



**U3AAA BULLETIN No 12**

**November 2014**

## **FROM THE CHAIR**



As many are winding down for 2014 and looking forward to the break, others are busy planning for 2015. The growth in membership to U3As continues in many areas and the resources needed to meet that growth presents challenges locally and nationally. Our greatest asset as a national body, at this point in time, is to continue to facilitate the sharing of resources and promote the value of the Life Long Learning opportunities that U3A offer. I recently attended a Community Forum, *Building Bridges, Sharing Harmony – Everyone Matters*. At this Forum I had the privilege of hearing Sophie Ryan, an undergraduate at the University of Queensland, studying a dual Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Laws program and concurrent Diploma in Languages, majoring in Peace and Conflict Studies, Studies in Religion and Japanese. Sophie spoke of her vision and passion in regard to social conflicts and how local and global organisations, governments and nations can work together to find ways toward world peace. I believe the life choices that involve sharing underpin our U3A organisation.

Linkage between learning and positive ageing continues to receive publicity and verbal support from Governments and age related organisations. There is a firm argument for national advocacy relating to greater recognition of and support for the learning needs for Australian seniors. U3As are ideally placed to participate in this conversation and if there is not a current conversation in your state, start one.

I wish you all a safe and happy Christmas season and look forward to a busy and fulfilling 2015.

I hope to see you all at the U3A Network Qld & U3A Asia Pacific International Conference *Cherish Today – Challenge Tomorrow* at Brisbane City Hall 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> May.

*Rhonda Weston*



U3A-ACT Inc is different from other Alliance members in that a single U3A covers the whole of the ACT. We are not a network or an alliance of U3As but a single U3A.

In 2014 we have over 4400 members and this year we offered a record number of 322 courses. Our courses are offered in a large number of locations across the ACT. Just under 40% of the courses are delivered in our leased facilities at either Hughes or Cook.

In addition to courses we jointly run with COTA Tuesday Lunchtime Forums every Tuesday from the beginning of June to the last Tuesday in October. These forums average 80 attendees each week. Speakers address a range of topics from current affairs, seniors health and welfare issues to music and local history.

We also have an active tours program. In 2014, 11 walks and tours were offered. These consumed 18 days and attracted 316 participants, other than the tour leaders. The total amount paid by participants was \$92,000 on a cost-recovery basis.

The University of Canberra and U3A Canberra signed a Memorandum of Understanding in November 2013. Under this agreement, the University of Canberra welcomes members of U3A-ACT to the campus and provides access to the broad range of subjects /taught there. Members may audit course; that is they may 'listen in' at lectures and take part in campus life.

In 2014 the first year of the new arrangement, 20 members attended Semester 1, 6 attended Winter Term and 13 members attended Semester 2. A total of 40 different units were studied ranging from psychology and writing to landscape, nutrition and business.

The Committee held a Planning Day in March this year, the result of which was a Five Year Strategic Plan. The plan focused on where we wanted to be in five years' time. As a result we have established five working groups, each respectively responsible for providing advice on strategic directions in:

- Program Development
- Good Governance
- Better Management
- Integrated IT system, and
- Headquarters Accommodation.

2014 has also seen us enter into a contract for services for 12 months with a consultant who is acting as Project Officer to the Committee. The consultant is assisting the Committee with the development or updating of a number of key governance documents. Her work to date has covered procedures for general meetings, a by-law and policy on payments and commitments, an updated tours and other activities policy, a privacy policy and statement, a safety and wellbeing policy and a legal compliance audit.

In 2014 we have also improved our online services to members. In 2014 over half of our 900 new members joined online. Over 87 per cent of our member households have provided us with an email address for receiving our e-bulletins. A newsletter is also available on line or in hard copy. Our most recent initiative enables members who join or renew online to choose to print their payment receipt, membership card and information pack, thereby avoiding any delays in enrolling in a course.

Robyn Beetham  
President  
U3A-ACT Inc



This is my first report for the U3AAA Bulletin since my election as President of U3A and the first thing I want to do is thank Di Delchau for her unstinting efforts during her time as President and wish her all the best. Di is staying on as Administrator of the website as that is not my area of expertise and for that I am most grateful. The new Committee of Management consists of:

Jean Walker – President	Tas
Bev Tapper - Vice President	NSW
Patricia Corby –Secretary	Tas
Pauline Saunier - Treasurer	Vic
Jean Duff	WA
Sharon Butler	NSW
Allan Thompson	Qld
Heather Jones	NSW
Kerry Hamilton	Qld
Di Delchau	Qld

The new Committee of Management has a good mixture of experienced and new members and I look forward to working with them. Di is currently at the U3A Asia Pacific Alliance International Conference in Katmandhu, a venue which sounds wonderfully exotic, and she will report on that on her return.



