



UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

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ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT 2023



~ By The Members for The Members ~

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

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“ The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes. ”
Marcel Proust 1871 1922

Every year a group of volunteers step forward to provide a wide range of services to the over 50 community in Bairnsdale. In fact, this has taken place for the last 36 years. One hopes it will take place for another 30 years.

Marcel Proust (a French novelist, philosopher) best sums up the challenge a U3A Committee faces. “We are at times too ready to believe that the present is the only possible state of things”. Unfortunately, in today’s world the challenge is to adjust or disappear as so many businesses and clubs are finding out.

Volunteer organisations face many challenges. One of the major ones is expectations. For U3A Bairnsdale it has been for Committee and members to accept that the building is only rented for certain hours in the day and is not solely for the use of U3A. The landlords are overall very considerate, but the building itself is owned by the local Shire Council who have endeavoured to address the issues of an aging building.

The second issue has been to acknowledge that there is no paid staff to assist in setting up rooms. Unfortunately, members must do it themselves. As we age, moving chairs or tables can be a problem.

Thirdly, the policy of the current Committee is to keep fees as low as possible, to not exclude members who may have limited incomes and to ensure we meet our corporate responsibilities. In addition, the world around us has changed. Clubs, charities and incorporated societies have a wide range of laws and policies that now must be followed. This means that committees and tutors must be aware of the legal frameworks that support both the rights of volunteer organisations and those that manage them.

For our current Committee looking at what exists with new eyes has been the focus. Health and Safety for a maturing membership base becomes a major priority. What has been achieved this year follows and has been arranged under appropriate headings.

Lorraine Scott



FACILITIES

THE BUILDING

U3A has been delighted with the assistance they have received from Gellen and East Gippsland Shire.

Work completed includes: -

- the repair of external doors to improve security.
- Servicing of all air conditioners to ensure there was no mould and removal of dust.
- Regular repairs to roof, toilet areas and walkways.
- Quality cleaning service.
- Yearly safety check.
- Regular checking of fire extinguishers.
- Disability Access check.

The safety check raised concerns about the placement of a large compactus in the hallways. This not only blocked light but reduced clearance in the corridors. Consequently, it has been removed creating more light and space.

Test and tag is regularly carried out on all electrical equipment.

COMMUNICATION

Access to the internet, Wi-Fi and screens rate highly in successful teaching and sharing ideas. As set out in plans for 2023, a review of technology equipment resulted in an upgrade of the internet service and replacement of a TV screen.

GARDEN ENCLOSURE

A refocus on the garden work area has taken place in consultation with the garden group. Guidelines for review involved ensuring the area looked after could be met by the number of members of the group; that health and safety were a key issue and garden beds were a suitable height for a more mature group.

CAR PARKING

The external carparking areas had lines re-marked and the disability car park spaces near the Bristol building were also re-marked. The internal carpark lines have been raised with the landlords and are still under discussion.



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MEMBERSHIP & COMMUNITY

LINKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Vision Australia Volunteers now operate from U3A. This has been a benefit to members, not only because of the skills Jodie Herbert and Peter Smith bring, but also the additional resources that are indeed valued by members with sight issues.

Probus - Probus joined U3A as part of the Remember the Fifties program. Lorraine Scott was the speaker at one of their meetings, speaking on the history of U3A in the Bairnsdale District.

Diabetes - Brenda Murray spoke at the local Diabetes Association on what was on offer at U3A.

Shire Council - A talk on Saving Electricity was funded by the Shire Council and presented by the Environmental Group of U3A.



MEMBERSHIP

Membership continues to be strong, with the closing number in December 2023 at 464. This consisted of 115 males and 346 females.

The table below shows the age distribution of the membership cohort.

51 - 55	5	Male: 1	Female: 4	Other:
56 - 60	9	Male: 2	Female: 7	Other: 0
61 - 65	37	Male: 8	Female: 29	Other: 0
66 - 70	85	Male: 22	Female: 62	Other: 1
71 - 75	128	Male: 34	Female: 94	Other: 0
76 - 80	104	Male: 30	Female: 74	Other: 0
81 - 85	56	Male: 9	Female: 47	Other: 0
86 - 90	22	Male: 6	Female: 16	Other: 0
91 +	18	Male: 3	Female: 15	Other: 0
Totals	464	Male: 115	Female: 348	Other: 1

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at U3A varies according to the time of year. Overall attendance is highest on the days where the most classes operate.

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OFFICE



Improving Office facilities has been a major focus this year. Recognition of the office volunteers plays an important role in the successful operations of U3A. Not only are the volunteers who staff the office the first point of call for new and established members, they are responsible for maintaining the high standard of cleanliness of the refreshment areas and ensuring that there is tea, coffee and of course the famous biscuits available at break times.

In addition, they provide some services to tutors. The maintenance of rosters has been willingly and successfully conducted by Merran Oakley (pictured above left). Merran's approachability and calm management practices are greatly appreciated.



