



AUSTRALIA

U3AAA BULLETIN No. 35

AUGUST 2022



*Hop on board for the 2022 Victorian State Conference in Bendigo, 2 - 4 October
(courtesy Elise Gower Photography)*

This issue:

■ Member reports:

- 💡 WA determined to have a go
 - 💡 SA receives a free ride
 - 💡 Queensland spreading their wings
 - 💡 NSW celebrate a diversity of arts
 - 💡 Victoria acknowledges an invaluable volunteer
 - 💡 U3A Online lists new courses
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From the Editor

Recently we have had reason to think about U3A's relationship to learning and health. We knew we did a lot of good in the community and couldn't understand why the Men's Shed movement seemed to be valued over U3A. Why did they get sponsorship and Deductible Gift Recipient status from the government when U3As often struggle for recognition let alone funding? They provide a place for men to gather and work on projects and proudly proclaim they are good for mental health.

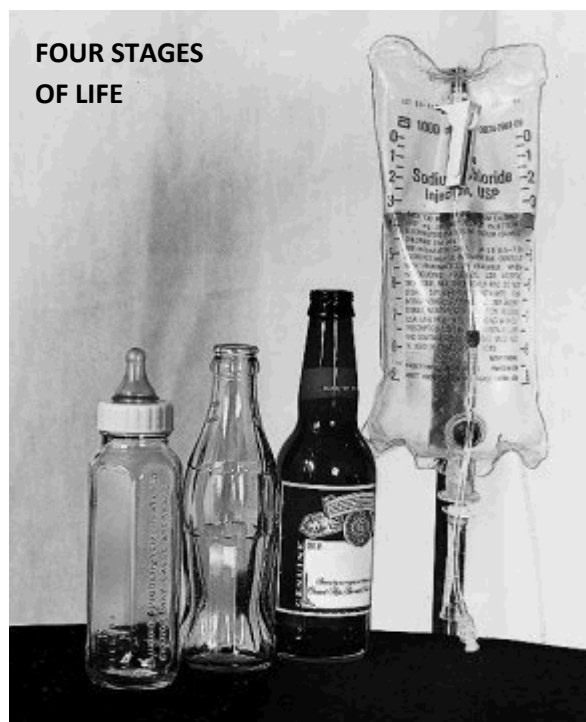
Traditionally we thought of U3A being all about learning: we called ourselves a lifelong learning organisation. But we are so much more than that. Joining U3A is good for both physical and mental health.

Members join us to learn something new, and invariably find themselves having fun and making new friends. Many U3As now promote the fun and friends angle above the learning. It is a powerful recruiting message amongst those who might have lost most of their social life through retirement, moving home, relocation of children, loss of a partner, etc.

New members rarely join for health reasons. But we do provide members with a healthier life. I like to think of it as 'health by stealth'.

By staying active, both mentally and physically, and being more socially engaged, people are known to live independently in their own homes for longer. Many studies show it can delay the onset of Alzheimer's. It prolongs our 'Third Age' that phase of active retirement thus limiting the years we will spend in 'Fourth Age' which is that phase of being frail and dependent on others.

Do listen to Dr Riley Moynes' TED talk about the four ages of retirement itself. U3A may not be well-known in Canada but it sounds as if Dr Moynes and his mates created their very own U3A: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMHMOQ_054U&t=15s.



Deadline for next issue of this Bulletin is Wednesday 26 October.



*Claire Eglinton
U3A Lower North &
U3A South Australia*

From the Chairman

As the member delegates of the U3AAA member networks continue to work through the process of incorporating the Alliance to provide the U3A movement in Australia with a united national voice, we have received further recognition as a significant contributor to providing seniors with engaging classes and activities. Involvement in these activities has contributed to the improvement of the levels of digital capability of seniors.

Three significant collaborative developments are further evidence that the volunteer-led peer-to-peer sharing of knowledge and experience is supporting seniors develop their skills in using technology as an enabler to connect in the rapidly evolving digital world. The three developments are:

The Commissioner for Senior Victorians has approached U3A to hear about the experiences of older people regarding digital connectivity and the digital divide to provide input into his advice to the Victorian Government about digital connectedness of older people in Victoria.

