



Strategic Plan 2018-20 update

Member survey

November 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Overview	2
2. Reason for renewing membership	3
3. Most important factors for QFHS	4
4. Most important issue facing QFHS	5
5. Most-needed change to QFHS	6
6. How QFHS will be different in five years	8
7. Survey details and respondents	9
Appendix 1: Verbatim responses	10
Appendix 2: Survey questionnaire	16

1. SUMMARY

A survey of those on the August "Who Does What" list were invited to complete a survey as input to the review of QFHS's strategic plan. 38 of the 59 members who were sent the survey completed at least part of it.

Results have been analysed by length of membership to determine differences in perspective of those with longer or shorter involvement with QFHS. There were few instances where this occurred.

Responses to the three open-ended questions were reviewed and grouped into themes, enabling insights into the overarching feeling of response to the question. The entire list of responses is provided in Appendix 1 for more detailed review.

In summary, the results are

1. Respondents are mostly re-joining QFHS each year for the camaraderie and sharing, the resources and the nature of the people.
2. Volunteering, communication and sustainability were the factors most associated with QFHS.
3. The issues seen as the most important facing QFHS were, in order of number of mentions: online access, new premises, declining membership, GSQ merger.
4. The most-needed change to QFHS was seen as, in order of number of mentions, the introduction of remote access, changes to management attitude/governance, communication with members, new premises, and 'no need to change'.
5. In five years' time respondents expect QFHS will have remote access in place and to be in new premises.

2. REASON FOR RENEWING MEMBERSHIP

Respondents are mostly re-joining QFHS each year for the camaraderie and sharing, the resources and the people.

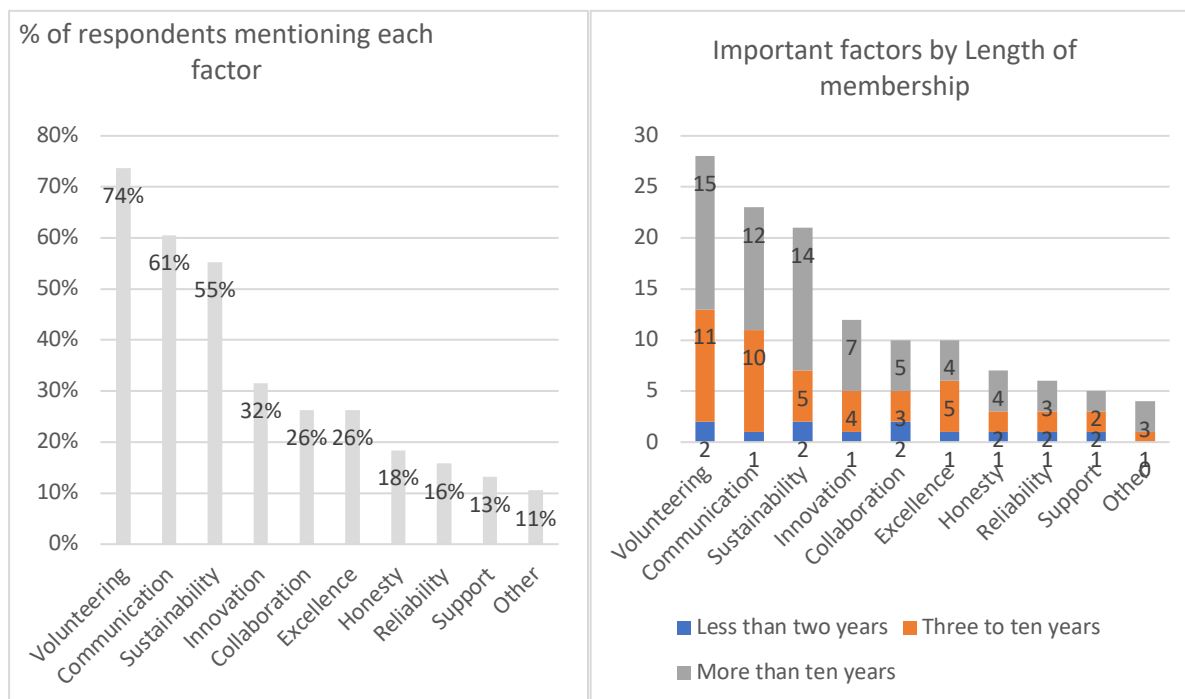
Many respondents gave more than one reason. Ten themes were identified within the answers, these are shown in the table below.