Jean Walker, President  
of U3A On Line

We have received news that the 'Broadband for Seniors' project will continue but with reduced funding and will definitely only run to 2017. So, even though this will keep us going for a while, we will need to look at alternative income in the future.

It is with sadness that I have to report the death of Dorothy Braxton on 3 September. As some of you will know, Dorothy was the inspiration behind the establishment of U3AOnline and we all owe her a debt of gratitude for the wisdom, insight and support she provided. She was an honorary life member of U3AOnline. I did not know her personally but I understand what a wonderful contribution she made.

We will be holding a Face-to-Face meeting in February and will complete the work of the sub-committees which were tasked earlier this year with looking at the way forward for U3AOnline. A lot of good work has already been done with a member survey having been completed and collated, and aspects of Course enrolment, evaluation and feedback being improved. However, we still have some work to do which will continue into next year.

I look forward to working with U3AAA and meeting some of you at forthcoming events.

Jean Walker President U3AOnline





***National Dancing, Seniors Festival Melbourne***

Victorian U3As again took part in October's Victorian Seniors Festival Launch at Melbourne's Federation Square. Blessed once more with fine weather the U3A's Carnival of Learning programme featured displays of craft, exercise, dance and music throughout an action packed and well attended day.

U3A's Seniors Week involvement continued state wide, as members participated in many senior focused events in both regional and suburban areas organised by local Councils and Victorian State Government Departments. These opportunities enable our groups to stimulate community wide interest in the value of our Lifelong Learning programmes by exhibiting the pleasure gained from participation in



***U3A Carnival of Learning Melbourne 2014***

our vast range of shared interests and skills plus the ongoing promotion of the ensuing health benefits. The U3A Network team manned a promotional stall located at the Town Hall Hub during the week following the festival joining with other service providers to greet visitors making their way to the nearby events and functions.



*U3A Choral Concert, Melbourne Town Hall, October 2014*

A major event at the Festival proved to be the U3A combined choral performance “A Sentimental Journey” involving nearly 300 U3A members including flute, piano and organ and recitals under Musical Director Andrew Wailes held in the historic Melbourne Town Hall. This exceptional and stirring two hour programme received a well-earned standing ovation from the large and appreciative audience. It was a truly memorable event for U3As in Victoria and for all those lucky enough to be present.

Closely following these events our Grampians Region (representing Ararat, Ballarat & Stawell U3As) staged its “Grampians Gathering” welcoming approximately 100 participants from throughout Victoria to Halls Gap, gateway to Victoria’s majestic Grampians. This event provided a series of interesting and entertaining presentations, supporting local excursions while extending an opportunity to enjoy the company of fellow U3Aers in one of our state’s most spectacular and picturesque regions.

Following many enquiries from Victorian U3As for assistance with their member administration requirements the Victorian Network formed a Technology User Group to identify suitable membership management database systems which were commercially supported. Many U3As have faced challenges when their supporting volunteer resources change or when membership growth necessitates replacement or upgrading of internally developed data base systems. A number of suitable systems were identified and assessed by the group which were subsequently submitted to a professional consultancy for impartial evaluation. The consultancy’s recommendation has been adopted for parallel trial by a number of U3As. This system is flexible enough to accommodate most membership enrolment, communication and course co-ordination requirements as well as offering an affordable management system well suited for adoption by member U3As.

This time of the year most of our U3As are busy finalising the coming year’s programmes and preparing re-enrolment processes. The ongoing effort involved in generating and delivering an attractive curriculum is at the heart of U3As relevancy to its expanding membership. We acknowledge the impressive effort provided by all those involved in our course development and administration teams,



who operate mostly in the background to ensure the ongoing delivery of our shared experiences, interests and skill programmes.

Approaching the close of another year we can view this as a period of positive progress at a number of levels, including membership growth (now exceeding 33,000) and particularly with an increasing level of cooperation, support and understanding from within our State Government Departments.



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## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

University of the Third Age



U3A NETWORK WA INC.

At the AGM held in July the majority of the committee were re-elected but, unfortunately, no-one volunteered for the position of President. So, at this stage, we are working without one – the Vice-President is running the show. We do hope to fill this important position in the near future. I know this situation is echoed in other U3As – it is difficult to get people to put their hands up. Sometimes succession plans are in place and something unexpected happens. Always expect the unexpected, as they say.