The Telstra Sustainability, External Affairs and Legal (SEAL) team which work across the business to drive progress against the strategy and manage sustainability-related risks and opportunities has approached U3AAA offering to partner with U3AAA to support U3A digital literacy mentors increase the digital ability skills among seniors. The support offered is to help seniors build their digital skills and confidence, helping them get an email address, use email, pay a bill online, set up direct debit, download apps, use accessibility features on their device, be safe online – and responding to specific requests for assistance. The Australian Digital Inclusion Index suggests the greatest need is in regional QLD and SA where those over 75 have digital ability scores that are 37 points lower than the national score.

NBN Co has commenced partnering with U3A Victoria piloting a six-month community 'digital uplift' pop-up program based in Geelong. The program is designed to support U3A mentors and local 'unconnected' or digitally under-confident community members with their digital skills, knowledge and confidence needs. The project is a collaboration between the City of Greater Geelong (CoGG), Geelong Regional Library Corporation (GLRC), U3A Victoria and nbn. The pilot is designed to create a blueprint based on the key learnings from the pilot to scale up to a quickly and effectively implemented national U3A support programs.

The U3A approach of peer-to-peer sharing of knowledge and experience has been recognised again as being an effective way to engage seniors.

In closing, I again acknowledge the good work of our member U3As in each state and the commitment of their committees, tutors and leaders to ensuring U3A in Australian can look forward to a bright future

Let us all look forward to the future with optimism and enthusiasm.

Glen Wall
Chair,
U3A Alliance Australia



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The Seniors' Recreation Council of WA run an annual fair called *Have a Go Day* at Burswood (just across the new Matagarup Bridge over the Swan). A wide number of seniors' organisations participate and every year, U3A Perth has a stall to publicise the activities of the U3A. There is a lot of noise out there and sometimes it seems nobody is listening but, at last, the message does seem to be getting through. More people have now at least heard of U3A than ever before. Last year the ukulele players were a hit. Publicity works.



The U3A Ukulele Group from Melville Branch at Have a Go Day 2021 (Photo Film Crew)

WA NETWORK STATE CONFERENCE THURSDAY 20, FRIDAY 21 OCTOBER 2022

All stops are out to ensure that this year's state conference will go ahead after COVID forced the cancellation of Busselton conference two years ago. It is being run by U3A Armadale with Network WA support. Interstate visitors will be very welcome. Travel subsidy for eligible visitors within WA. Cost: \$60 pp includes morning/afternoon teas, plus lunch on day one.

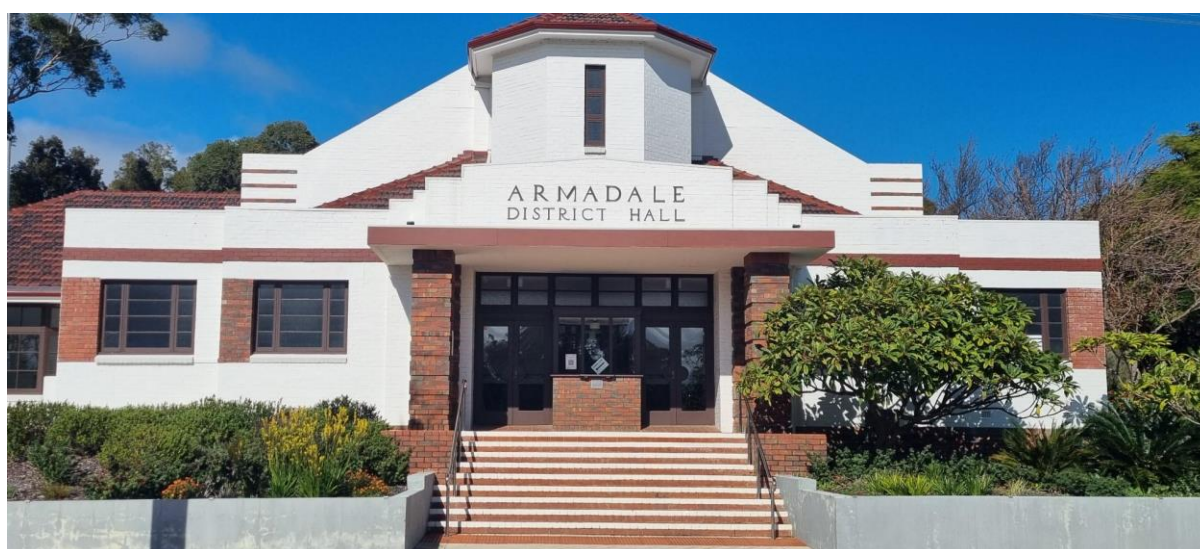
An exciting program of speakers on the theme of 'Communication in our Communities' includes: Professor Peter Newman AO (urban development). Professor Steven Maras (impact of social media), Dr Brett Biddington AM (the online world, identity, society and community), The Melody Makers (communication through music), Julie Fearn-Pheasant (communication through art), and Geoff Kaye (miscommunication).

