



AUSTRALIA

U3AAA BULLETIN No. 30

NOVEMBER 2020



Colourful new premises for one lucky U3A

This issue:

■ Member reports:

- 🔊 *WA keeping photographic record*
 - 🔊 *SA gets lucky with venues*
 - 🔊 *Queensland COVID closure produces book*
 - 🔊 *NSW enjoys merry-go-round*
 - 🔊 *Victoria proves anything possible online*
 - 🔊 *U3A Online gone a droving*
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From the Editor

It may have been a hard winter for many U3As, especially in Victoria, but the future is looking bright with borders opening, Christmas on the horizon and the opportunity to reinvent ourselves in 2021. A much better prospect than our counterparts in England who still have a total ban on in-person U3A activities with very little hope of things getting better soon.

Let's celebrate International Volunteer Day (IVD) on 5 December 2020. Mandated by the UN General Assembly, IVD raises awareness of the important role volunteers play, particularly this year, in responding to the challenges facing the world.

Volunteering Australia recently used a graphic of raised hands forming a Christmas tree. What a wonderful sight it is to see someone raise their hand to volunteer, to lighten the load, to play their part in running their organisation.



Watching the American elections (avidly!), I see the irony of two men in their seventies fighting tooth and nail to be president of an over-armed, volatile population, while here we find most people in their seventies say they are too old or too busy with grandkids or too unqualified to run their U3A. Sometimes I consider buying a maneki-neko (Japanese lucky beckoning cat) just for the pleasure of seeing a raised hand. Is this what a maneki-neko AGM looks like? Are they raising their hands to volunteer or nominate someone else to do the work? Knowing my cat they are voting to hire a full-time employee for 24/7 door opening.



I wish everyone a great Christmas New Year holiday season. Use your free time to practise putting your arm in the air: if it hurts just raise it from the elbow. When you come back refreshed, with no overseas escapes planned and with a post COVID understanding of how important our organisation is to keeping us all happier and healthier, you will be ready to take on a role in your U3A or State network. There are so many options: publicity, photographer, or president seems remarkably popular. Once you try it, you might not want to give it up.

Deadline for next issue of Bulletin is Wednesday 24 March. Start collecting photos now.



*Claire Eglinton
U3A Lower North
South Australia*

From the Chairman

As COVID 19 restrictions are being relaxed within each state it is a good time to reflect on the how the U3A movement in Australia has met the challenges and maintained connection at a local level with their members. We have seen generally an improvement in digital literacy through the transition of classes and activities to remote access using the Zoom application. As a result, we are hearing that many U3As in each state will continue to offer remote access classes and activities with face-to-face classes post COVID.

I am pleased to confirm that the alliance networks are working together to share experiences and challenges to present a national face for the U3A movement in Australia.

With over 110,000 seniors as members of U3As across the country our movement is being recognised as a significant provider of positive ageing and lifelong learning classes and activities that support the mental and physical health and social engagement of seniors.

We are well placed to be a significant contributor to the shaping of the post COVID normal for the engagement of seniors.

The recently released *Measuring Australia's Digital Divide: Australian Digital Inclusion Index 2020* found that 'Low levels of digital inclusion for older Australians increase the risks of social isolation and loneliness. People aged 65+ remain our least digitally included. The ADII score for this age group is 49.7. The age gap is 19.4 – the gap between people aged 65+ and the most digitally-included age group of 35-49.' widened progressively from 17.9 points. 'These results indicate many older Australians are not able to use the internet as an alternative to face-to-face social interactions curtailed by COVID-19 physical distancing measures.'

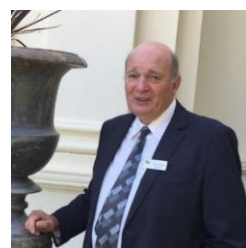
This situation is an area where our movement has responded to the challenge of assisting members improve their digital literacy to use technology as an 'enabler' to enable them maintain contact not just through the period of COVID-19 isolation regulations but ongoing in the post COVID-19 era.

It is pleasing to report that many U3As are sharing their challenges and successes with other U3As not just within their state but also with U3As in other states. These discussions are shaping the post COVID operating model.

The U3AAA delegates have been developing promotional material to support the promotion of the U3A movement's influence in continuing post COVID to be a valued contributor to the provision of benefits of positive ageing and lifelong learning which support the mental and physical health and social engagement of seniors in Australia. This promotional material will be significant in the further development of a national voice for our movement and build public awareness of our approach to successfully meet the post COVID challenges through the recovery stages.

Please stay safe and keep contact with your U3A members and friends.

