

U3AAA BULLETIN NO 2

September 2011

Western Australian Inaugural State Conference a Big Success



U3A(UWA) President, Margaret Petrovich
with WA Governor, Malcolm McCusker OM
, QC opening the WA Conference

Glen Capelli, motivational speaker, writer and
broadcaster talks to U3A member
Betty Kroeger

. (More about this Conference in the WA News page 5)

FROM THE ALLIANCE

The main development since our last bulletin has been the preparation of the submission to the Advisory Panel on the Economic Potential of Australian Seniors. I am to present it to the Panel on Wednesday 21st September.

The submission addresses four of the eight Terms of reference. Firstly, in relation to *Cultivating Positive Attitudes Towards Senior Australians*, it is argued that the

Commissioner for Age Discrimination should work towards alleviating problems which affect vulnerable people in the community, and towards dispelling negative stereotyping of the elderly.

Next, in regard to *Fostering opportunities for business and community groups to provide a wider range of services and support healthy and active lifestyles for seniors*, we recommend that the Commonwealth Government support efforts at Local Government level which encourage health, built environment, and transport initiatives, as well as life-long learning opportunities. The third item supported the extension of the National Broadband Network to create opportunities for seniors.

In respect to the submission on *Creating new avenues for senior Australians to volunteer*, we raised two issues that the Alliance has been considering for some time, as currently creating obstacles to volunteering: the lack of access to *Deductible Gift recipient status*, and the legislative barriers created by the *Uniform Work Health & Safety* legislation towards voluntary not-for-profit incorporated associations which are run entirely by volunteers, and which comes into effect nationally in 2012.

The full submission will be available on the U3AAA pages at www.network.nsw.org.au

Finally, we are still considering the format of the U3AAA logo.

Ron Browne
Chairman

U3A NETWORK NSW

1. As previously reported, the NSW Minister for Ageing, Hon Andrew Constance, announced a grant to the U3A NSW Network of \$30,000 per year over four years. The Network Committee has met to consider how to allocate these monies.

It is fortuitous the Network's current Five Year Plan concludes at the next Annual General Meeting in March 2012, so the Committee's deliberations are in conjunction with developing the next long term Plan for the Network.

High priorities for spending the grant are to promote and publicise U3A in New South Wales; to expand the number of U3As and membership generally; to strengthen operations at the regional level; and to maintain our website and Resource Library.

2. The Minister is also embarking on a project to generate a Positive Ageing policy for New South Wales. It is his intention that this involves other relevant Ministries of Health, Education and Treasury, and also to develop the concept with Local Government.

3. Discussions continue as to how the Network and its members can be more responsive to the multicultural character of contemporary society.
4. The Network's Annual Conference and AGM will be held at Port Macquarie over 28-30 March 2012. The theme of the Conference is *The Fountain of Age*. Expected to be among the keynote speakers are Noelene Brown, Ambassador for Ageing, and internationally acclaimed Australian author Thomas Kenneally. There will be performances to display the creativity of our U3A members. There will also be adequate opportunity for workshops, and to explore local scenic and historic attractions. I will ensure that you receive further information as it becomes available, but should you require further details at this time, contact the Organiser, Dr Des Davis at desfaye76@gmail.com

Ron Browne
President



Photo: NSW Minister for Ageing, Hon Andrew Constance MP (left) with U3A Network NSW President Ron Browne (right) and Secretary Ainslie Lamb.

U3A Network – Queensland

The grant from the Department of Communities has been effective in the growth of U3As in Queensland. New U3As were started in Beaudesert and Atherton. Roma has become a branch of Dalby U3A but is well on the way to becoming a separate U3A. Caboulture is a branch of Bribie Island U3A and there are moves for the development of either branches of neighbouring U3As or U3As in their own right at Howard and Pittsworth.

It is clear that if the funds are available to really promote the development of U3As then the process does become self fulfilling. After years of no **new** U3As in Queensland there is now a real awareness of the benefits and word is spreading causing people to want to establish a U3A in their area.

We are hoping this evidence will convince the government to follow up with another grant next year. Unfortunately, so far, they are resisting.

The 2012 State Conference and AGM is being organised by U3A North Gold Coast and supported by the U3A's of the Gold Coast region and will be held on 5th and 6th June 2012. More details about that later.