See u3aarmadalewa.org.au or contact Sheila Shenton, U3A Armadale, 0439 926 333 for details. Tickets: <https://www.ticketebo.com.au/u3a-network-wa/u3a-state-conference-2022>

ARMADALE

Armadale City is a rapidly expanding local government area nestling in the foothills of the Darling Escarpment about 20 km south-east of the Perth CBD. It is also quite historical in terms of European settlement. A wayside inn, Ye Olde Neerigen Inne, the first stop on the Perth to Albany stagecoach route, was built in the 1850s after convicts were used to improve that 450 mile road. Later, after some confusion between the names Neerigen and Narrogin, the name was changed to Ye Olde Narrogin Inne. It is still there, greatly modernised, and one of the places that conference delegates can stay if they wish.

The Armadale District Hall (retaining the name it was given in 1936 despite now serving a city of nearly 100,000 people) will be the U3A State Conference venue. Recently refurbished, it has all the facilities of a modern conference centre. It is adjacent to the city CBD, parking is plentiful, and the Armadale train station, with a shuttle service, is just over 500 metres away.



Armadale District Hall historic Art Deco facade (Photo: Sheila Shenton)

October is a great time to visit WA. The northern wildflowers will be finished but those in the south will be in full bloom. Armadale would be an ideal place to start a tour of the south-west wine regions such as Margaret River. Close by to Armadale itself are the many attractions of the Perth Hills including the Elizabethan Village, Pioneer Village and Araluen Botanic Park.

Peter Flanigan
WA Network



CALCULATING THE \$ VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING

Twice a year Volunteering SA&NT updates the volunteering dollar replacement hourly rate figure (average*) for Australia, currently \$46.62 per hour. Based on the biannual Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) average weekly earnings figures for Australia.

*NSW (\$46.96); VIC (\$46.92); Queensland (\$44.43); SA (\$42.40); WA (\$50.55); Tasmania (\$41.11); Northern Territory (\$45.30); ACT (\$52.76)

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Suburban U3As who can plan outings using public transport have always been fortunate. 'We will all gather in the first carriage of the train leaving terminus station at 10.15 a.m.' is the type of instructions issued. How convenient to hop on the same train as it passes through your local station. Now I have another reason to be envious: it is all free.

March brought a change of State government and they announced that from 1 July 2022, SA Seniors Card members can travel for free on Adelaide Metro buses, trains and trams, all day, every day. This may also allow greater flexibility in some U3As' programming.

As COTA South Australia CEO Jane Mussared said, 'The days of being Cinderella, and racing home before the 3pm curfew, are over. At a time when cost of living pressures are paramount for people on low and fixed incomes, this is so important. It also helps older people make the decision to leave the car at home and supports their independence.' [Jane has just resigned after 7 years as CEO to move onto another age-related role in Canberra.]

