

OUR FUTURE

This Communique is the fourth in a series providing information to members about discussions to amalgamate the Queensland Family History Society (QFHS) and the Genealogical Society of Queensland (GSQ). There is no accompanying Discussion Paper.

Contents:

- The name of the new organisation
- The search for suitable premises
- Amalgamation process
- Have your say

THE NAME OF THE NEW ORGANISATION

Choosing the right name is one of the most exciting and yet challenging elements of the amalgamation discussions.

Suggestions have been received from many, for which we thank you. The Amalgamation Subcommittee has gone through a rigorous search, review and evaluation process of more than 80 possible names. The following have been short listed (in no particular order). Further suggestions are welcome.

- History Connect
- Family History Community
- myHistory
- Family History Queensland
- Genie People
- Relative History

Whichever name is selected would be used with a tagline such as: "*organisation* – find your family in Queensland and worldwide" where the chosen name replaces 'organisation'. Note, this is an example only.

We need your input – which of these do you think is the right name for an organisation to take us into the future? Do you have an alternative suggestion, and if so, what is it and why do you think it would be best? Email us at either (QFHS) ourfuture@qfhs.org.au or (GSQ) ourfuture@gsq.org.au

THE SEARCH FOR SUITABLE PREMISES

The search for premises has been frustratingly non-productive to date, but continues to be driven by the following considerations –

- Objective of obtaining Government interest and support in locating and financing new premises

- Awareness of increasingly insecure tenures of both organisations
- Joint approaches to date to State and Local Government politicians and public servants
- Government ability to engage with one united organisation, rather than with individual organisations
- Locational needs of members of both existing organisations

SEARCH

Kate Jones, MP for Cooper and Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for Cross River Rail; Corrine McMillan, MP for Mansfield; Tim Mander, MP for Everton; and Deputy Mayor Krista Adams are fully supportive of our endeavours, and actively pursuing enquiries among Government agencies. Contacts within the Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works are reviewing possible premises for us.

Expressions of interest in the Moorooka Bowls Club were unsuccessful – as were our grant applications to Council for funds to assist with potential amalgamation.

TIMELINE TO NEW PREMISES

The “search timeline” is driven by –

- QFHS lease is currently on a month to month basis. There are no indications that we will be asked to vacate in the short term but no security of tenure.
- GSQ lease expires in late 2020 with options for extension.

It has been the objective of the Amalgamation Sub-Committee to locate suitable premises prior to seeking the members’ vote on amalgamation.

We need your opinion. We need to gauge the opinions of members of both Societies about whether the vote for or against amalgamation could proceed before the location of new premises is identified. Email us at either (QFHS) ourfuture@qfhs.org.au or (GSQ) ourfuture@gsq.org.au

In view of frustrations to date, the Amalgamation Subcommittee has decided to cast the net wider to consider commercial properties. A Premises Working Group has now swung into action focussing specifically on identification, inspection, and assessment of financial realities of the potential new organisation renting commercial premises.

We need your assistance. The Premises Working Group is keen to tap into knowledge and suggestions by members of both Societies of possible commercially leased spaces. Email us at either (QFHS) ourfuture@qfhs.org.au or (GSQ) ourfuture@gsq.org.au

AMALGAMATION PROCESS

This section explains what is required before a resolution for amalgamation can be put to members for a vote, how that vote occurs and what must be done to ensure members are fully informed before a vote.

AMALGAMATION GENERAL MEETING

As both Societies are incorporated associations, amalgamation can only proceed according to the mechanisms of the Queensland Associations Incorporation Act 1981.

To decide whether to amalgamate, each of the two Societies must separately hold a general meeting at which a special resolution is put to members. This resolution refers to two sets of information:

- a single set of proposed rules for the new organisation
- interim officer bearers for the new organisation

and proposes that the two Societies amalgamate.

If the proposal is passed, a second resolution at this meeting appoints a single person (appointed person) to prepare the application to amalgamate – this must be the same person for both Societies who is often external to the amalgamating organisations.

For the special resolution to be passed, it must receive 75% of the vote from members who are present and entitled to vote. Refer to your Society's constitution for more information about entitlement to vote.

Both Societies must pass the special resolution for amalgamation to proceed.

COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS

Both Societies are committed to ensuring that members have all the information they need to make an informed decision, prior to such a general meeting.

Members will be advised of the proposed rules (constitution), interim committee and appointed person before the general meeting. These will have been agreed by the Management Committees of each Society beforehand.

Members will continue to receive communiques and have access to discussion papers detailing information as it becomes available.

There will also be meetings at each Society to inform members and allow questions and concerns to be discussed.

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

Members must receive the following information about the proposed new organisation before a vote can be taken. Extensive discussion and collaboration on each of these is required beforehand.

- Name for the new organisation.
- Proposed members of the interim management committee to run the organisation in its first months.
- Objects of the new organisation – what the organisation does.
- Draft constitution, the single set of proposed rules, which will include:
 - Types of membership
 - Configuration of the organisation e.g. branches, associates, reciprocal rights
 - Positions on the management committee
 - Financial arrangements for the new organisation

- and more.
- Status of the search for premises.

PREPARATION FOR SUCCESSFUL AMALGAMATION

Should the vote be for amalgamation, the new organisation must be in place within three months.

Key elements that must be in place on day 1 for a new organisation include:

- Capacity for new members to join on Day 1
- Capacity to work with members of both originating Societies to provide for any differences between membership arrangements and costs of the two Societies and the new organisation.
- Access to and familiarity with the collections of both Societies for the volunteers who would be interacting with members and the public from Day 1
- Name, letterhead, logo and other collateral and stationery for the new organisation
- Website
- Communications such as social media, blog, e-news are in place and functional on Day 1.

Developing these involves significant effort which cannot wait until after a vote. The Amalgamation Sub-Committee has established working parties addressing each of these and more, so that a successful vote results in a successful start to the new organisation.

PROPOSED TIMELINE TO THE VOTE

The following timeline will ensure a decision by the end of 2020:

February	Potential names determined and discussed.
March	Membership structure decided. Property search strategies widened to include commercial leases.
April	Financial structure understood, and issues resolved. Estimated costs available for legal advice, registration and other payments, and for common appointed person.
May	Proposed name and final draft of constitution agreed by Management Committees. Property search strategies progressing.
June	Receive legal advice on draft constitution. Property search strategies progressing.
July	Finalised constitution. Common appointed person identified. Property search strategies progressing.
August	Meetings with members to discuss information relevant to amalgamation. Negotiations for suitable premises, location and time of move determined.
September	Distribution of final information to all members.
October	Each Society holds a General meeting at the same time, presenting the special resolution for amalgamation.
November, December, January	Three month period (maximum) for the administrative processes creating the new organisation.

February New organisation commences business at the same time as the two Societies cease to exist.

HAVE YOUR SAY

We are now at a stage where we need your views. As outlined in this Communique, we are seeking your opinions on:

- Proposed names of the potential new organisation.
- Voting for or against amalgamation before location of future premises is identified.
- Any suggestions you may have on location, availability, and cost of commercially leased spaces.

Email us at either (QFHS) ourfuture@qfhs.org.au or (GSQ) 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



All communiques and discussion papers, including this one, are available on the Our Future pages of your Society's website.

QFHS <https://www.qfhs.org.au/ourfuture>

GSQ <https://www.gsq.org.au/gsq-qfhs-amalgamation-discussion-papers/>