“Grey Matters”, the U3A Network – Queensland Newsletter, continues to keep the members informed of Queensland U3A events and updates. We are grateful to Mary Courtney for this publication.

*Di Delchau (Secretary)
For Jim Hales (President)*

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

South Australia has a great thinker-in-residence programme and one of its current imports has relevance to the U3A movement. Dr Alexandre Kalache is a world-leading authority on ageing and pioneer of the concepts 'active ageing' and 'age-friendly cities'. The former head of ageing initiatives at the World Health Organisation, Dr Kalache said in an Adelaide speech that access to education is a feature of any age-friendly community. This prompted us to offer our support for any of his local initiatives.

SA Premier, Mike Rann's statement that Dr Kalache's visit would help “developing opportunities for [older people] to live richer, fuller lives” filled us with optimism. Of course politician's statements are not necessarily reflected in the deeds of their government.

My mention of the precarious state of our funding in the last issue proved to be quite prescient as by the time it was distributed we had indeed lost the funding which was received through the Further Education department's Adult Community Education programme. The department has redefined its goals to concentrate entirely on vocational education. They no longer have any interest in people who will not be re-entering the workforce. Likewise, the Dept of Education has stopped subsidy at adult entry colleges for anything which is not related to training for workforce. In fact they met with us to ask if they could redirect non-vocational students to us. We could choose to be flattered by their high opinion of us or despair at their obvious lack of options.

Of course this narrowing of their goal posts is their right (a management review has probably instructed them to focus on their Key Performance Indicators and no doubt their chief KPI is the number of people returned to workforce), but other departments need to step forward, the Dept for Ageing being the obvious choice. Our earliest approach didn't bring much joy but we have now secured an opportunity to address the Minister's advisory board which is a step in the right direction.

This change in policy did make for a cool reception to government invitations for us to celebrate Adult Learning Week in SA. This current view of life-long learning redefines life as ending at 65. It probably made sense to the fully-employed, comparatively-young bureaucrats who made the decision. Our catchcry needs to be, “when it comes to life-long learning, life should mean life”.

I must say how helpful it was to be able to ask our counterparts in other states how their funding worked: how much and from whom. Victoria's figures, in particular,

encouraged and emboldened us. Thank you to everyone who responded. The national Alliance has already benefited us.

Another issue raised in our first bulletin was the challenge of bringing all SA U3As under the umbrella of the State network. As our last State meeting was to hear the progress report on the national body and our trip to Sydney for this purpose, we thought it an excellent opportunity to extend an invitation to all U3As. How could they resist learning about Australia's new national Alliance? Well, they could and they did. No acceptances, not even deemed worthy of a reply. We underestimated the difficulty in merely opening a line of communication. It is still on our to-do list.

On a more positive note, State president Vale Pederson's home U3A, Campbelltown, recently won an excellent opportunity under the Community Voices programme. Flinders University media students will be filming a promotional video of their activities. Vale hopes to keep it largely generic so it can be used State-wide to promote the U3A movement. Gawler U3A's ukulele players and bellringers have been invited to participate to give it a bit more colour and movement. An early story outline looked promising and we look forward to seeing it acted out.

Claire Eglinton, Secretary, Alliance of U3As in South Australia Inc.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The big news is our recent State Conference run by the Perth Group U3A(UWA) at the Duxton Hotel on 19th and 20th of September.

This was an outstanding success with over 100 delegates from the state and two from Queensland (Jim Hales and his wife Elizabeth) and one from NSW.

The Conference had the theme "U3A in the 21st Century – Riding the Tiger of Change". It was opened by the newly appointed State Governor, Malcolm McCusker AO QC and the keynote addresses were given by Professor Alan Harvey on the latest brain research and by Professor Jane Davidson on Music for Health and Well Being. Other speakers included the Chancellor of UWA, Professor Alan Robson, the State Minister for Education, Dr Elizabeth Constable and Glen Capelli, well known motivational speaker.

There were also twelve workshops from which those attending could select four. These included modern communications, strategic planning, anti-aging, exchanging ideas, emotional intelligence and U3A Online.

It was a busy and productive two days and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Congratulations to U3A(UWA) President, Margaret Petrovich and her very efficient committee.