Glen Wall
Chair,
U3A Alliance Australia



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

U3A (UWA) PERTH

Perth U3A, the largest U3A in WA, is made up of ten individual groups. Each operates their own program and functions, largely, as an independent U3A but all are incorporated as one body. This is run by a council of delegates which meets on a monthly basis. Each sub-group is called a Region. This structure was determined in the late eighties and only marginal changes have been made since then. The UWA in the title acknowledges the origin of the group under the auspices of the University of Western Australia Extension Service.

The advantages of this combined organisation are that, with the greater numbers, more specialised courses can be offered, promotions can be coordinated centrally and events such as the annual seminar and State Library lectures can be offered. In addition, activities such as a U3A choir and a film group have been inaugurated with some success.

*Denise Beer (president),
Jean Duff (treasurer),
Val Buckley (past president)
and Christine Oliver (secretary)
confer before the recent
Annual General Meeting.*



A disadvantage seen by some critics is that it has not promoted growth in overall U3A membership in the Perth metropolitan area even though Perth itself has almost doubled in size in the last thirty years. Currently, total membership is a little over 1000.

In a recent constitution update the quorum for the AGM was set at 100. This is normally achievable but in this virus plagued year it was too difficult, despite using a combination of physical presence and virtual presence (by Zoom). Under the rules the meeting was recalled for one week later using Zoom. Forty people attended and the meeting was declared to be legal. Denise Beer, Jean Duff, Christine Oliver and Judith Amey (vice president) all retained their positions.

Despite the pandemic, U3A in Perth and the wider state of WA has continued in one form or another and 2020 has been a productive year. The uptake of technology has been one decided gain. All groups have now resumed normal activities.

FILM CREW

The Film Crew have been active recently and have visited several of the Perth Regions to record activities on video and still photography. Below are two of their records.



Artist Jenny Ellis Newman at Joondalup Art Exhibition (Photograph: Jan Bowra)



The Ukulele Group at Melville Region (Photograph: Peter Browne)

Peter Flanigan
WA Network

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

It might sound like a new U3A but U3A Inner North has come into existence perfectly formed and ready to go. U3A Prospect's search for suitable venues was proving problematic, despite having support from local Prospect councillors. It is a familiar story for many of us but they decided to light a candle rather than sit and curse the darkness. They took the search to neighbouring council areas and found what they wanted in the nearby, much larger Pt Adelaide Enfield Council district. With the support of this new Council they will be moving activities to the Enfield Community Centre (cover photo and below). Covered with vibrant murals of local birds and butterflies it is easy to spot. Well located on a main road with bus stop and off-street parking, this colourful building is set within a large park with mature gums.



U3A Inner North's new home among the gum trees, complete with veranda out the front

Instantly recognizing a good thing, Prospect diplomatically reinvented themselves with a new, more encompassing name: U3A Inner North. The committee has wholeheartedly committed itself to the rebranding project with new [website](#), redesigned newsletter adopting the symbol of the Centre's Rainbow Lorikeets. Jenny Rossiter who worked tirelessly to see this U3A founded, has just passed on the reins to others and I think she has left them set for success.

U3A Strathalbyn is also anticipating new premises. The Senior Citizens Hall refurbished with commercial standard kitchen and new meeting rooms has been handed over to the Strath Neighbourhood Centre. U3A Strathalbyn anticipate being able to relocate some of their activities to the new centre which shares its site with the Parker Avenue Community Garden.

State network U3A SA's October AGM was its first face-to-face meeting in 12 months. The executive continues unchanged. While stability is good, an injection of new blood is overdue. The 2021 calendar was set with a mix of conventional and online meetings and, despite the uncertain times, U3A Tea Tree Gully is going ahead with plans to host the 2021 Rendezvous. President Kerrie Smith has had several successes in her search for small grants to increase member benefit. The most popular one has covered costs for sanitizer and Zoom licences.

As part of Get Online Week, U3A SA, ran a Zoom session open to all member U3As. It raised awareness of the Be Connected IT training plus using Zoom for classes as well as meetings. It was obviously a success as requests for Zoom licences have boomed.

Glenda Sherwin-Lane, president and resident IT whizz at U3A Campbelltown, led the discussion showing how she uses Be Connected learning resources with her students. Maria-Antoinette Galetta, tutor in French and Italian, said Zoom language classes had been so successful that those students who participated now want classes to continue through this medium. Zoom has proven superior to face to face for hearing the finer nuances of pronunciation necessary when learning a new language. Now Marie-Antoinette is left with the dilemma of what to do with three students without computers.

