

U3AAA BULLETIN No 1

JUNE 2011

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Firstly, congratulations are extended to Peter Flanigan – U3A(UWA) PERTH - for taking the initiative to assemble and produce this, the first bulletin for the Alliance. This is a step forward in the development of the recently established national body of the U3A Movement in Australia. Other developments will follow with the first trial of an on-line meeting during July and then we should perhaps consider the construction of a web site.

While the minutes of the recent Alliance meeting have been provided to all members, a couple of relevant matters that have/or are currently happening are described below. The first is that the Commonwealth Government has embarked on an enquiry, the outcome of which could be relevant to our bid to have DGR status. (*Deductible gift recipient – ie the donor gets a tax deduction - Ed*)

And secondly, in relation to proposed worker safety legislation, our Secretary - Ainslie has just perused the relevant web site (www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au) and her reading of the Revised Draft Bill is that it does not apply to U3As unless they have paid employees.

It seems to me that we should consider making representation to the Commonwealth Minister for the Ageing, and also, perhaps, devote consideration to embarking on a publicity program. Accordingly, I propose that we can consider these topics at our July meeting.

Ron Browne, Interim Chair, U3AAA

PS Please note that the above statement augments five documents which collectively provide information on the main decisions and considerations of the Alliance (U3AAA) to date. They are:

- Minutes of U3AAA meeting held on 24th March 2009 at Orange, NSW;
- Minutes of the U3AAA meeting held on 10th March 2010 at Penrith NSW;
- Minutes of U3AAA meeting held on 27th April 2011 at Sydney, NSW;
- Memoranda of Understandings updated at U3AAA meeting on 19th March 2010;
- Brief History of U3AAA located on the U3A NSW Network web site

(www.nsw.u3anet.org.au)

NEW SOUTH WALES

A most successful annual conference with the theme *THE FUTURE IN MIND* was held at the Wesley Centre, Sydney on 28th April with over 200 people in attendance. Prior to the conference, the City of Sydney hosted a Civic Reception to honour a meeting of U3AAA earlier that day; in her welcoming remarks, the Lord Mayor – Cr. Clover Moore MP - noted that this was the first time at which all jurisdictions were present at a meeting of the Alliance. Keynote speakers at the Network conference included the Hon. Barry Jones (Patron of the Alliance), Professor Julie Byles and Mr. Bob Ellis; the conference was opened by Ms. Ann Hoban, Director of City Culture and Community (City of Sydney). Copies of the speeches made by Ann Hoban and Julie Byles are posted on the Network web site.



PATRON BARRY JONES SPEAKS AT THE RECENT CONFERENCE

Currently, the Network has 75 members of whom 12 are interstate. A revised constitution was implemented since the last AGM which provides for seven Regions (one of which is Sydney U3A) to have direct representation on the Network Committee.

The Network's web site became operational in 2007 and currently has 28 sites. The Network also has a Resource Library which has its catalogue on the Network web site, and from which materials can be obtained by any U3A nationally either by downloading or in CD format.

An initiative being developed by the Committee after support from discussions at the recent AGM is the conduct of Weekend Sessions. The idea is that geographically proximate U3A groups invite interesting speakers to develop and explore themes which may range from scientific, historical or literary topics to issues associated with the processes and provision of life-long education. We anticipate that this will inject a new dimension of vitality into the already vibrant range of activities enjoyed by our members.

Ron Browne, President

VICTORIA

The Victorian Network held their bi-annual conference in May at the Melbourne Town hall. The conference was held over two days. The theme of the conference was Vitality, Knowledge, Growth. The organisers felt these subjects were very appropriate to every U3A. Speakers included motivational and dynamic thinker Glen Capelli. Glen surely motivated everyone and we learnt new words, such as, neoteny, what does it mean you may ask, according to Glenn it means – ageing and retaining child-like behavioural traits while adding wisdom as we age. Another word was kaizen, the act of making small, seemingly insignificant on-going and never ending improvements. Then we have, widezen, the difference between the two words is that kaizen is analytical and widezen imaginative. Both are great tools for use in U3A if we care to use them.

