



BULLETIN NUMBER 10

MARCH 2014



Message from the Chair

Christmas and the New Year is often referred to as the “holiday period” however for many U3A administrative volunteers it represents the peak period of activity as they manage enrolments re-enrolments and placements into the year’s programmes. In addition many U3As choose to conduct popular Summer School programmes during this period. The provision of these additional programmes and activities which supports their year’s formal programmes adds greatly to the community value generated by U3A. The ongoing popularity of these programmes is a reward for enthusiastic and hardworking volunteers, highlighting the power of, and support for the U3A delivery model.

The expanding growth pattern of our movement is evidence that U3As are successfully serving ongoing interest and demand within the community. We live in an age of accelerating change, and maintaining relevance to younger generations of members will be the key to maintaining U3A’s future attraction and support. Change itself can generate discomfort and often a subsequent natural resistance for older citizens. This tendency can apply equally to the management and administration of voluntary organisations such as ours. Maintaining the status quo based upon its past success may result in U3As becoming progressively unattractive to younger potential members. Encouraging and enabling younger members to participate in our organisational structures should be an ongoing objective as the tempting alternative of relying upon willing and successful stalwarts for too long. Based upon its progress to date we should be confident of U3As ability to anticipate the requirements for ongoing success.



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Against the background of improving health, educational standards and longevity in Australia the potential for U3A membership will continue to expand. The value and benefits of our low cost contribution to the wellbeing of this growing sector of the community should be highlighted at every opportunity to political representatives at all levels to evidence the need for their support.

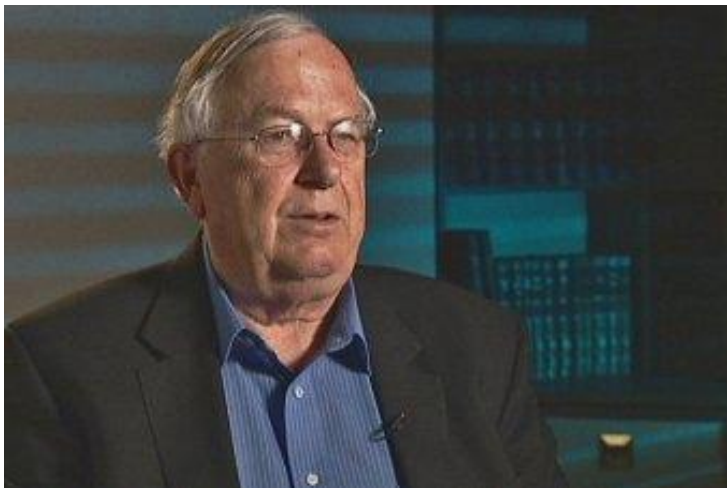
This year represents to 40th Anniversary of the founding of the first U3A in Toulouse and the occasion will be celebrated at an International Conference organised by the AIUTA and IAUTA body entitled "International Cooperation and U3A" to be held 2nd – 4th June 2014. A small contingent of Australian U3A members will be attending this event and for those interested in joining them in Toulouse you may find full details on the following website: www.aiu3a.com

I am pleased to report a local organisational milestone has been reached as we now have a Tasmanian representative within the Alliance as Glenorchy U3A is a welcomed addition to the organisation. This move will enable them to present their local perspective to discussions and hopefully be a precursor to the development of a formal Tasmanian representative body.

Victoria is about to transition the role of the U3AAA Chair and Secretariat to Queensland under our ongoing U3AAA rotational agreement.

Lindsay Glen
U3AAA Chair

Brain exercise vital: Use it or lose it.



[Photo: Dr Michael Merzenich says it is possible to have good brain function deep into old age](#)

A neuroscientist is warning people need regular brain exercise to help ward off health risks such as senility as they age.

Australians generally are living longer, healthier lives than ever before but visiting American neuroscientist Michael Merzenich warns work is needed to maintain functioning into old age.

Dr Merzenich, emeritus professor of neuroscience at the University of California, says the burden of rising demands on the health system could become economically and socially unsupportable.

"By the time you reach your 85th birthday about half of us will need continuous care, [so] have to think about maintaining our abilities and capacities," he said.

I think it is possible to keep most people in good stead from brain health to the point where their brain span can equal their life span

Dr Michael Merzenich

(With acknowledgements to ABC website)

VICTORIA



Many Victorian U3As have reported a hectic commencement to the year with membership numbers exceeding last year's record breaking figures. Coping with this membership expansion and the inevitable impact upon course administration and facilities management has presented increasing challenges for many of our volunteer administrators.