The new committee is: Peter Flanigan, Don McDonald, Norma Vaughan, Celia English, Helen Baker and Paul Thiessen

It is good to see the steady increase in U3A members joining the “online” fraternity. Recent figures from the Peter Alcock, President of our largest group, Perth show 728 members out of 1002 are on the email list. More and more information is being sent out this way. Of course we cannot forget members who are not on line, many of them have made a very valuable contribution over the years.

The subject of U3A badges came up at a recent meeting of North Coast (Warwick). Pauline, The chairman of the group, reported that she wore a U3A lanyard while on a recent cruise. Through that she was able to attract other U3A members on the cruise and they had a “meeting” on board at which the usual coffee and cake was consumed. Another member suggested that there should be a small lapel badge for U3A Australia available to all members. In fact there used to be some around – but I haven’t seen any of them for several years. Perhaps the Alliance could look into this.

A new group at Wanneroo, north of Perth, has been formed. Currently at the early stage of being run by a steering committee, it is hoped to move the group to a more formal status early next year. Wanneroo City is one of the fastest growing local government areas in the state and there would appear to be room for a second group in the

north of the city.

**Peter Flanigan and Rosemary Grigg from Perth recently visited our smallest network member, Manjimup U3A, in the SW of the state. Despite their numbers, Manjimup is a thriving group.**



**Janet and Allan Black from Wanneroo with visiting Speaker, Norman Harrison, of Joondalup U3A.**

**Liz Bursey, Sue Kennedy and Joy Phillips, all from Manjimup, with Peter Flanigan and Rosemary Grigg.**

*Peter Flanigan (V-President)*

## NEW SOUTH WALES

Someone once said that one who fails to plan, plans to fail. The NSW Network is coming to the end of its current 3 year plan, which follows on from an earlier 5 year plan and needless to say we are working on the next 3 year plan. Such plans not only keep us focussed on our objectives but outline ways to achieve them in realistic timeframes. Of course issues still arise that can't be anticipated but nevertheless the very existence of a plan changes the culture of an organisation to one of being proactive rather than just reacting. A lot of work reviewing the boundaries of our 6 non-metropolitan regions resulting from a request at our AGM has occupied our committee since the last Bulletin and at present our Educational sub-committee is meeting preparatory to a full Network committee meeting early in November.

Prior to the implementation of the current plan we'd been successful in obtaining a grant from the NSW Government to promote U3A with emphasis on regional NSW to roughly coincide with the term of our current plan. We have had moderate success in doing so considering some entrenched difficulties which I feel are worth relating as they may have relevance to other Networks.

In common with other states most of NSW's population hugs the coast, particularly in the Newcastle, Sydney, Wollongong area to the extent that some in regional NSW reckon those initials stand for Newcastle Sydney Wollongong.

Up until 200 years ago the impassable Blue Mountains prevented development to the west of the Sydney basin and although Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth found a way across the aptly named Great Dividing Range it has nevertheless remained as a psychological barrier ever since as few Sydneysiders in particular even contemplate venturing beyond it to find work, let alone cheaper housing or a less hectic lifestyle. I speak from experience, having been born and bred in Sydney and enticed 600kms west 50 years ago, where I've happily remained to this day. But I'm the exception. It



was an uncommon occurrence back then and regarded as an aberration today even by those on a merry-go-round of countless hours commuting to a metropolitan CBD for work and servicing a mortgage of unprecedented size, if they're lucky to get a toe-hold in today's over-heated housing market.

Exacerbating the problem for many of our regional communities are the effects of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan which has diverted water from agriculture and industry west of the Divide to the environment. While this concept sounds unassailable, like motherhood, the Plan was silent as to how the environmental water could be used. There are justifiable concerns in some quarters that some centres will face flooding from too much water being pushed down narrow shallow river systems in a flat landscape and moreover that some species won't survive not through lack of water but from too much in a marked change from centuries of an ephemeral system.

Then there is the exodus of a number of regional retirees to the coast for their 3<sup>rd</sup> age, having recalled relaxing beachside holidays, though some return after finding the reality of everyday life there didn't match the euphoria of brief carefree sojourns.

So many regional communities in this state are declining, and as electoral boundaries are redrawn to reflect population drift there are less elected representatives to make up the numbers to withstand the pressure for more of the same policies from their city-centric counterparts. Opportunities to expand regional industry and education are having to compete with the dollars needed for another metropolitan motorway for example.