<i>Reason to re-join</i>	<i>Less than two years</i>	<i>More than ten years</i>	<i>Three to ten years</i>	<i>Grand Total</i>
Sharing information	2	8	3	13
QFHS resources		6	5	11
The people at QFHS	1	1	4	6
Expertise available		2	2	4
Education			2	2
To support QFHS		1	1	2
The physical building			1	1
The QFHS print library			1	1
Life member		5		5

3. MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS FOR QFHS

This question was designed to uncover more intangible components associated with QFHS such as values and attitudes.

Volunteering is the factor most associated with QFHS, with nearly three quarters mentioning it. This is followed by communication, and sustainability.



<i>Length of membership</i>	<i>% mentioning each factor</i>	<i>Number of mentions</i>	<i>Less than two years</i>	<i>Three to ten years</i>	<i>More than ten years</i>
Volunteering	22%	28	2	11	15
Communication	18%	23	1	10	12
Sustainability	17%	21	2	5	14
Innovation	10%	12	1	4	7
Collaboration	8%	10	2	3	5
Excellence	8%	10	1	5	4
Honesty	7%	7	1	2	4
Reliability	6%	6	1	2	3
Support	5%	5	1	2	2
Other	3%	4	0	1	3

A number of factors were specified as "other" in addition to those in the survey list - these were:

- being open and friendly to people visiting the library
- online databases for members (two mentions)
- welfare

4. MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING QFHS

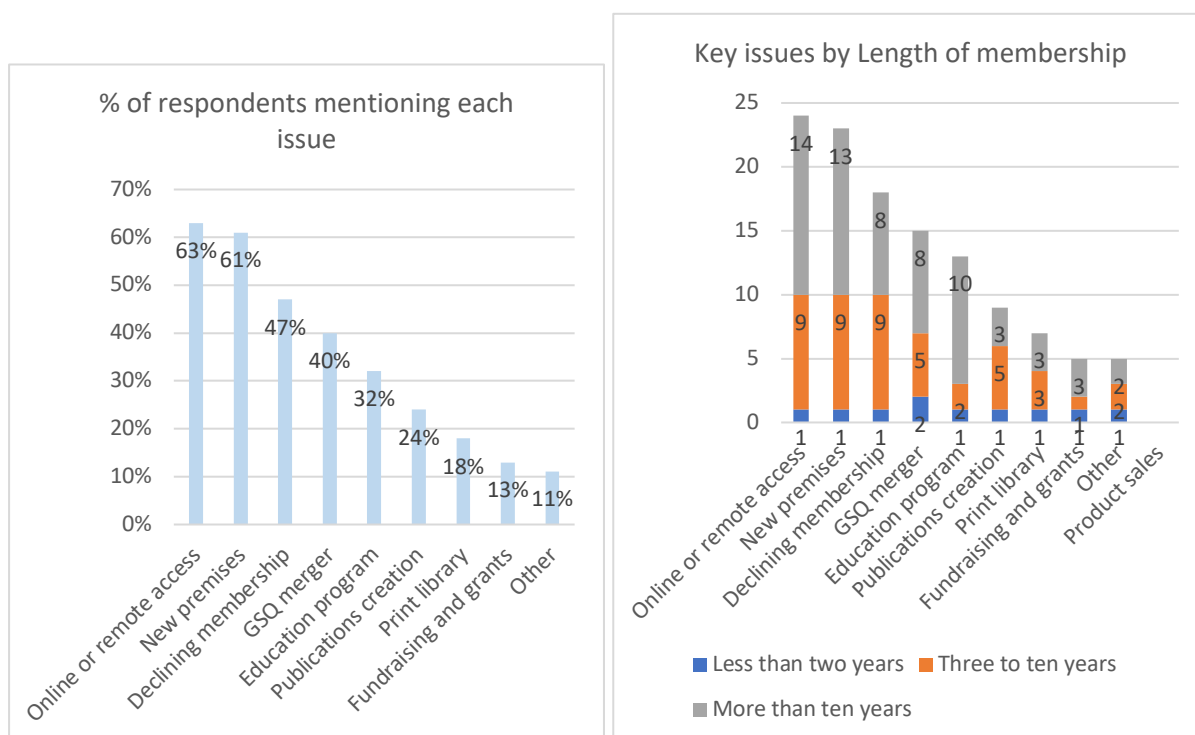
Online access was mentioned by nearly two thirds of respondents, with almost as many mentioning new premises. Declining membership was the third-most mentioned issue followed by the GSQ merger.