The Victorian U3A Network has commissioned its Technology User Group Sub Committee to identify and evaluate suitable commercial data base programmes for prospective use by individual member U3As. The scope study has identified a number of proven systems capable of offering an integrated registration, course, communications, activity and venue management as well as a possible financial management system. The challenge is to identify those which offer ease of operation and the flexibility to enable U3As to adapt or adopt those aspects suited and relevant to their individual needs and crucially, those which offer affordable ongoing system support. Trials are to be conducted within a number of U3As to assess the chosen programmes suitability, ease of operation and capabilities.

A Network Strategic planning Day was conducted during January to identify the emphasis and direction for the ongoing operation of the Victorian Network body through to 2018 which underpins our funding negotiations with various Victorian State Government departments. The Network Executive has successfully secured a further twelve month grant from the Adult and Community Further Education (ACFE) board for 2014. Network Secretary, Susan Webster who has now commenced duty on The Commissioner for Senior Victorians Advisory Committee reinforces our alignment with Government and as representative of an important sector of the senior community.

We have made progress in the establishment and support of our Regionalisation Programme throughout Victoria. Victoria was not originally organised on a regional basis, although some U3As formed their own informal groupings, however our Development Support Officer has been encouraging their formation by promoting the value flowing from a more localised structure. This is especially important to assist the generation of new U3As and membership growth. Twelve Regional Structures have now been formed, covering most Victorian areas and is aimed to provide a local focus and opportunities for the exchange of more informed interaction, assistance and support.

There are now 102 working U3As in Victoria with a further three new U3As to join our Network in March 2014, this means that most of the municipalities of Victoria have a U3A presence within their area.

Lindsay Glen
U3A Network Victoria



The U3A Network-Victoria Inc. Reg. No. A0017645X ABN 85 852 028 849
8/341 Queen Street Melbourne VIC 3000 Telephone: (03) 9670 3659
Email: info@u3anetvic.org.au Website: www.u3anetvic.org.au

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Groups across the state got underway in February. Pictured below are some members of U3A North Coast (Warwick) – one of the regions of the Perth group.



(Left) Val Silverlock, member of North Coast' (Warwick) for 22 years. (Right) Guest speaker from Whitfords Volunteer Sea Rescue Group, Bob Jacobs accepts a presentation from Glenys Munro.



Members of North Coast (Warwick) U3A Derek Talbot (left), Robyn Talbot and Ken Carney (right).

SEMINAR

Details of the annual seminar day run by U3A (UWA) Perth are starting to emerge. The seminar will be held at the State Library in Northbridge on July 17. The title is: Beyond Bali – Indonesia, Our Nearest Neighbour. Some excellent speakers have been engaged and this promises to be a great day. Attendance will be open to all U3A members in WA. In addition tickets will be offered to the general public.

Sonia Kellett, editor of the magazine, Inform, for the past eight years has passed on the reins to David Phillips. Many thanks to Sonia for her great work and thanks, also, to David for stepping up for this essential task.

The U3A Network WA magazine has recently been published on line. It can be viewed on the Website ([google u3anetworkwa](http://google.com/u3anetworkwa)). Many thanks to Norma Vaughan, network secretary and webmaster.

Peter Alcock, deputy president of U3A(UWA), committee member of the Network and a leading member of the U3A film group travelled recently with his wife, Barbara, to the Antarctic Peninsular. This is one of his many great shots of this amazing part of the world



Looks like a really good place to be instead of in Perth which has had one of its hottest and driest summers on record.

JOONDALUP

One of the newest and busiest U3As in the Perth Region, Joondalup U3A, just keeps on growing.

A second book club has just been launched to accommodate the growing roll-call of more than 70 members.

Patricia Lysons is facilitating the 2nd Book Club and is also keen to restart her popular Creative Writing sessions in the near future.

Says Patricia: "I joined Joondalup U3A in 2009, a year after its inception because I wanted to meet interesting, like-minded people and it's great to see how the groups have expanded to cater for every conceivable interest – including Mah Jong and board games and various discussion groups, through to groups for gardening, travelling and photography enthusiasts."



Patricia Lysons loves reading and writing and has just launched a 2nd Book Club for U3A Joondalup.

