

# OUR FUTURE

This discussion paper is the third of a series providing information to members about discussions to amalgamate the Queensland Family History Society (QFHS) and the Genealogical Society of Queensland (GSQ). It delivers an update of our progress towards potential amalgamation and outlines the next steps in planning for this.

Previous Communiques and discussion papers, as well as this one, are available on the Our Future pages of your Society's website. The first discussion paper explained the reasons for amalgamation discussions and addressed benefits and impediments to it taking place. The second discussed member feedback received to our first Communique and outlined the potential amalgamation process in more detail.

Your comments or questions are welcomed – please email them to either QFHS: [ourfuture@qfhs.org.au](mailto:ourfuture@qfhs.org.au) or GSQ: [ourfuture@gsq.org.au](mailto:ourfuture@gsq.org.au) or mail them to either Society's postal address.

## ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS

Thank you to the many members of both Societies who continue to provide feedback. It is encouraging to hear your thoughts, suggestions and concerns and to know that all of us care deeply about the future of the Societies.

Thank you also to the generous member who donated \$200 towards the costs of potential amalgamation.

The majority of comments concerned impact on membership fees and the potential location of premises.

## *MEMBERSHIP*

Members have expressed concerns regarding their membership, should the Societies amalgamate. These include queries regarding differences in payment periods, dual memberships, life memberships and others.

In general, those who are presently members of both Societies would have only one membership in the new organisation. Those with a life membership in either Society would continue to be a life member of the new organisation.

A working group will shortly begin framing possible future membership arrangements, based on the principle of no financial disadvantage. The Amalgamation Sub-Committee will be ensuring members' interests are kept at the heart of these discussions.

## **THE SEARCH FOR SUITABLE PREMISES**

### *TIMELINE*

The need for suitable premises continues to be at the forefront of our activity.

GSQ's lease expires in late 2020 with options for extension. QFHS is presently negotiating a lease to 2021 for its present building.

Ideally amalgamation should take place at least six months prior to a move. If the earliest move is October 2020, amalgamation must be finalised by mid-April 2020.

It may be that, initially, the new organisation will operate from two locations until a suitable premise is located.

### *SEARCH*

#### **Commonwealth Government**

Helen Veivers, President GSQ, met with Ross Vasta, Federal Member for Bonner. He advised that the Commonwealth government had divested itself of most buildings, handing them to the Brisbane City Council (BCC). The Amalgamation Sub-Committee was advised to contact Krista Adams, BCC Deputy Mayor, to discuss further.

*Victoria Barracks:* Managed by the Department of Defence, it is not available for community group use.

#### **Queensland Government**

The Sub-Committee is corresponding with both Corrine McMillan, MP for Mansfield, and Tim Mander, MP for Everton. Both are supportive and providing contacts within appropriate state agencies.

Contacts within the Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works are actively reviewing possible premises for us. Representatives have met with the Sub-Committee to discuss our needs.

*Gabba Towers* – Amalgamation Sub-Committee members viewed several floors of this 12-story office building at Woolloongabba on 18 June. The building is in good condition and the floor is suitable for our needs. Parking may be able to be negotiated. There is a bus interchange very close by. Rent is in the order of \$210,000 so grants to cover this would be required. Some not-for-profit tenants were relocated from previous government premises and have subsidised rent but this would not be available to us. The long-term future of the building is unclear, hinging on the re-development of the Gabba area, including cross-river rail construction. Further information is being sought regarding this option.

*The former Ithaca TAFE building* – Amalgamation Sub-Committee members viewed this building earlier this year. The building is in fair condition and suitable for our needs. There is ample parking available, with public transport nearby. The Sub-Committee was later advised that the building was no longer available.

*The former State Library building (William Street)* – presently part of the Star Casino development, unlikely to be available for re-leasing for some years. The National Trust may eventually be located here.

*The Old Museum* - leased by the Youth Orchestra, with areas sublet to other groups.

### **Local Government and community organisations**

*Moorooka Bowls Club* – this club is in administration and has closed. The Sub-Committee along with several of the QFHS Premises Committee visited the Club on 3<sup>rd</sup> June and were impressed at the size and condition of the facility. There would be ample room for both societies and for other community and sporting groups to share the space.

*Cannon Hill Bowls Club* – not an option due to a required spend of more than \$200,000 in maintenance to comply with fire regulations, before any other expenditure.

*Bowls Queensland* – has been contacted to explore partnership possibilities with struggling clubs prior to going into receivership. The CEO advised that they are not aware of any suitable clubs.

### **Next steps**

*Brisbane City Council* – Amalgamation Sub-Committee members are meeting on 25 July with the Deputy Mayor Krista Adams to discuss our needs and possible solutions.

