



April 2020

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[RMCANberraNews@quakersaustralia.info](mailto:RMCANberraNews@quakersaustralia.info)

## Canberra Regional Meeting Responds to the Challenge of Covid-19

COVID19 is changing our daily lives and affecting the way that our Quaker community gathers. The worshipping group in Bega is meeting online. On Sunday 29 March 35 Friends mainly from the Turner Meeting gathered via Zoom for Meeting for Worship, including three Friends from interstate. Later that day, a Zoom meeting was held to discuss the Right Holding of Yearly Meeting, in which 17 Friends participated. Instead of being held at Avondale College in Cooranbong, Yearly Meeting 2020 will be a virtual gathering. The Hosting Group is very engaged in working out how to offer a gathering which meets the organizational, spiritual and social needs of the Australian Quaker community, including the possibility that others will join us for the event. *An update on the plans is [here](#).*

## A Thanksgiving Service for the Life Of Keith Crook



A thanksgiving service for the life of Keith Crook was held on Friday 28 February. Anne Felton wrote a short biography for the occasion, which is [here](#).

## Stop Killer Robots Campaign



In mid-February 2020, supporters of the [Campaign to Stop Killer Robots](#) from various peace organisations gathered in front of Parliament House to send a strong message: that we must Stop being asked to take a stand against fully autonomous weapons. The Quakers were represented by Margaret Bearlin. The Peace and Legislation Committee hosted a roundtable for the Campaign later to brief groups in Canberra on the issue, discuss how they could engage with the campaign in 2020, and plan future events. Quakers will continue to support the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots as they advocate for Australia join with other countries in calling for a ban on fully autonomous weapons.

*This report was written by Matilda Byrne, Organiser*



**Canberra Friend Margaret Bearlin (also representing *Women's International League for Peace & Freedom*) and Cate Adams from Wage Peace are pictured at the rally.**

## How the earliest Quakers prepared for Meeting for Worship



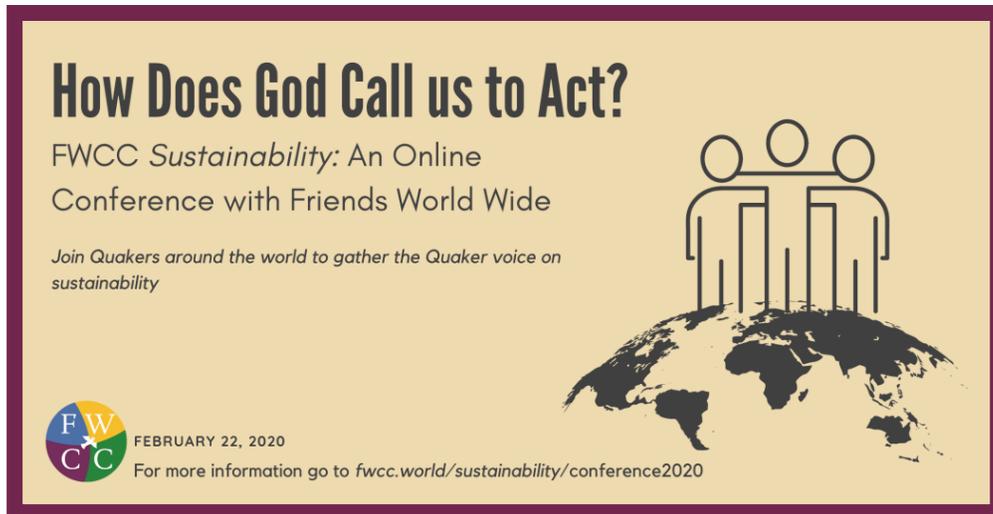
*Alexander Parker, letter of advice, 1660:*

“The first that enters into the place of your meeting, be not careless, nor wander up and down wait upon God singly, as if none were present but the Lord, and here thou are strong. Then the next that comes in, let them in simplicity of heart sit down and turn in to the same light, and wait in the Spirit, and so all the rest coming in the fear of the Lord sit down in pure stillness and silence of all flesh, and wait in the light.

A few that are thus gathered by the arm of the Lord into the unity of the Spirit this is a sweet and precious meeting, where all meet with the Lord ... Those who are brought to a pure, still waiting upon God in the Spirit are come nearer to the Lord than words are ... though not a word be spoken the hearing of the outward ear ... In such a meeting, where the presence and power of God is felt, there will be an unwillingness to part asunder, being ready to say in yourselves, It is good to be here, and this is the end of all words and wrings, to bring people to the eternal, living word.”

*Alexander Parker, convinced in 1653 at the age of twenty-five, became one of George Fox's closest personal friends.*

## An Online Conference with Friends Worldwide



Canberra Friends gathered at the Meeting House in Turner on Saturday 22 February, in order to participate in the Online Sustainability Conference. The Online Conference was described in the FWCC e-Newsletter. Here is an excerpt\*:

*“Last month over 300 Friends gathered for the first Online Sustainability Conference. During the conference, a group of Elders were listening to the spoken ministry. After the conference they wrote reflective statement. This cannot be an epistle for the conference, because those gathered will do not have the chance to approve it. However, it can act as a sense of where Friends are today, and it can help prepare us for our next gathering at the World Plenary in 2023.”*

\*A full description is available on the FWCC [website](#).