Many country members never realized that the metro logo on their Seniors Card denoted it was a smart card pre-loaded with credit to use on public transport. Now it is even more important to make sure it is in your wallet for your next trip to the city. Rather than drive into the city and pay for parking, we can park at an outer station and enjoy a free trip into the city.

There have been lots of recent celebrations. U3A Whyalla held a birthday lunch in a local restaurant for their 25th, U3A Mt Gambier hosted a special speaker on local charity Miroma to mark their thirtieth (rather belatedly due to COVID), but a real winner was U3A Adelaide



Hills' group leaders event. Holding it on Bastille Day gave a perfect excuse to book a special lunch at Auchendarroch House in Mt Barker. Many members dressed for the occasion, even Napoleon attended. Great company and good food, all capped off with a surprise appearance of the newly-formed French language course performers. [Sign of the times and digital ability: audience videoing the performance].

SA State network has quite a gap between EOFY and our AGM in October, but we have already seen a new candidate for treasurer, Paddy McKay, step forward and take over the books from retiring treasurer Katarina Spudic. Like most of our current committee, Paddy McKay comes to us from U3A Campbelltown, as did her predecessor. Initially smaller U3As were concerned that the two larger U3As would dominate the State network, but in all those years we have only had one executive member from the larger U3As, none from the small U3As but all from a couple of middle sized groups of 200 to 350 members and in particular Campbelltown. They

are great people, but it would be good to see a more diverse representation. With more frequent digital hook-ups, distance should be no bar. Luckily our all-Zoom meetings do go better than the last network meeting in July which was our first attempt at a hybrid meeting. It did show we had a lot to learn and again I thank everyone for their patience.

President Kerrie Smith explained our insurance policies, both Public Liability and Volunteer Worker, which cover all SA members. Our IT man, John Travers is looking for ways to increase participation in our Statewide online courses before the trial period finishes. We are hoping some professional development topics, like Mail Chimp and MyU3A, aimed at administrators will alert U3As to Statewide's value. The Forum looked at ways to increase membership post COVID. Good advice was to first ensure your 'product' is in good condition: a range of activities to suit most interests and a user-friendly enrolment system spring to mind. Personal recommendation was generally agreed to be the best recruiting method.

It has been a particularly wet, cold winter in SA but the U3A Aldinga walking group seems to have adopted the motto: there's no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing.

Right: a die-hard core on a particularly terrible day on part of the Heysen Trail, shrouded in rain with the coast and Bluff barely visible in the background.



Left: On a drier but still chilly day in front of the Pingle Farm ruins (built in 1862 and lived in by the Jared family for over 100 years).

The Pingle Farm walk is a 4.5 km round trip of about 2 hours within the Onkaparinga River Recreation Park, part of the greater Onkaparinga River National Park, located near Port Noarlunga. It is a large reserve encompassing SA's second longest river. After their mandatory water stop, the group headed into Seaford Meadows for coffee. Coffee might not be a good hydrator but anything warming takes precedence in wintry weather.

Claire Eglinton
Secretary
U3A South Australia



QUEENSLAND

There has been a change in the leadership in Queensland. At the recent AGM Gail Bonser completed her four-year term as president. Her contribution was enormous and Gail can confidently say that during her term a new strength and depth was added to the role carried out by the network.

Also stepping down from network was Colin Maddocks. Colin was the communications officer and the driver of the latest update to the strategic plan launched in 2021 and co-creator of the recently released U3A promotional video. Colin brought his brand of efficient management and boundless enthusiasm to network and we thank him and wish him well.

I stepped into the president's role once again. I previously occupied this chair in 2012-2015 when, in Queensland, we were focusing on attracting all U3As in our state to see the benefits of network and to join us. The international conference held in Brisbane city hall was the catalyst for this and Network Qld has been powering on, evolving and growing into the eminent organisation that it is today. It is timely to pause for a moment and acknowledge the work of Jim Hales who was the instigator of the concept of a network for Queensland.

