

U3A ALLIANCE AUSTRALIA

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

[Revised 28/3/2017 and subsequently adopted on 14 April 2017 by all the members present at the 28 March meeting]

Background

U3A (University of the Third Age) began in Australia in 1984, in Melbourne, and spread rapidly to other parts of Australia. U3As were established as autonomous groups, with their own administration and curriculum according to the needs and interests of each group. Over time, these groups began to appreciate the importance of networking, and to form incorporated Network organisations on a State-wide basis.

In 1986, a Network was established in Victoria to assist both existing U3As and the formation of new U3As in that state. Similar bodies were formed in New South Wales (1991), South Australia (2006) Queensland (2009). U3A ACT Inc was established in 1986 and U3A Network WA Inc in 2012. An independent 'virtual' U3A, U3A Online was established in 1999 and incorporated in NSW in 2004. There are now about 300 U3As in Australia, with about 100,000 members. Almost all U3A activity takes place at a local or State-wide network level. U3A Online maintains a register of U3As in Australia.

Nevertheless, from early years there had been a desire expressed by some members of U3As in Australia for a national body of some sort to foster greater public awareness of the work and benefit to retired older citizens of the U3A movement, and to promote interaction between U3As across state boundaries. In March 2010, the New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria U3A Networks, U3A ACT, and U3A Online, established the *U3A Alliance Australia (U3AAA)* through a Memorandum of Understanding, with provision for inclusion of future representation from Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory. The Alliance is envisaged not as a hierarchal body, but as a co-operative approach to exchanging information, and communicating to government the contribution and value of lifelong learning to positive ageing through U3A.

The Alliance members have now reviewed the strengths, weaknesses and achievements of its existence and have agreed to revise the Memorandum of Understanding to reflect the results of that review so as to become more effective in achieving its purpose and aims.

1. Vision (or Purpose)

To promote within the Australian community and to the national government the contribution that the U3A movement makes to positive ageing and the benefit of lifelong learning to the mental and physical health and social engagement.

2. Objectives

2.1 To advocate for and promote the U3A movement at a national level.

2.2 To foster cooperation and exchange of information between U3As across Australia.

2.3 To establish links with appropriate seniors' and educational bodies in Australia and overseas.

3. Membership

3.1 Membership of the Alliance comprises the following organisations which reflect the national profile of the U3A movement in Australia:

- U3A ACT Inc.
- U3A Network NSW Inc.
- U3A Network Qld Inc
- U3A South Australia Inc
- U3A Network Victoria Inc
- U3A Network WA Inc
- U3A Online Inc.

3.2 Until such time as an incorporated representative organisation (i.e. a network) of U3As is formed in Tasmania or the Northern Territory, one or more incorporated U3As in that State or Territory may apply to be accepted as a member of the Alliance, and nominate an individual to represent them as their delegate.

3.3 Members will make an annual financial contribution of \$50 or such other amount as is agreed by members, to cover administration expenses. This sum is to be paid annually by 30 June.

3.4 The Committee may approach member organisations for a special levy for a particular purpose in exceptional circumstances and agreed to by all members.

3.5 A member of the Alliance may on 30 days' notice withdraw from membership at any time in writing, submitted to the Secretariat.

4. Management

4.1 The Alliance will be managed by a Committee comprising the President (or the nominated representative) of each member of the Alliance.

4.2 The chairmanship of the committee will rotate among the membership, for two year terms, unless previously relinquished, terminating at the April/May meeting.

4.3 Secretarial and treasury functions will be maintained by a member organisation for such time as the Alliance may consider appropriate.

4.4 Until such time as the Alliance becomes an incorporated entity –

(a) the Alliance shall be registered as a business name in New South Wales, at the address of the New South Wales U3A Network secretary;

(b) an incorporated member may be authorised by the membership to apply on behalf of the Alliance for any grant funds which might be available to it for its purpose and activities.

5. Principal Activities

To achieve its objectives, the principal activities of the Alliance are:

- To establish and maintain a quarterly Bulletin for regular reporting of information from and to members of the Alliance and other relevant persons and organisations;
- To establish and maintain a website;
- To conduct a meeting of the Committee of the Alliance in April/May each year and such other meetings as may be appropriate;
- To produce materials to provide information about the U3A movement in Australia;
- To make submissions to Government Ministers, public enquiries etc., on issues relevant to U3A;
- To conduct or support research into matters affecting the U3A and its members; and
- Such other activities as may be conducive to the achievement of the Vision and Objectives of the Alliance.

6. Meetings

- 6.1 A meeting will be held in April or May each year, and at such other times as may be considered necessary.
- 6.2 Ideally the April/May meeting shall be a face-to-face meeting at a venue to be agreed.
- 6.3 A quorum will be two-thirds of the membership, and agreement on decisions will ideally be by consensus, but if put to a vote, will require a simple majority of membership present and voting. If a member cannot attend personally they may attend electronically.
- 6.4 Additional meetings may be conducted electronically, with at least 14 days' notice of the purpose of the meeting, and notifying the commencing and concluding dates and times of the meeting over a period of not less than 72 hours.
- 6.5 The agenda of any meeting must be advised at least 14 days in advance. Agenda items proposing any specific action should be accompanied by a draft motion or proposal in writing.

7. Records

Records (minutes, correspondence, etc) will be maintained electronically. The possibility of an online storage system will be explored, so that files and records can be easily accessed on the change of secretariat.

8. Dissolution/Variation

8.1 This Memorandum of Understanding will continue until dissolved by mutual agreement, and may be varied by agreement from time to time, as befits the need for flexibility in the development of the Alliance purpose and activities.

8.2 If the Alliance is dissolved any funds held on its behalf will be distributed equally among the members at the date of dissolution.

ADOPTED as revised 14th April 2017