Canberra Quakers attending the Online Sustainability Conference



## Reg's Poem "Seekers"

Reg Naulty contributes book reviews to our newsletter.

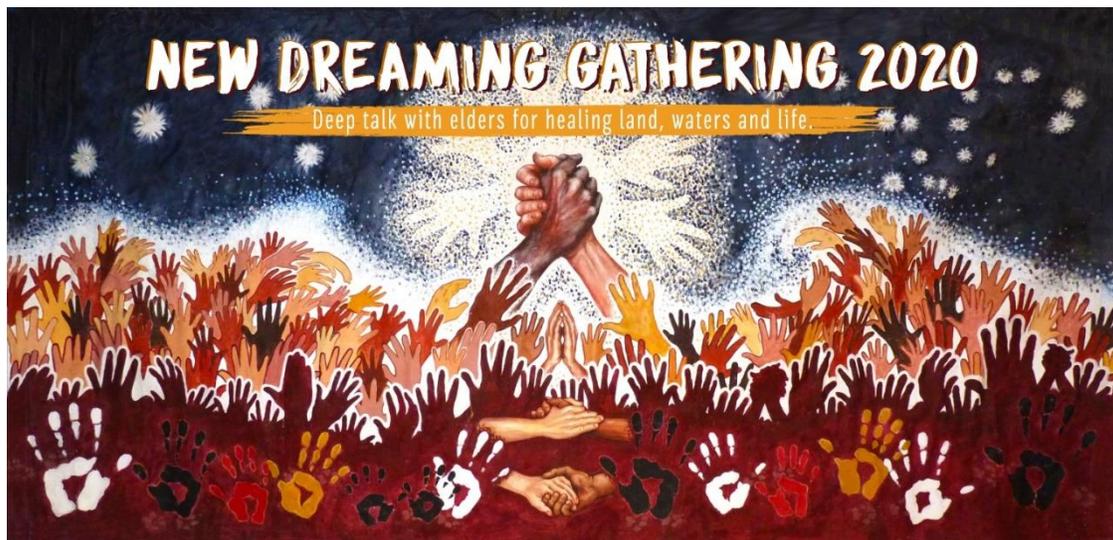
For this edition, Reg has provided a poem entitled "Seekers". Read it [here](#).



## Wilma Davidson's "Exceptional" Retreat Experience

Wilma Davidson, Canberra Friend, has gone into retreat at Shoreham in Victoria annually for a decade. Wilma writes about the exceptional nature of this year's experience [here](#).

## Honey Nelson Talk on New Dreaming Gathering 2020



On Sunday 8 March 2020, **Honey Nelson\*** spoke to 25 people (including several non-Quakers) about how she was drawn to the Aboriginal Tent Embassy many years ago and has become more aware of the significant 'holocaust' of experience of Aboriginal people since white settlement.

We are all responsible for the care of the Earth, and for listening to the voices of Indigenous Australians. A gathering of first nations elders and others is planned "to talk with people of Australia about the Great Sickness of Our Ancestral Lands and Waters and Climate and Life, the Past and the Future for all our Children". **Uncle Kevin Buzzacott** from the Aboriginal Tent Embassy has been a major proponent of the need for such a gathering of those with grounding in the Spirit and Indigenous Law to help us all 'come right way'.

Honey explained that the plan was that over four days in Canberra there would be dance, ceremony and deep talk. It will be an opportunity to reverse the harm done to people and the Earth over the years since white settlement. It will lead to practical steps to challenge the powers that be to make decisions in the interests of our grandchildren.

The gathering will take place at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture in Barton, and all people of goodwill are invited to take part. The accommodation, travel and other costs will be met largely through voluntary financial contributions, and donations of food.

*\*Honey is the convenor of the 'Peace Group' which is organising the [New Dreaming Gathering 2020](#) together with First Nations Elders. Their aim is to bring together First Nations Elders with concerned people of all backgrounds including scientists to develop an actionable blueprint for the restoration of the environment and harmonious living in Australia.*

## Testimony to the Life of Erica Fisher



Erica Fisher, Joon Garfit and Catherine Dabron are pictured above, date unknown.

A Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Erica Fisher (1935-2019) was presented at the March Meeting for Worship for Business in Turner, and may be read in full [here](#). \*

*\*A short version has been prepared for reading at Yearly Meeting 2020.*



### Susan Rockliff on Quaker Discernment

As a member of the Ministry Committee of the North Canberra Meeting, Susan Rockliff was preparing material for a Quaker Sampler on "**Quaker Discernment**", a short information- and worship-sharing event for local Friends, when COVID19 hit. She decided to turn her reading to good use and write something for the newsletter. Susan would like to share with you some of the ideas that she found illuminating. Click [here](#).

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