Members of 3-10 years gave equal weight to the first three issues whereas those of longer membership were more likely to mention the education program.

Members for more than 10 years mentioned the education program more than membership numbers or GSQ merger, whereas members for 3-10 years mentioned declining membership equally with online access and new premises.

A survey error disallowed details of "other" mentions being provided.

No one selected "Selling non-QFHS books and software" as an important issue.



Length of membership	% mentioning each issue	Number of mentions	Less than two years	Three to ten years	More than ten years
Online or remote access	63%	24	1	9	14
New premises	61%	23	1	9	13
Declining membership	47%	18	1	9	8
GSQ merger	40%	15	2	5	8
Education program	32%	13	1	2	10
Publications creation	24%	9	1	5	3
Print library	18%	7	1	3	3
Fundraising and grants	13%	5	1	1	3
Other	11%	5	1	2	2
Product sales	0%	0	0	0	0

5. MOST-NEEDED CHANGE TO QFHS

Introduction of remote access and changes to management attitude/governance were the most-mentioned themes, followed by member communication and new premises

Three respondents considered there is no need for QFHS to change. Five did not answer this question.

<i>Most need to change</i>	<i>Less than two years</i>	<i>More than ten years</i>	<i>Three to ten years</i>	<i>Grand Total</i>
Remote access	2	1	3	6
Management attitude and governance	1	2	3	6
Communicate with members		3		3
New premises		1	2	3
No need to change		2	1	3
Refresh existing premises			2	2
Adapt to change		1		1
A backup for John Perryn			1	1
Education for younger population			1	1
Adopt strategic plan with support from influential members		1		1
Continued innovation		1		1
Improved marketing		1		1
Partner with like organisations		1		1
More stakeholder management			1	1
Update journal		1		1
Update website		1		1
Procedures for volunteers		1		1
No comment		4	1	5

The specific statements regarding management were:

- Conservative attitude to spending money
- Attitude of some on the Management Committee
- Its structure and mode of governance
- Current management committee appears to consider itself not answerable to the general membership
- Old guard to be involved in succession
- Possibly the attitude of 'ownership' exhibited by some members, to facilitate the implementation of fresh ideas

The specific statements regarding communicating with members were:

- ensuring that communication is open and transparent for all members

- the secrecy and protection of their roles and their own little world, within the members who run various areas
- More communication with members regarding what volunteers can do to help. There doesn't seem to be any calls for assistance to help with new or ongoing projects

6. HOW QFHS WILL BE DIFFERENT IN FIVE YEARS

Many respondents (19) think QFHS will have remote access within five years, and a further 11 think QFHS will be in new premises.

The GSQ merger is expected by four respondents. Four expect QFHS to have fewer members or visitors in that time.

Only one person did not answer this question.

<i>In five years...</i>	<i>Less than two years</i>	<i>More than ten years</i>	<i>Three to ten years</i>	<i>Grand Total</i>
Remote access in place	2	9	8	19
In new premises	1	5	5	11
GSQ merger	1	3		4
Fewer members/visitors		3	1	4
Changed technology			2	2
Broader membership base		1		1
Regional society support		1		1
Fewer services		1		1
More digitisation		1		1
Continuing member support		1		1
Partnered with a like organisation		1		1
Revamped MC		1		1
Revamped staff		1		1
New technology		1		1
Expansion of DNA aspect			1	1
Print library to lend			1	1
QFHS seen as "gateway" to knowledge			1	1

7. SURVEY DETAILS AND RESPONDENTS

All 59 members of the August list of "Who does what" were invited to participate in a survey in October/November 2018, to inform an update of QFHS's strategic plan.

38 people completed at least part of the survey.

Respondent length of membership

<i>Length of membership</i>	<i>Years</i>
Less than two years	2
Three to ten years	15
More than ten years	21

Respondent Age

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Number</i>
46 to 55 years	2
56 to 65 years	14
66 to 75 years	10
76 years or more	12

APPENDIX 1: VERBATIM RESPONSES

*Q3. What is the **one** most important thing about QFHS that influences your decision to renew your membership each year?*

The value of family history organisations in sharing information and experiences with others.
Collegiality and the welcoming atmosphere.

N/a

N/a - I'm a life member.

Stimulation in an interesting activity and hobby.

Resources.

Not applicable as I am a Life Member.

I am a life member.

The wonderful print library, the SIGs, the computer databases, and access to LDS films via the internet at QFHS.

The opportunity to meet with like-minded people and discuss and research my own family history.