Peter Flanigan and Pauline Yarwood

NEW SOUTH WALES

While most U3As focus on keeping their members' minds active the NSW Network takes pride in having initiated the production of an innovative Exercise DVD *Balance 'n' Bones* developed especially for seniors. Beth Denny, a U3A member and an experienced and qualified fitness instructor, features her Warm Up, Conditioning, Cool Down and Stretch and Relaxation exercises on the DVD specifically with seniors in mind.

At the official launch in Sydney on 19 February Kathryn Greiner AO, Chair of the NSW Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing said that the DVD would provide seniors with a fun and simple way of keeping fit.

It is particularly suited to smaller and remote U3As whose members don't have access to fitness classes as a qualified instructor is not required to supervise the exercises. The DVD and an accompanying Group Leaders' Handbook booklet are all that's required.

The Hon John Ajaka MLC, The NSW Minister for Ageing and Disability Services, praised the initiative and commended U3A for its innovative work in helping to engage seniors in the benefits of a healthy and active lifestyle.

Copies of the DVD are being distributed to U3A members of the NSW Network and via the State Library to New South Wales' libraries.

For 5 weeks from mid-January a 30 second ad promoting U3A went to air on WIN TV in most of regional NSW featuring some of the classes at Orange U3A, where the ad was made. The Network was able to have input into aspects of the ad including the text of the voice over and choice of (subdued) background music and the result was both professional and pleasing. I've had positive feedback from both U3A members and non-members.



Beth Denny, Kathryn Greiner AO and Alan Haggarty
Launch of Exercise DVD WIN TV ad.

The Senior.

The Senior has agreed to publish an article from the Network in its forthcoming Seniors Week edition. As well as detailing a couple of U3A activities during Seniors Week it includes some background to the movement as well as some contact details.

Allan Haggarty

TASMANIA

Tasmania currently has nine U3As and three Schools for Seniors which operate in a similar manner to U3As. These range from the oldest and biggest - U3A Hobart - to several quite new and smaller ones in areas such as Geeveston and the Tamar Valley.

While all of them have the same goals and purpose, to offer lifelong learning to seniors, they are also very different from one another. My own U3A is in Glenorchy, to the north of Hobart, some of which is an area of fairly low socio-economic demographics and educational attainment, so we operate rather differently from U3A Hobart which had its beginnings connected to the Hobart University and which still draws many of its tutors and members from there.



U3A Glenorchy
committee members at
Volunteers Expo at
Glenorchy City Council.

U3A Glenorchy operates on three mornings a week from 9.30 till 12.00 and offers courses such as Creative Writing, Art, Mahjong, Meditation, the French Monarchy, Miniatures for Dolls Houses; Australian History, and a Taster series of one-hour talks. We are based at Cosgrove High School and our class numbers vary from 4 or 5 for Meditation to 25/30 for lectures. We have a membership of about 120 and recently held an Open Day with a free lecture and Morning Tea from which we gained several new members and hopefully also spread the word about what we are all about as some people in the area can be put off by the “university” part of our title.

Three of our U3As have formally agreed to enter into a Tasmanian Alliance, with others still to decide. At the moment I am informally representing Tasmania at U3AAA meetings as a non-voting observer.

Jean Walker

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

There has not been much activity at State level since our last report. Funding from the Office for the Ageing has definitely not been renewed for 2014. One of our outgoings covered by that funding has been subsidising delegate travel expenses to our quarterly meetings. With no pressing business apart from the need to tighten the purse strings, we cancelled the January State meeting. No objections were received so I presume everyone else was also snowed under by the business of getting their U3As cranked up for another year.

The executive committee consisting of president Erica Majba, treasurer Arthur Davies and myself met and set some goals for the year. SA needs to continue concentrating on increasing membership and we plan to get out and visit more U3As on their home territory.

Many of us associate the suburb of Henley Beach with the Charles Sturt U3A but since January the suburb has a greater claim to fame for third agers as it was the venue for a photo shoot to create images portraying seniors in a positive fashion.

The Sea of Knowledge photo shoot was the brainchild of artist Andrew Baines under the patronage of aged care providers ACH. The brief was to create art that would challenge common perceptions of older people: those negative stereotypes which forget that within every old person is a young person enriched by life experience.