This was the first such event held in WA and augurs well for ongoing cooperation between groups and ongoing development of U3A in WA.



Concentrated listening at the WA State Conference in Perth earlier this month

(Photos of the WA Conference by Geoff Smith)

TOWARDS A STATE NETWORK

Prior to the Conference, on Sunday 18th a meeting was held to consider the formation of a State U3A Network in WA. We were fortunate to have Jim Hales, President of the U3A Queensland Network, at the meeting. Jim talked to the group about his experiences in Queensland.

After considerable discussion it was agreed to proceed and a Network Steering Committee was formed. The committee has met once and are currently formulating a statement of aims and objectives and a timeline of steps to bring this to fruition. When finalised this will be submitted to all groups for consideration.

Peter Flanigan (WA Alliance Rep)

Network Victoria News

Presidents Briefing Session:

The Victorian Network held a Presidents Briefing session in September to outline operational issues to those in charge of individual U3As more directly than relying upon regular communication channels and our Council Meetings.

The increasing complexity of Network's operational matters include funding applications and requirements, compliance & reporting, Strategic Planning reviews, Regional expansion progress and status, and workshop reviews has initiated these Presidential assemblies.

Our Presidents have indicated that this format is proving a positive assistance in improving the knowledge and background detail to our programmes and developments, explaining procedures in and enabling a level of organisational knowledge continuity against a background of regular executive turnover within their individual organisations.

These gatherings will become a more regular feature of our future Network's operational programme.

Accommodation Survey:

An accommodation survey was conducted covering all our U3As to support a workshop held to assist those who encounter difficulties in accessing suitable community facilities for the conduct of their activities. Survey data included Type of occupancy – sole or shared, costs, terms and type of accommodation, partnership styles and current relationships with local authorities. Details revealed an interesting profile of our present group and individual status proving of great value to those attending the subsequent workshop.

Notable features included the sourcing and assembly of pertinent data, methods for persuading stakeholders as to the value of U3A to the community and establishing a negotiation base for dialogue with Local and State Departmental officials.

Parliamentary Inquiry:

We were invited to participate in the State Parliamentary inquiry into the Opportunities for Participation of Victorian Seniors. A presentation was prepared and delivered by President Elsie Mutton detailing the contribution of U3As to the seniors sector in Victoria. This sought to highlight the value of our course and activity delivery programmes and emphasise the acknowledged beneficial effects of maintaining both mental and physical activity levels within the ageing sector. Reception was positive and served to further develop mutual understanding of the economic worth of our model, as well as detailing the nature of support required from Government to enable us to maximise our potential within the sector. Regular exchanges at this level serve to consolidate recognition of our movement's contribution and emphasise the relatively meagre support requirements which could be accommodated within future Governmental Departmental policy development.

Lindsay Glen (Alliance Rep VicNet)

U3A Online

U3A Online is to hold its AGM during the first week in October but I don't anticipate a change in the current committee except for the addition of one more member. It has been a great committee so I hope it is retained.

The work on the new Web Development continues and is on track for the new site to 'go live' in November. This is a good time because the courses with a Leader will have been completed and new ones not becoming available until the New Year.

We continue to work with VicNet the aim being to eventually be able to offer multi-lingual courses through U3A Online. This is progressing slowly but positively.

U3A Online sponsored me to attend the U3A International Conference in Singapore in August.

I was able to promote U3A Online which was very successful with members from Singapore already signed up and a great write up about U3A Online in the c3a web site:

<http://www.c3a.org.sg/story/u3a-online-21st-century-learning-older-people.html>

I was also able to make known the development of U3AAA which is very welcomed. People are really interested in U3A in Australia and it was great to also have Elsie to talk about the Victorian Network and comment generally about U3As in Australia. Dr Andrew Bode from the Gold Coast was also in attendance and used opportunities to be involved.

We three Aussies put on a “cultural” presentation with a poem and Power Point about Australia.



CORE GROUP FOR U3A ASIA PACIFIC ALLIANCE

Dianne Delchau --- President U3A Online

FROM THE EDITOR

Many thanks to all who contributed. Please forward to all groups in your state.
Next issue December 2011. A reminder will be sent.

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Peter Flanigan