The Queensland conference 'Learn to Spread your Wings' was an excellent event. Our new website was launched at the conference. Network vice president John Armstrong created this website to facilitate a more consolidated approach and to streamline our operations. Check it out at u3aqld.au

The announcement of the winners of the art competition was a spectacular moment. Trudy Graham from the competition committee made these observations:

Members were invited to submit a painting or a drawing on the theme 'Spread Your Wings' and to include an artistic statement with their entry. Those statements spoke of the benefits of joining U3A, of new friends made, and of discovering talents they didn't know they had. Many commended their tutors and their individual U3As, saying that U3A inspires them, gives them confidence to try new things, and encourages them to spread their wings.

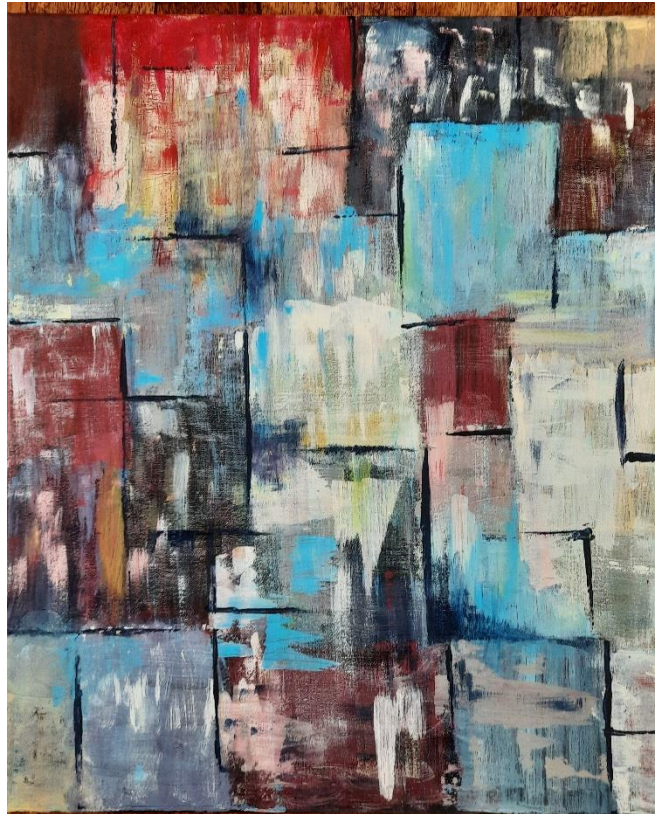
The judges said they felt that all entries showed a strong sense of involvement, a level of curiosity, and a willingness to explore creatively through various techniques and mediums.

In the painting section, first prize was awarded to *No Birds Here (right)* by Kaye Sandstrom of Redcliffe U3A. The judges described this as a visually engaging work with a strong sense of storytelling and they commended the artist on her innovative use of the watercolour medium.



Abstract #2 (right) by Kevin Hanley of U3A Toowoomba was the runner-up in the painting section. The judges found this piece emotive, energetic and visually engaging.

In the drawing section, first prize was awarded to *U3A Portrait Class Shows Off* by Maeve Cunningham of Brisbane U3A. The judges said that it is an emotive work, conveying a sense of joy and enthusiasm. They added that it made them smile just to look at it. Runner-up was *The Tyred House* by Ralph Townsend of U3A Toowoomba. The judges said that there was a strong sense of authenticity and honesty manifested in this work.



A new initiative introduced by our new committee, and in response to the requests from our member U3As, was to appoint a liaison person from our network committee to each of our 35 U3As. The aim of this approach is to strengthen ties with the U3As and streamline the process for them to benefit from the network's combined knowledge.

50 years of U3A worldwide will be celebrated with great fanfare next May at the 2023 Qld State Conference, 'U3A Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow' hosted by U3A Rockhampton. Confirmed international keynote speakers will be Professor Francois Vellas, International President of the Association of International Universities of the Third Age and Professor Maria Chester, Secretary-General, Association of International Universities of the Third Age. Planning is well under way and we are excited to be able to bring you this event and look forward to meeting you there.