Time and tide were vital and at dawn 15 people in their 70s, 80s and 90s stood in the shallows of a millpond sea. The models represented a variety of roles and the vast “sea of knowledge” of their accumulated life experience. They included a choir, musicians, life guard, teacher, javelin thrower, grandparent and person with guide dog. Above the water line a bare-footed, tails-wearing pianist, 92-year-old Charlie Baldacchino, played and sang.



Andrew said “They were there to promote that they were a valuable part of society and their wealth of knowledge should be shared and valued.” Not only an excellent initiative but sounds as if it could be pure U3A publicity.

Funds raised from the use of these photos will support projects of the ACH Group's Foundation for Older Australians, which supports programs that create opportunities for older people to remain vital and connected to their communities. Expressions of interest in the artwork are accepted at <http://www.ach.org.au/sea-of-knowledge>.

As many of us are at that age where we pay more interest to the obituary page, you may have noticed that of Colin Lawton in a recent edition of the Adelaide Advertiser. Born in 1925, Colin came to an interest in adult education through a very indirect route. The first real step was as secretary of the Workers Education Association after WWII, followed by director of courses for adult education at the University of Adelaide. In a time pre-dating the first U3A in France, Colin enabled people to learn political philosophy, economics and languages without entrance requirements or final examinations.

However we should remember Colin for bringing U3A to South Australia back in 1986. Prior to his own retirement, Colin helped set up the founding committee for the Adelaide U3A which met in his offices. In his drive to make education available to everyone, within a year he had helped found the Noarlunga, Tea Tree Gully, Port Adelaide and Gawler U3As.

The last time I talked to Colin was at a meeting of the unofficial group of U3As prior to the formation of our current State Alliance and Colin had just announced that failing health would prevent him from attending any future meetings. What we talked about is forgotten but not my pleasant surprise at discovering the sharp mind and friendly wit hidden inside an ageing shrunken figure. Colin passed away in December 2013. We owe him a lot.

U3A membership is largely female. Over the years we have formulated many theories about why this is so and it usually boils down to a belief that social interaction is not so important to men. Those holding this belief would be surprised by the findings of a Melbourne study presented at a recent conference in Barcelona. Professor Collette Browning said factors contributing to wellness (defined as ability to live independently and be in good physical and psychological health) differ according to gender and surprisingly said that social activity was an important contributor for men. Key risk factors for men not ageing well: perceived strain, lower levels of social activity, perceived inadequacy of social activity, low perceived social support and being a current smoker. (For women the key factor was incontinence.)

Anyone dismayed when Tony Abbott scrapped the Positive Ageing Panel only 8 months short of it presenting its report, will be heartened to hear that it reformed as an independent, non-government body. It has promised to report by the original June 30 deadline. To finance this it intends to raise \$20,000 through crowd funding. Currently the web site shows a pitiful total of \$752 so please visit <http://www.pozible.com/project/177631> and pitch in with a small donation. The panel is just starting the public consultation process and over March and April will conduct public consultations in all the major cities to hear feedback on the blueprint. If you see an advertisement for Adelaide sessions, please let me know.

*Claire Eglinton
Secretary,
Alliance of U3As in South Australia Inc.*

QUEENSLAND NEWS

The huge influx of new members is continuing across our State and U3As everywhere are rising to the challenge of meeting this need. Howard District, formally members of Maryborough, has become fully autonomous and is the 33rd Qld U3A. Warwick has formed a new branch in Goondiwindi, and will continue to mentor them until they consolidate their membership. Interaction between Qld U3As is growing, directly due to the networking and face to face contacts made at Conferences, Region Meetings and Friendship Days.

A big Thank You to Julie Porteous, and her Redlands Team the organisers of our 2014 Conference. It will be a conference not to be missed and what a lovely location, Qld's beautiful coast. All welcome.

REDLANDS RENDEZVOUS

2014 State
Conference
U3A Network -
Queensland Inc.,
and AGM
Cleveland
Performing Arts
Centre
17th & 18th June 2014



Conference information as it comes to hand
is at www.u3aqld.org.au and
www.u3aredlands.com.au

Email: u3aredld@bigpond.net.au



The U3A Online committee held their yearly face to face meeting in Bright in February. This was a wonderful opportunity for all committee members to 'get to know' each other and was especially valuable to the new members on the committee.

The committee decided on the relevant sub-committees to be established to work on the issues identified in the Vision 2020 document. A call will be put out within the next couple of weeks for U3A Online members willing to be part of this future planning for U3A Online.