Another option which arose from the session was having State-wide classes. Priscilla Jordan, who runs a 6-week Positive Psychology course, has run out of students at U3A Adelaide and is interested in widening the scope. How it will work and who will take enrolments remains to be discussed but it is an interesting possibility now COVID has made more of us Zoom savvy.



Lower North artists in front of their work at a previous exhibition

U3A Lower North's two thriving art groups are a testament to their former tutor, the late Gerald Moore. Both Auburn and Burra art groups are trying to create diversity with different art mediums and were kept busy in 2020 with a number of demonstrations by their own members: alcohol inks with Vicki Moroney, acrylic pouring with Ann Foster and Gloria Lisman; and from guest artists: water mixable oils with Jim Cook, and watercolour demo with Joe Dennis a member of Pastel Artists of S.A.

Their March exhibition at the Clare Art House was closed early due to COVID restrictions but group leader Ann Foster says they have resumed classes just in time to prepare for the annual U3A Art Exhibition during November at Linhay in Auburn.

Claire Eglinton
Secretary
U3A South Australia



QUEENSLAND

U3A Toowoomba Rainbow Writers

The U3A Toowoomba Rainbow Writers class did not allow COVID19 to stop their enjoyment of writing. Members could not meet as a group, but tutor Irene Bridgeman suggested a novel way to keep her class members engaged in the writing process from their homes.

A true story written by class member Allen Hubbard provided the impetus for Irene's idea. Beginning with Allen's story as Chapter One, each member contributed a chapter extending Allen's original idea into a book. Nine members wrote at least one chapter and others were happy to support the idea and read the chapters as they were written and circulated.

The culmination of their creativity and hard work was the launch of their book, *Heartbeat of the Outback*. It was so exciting to see the completed book in print and a testament to the resilience of U3A members. The U3A Toowoomba Rainbow Writers managed to turn the difficulties which COVID19 presented into a rewarding learning experience.



From left: Jill Corey, Suzanne Combes, Liz Watson, Irene Bridgeman, Geoff Taylor, Allen Hubbard, Lesley Henry. Absent: Dale Philpott, Maree Haley.

U3A Network Strategic Plan 2021-24

The U3A Network Queensland formed a sub-committee chaired by vice president Wendy Sanders and comprising executive officer Colin Maddocks and members Rhonda Weston (president U3A Toowoomba), Desley Taylor (president U3A Brisbane), Jim Hales (U3A Sunshine Coast) and Phil Ackman (U3A Cairns), to formulate the next iteration of its strategic plan. The group surveyed Queensland U3As to establish some baseline information regarding their needs from the Network.

The sub-committee also took the opportunity afforded by the impending Queensland State election to contact all sitting politicians regarding the established aim of the Network to increase the number of U3As in Queensland. The response has been very positive.

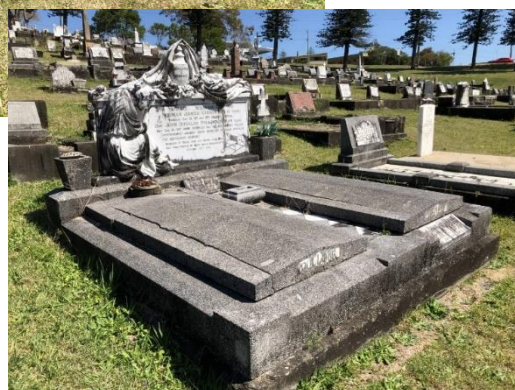
They also contacted the mayors of all local governments in which there is a U3A located to draw attention to the needs post the COVID shutdown of established U3As.

The new plan should be launched at the 2021 State Conference in Stanthorpe in May.

U3A Twin Towns Explores Some Local History

U3A Twin Towns *Walk and Discover* Group meet on the first Friday of each month to explore an aspect of the environs and its past. Recently the group visited the Tweed cemetery which contains a wealth of history. Among those buried there is a man who fought in the Crimean War and then went on to engage in the American Civil War. He was taken prisoner of war but on release went back to join the fight. Also among the graves is that of the doctor who practised for many years in the Tweed and who was responsible for having the Tweed hospital established. The wife of a Queensland premier who became a federal politician and later ambassador to Ireland rests in the Tweed cemetery. Not far from her grave are those of a group of young men who were involved in a shipwreck. Close by there are the graves of two men who lost their lives in a shark attack. One was attacked by the shark and the other was mauled when he went to the rescue of his friend.

Several members of the group delivered interesting talks about persons whose final resting place is the Tweed cemetery. The cemetery was established in the 1890s and has been closed to new burials for a number of years. The group noticed that there were many very elderly persons interred there and of course, it was also noted that there were quite a large number of graves for little children, many of whom had died as the result of misadventure.