On a personal level, I was in equal parts delighted and inspired recently when at an Order of Australia Association conference in Canberra I was able to talk with His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC, DSC, FTSE, about U3A and the immeasurable benefits that our organisation brings to the community.



*Rhonda Weston AM
President
U3A Network Qld Inc*

NEW SOUTH WALES

A belated 2021 U3A NSW Network annual general meeting was held via Zoom in June, returning Denis Simond as president, and new faces to the executive positions: vice-president Roger Curran, secretary Greg Brown and treasurer Peter Robinson. The network committee will now be concentrating on developing its action plan for the future in the areas of technology, advocacy, publicity and support for member U3As.

Elizabeth Elliott and Laurene Mulcahy, who produced the highly successful *Holy Crap* book (see last issue) are now working on producing 6 podcasts to share U3A with the listening world. The Network is financing the endeavour, knowing that this is a valuable avenue of marketing and promoting U3A to the general public. The podcasts will profile U3A in 6 different NSW regions.

For many U3As, emergence from COVID restrictions has presented opportunities to showcase their activities to the public especially during Seniors Festival sponsored by the NSW Government in April. U3A ACT was a participant in the ACT Council of the Ageing expo held in May, reporting a steady stream of visitors to their stall, wanting to know about U3A. Many other U3As also held special events and open days.

Right: The Illawarra U3A Choir, performing at the Tarrawanna Gardens Retirement Village, 7 June 2022, as a belated Seniors Festival event.



Central Coast U3A has been mindful of the troubles elsewhere in the world. As a tribute to the people of Ukraine, the art group decided to paint sunflowers. Everyone was most enthusiastic, painting their own interpretation of the sunflower. Sunflowers (*soniashnky* in Ukrainian) have been grown in Ukraine since the mid-18th century and sunflower seeds were the country's most popular snack. Throughout Ukraine's history, the flower has become a call to leaders to plant the seeds for a more peaceful future and now it has become a global symbol of resistance, unity, and hope. The Kincumber Neighbourhood Centre kindly allowed the U3A art group to exhibit their paintings and sketches in the reception area. They make a colourful display. All pictures are for sale and proceeds will be directed to Ukrainian Refugee Relief.

It has not been easy for U3As in the flood affected areas of northern New South Wales, but they soldier on. Northern Rivers (Lismore) U3A reported that due to COVID, membership had declined, but they were slowly getting an increase in numbers when the floods came,

rendering the Sports Club building that had accommodated the U3A activities uninhabitable. However, the class co-ordinator has gone over and beyond excellence in re-housing 31 classes and groups on various locations e.g., in country halls, private homes and outdoor settings. Social activities have been popular and have done much to raise the spirits of our members. A locally produced e-magazine *CBD Lismore* has been giving us space to advertise over the last few months doing member profiles.

ArtWalk is Port Macquarie's signature annual cultural arts event with exhibitions, light shows, live performances and artists' markets. After two years of disruption due to COVID, ArtWalk recently returned to the CBD where it attracted thousands of residents and visitors. Two of our U3A groups, the international dancers and the acrylic artists, participated this year, the dancers giving three 10-minute performances in the forecourt of the Glasshouse cultural centre, one of the principal venues. Dressed in traditional costume they performed dances from Germany, Romania (*pictured*) and Israel and were enthusiastically received by large audiences. The artists exhibited their work in a separate venue, close to other art displays, and attracted a constant stream of visitors throughout the evening. Involvement in events like these is important in gaining recognition for our activities within the general community.



The U3A Shoalhaven educational travel program organised a 5-day program spending 2 nights at Young and 2 nights at Cowra, with a 2-day visit to Grenfell for the Henry Lawson Festival. Henry Lawson, renowned Australian poet and story writer, was born in Grenfell at the Goldfields in 1867 and died in 1922, so this year's festival celebrated 100 years since his death.

The festival included a static street parade, an art show, and Lawson's poetry being recited on the roundabout of the main street, where a large bust of Henry was erected. Henry Lawson look-a-like actor Geoffrey Graham, together with U3A members Denis Simond, Lloyd Pitcher and Christine Wade also recited poems and short stories. Geoffrey joined the U3A group and it continued on to the Grenfell Bowling Club for more Henry Lawson poetry, which delighted the patrons.