We then had a discussion panel lead by a representative from the Office of Senior Victorians who spoke about community involvement and how the State Government looks very favourably on projects that link community groups together. This was followed by another key speaker, Jane Wenlock. Jane spoke on how U3As may encourage the CALD community into their U3As very important as some of our state funding is tied to this area. A panel led by The President of the historical Society of Victoria on how to write the history of your U3A finished the day.

Day two was opened by key speaker Brett Lee who is a specialist in cyber crime. The final key speaker was a young man who spoke about how to market our brand to the next generation of retirees. He introduced us to the 3 Be's – Belief, Belonging and Behaviour which translates to "People will change their behaviour if they have belief in belonging" "What are we going to BE that new members will feel" The question he asked us was "do we create a substance or just offer a service" If we believe in what we do, then we are half way there. The final session was about where to from here, looking at the future of the Network and the working of regionalisation. Final decision, a very worthwhile conference with a vote not to go back to the old style of key speakers and workshops.

Apart from the conference, Network Victoria has just signed off on the first funding round in the four year agreement with the State Government.

Elsie Mutton, President, U3A Network Victoria

U3A ONLINE

U3A Online has had a recent influx of members as a result of an article that appeared in the Centrelink Seniors magazine. We now have approximately 1650 members with new applications every day. The number of courses on offer is currently 40 with new courses constantly under development.

At a special meeting of U3A Online members in March, Dorothy Braxton was granted an Honorary Life Membership. This was in honour of the inspiration from Dorothy that led to the establishment of U3A Online and has provided such a benefit to many isolated people during the 12 years it has been functioning. Dorothy has continued her work and involvement with the organisation and continues to do so to this day. An honour very well deserved.

I flew to Canberra on the 8th June to present the certificate to Dorothy. U3A ACT, and especially Jim Nichterlein, Vice President, and Pauline Bryant who leads a very well attended Current Affairs course at the Southern Cross Club which Dorothy attends each week, were wonderful in the support and help they gave to ensure that this presentation was worthy of the honour being bestowed.

Di Delchau (President)



Di Delchau(R) and Dorothy Braxton

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The big event coming up is the State Conference scheduled for 19, 20 September at The Duxton Hotel in Perth. This being organised by the Perth group U3A(UWA) with President, Margaret Petrovich, in the chair and a bevy of past presidents helping out on the committee.

Entitled

“U3A IN THE 21ST CENTURY – RIDING THE TIGER OF CHANGE”

the conference will focus on what U3A groups need to do to survive and prosper in the future. We were fortunate to obtain a substantial grant from WA Lotteries Commission to help fund the conference and to subsidise the attendance of country delegates.

Planning is well advanced and the program looks to be an exciting one. The Conference will be opened by the State Governor, Malcolm McCusker QC. There will be four keynote speakers, including the Vice-Chancellor of UWA, Professor Alan Robson and a series of concurrent workshops from which conference participants can make a choice.

Full details are available on our website www.u3auwa.org or by email to info@u3auwa.org. We would really welcome interstate visitors.

Prior to the Conference, on Sunday 18th, there will be a meeting of representatives of Western Australian U3As to discuss the possibility of setting up a state network. Currently there are about a dozen separate groups spread from Esperance to Geraldton. All are self-funding although grants from the WA Lotteries Commission for specific projects have been a bonus over the years.

Peter Flanigan

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Background

The first U3A started in South Australia in 1986, only two years after Australia's first in Melbourne. As a few more appeared, their representatives used to meet biannually as an informal group with positions of chair and secretary changing at each meeting. The format was not the best way to solve common problems or pursue larger goals. Looking back at their early minutes, we see they were talking about the very same matters which concern us now: finding venues, insurance, funding, publicity.

Motivation for change came when they approached the South Australian Government for funding. Government said it wanted to deal with one incorporated body rather than this loose coalition. While providing a positive force for change, it also set a few teeth on edge when the Government representatives used the term 'peak body'. This term grated on groups who feared they may lose some of their autonomy and the freshly drafted constitution went to pains to make it clear this was neither the intention nor desire. Other groups, perhaps because they were secure in their established affiliation with universities, felt they had no need of this new body. For whatever reason, three U3As chose not to join the new State Alliance when it was formed in 2007.