*Gail Bonser
President
U3A Network Qld Inc.*

NEW SOUTH WALES

At the Network administrative level, although the constitution was amended to enable AGMs to be held in an electronic mode and 2020 Annual Reports will be distributed shortly, the 2020 AGM has been deferred. The formalities of the 2020 AGM will be concluded together with the 2021 AGM, at the Network Annual Conference, 12-13 April 2021, to be hosted by the Wagga Wagga U3A. The Network committee has also undertaken an upgrade of its website hosting services to ensure greater security and maintenance service to those members which subscribe to it.

Nola Younghusband of Dubbo U3A, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours List, for services to education. Nola, a former teacher, has been a member of U3A for several years, including Dubbo president for the past 7 years. She also conducts a class in art history.

At the grassroots level, U3As have accommodated to the COVID-19 pandemic in various ways since July as restrictions on meetings have gradually eased. Several have resumed some face-to-face classes, although classes via Zoom and utilising YouTube have become very popular as members have realised the value and simplicity of these means of connection and participation for U3A activities. As one member has commented, *I live alone so it was either stay here in hibernation or learn to be an online dynamo.*

Open air activities such as Tai Chi and exercise classes, walking groups, birdwatching and photography classes, have become very popular.

Right: Eastlakes U3A practices social distancing.

Below: Hawkesbury U3A birdwatching in the mist.

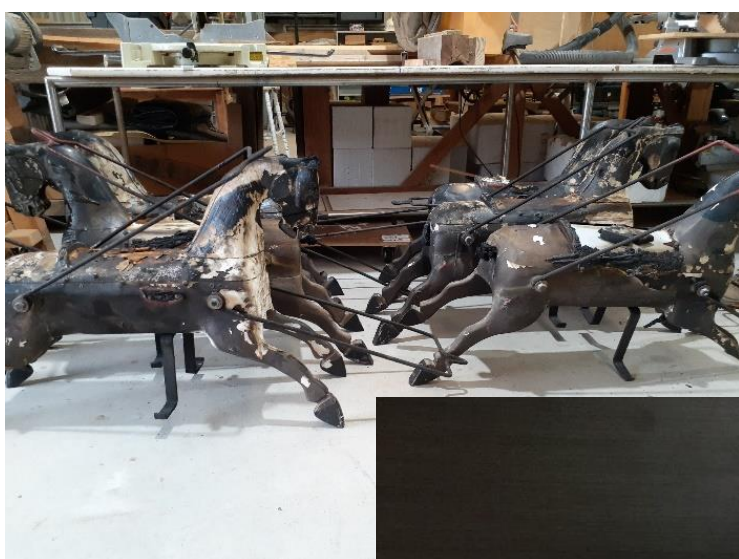


Having been shut down for most of the year due to the pandemic, Newcastle U3A is celebrating its 30th anniversary year by presenting *Learn Laugh Live*, a showcase of a small cross-section of its courses at the Digital Library in Stewart Avenue, Newcastle. Over three weeks in November, U3A tutors

will present a total of 15 2-hour sessions on their speciality subjects, which will also be streamed live on the Newcastle Libraries Facebook page. This is truly a magnificent effort,

demonstrating the dedication, perseverance and resilience of U3A members to continue lifelong learning.

Clarence River U3A (CRU3A) hosts both a Men's Shed and a Women's Shed. Both have recently contributed to a community effort to assist the local Maclean Lions Club restoration project. Late last year, a deliberately lit fire destroyed the Lions Club's shed at Yamba, and in the process a very popular merry-go-round, much loved by local children, was badly scorched and barely recognisable. The Lions Club received a minimal amount of insurance and some State and Federal grants. The CRU3A Men's Shed applied their skills to sanding, carving and restoring the horses of the merry-go-round. Then the Women's Shed members applied their skills and artistic talents to decorate the horses, each with a different look and colour. The work occupied several people over more than three months to complete, but beyond worth is also the value of community groups working together.



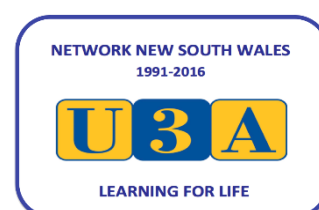
Left: The horses after the fire

Below: A restored carousel horse



Large, medium or small, our U3As have maintained and sustained their memberships during the virus crisis, and look forward to better times in 2021.

Ainslie Lamb
Publicity Officer
U3A Network NSW Inc.



VICTORIA

Traditionally, October is a whirlwind of events celebrating the achievements of older Victorians during the Victorian Seniors Festival. The Festival had to be 'reimagined' this year and moved online with a series of video performances and onto the radio.