We thank all volunteers for their contribution. (Pictured below right) is Rosie Thompson, (above centre) is Phil Searl and (above right) is Barbara Earles, who, among others, give their time each week to volunteering in the office.

One of the unseen, but important tasks is keeping our records up to date. While several people contribute to this, the mainstay of the project are two very willing workers - Maureen Barnes (pictured below left) and Wendy Boyd (pictured below centre). They spend many hours ensuring membership details are up to date and rolls as accurate as possible.



MONDAY

Chess
Gardening - Community Garden
Electronics For Fun
Exploring History
Australia – Informative Talks/Term1
Apple Devices Assistance
Australia - Informative Talks
Art & Craft
Book Club 1
Book Club 3
Boule (Pentaque)
Great Works of Literature
Rhythm Guitar
Photography

TUESDAY

Japanese - Advanced
Simply Yoga 1
Fly Tying
German
Tai Chi For Vision Impaired
Better Balance
MahJong - Beginners
Simply Yoga 2
Celtic Folk Music
Android Device Assistance
Vision Impaired Mobile Tuition

WEDNESDAY

Musical Chair Aerobics
French - Intermediate
Environmental Issues
Watercolour Painting
French - Beginners
Ukulele - Beginners
Drawing For Fun
Ukulele - Advanced
U3A Discussion Group

THURSDAY

Italian - Beginners
Musical Chair Aerobics
Current Affairs
Italian - Advanced
Conversational French
Just Write
Mandarin
Tai Chi - Beginners
Tai Chi Intermediate
Watercolour Painting
Book Club 4
Tai Chi - Advanced
Canasta
Drama & Theatre
MahJong
Qigong

FRIDAY

Amblers
Australian Literature
Musical Chair Aerobics
Painting on Friday

SATURDAY

Calligraphy
Guitar For Enjoyment
Saturday Matinee



“
While the number of members attending courses vary, the policy has been to allow interest groups to occur regardless of size where accommodation exists.
”



TUTORS

Without volunteer tutors, the programs offered would not be possible. The quality of programs and dedication of the tutors is exceptional and their work and commitment are acknowledged with thanks.

Tutors have responded well to implementing the RESPECT policy of our U3A and following policies and operational guidelines.



Mee Mee Bell

It is with sadness that we say goodbye to several long-term tutors. Mee Mee Bell (left) and Claire Dingey (right).

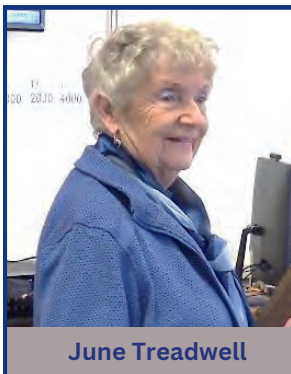
Mee Mee has taught French and Mandarin for many years and is recognised by her students for her commitment and caring manner. She will be missed.



Claire Dingey

Claire Dingey has been a member of Committee, Secretary (2016) and played a major role in establishing the website and its early maintenance, writing the newsletters and generally administrating the technology of the organisation.

Long time Tai Chi tutor **Lesley Prosser**, has also completed tutoring at U3A. Lesley has been a committed member of U3A and the Committee, in the past, has rewarded the dedication by funding additional training.



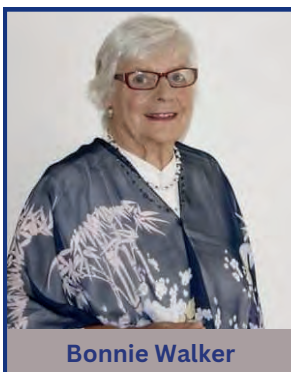
June Treadwell

June Treadwell has taught History at U3A for 16 years. A remarkable effort. Her classes were very popular and enjoyed by many. June spent many hours meticulously preparing her classes and researching visual materials to engage her class. I doubt that June's record will ever be broken.

Bonnie Walker has retired from tutoring but is still an active member of the U3A Committee. Bonnie's successful series of talks based around aspects of Australian geography, history, flora and fauna were very popular and enjoyable. In addition, Bonnie was Jean Treadwell's right-hand person, assisting with all aspects of IT in this class. With her husband, **John Walker**, Bonnie has successfully hosted Saturday movies, a role that she has taken on alone since John's illness and recent death.



Lesley Prosser



Bonnie Walker



John Walker

OUR THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING TUTORS AND ALL OTHER SPEAKERS WHO ASSISTED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

Alastair Mailer
Bob Parrôt
Peter Hart
Lesley Fenton
Gary La Roche
Sue Tanian
Pat McKeown
Steve Mills
Elaine Bryant
Thea Talbot



Bernadette Williams
Helen Gottschalk
Roger Newman
Liz Hrouda
Mike Hinchey
Peter Gardener
Claire Dingey
Mee Mee Bell
Pam Cracknell
Pip Cooper



Beatty Blennerhassett
Debbie Papadopoulis
Glenda Hein
David South
Denise Knight
George Ellingsen
Stella Tyers
John Kahsnitz
George Ribeiro
Lorraine & John Scott

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COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

EMAIL

The UMAS data management system developed by U3A Network Victoria has been greatly improved. As a result, forwarding emails to all members is no longer a major problem. The main problem is generally my (Lorraine Scott) failure to include attachments.