The new Alliance started meeting in the local U3A of its president, Betty White, at Tea Tree Gully which was also undergoing a Cinderella transformation as a combined effort from Local and State Governments took this group from a demountable double classroom to a permanent block of ten classrooms and associated offices and facilities. Thankfully the Tea Tree Gully U3A campus has continued to provide a venue for the Alliance's quarterly meetings as any government funding has been totally insufficient to contemplate a separate central office.

Just as seeking government funding created a need for the Alliance, terms of that funding have provided a form to our meetings. We now include professional development topics to help us elevate skills in member U3As and through discussion on topics such as retaining tutors and the difficulties of venue hire we share our operating knowledge with each other.

Currently we are on our second generation of leadership and have a very active management team. Now we have this confident, competent committee, one of our next challenges will be to show those U3As who have hung back that there are many benefits from being involved in our Alliance which has become far more than just a fund-seeking body.

Having said that, we also need to hone our fund-seeking ability as we still exist on a small and unreliable handout from the Adult and Community Education section of Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology. Grant acquittal time brings much head-scratching as we try to answer questions on how many people we have helped re-enter the workforce.

We use this funding to reimburse our members for their insurance premiums, COTA membership, copyright fees and special projects which individual U3As may find beyond their means. Seeding money is also provided to help new U3As become established. Administration costs are absolutely minimal.

The SA Alliance currently has 15 member U3As who in turn have about 2,500 members. It is a small membership base spread over a large area which can make finding officers challenging. It is probably a 50/50 mix between rural and urban/urban fringe. The recent demise of two former member U3As, Playford and Salisbury, make us aware of the need to promote U3A and bring in new members, not only to form new U3As, but to allow for generational change in established U3As. We are currently looking for a publicity person to raise the profile of U3A in South Australia.

Our rather minimalist website can be found at www.alliancesa.webs.com.

Just as we find sharing information within our State beneficial, we have hopes of learning a lot from our new national colleagues. The formation of a National Alliance can only be beneficial for the U3A movement in Australia and hopefully provide a framework for local action on publicity, marketing, etc. We even forgive the National Alliance for purloining our name and dooming us to forever adding the prefixes State or National to our every mention of an Alliance.

Claire Eglinton
SA Secretary and National Delegate

QUEENSLAND

Some snippets from our Annual Report presented to the AGM on June 25 last :

Membership

An increase from 19 to 24 U3As registered with the Network during the year. Together we directly represent over 11,000 members in Queensland and indirectly over 15 000 members in 30 U3As in the State– arguably the largest volunteer adult education group Queensland.

New U3As established

Thanks to the Department of Communities Grant as part of the Positively Ageless Strategy for Seniors 2010-12, we were able to establish two new U3As in Queensland – the first since 2008. We are hopeful that another two regions could become branches of existing U3As as a first step towards full autonomy.

Promotional Resources

The DVD promo “When I Grow Up” was produced by the Film Unit of Griffith University , with thanks to members of U3A Brisbane for being the “models” in this video. In addition the Gambling Community Benefits Fund grant provided funds for the printing of a generic brochure promoting U3A .

Website

Our Website continues to be a popular promotional tool for U3A .The number of visitors to this site has consistently exceeded 300 per month over the year.

Meetings of the Network Committee

Our successful application for a federal Volunteers Grant and some funding from the Positively Ageless Grant has enabled the committee to meet face to face on four occasions during the year, at Townsville , twice in Brisbane and in Toowoomba. There is no doubt however that the Network could not have been so successful in its initial years had it not been for the electronic communications we now have at our disposal.

*Jim Hales, President
U3A Network Queensland Inc.*

FROM THE EDITOR

Many thanks to all who have contributed to the first edition of what it is hoped will be an ongoing quarterly publication. As you see, photos can be included and I would welcome these for future numbers. As far as distribution is concerned we will make use of the wonders of e-mail. I will be sending it to my contact in each state and would hope that it can then be forwarded to other interested members of the state network. There is no copyright involved and hard copies can be produced if desired. As soon as a logo for U3AAA is approved I will incorporate it in the heading. Any suggestions re content or format will be welcome.

The deadline for the next edition is September 15.

Peter Flanigan