These are some of the challenges facing U3As in regional NSW, especially those west of the Divide, in contrast with some along the coastal fringe that are experiencing growing pains. And although I don't have any statistics to back it up I wonder if they have an older membership than those closer to the seaboard, as the average age of the members in my U3A is around 80, resulting in less being able to take an active role either as tutors or administrators.

While more money for promoting U3A isn't necessarily the answer it's hard to achieve results without it. While we had a good reception when meeting the responsible Minister recently with a view to further funding it seems NSW's funding criteria may change so at present we don't know what the future holds in that regard. In the meantime it's disappointing that his Federal counterpart has not yet met with the Alliance's representative despite several attempts and the groundwork put in with the Coalition when in opposition. It's even more frustrating when one realises that the country's Men's Sheds are able to apply for up to \$8 million annually. While I'm the first to acknowledge the vital role of that organisation, unlike U3A, it caters for less than half the nation's retirees.

Like the ad for a certain household paint of many years ago the NSW Network will keep on keeping on. It's to be hoped we have the necessary resources to help us to do so.

Allan Haggarty President



## International Conference 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> May 2015



'Cherish Today – Challenge Tomorrow'

## QUEENSLAND NEWS

Organising this conference, to be held at the refurbished Brisbane City Hall, has been the focus for Network Queensland during the last few months. Now that the 5<sup>th</sup> APA conference has taken place in Kathmandu we will commence a marketing programme to bring this Queensland APA conference to the attention of not only the state and the nation, but to a world audience.

The conference website has been constructed by Greg Taylor, Brisbane Vice President and IT guru. [www.u3aqldconference.org](http://www.u3aqldconference.org) will give you all of the details organised to date. You will see a provision for additional information to be added as it comes in. As well as the overseas U3A guest speakers that you see listed on the Program we have confirmation that Professor Armoogum Parsuramen, President of U3AM Mauritius will be joining us.

I know from my experience in Toulouse that the opportunity to talk with members of U3As and Life Long Learning Organisations from other countries and culture's is a very rewarding experience and one not to be missed.

The conference will be three days for our Queensland members, with day three being the Network AGM and our inaugural Presidents' Council. Concurrent workshops will be held for Tutor and for those interested in Policies and Procedures.

Network Queensland invites you and your members to join us for this exciting event.

*Rhonda Weston*



## Last minute offers on 2014 Educational Programs from Odyssey Travel Book by November 24<sup>th</sup> — limited spaces available

*For a full list of Odyssey programs, please visit [www.odysseytraveller.com](http://www.odysseytraveller.com)*

### Taiwan Lantern Festival

Taiwan is a destination ready to be unlocked, with natural beauty and its traditional culture just waiting for those who dare.

Duration: 11 days  
Starting: March 2015  
Total Package Price: \$5,033pp  
Program Cost (Twin Share): \$3,734  
Insurance: \$231  
Flight costs: \$1,068 \*  
(with 15% discount)



### Britain's Canals and Railways

This program explores the spectacular canals and railways that changed Britain during the industrial revolution.

Duration: 23 days  
Starting: April 2015  
Total Package Price: \$10,989pp  
Program Cost (Twin Share): \$9,144  
Insurance: \$231  
Flight costs: \$1,614 \*  
(with 15% discount)



### Treasures of Western Europe

This educational program combines visits to France, Belgium, Luxemburg, the Netherlands and Germany.

Duration: 26 days  
Starting: April 2015  
Total Package Price: \$10,248pp  
Program Cost (Twin Share): \$8,502  
Insurance: \$231  
Flight costs: \$1,515 \*  
(with 15% discount)



### Scottish Isles

These isles are among the world's great repositories of archaeological treasures including villages preserved almost in their entirety.

Duration: 20 days  
Starting: May 2015  
Total Package Price: \$10,248pp  
Program Cost (Twin Share): \$8,502  
Insurance: \$231  
Flight costs: \$1,515 \*  
(with 15% discount)



### Roaming Rural Britain

This walking program is designed to introduce participants to the incredible variety of walks and destinations available in Britain.

Duration: 22 days  
Starting: June 2015  
Total Package Price: \$10,347pp  
Program Cost (Twin Share): 8,502  
Insurance: \$231  
Flight costs: \$1,614 \*  
(with 15% discount)



### Scandinavian Spirit

Uncover a Viking past and view of the world's biggest fjords on this journey through Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

Duration: 13 days  
Starting: June 2015  
Total Package Price: \$10,248pp  
Program Cost (Twin Share): \$8,502  
Insurance: \$231  
Flight costs: \$1,515 \*  
(with 15% discount)



\* Airfares quoted are subject to availability at time of booking

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Several of our U3As are celebrating their tenth birthday. It makes me wonder what was in the water back then to produce such fecundity. It was certainly our last wave of new U3As and seems too strong a peak to be purely coincidental. Does anyone have an explanation? Our congratulations to you all and we hope you are celebrating in style.