Whether I have something useful to contribute and share with others. Closely followed by whether I have anything left to research.

The available resources and the expertise within its membership, which is two which amounts to one resource for finding out about my family history.

Interaction with members.

Accessibility to library resources.

The joy of working and socialising with like-minded people.

Although I am no longer very actively researching my family history, I nonetheless still value things like the journal, Snippets, seminars, the QFHS CDs, and the resources at the library when I do need them. Also the many volunteers in QFHS who do wonderful things. So I like to continue to support the organisation as I think it's an organisation that is worth having for the benefit of the community at large. And that matters to me more than the personal "value proposition" for me as an individual.

Access to information.

The pleasure of interacting with like-minded people.

I am a life member.

All the friendly people!

Commitment to genealogy and continued research.

The QFHS educational and social experience.

Education.

Access to people who belong to and attend QFHS library - our best resources are our members.

Learning with other/from other members - adventure together.

Support to the organisation.

Access to resources.

The people.

Engaging with like-minded people, helping me and others with their family history research endeavours.

Keeping current with the ongoing education needs of researchers from beginners to advanced.

Having diverse research facilities. On-line, print and people (library assistants) to assist my research.

Availability and access to the information held by the society.

Physical meeting place.

History files and expertise.

Help is in the background if I do research and fellowship between members.

The wonderful volunteers and management committee.

Continuing provision of resources for quality research.

Q4. What, if anything, does QFHS most need to change?

Continue to endeavour to adapt to changing circumstances - technological, social, library use.

Adoption of a plan for a sustainable future that has wide support amongst influential members.

Backup for John Perryn - perhaps paid support.

Ensuring that communication is open and transparent for all members.

The secrecy and protection of their roles and their own little world, within the members who run various areas.

More communication with members regarding what volunteers can do to help. There doesn't seem to be any calls for assistance to help with new or ongoing projects.

The concept is that family research is for the retired, however, we need to introduce education programs for the younger population especially during school holidays. Another idea would be to bring a grandchild, niece/nephew etc every so often during the year to encourage a new generation.

Continue to innovate.

Conservative attitude to spending money, and reluctance to increase its online presence - ie. more digital databased for access by members - and this does not require a dedicated server on QFHS premises to provide it, just more online capacity from an Internet service provider.

Attitude of some on the Management Committee.

Its structure and mode of governance.

Current management committee appears to consider itself not answerable to the general membership.

Old guard to be involved in succession.

Possibly the attitude of 'ownership' exhibited by some members, to facilitate the implementation of fresh ideas.

Image and communication with the wider public, with QFHS seen as THE place to go for genealogical answers as to all of the aspects of how to research family history.

New premises.

The QFHS operation is good. Would be good to have permanent facilities.

Building A bigger space to hold weekly monthly meetings.

So far changes have grown out of previous activities or processes. I'd be concerned about forced changes.

Haven't given this much thought.

No comment.

No answer.

Nothing.

It doesn't need to change as such, it's a Society, it doesn't have to be run as a business. Family history is more a hobby for most people.

Nothing I can think of.

I think QFHS needs to partner to survive declining membership & rising rents. Now GSQ is an obvious choice (although reducing to a single set of premises would be difficult to negotiate to satisfy people from a geographic perspective). But we ought to look more widely for compatible partners. E.g. we have a large print library, could we partner with the BCC library (who are progressively refurbishing libraries) to make the QFHS collection a resource within one of their libraries, an office for QFHS, but use their computing facilities and their meeting rooms. If GSQ could be part of the same conversation, BCC could have two libraries (one northside, one southside) with special collections, special advice, as well as events etc. Obviously this would be more likely to work better where BCC have their own premises (less constrained by rents they have to pay in the shopping-centre libraries) with good parking and public transport links. Relationships with other organisations with libraries could also be explored e.g. universities (but they usually have massive parking problems).

Appearance of internal building as "happening" place - draw new/current members in.

Chairs in the m/fech area.

Need for provision on resources for members online.

Conservative attitude to spending money, and reluctance to increase its online presence - ie. more digital databased for access by members - and this does not require a dedicated server on QFHS premises to provide it, just more online capacity from an Internet service provider.

It needs to provide information in a more up to date way to encourage younger members to join. If it does that it should also get the attention of people with skills to maintain the website including remote access.

Online presence - eg seminars online. If possible accessing other software online from home as we currently do with MyHeritage - eg FindmyPast.

It needs to have online remote access to its services.

Access to online tutorials via remote access. Stats show an aging membership with mobility issues.