FACEBOOK AND THE WEBSITE

These have been the key to communicating with members and the public. Nikki Francis has taken on the role of managing Facebook and our U3A Website. Her dedication and work are outstanding and her design knowledge and skills greatly valued. These tasks provide an excellent overview of the organisation and Nikki has made a major contribution to identifying areas that need more information or ways that can improve the processes we use.

NEWSLETTERS

A team of three people, Sue Tanian, Thea Talbot and Nikki Francis put together the newsletter which is emailed to members, placed on the website and hard copies distributed in the Coffee area and also available on the foyer wall. The Canva program is now being used for formatting the document. The new format has been very well received with several members commenting on the content. The work of the team is greatly appreciated.

INFORMATION BOARD

An information board has been established in the entrance to the building. This is dedicated to U3A Bairnsdale information only. It is proving a very useful tool as it is well used by members. It contains programs and information on upcoming programs.

INFORMATION SCREEN

Sue Tanian has ensured members are kept informed about what is happening at U3A with information and stories and anecdotes on the computer screen in the Common Room. Sue's hard work is greatly appreciated.

NEW MEMBERS KIT

While a sample kit was tabled for Committee a considerable time ago, kits have now been prepared thanks to Nikki Francis and Wendy Boyd. The information kits make it much easier for office volunteers to provide information immediately to prospective members.

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THE COMMON ROOM



The common room is the hub of U3A activities. Housing the Library, this room has a comfortable friendly atmosphere with refreshments on tap. It has become a central venue for U3A members who meet there, celebrating birthdays, waiting for partners or friends, working on the jigsaw or just reading. There is always someone around, so it is a good place to call in and have a chat.

It has become an important part of regular social interaction, and this leads to happier and more fulfilled lives which, in turn, means better long-term mental health for our members.



Sue Tanian, our librarian, works consistently throughout the year to maintain not only the atmosphere but in upgrading and sorting the collection. A major task has been the consolidation of U3A resources and updating, where necessary, of records.

This has meant that books formerly distributed throughout the building are all located in the common room and adjoining hall area. The DVD library has increased, and donations of quality books continue.

“The re-organisation of books and resources has meant that lecture rooms are now brighter, cleaner and tidier. A great outcome all around!”



“The jigsaw has proved a great success and many members can be seen adding to the puzzle before and after classes.”



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EVENTS

THE WINTER FESTIVAL

- Remember the Fifties lecture and Morning Tea
- Nonagenarians get-together



Spring Garden Festival

THE SPRING FESTIVAL

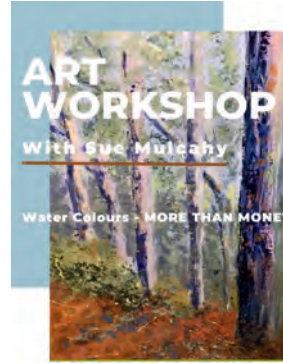
- Lecture: The history of Gardening.
- Orchid Workshop
- Open Garden



Art Workshop

SENIORS FESTIVAL

- Open Days
- More than Monet - Water Colour Painting with Sue Mulcahy
- Acrylic Painting with Karen Price



BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

This replaces the Annual Christmas functions and provides the opportunity to celebrate the age of our organisation. As one of the earliest and largest country U3A's, we have a lot to celebrate as the U3A movement in Australia only began forty years ago.



Thanks to June Treadwell for 16.5 years of dedication as a tutor

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

COMMITTEE 2023/2024

President - Lorraine Scott

Vice President - Bonnie Walker

Treasurer - Dan O'Connell

Secretary - Denise Knight (part of year) and Janet Hudson (current)

Committee Members - Brenda Murray, Jill Johanssen, Bob Parrot, Jody Herbert, Julie Trewin and Pauline Glynn

UMAS - Peter Hart, Maureen Barnes and Wendy Boyd

Website and Facebook - Nikki Francis

Newsletters and Bulletins - Sue Tanian, Thea Talbot and Nikki Francis.

Program Coordinator - Diane Granger

Office Staff - who keep the office functioning

Past President - The contribution of our past president, Joy Green, has been invaluable and much appreciated as her wealth of knowledge about the organisation has assisted us in making informed decisions.

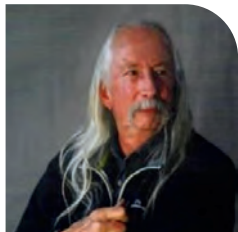
To all members who assist in so many ways. They see something that needs to be done and do it. They are too numerous to mention.

To our many short and long term members who support and maintain our courses.

Thank you.

Lorraine Scott

December 2023



~ By The Members for The Members ~