The attendance at the State AGM in October was quite pleasing. This year we catered for lunch so requested accurate figures on who would be attending. The cost of a few platters of sandwiches and fruit was a small price to pay for the peace of mind of knowing who would and would not be attending. It also livened up social interactions at our usual lunch-time adjournment so I am sure we will repeat the exercise.

There have been a couple of changes to the executive. Heather Dibbin from Murraylands U3A is the new Vice President. Jeanne Behrens who had served as vice-president since 2012, resigned but will maintain her long involvement with the Alliance as Noarlunga U3A delegate. Peter Adams is our new, and well-qualified, treasurer, taking over from Arthur Davies in a neat transfer of not only office but also as Gawler U3A delegate.



*Left: Noarlunga's French Group line up to take a bow after presenting a play set in a French café. (Jeanne Behrens in fetching pinny.)*

*Below: Murraylands (10 in 2015) must have a good computer tutor as students Ann Hughes and Rob Smythe are even enjoying creating spreadsheets.*

Forests and postmen would quake in fear if our grant sub-committee ever changed from electronic to hard copy communication. It has been a hive of activity while establishing a funding agreement with Department of Further Education, Environment, Science and Technology (DFEEST). The first tranche of internal grants to individual U3As has been approved and a few whose initial





claims were very modest were invited to submit further claims.

We have also invited tenders from consultants under separate funding of \$20,000 which has to be used on marketing and publicity before the end of the current financial year. This finds us in very unfamiliar territory: not only that of marketing and publicity but also having money to spend. It is a big project to undertake in what for us is a tight timeline. We have been achieving so much with so little for so long that it goes against our frugal natures to be talking in commercial figures and employing experts. Knowing it is a once-only opportunity, there is also a lot of pressure to get it right.

Selected mostly for their history of working with not-for-profits, several businesses were invited to submit tenders. From seven invitations we received four responses and all were very competent and competitive. One difficulty was explaining that although we have money to splash out now, it is one-off expenditure for this year and after our other grant expires in 4 years' time we may not have any income to maintain programmes. It is a bleak picture but we have to be realistic. Sometimes it is a very fine line between pessimism and realism when planning on the generosity of whomever might be in government at the time.

On 5 November we will meet with the successful tenderers, CBB (themselves a not-for-profit originating from a restructuring of the Spastic Centres of South Australia Inc.) That will be in the form of a 4-hour workshop to better inform them about U3A and our expectations.

CBB, amongst other things, will be designing a new website for us. Our current website started life (one weekend when I had nothing better to do) primarily to explain the SA Alliance and as a resource for our own members rather than to promote U3A to the general public. The only criterion was that it be totally free. Now we want a website which will increase membership and public awareness.

You may remember the panel investigating how the coming ageing tsunami can be turned into a positive rather than negative for Australia. They were disbanded by the current federal government just months short of reporting their findings. Unwilling to abandon such important work they soldiered on as an independent, non-government body, finding some corporate sponsorship after crowd-funding failed. The report, published in September, can be found at:

[http://www.percapita.org.au/dbase\\_upl/BlueprintForAnAgeingAustralia.pdf](http://www.percapita.org.au/dbase_upl/BlueprintForAnAgeingAustralia.pdf).

*Blueprint for an Ageing Australia* opens by saying "Longer lives are the most positive development in the last century of human history. They represent the product of greater prosperity, better diet, disease eradication and healthier lifestyles. They offer each of us, on average, 25 extra years of high quality living with new opportunities for productive work, unprecedented leisure, teaching and learning, and fulfilling relationships with family and friends."

That sounds like a good argument for having a vibrant U3A movement across Australia. This is a resource for anyone who is interested in the politics of ageing. Thank you to Everal Compton and his panel for persisting when many would have thrown their hands in the air and walked away.

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

## FROM THE EDITOR

Once again, many thanks to all who have contributed to this issue. It makes an editor's life a pleasure when well written articles and interesting pictures come flowing into the inbox.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our readers.

Deadline for the next issue will be

**March 25 2015.**

Peter Flanigan    [u3apeteraa@bigpond.com](mailto:u3apeteraa@bigpond.com)



U3A Perth Choir performing at the Variety Concert in City Place in early October

(photo courtesy U3A Film Group)