday morning attended Meeting for Worship at the Drop in Centre in Johnson Street where he gave ministry and counsel, further enriching our spiritual growth. Afterwards we enjoyed fellowship together over a pot-luck lunch.

*Photo taken by Mel Baulch on our verandah. From left: Richard Green, David Johnson, Geraldine Gradon, Anne Seebach, Cherry Lindsay, Mary Polkinghorne and Andrew Gradon.*

Michael Bayles reports [here](#) on recent meetings of WWQRC.

## Would you like to go on a Quaker study tour to North Korea in 2020 ?

In 2018 Sejin Pak (SANTRM) led a group on a one-week trip to North Korea. Sejin is planning a return trip in 2020, if sufficient people are interested. The visit will be either in spring (May or June) or autumn (September or October).

Sejin has a concern about peace in the Korean peninsula and would like to introduce Quakers to this largely unknown country. The cost of the trip is expected to be approximately \$US2,500, plus air fares to a departure point in China.

A party of at least 12 is required. Travel in North Korea is tightly controlled but safe.

For further information, visit the [Australia North Korea Peace Support Group website](#)



Australian Quaker 2018 No. Korea Study Tour



### QUAKER GENERAL SECRETARY TO SERVE AS LEADER OF WORLD ECUMENICAL CONFERENCE

This news is copied from the FWCC Asia West Pacific Section Newsletter, found [here](#).

Not only was October 2019, the month the World Quaker Family celebrated the 6<sup>th</sup> annual World Quaker Day, but it was also the month that Gretchen Castle, the General Secretary of the World Quaker Office was appointed the chairperson for the Christian World Communion Conference.

Gretchen Castle, General Secretary of FWCC World Office and new chairperson of **The Christian World Communion** is pictured with the previous chairperson, Martin Junge. Gretchen, will be the first woman to be the chairperson. Quakers, yet again, are leading the way for a worldwide representative to be a woman.

In other news, November 2019 a gathering of FWCC Asia West Pacific representatives was held in India. Armistice Day (11 November) occurred during this period, and provided the occasion for Meeting for Worship. [A moving account of this written by Virginia Jealous, WA, is here.](#)

Thanks to Mary Rizk for her steadfast support in resolving technical challenges, and to Stephen Hodgkin for distributing the newsletter. Ed.



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