Rolf Rekort is continuing to represent U3A Online in Broadband for Seniors discussions and it has been extremely disappointing to find that, despite the money already having been allocated for the continuation of the program, the new Government has chosen to withdraw the funding. Therefore unless it changes its mind the BFS will cease at the end of June this year. Rolf has put together a proposal for consideration of the consortium to be able to continue to make use of the existing kiosks to continue the program in some form. It is early days with this proposal with few explicit details having been agreed to, or costed, so a later report will be necessary on this topic.

The enhancements for the U3A Online website have reached the point of being ready for production but we have a hold up with Griffith (the Hosting body) having a stop on any changes to their platform until the 7th March. This means that the site cannot be in production (live) until after this date ----- we are certainly hoping it will not be very long after this date.

On the 7th March I will be travelling to Melbourne for the day for a Roundtable discussion, organised by ALA, with a small group of representatives of national, state and peak body groups who share an interest in collaboratively advancing the agenda of ensuring equitable access to "Lifelong and Lifewide" Learning for all.

I attended an earlier discussion in May last year and this is a follow up.

U3A Online committee members have been involved in presenting information to a number of different organisations interested U3A generally and U3A Online specifically.

Also as a member of most of the State Networks we support their activities whenever possible.

Di Delchau
President

U3A INTERNATIONAL



IAUTA, the International Association of Universities of the Third Age, announce their Conference and Workshops on "International Cooperation and U3A" Toulouse, France June 3rd and 4th 2014. To download further details [click here >>>](#)

For lots more international news look at the online monthly publication U3A Signpost.

FROM OUR SPONSORS

We are only a few months away from the [U3A International Cooperation conference](#) that will be held in **Toulouse, France** from the 2nd to the 4th of June, 2014. At the Australian regional conference held last October in Melbourne many of you registered your interest in attending this conference with Odyssey.

For this special occasion, Odyssey has designed a [12 Day pre-conference program](#) that will uncover some of France's most historic places as we make our way **from Paris to Toulouse**.

On our study tour we will follow the influence of **Rome** as well as the still earlier Grecian civilisation. We will begin on the broad and orderly boulevards of Paris, which are still redolent of Europe's antiquity and of the revolutionary fervour which was to take seat first in America and then returned to burn within France itself.

[Click here to browse the full itinerary online.](#)

Price starting from AUD\$3,270 per person (excluding international airfares).

Book directly with one of our Educational Travel Advisors and receive a \$75 Travel voucher towards the cost of the program.

We can also help you secure the cheapest flights available on the market and book pre & post accommodation travel for you.

If you are still thinking about the journeys that you might like to experience then the *Australian Geographic Magazine Jan/Feb 2014* edition includes an 8 page essay on the [Chinese Dinosaur Odyssey](#) program educational program from 2013, departing again in mid-October, may be of interest to you.

If you are looking for something new and challenging then how about one of these new programs;

- [Women of Peru](#)
- [French History by rail](#)
- [Prehistoric Britain, which includes a dawn visit to Stonehenge](#)
- [English Country Houses & Museum Homes](#)
- [Scottish Isles](#)

Odyssey Travels' sale of destinations on some outbound programs finishes March 21st; there are still a few places left on some educational programs all around the world! Some of the programs on sale include:

- [Secret France- May '14;](#)
- [Roaming Rural Britain - June '14;](#)
- [West African Cruise- Cape Town to Marrakech](#)
- [The Land of Fire and Ice, June '14;](#)

Then there are our new [European short tour options](#) for those who are pressed for time.

On our Short Tours you can join at the beginning and then depart at the end of a defined section of that particular program.

Some of the Short Tours available now include [La Belle France](#), the [European Music Festivals](#), [Britain's Heritage](#), and many more.

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There are a great number of reasons and experiences to choose to travel with Odyssey and not only can we provide you with a memorable educational program, we can book your flights and pre & post accommodation travel for you with just one visit to www.odysseytraveller.com or a phone call to one of our offices.

Odyssey looks forward to welcoming you onto one of these great educational and learning programs.

FROM THE EDITOR.

**Thanks to everyone who
contributed to issue number 10
of the Bulletin.**

**Special thanks to Pauline
Yarwood who has assisted in the
editing.**

Deadline for next issue: June 25

Peter Flanigan