In the last edition, we highlighted Andrew Parker of U3A Ballarat and his hiking group's musical performances. Since then, another three U3A groups have been in the spotlight.

This is a [link](#) to information about the complete Victorian Seniors Festival Reimagined programs.

U3A Melbourne City's Creativity Cluster

Nancy D. Lane's artistic career began in her 70s, when she began collecting discarded junk from the streets. Initially she picked up random wire and metal out of a mixture of curiosity about its origins and concern it could puncture a cyclist's tyre, but it did not take long before the found items began to mount up.

This is the [link](#) to the video featured in the Victorian Seniors Festival's site.

This is a [link](#) to Nancy's profile.



U3A Melbourne City's Scriptwriters

Melbourne City's script writing group enjoy writing both monologues and dialogues on broad topics. These four monologues were selected based on audience reaction in class. All very different, one topical, one wistful, another poetic and the fourth introspective. The scripts featured are *A Certain Kind of Man* by Ron Irwin, *If Only* by Maureen Inkster, *A Sister* by Toni Purdy and *Pandemic Blues* by Caz Myles.

Click on this [link](#) to hear more.

U3A Nunawading Line Dancers

Line dancing used to be the domain of boot scooting cowboys and girls, but Marie Pietersz' classes are packed with seniors keen to stay active and have fun. Follow the [link](#) to meet Marie and her students:

This is a [link](#) to Marie's profile.



Victorian Governor Hosts U3A Virtual Reception

The Governor of Victoria, Her Excellency the Honourable Linda Dessau AC, and her husband, Mr Anthony Howard, hosted her first virtual reception to mark International Day of Older Persons on 1 October, hosting the U3A movement in Victoria. Over 100 U3A members were able to log on to hear the Governor's address and a response by U3A network president Susan Webster.

Susan noted that the challenges of this year have also given us the opportunity to take up new skills and use them for the benefit of others – a wonderful example of the contributions to the community made by those in the third age. She said that, even during this term break, U3As like Deepdene



were offering up to 20 video-based classes and activities a day; U3As like Port Phillip were extending their reach beyond the State to introduce our movement to newcomers, and U3As like Port Fairy were introducing video as a new medium for seniors in that area for coming together and interacting.

June Kinsella, president of U3A Mallacoota, spoke of her U3A's isolation after the bushfires, and how donations from sister U3As had given them the means to work with other of the town's community groups for the well-being of the whole town.

Pat Buoncristiani, president of U3A Emerald, regularly rang those in her U3A without any digital skills. She spoke of members with no other outside contact and their pleasure at hearing from U3A friends.

Benjamin Chan, vice president of U3A Melbourne Chinese, talked about the impact of the pandemic on his many older migrant Chinese members and the importance of his teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) in making people feel part of the community.

The reception itself finished on schedule but many U3A attendees stayed behind to chat with friends unseen for several months.

A complete description of the virtual reception appears on the Governor's website [here](#):

Tracey Swadling
Administration Manager
U3A Network Victoria.



U3A ONLINE

It was with some sadness that we have learned that Tom Holloway has decided to retire from his role as editor of World U3A Signpost, the e-newsletter of U3As worldwide. Tom has served twice on the committee of U3A Online and has been a great supporter of us, always promoting us wherever he could. In fact, he has been a highly regarded supporter of the entire U3A movement.

Recently we uploaded a new course: Droving and Herding Round the World. It may seem like an unlikely topic but I assure you it is an interesting one. The unit on Wales was written by a member in the UK who lives there. The other units were written by Heather Jones.

Did you know:

- Vikings traded cattle at markets in Germany and Hungary
- Wild cattle were herded on the Iberian Peninsula (Spain) before the Punic Wars (264-241BCE)
- Edward Corbett was the first drover in Australia. Edward would drive his small herd from the Domain to the 'farm' (now the Royal Botanic Garden, Farm Cove, Sydney) each night for security.



That makes 74 courses now available and we have one on geometry coming soon. Thanks to the U3A Online members who offered these courses to us.

We sometimes get asked for a course on a specific topic, such as a language or a particular aspect of IT, and people may not be aware that we do not write the courses ourselves. In the same way as local U3As, they are offered to us by members, so we can only offer what we are offered! They are then adapted to our format by a few volunteer members of our committee of management. This is a complex job, often needing to work closely with the original course writer, adapting them to fit our eight unit style and deciding on graphics and images.

We hope we have helped U3As to get through the difficult period of lockdown which is still in place for some states and hope that when you all return to your face-to-face meetings, you will remember that if and when you are unable to attend a local group, U3A Online is there to offer continued lifelong learning

Jean Walker
President
U3A Online