More schmoozing with State Government reps, Governor /patron, more active promotion of bequests to QFHS in wills.

Give the quarterly Journal a much needed up-date, same layout forever.

Perhaps an update of web site and publications design might attract a younger "audience". All are very serviceable but appear a little dated for the digital world.

Internal procedures for volunteers, especially induction and training.

Q5. How do you expect QFHS will be different in 5 years?

More members will access data online including education.

New premises probably, and merged with GSQ. These are mutually inclusive options. Also having a much greater online presence.

I'd hope that QFHS still offers the support that it currently does to its members. New members don't necessarily understand the need for support that our combined expertise can offer. But I strongly believe that is a part of our core value. That doesn't mean that changes shouldn't occur. But they should occur for the right reasons.

Maybe we'll get lucky and get an Executive who don't think they are the be all and end all.

More interactive computer usage in larger premises.

Hopefully new premises and remote access.

Unless a more permanent home at a lesser ongoing cost is achieved, I expect a somewhat smaller membership through loss of members, and a society not able to deliver the range of quality services that it does today.

Remote access.

More online databases to keep in par with other history societies around the world.

I would hope that there would be a single group to claim to be the face of genealogy in Queensland. An umbrella group to include small city and country local history groups who may disappear if not supported. This could include an arrangement with small societies to promote indexed records that could be contracted to the larger society to give them income.

Life and history research has taught me that beyond my answers above, this is a futile question. Sorry.

A lot more of its resources will be available online.

Hopefully in new premises with adequate parking. New equipment. Revamp of staffing.

Most likely merged with GSQ (which makes senses both for resources and members).

Fewer people will be visiting the rooms. To retain visitors we will need room for members with their own laptops. Hopefully better seating. A room for reading. Probably new premises like a shop.

Operating as a "traditional family history society", I think QFHS will still survive (as it is a strong and well-run organisation) but will be under increasing pressure in relation to rents for the footprint we need to operate as an independent organisation, also pressure around the increased need for technology updates and advances. This is why I think we need a partnership with an organisation that already has the things we need and can see a "value proposition" to see the benefits QFHS can bring to them.

Changes in technology.

Fewer visitors to library, greater expectation and use of online data, digitisation of existing material.

I expect us to be in new premises and have remote members able to participate more fully in the resources we offer city members.

A broader geographical membership base.

Possibly merged with GSQ.

Greater emphasis on online / remote access.

Accommodation a big unknown. It is vital for keeping our wonderful community of family historians off the streets!

More internet-focused as the average age of members decreases.

Harnessed talents of current/new members to present QFHS as a "gateway" to knowledge.

Technology.

Scaled down physically.

More online access. Introduction of members being able to borrow from the main library.

It will either provide remote access and attract new members, or it will be out of business.

Larger meeting room for workshops.

QFHS would provide more on-line research facilities. With Library Assistants also helping members on-line.

At a new address.

Digital disruption will be so advanced that staving it off will become a focus.

Better building and more on-line services.

More remote access available and our CDs on line.

More remote access to resources.

Fewer members, more focus on remote access, possibly the expansion of the DNA side of genealogy.

APPENDIX 2: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

QFHS is reviewing its Strategic Plan. You are invited to input to this process by completing this short survey. Your thoughtful responses will help focus and prioritise this work.

1. Please choose the three most important issues facing QFHS from the list below (tick beside your choices)
 - Providing an education program
 - possible need for other premises
 - providing a unique print research library
 - providing online or remote access
 - ongoing creation of publications (eg electoral rolls, school enrolments etc)
 - a potential merger with GSQ
 - declining membership
 - Selling non-QFHS books and software
 - fundraising and grants
 - Other

2. Which three of the following factors are most important to QFHS? (tick beside your choices)
 - Sustainability
 - collaboration
 - support
 - honesty
 - volunteering
 - communication
 - innovation
 - excellence
 - reliability
 - Other (please specify)

3. What is the one most important thing about QFHS that influences your decision to renew your membership each year?

4. What, if anything, does QFHS most need to change?

5. How do you expect QFHS will be different in 5 years?

6. How long have you been a QFHS member?

- less than one year
- one to two years
- three to ten years
- more than ten years
- not a member of QFHS

7. Which of the following best describes your age?

- 45 years or less
- 46 to 55 years
- 56 to 65 years
- 66 to 75 years
- 76 years or more
- prefer not to say

Thank you for giving your input and helping with the QFHS strategic planning, it is greatly appreciated.