Left: Lloyd, Henry and Denis 'chilling out' together.

Ainslie Lamb

U3A Network NSW newsletter editor



VICTORIA

Congratulations to Kevin Whelan, U3A Whittlesea, for winning Technology Volunteer of the Year at the Connecting Up awards ceremony in May. Network was proud to nominate Kevin and to have the work of him and his team recognised across Australia and New Zealand.

U3As in Victoria and interstate will recognise Kevin and his team's work with the U-MAS membership management system and the U3A website template.

Kevin and his six volunteer database specialists support 98 volunteers across 49 Victorian U3As with U-MAS. This includes providing training and on-call support.

In 2021, they successfully accomplished a significant upgrade to U-MAS during the various lockdowns in Victoria, implementing the new U-MAS for Members system which features device responsiveness.

In 2017, Kevin identified the need for a template website product for U3As to use to host their member management and course enrolment systems. Along with his three volunteer website specialists, Kevin supports 93 volunteers across 59 U3As. This includes securing and managing domains, hosting, Google analytics, WordPress configuration and managing APIs, as well as providing training and support.



U3A Victoria State Conference – Building Back Better

U3A Network Victoria is delighted to invite U3As to the 2022 Victorian State Conference hosted by U3A Bendigo from Sunday to Tuesday, 2 - 4 October. This conference will feature a unique style of attendee participation - an opportunity to help develop a whole-of-U3A statement of needs, wants and plans - as well as the many attractions of meeting in one of Victoria's most picturesque and cosmopolitan cities. Building Back Better is the post-COVID theme, with U3As looking to the future.

Representatives from Victorian U3A committees of management, general members of Victorian U3As, representatives from interstate U3A networks and the U3A Alliance Australia are all warmly invited to book in to attend this conference. Follow this link to the conference webpage to find out more: <https://u3avictoria.org.au/building-back-better-2022>

Tracey Swadling

*Administration and
Operations Manager
U3A Network Victoria*



Network Victoria
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

U3A ONLINE

We have just had an interesting new course given to us by a member who used to teach Latin at U3A Redcliffe. She notes in the introduction: 'This course is not designed to be an academic treatise, it aims to inform and share the Latin language'. The course also contains interesting background information about ancient Rome. You'll find it listed under Writing and Creativity in the independent courses list.

We have also added two new short courses: Afghanistan, and A Selection of Australian Poetry. These courses may be useful for members who feel like something briefer than our usual courses and also to local U3As as a guide to a longer course.

We sometimes hear that there is a belief that U3A Online is in competition with local U3As. This is far from the truth. Our brief since our inception, 24 years ago, is 'an online service for isolated people who cannot access a local face-to-face group'. This grew to include those who were disabled, confined to their homes as carers, or simply too remote from a local U3A.

Apart from these services, we aim to support local groups by offering them our courses to share with their face-to-face groups. The membership fee for local U3As is \$15 and then \$20 for a licence for each course they wish to use with their members. We have been told that it can be easier to find someone to tutor a course if they have the backup notes and activities from a U3A Online course.

Jean Walker
President
U3A Online



UPDATE YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

After each AGM please make sure any change in contact details is passed on to not just your State Network but also U3A Online. They keep a valuable database of U3As around Australia which anyone can access through the U3A Online website: <https://www.u3aonline.org.au/>

Check your U3A's entry now to see it has the correct information. This valuable service is maintained by volunteers so be generous in allowing time for updates to occur.

STOP PRESS

The Federal Parliamentary Friends of Ending Loneliness co-chair, the Hon Andrew Giles MP has launched their second white paper: [Strengthening Connection to Accelerate Social Recovery 2022](#)

Dr Martin Bridgstock's paper 'Impact of U3As upon the Health and Welfare of their Membership' is on the Queensland network website: [Martin-Bridgstock-Paper](#)