*State Government* – Amalgamation Sub-Committee members are meeting on 2 August with Kate Jones, MP for Cooper and Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry and Minister for the Commonwealth Games.

A number of other Bowls Clubs are also being investigated for suitability.

Genealogical and family history groups in other states will be contacted to see what arrangements they have with their state or local government for accommodation.

The Amalgamation Sub-Committee is seeking letters of endorsement from our patrons, key figures in our industry and other stakeholders. The letters will form part of a submission outlining the benefits and importance of our Societies, including our contributions to the economic, social and historic wellbeing of Queensland.

## **PARTNERING WITH OTHERS**

### *HERITAGE HUB*

For some time, QFHS and GSQ have been considering the formation of a Heritage Hub located in Brisbane.

A Heritage Hub would provide an enduring entity to secure and develop the history of the people of our state, enabling us to engage with that history and make sense of the past and the present. It would be of interest to organisations devoted to aspects of the history of Queensland and those who live here, enabling shared facilities and exchange of knowledge, experience and expertise. A Heritage Hub may provide opportunities for

improved resilience and longevity to organisations in times of challenging structural change.

It is envisaged as having four components:

- a shared location, preferably in a building of historical significance
- potential for co-location of library materials
- potential for shared stakeholder management regarding the history of Queensland
- a range of participants with differing needs for collaboration and support

We are looking for organisations to be part of this Heritage Hub. They may be of equal standing looking to simply share premises, or one that would benefit from shared support in some way.

### **Do you know of an organisation that this might suit?**

If so, email the name of the organisation to either QFHS: [ourfuture@qfhs.org.au](mailto:ourfuture@qfhs.org.au) or GSQ: [ourfuture@gsq.org.au](mailto:ourfuture@gsq.org.au)

## **BRINGING THE SOCIETIES TOGETHER**

### *SOCIAL ACTIVITIES*

8 October - A bus trip to Toowoomba for members of both GSQ and QFHS. Arrangements include a tour of the historic Toowoomba Railway Station with talk by Qld Rail Historian Greg Hallam, as well as a visit to the Toowoomba Historical Society. The cost is \$50, including morning tea and lunch. Book your place here [[link to https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/bus-trip-to-toowoomba-tickets-64274786617?ref=estw](https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/bus-trip-to-toowoomba-tickets-64274786617?ref=estw)].

31 May – A successful morning tea and get-together was hosted by QFHS. Volunteers from the Collections and Financial areas of both GSQ and QFHS met and discussed various aspects of our Societies. They are now very keen for the reciprocal gathering at GSQ.

A similar social opportunity is being planned for the Special Interest Group convenors. You will find a list of the interest groups of both GSQ and QFHS on the Our Future webpage of your Society.

GSQ members are invited to the QFHS Colonial India and Far East special interest group, and QFHS members are invited to the GSQ Military special interest group.

Both Societies now offer reciprocal member rates to attend each other's educational opportunities.

## **THE AMALGAMATION PROCESS**

## *ACTIVITIES*

Several working groups have already formed and are working together to share information and scope a potential shared future. These are the finance and the constitution working groups.

Volunteers from the collections are also working together. This is a broad area where members are initially focussing on getting to know each other's collections.

## *AREAS OF DISCUSSION*

We are presently in the most challenging and time-consuming step, scoping the potential amalgamation and determining whether or not it is the best way forward. A list of some of the many areas which must be discussed has been drawn up. You will find this on the Our Future webpage of your Society.

## *PRE-AMALGAMATION PLANNING*

A series of working meetings is planned to progress pre-amalgamation planning.

An initial half-day planning meeting has been scheduled for 30 July for a team of about 20 key volunteers from both QFHS and GSQ, to identify and group the key issues and differences between the two Societies. You will find a list of some of the discussion areas on the Our Future webpage of your Society.

This will be followed by a series of workshops to progress the individual areas, involving others as the discussion widens.

Finances, constitutions and by-laws are outside the scope of these meetings, with working groups already underway.

The Amalgamation Sub-Committee continues to lead the process, under the direction of the two Society Management Committees. The two Societies are equal partners working towards a potentially greater and more resilient organisation.

## **HAVE YOUR SAY**

Your input is welcomed. You are invited to provide any questions or comments by emailing either

QFHS: [ourfuture@gfhs.org.au](mailto:ourfuture@gfhs.org.au) or GSQ: [ourfuture@gsq.org.au](mailto:ourfuture@gsq.org.au)

If you prefer not to email, you can post your feedback to either Society at the usual postal address, marked "Our Future".

Thank you for your interest.

*Chris Gibbs*

President  
QFHS

*Helen Veivers*

President  
GSQ