



AUSTRALIA

UBAAA BULLETIN No. 17

AUGUST 2016

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From the Editor

Welcome to my second issue as editor of the U3A national bulletin. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue, especially those who didn't mind being cajoled into submitting a little more or providing filler items for our backup library.

I have tried to keep it short and readable as I too have been cut down to size. I was pleased with the last issue. It was nice to receive some positive feedback from fellow U3AAA delegates. It was a little perturbing that no one in my own State mentioned it, not even my own U3A. When I was canvassing opinions for the U3AAA questionnaire at our local U3A committee meeting, they didn't seem very aware of what U3AAA does. I asked who read the national bulletin. Blank looks. The penny dropped: not even my own committee reads this bulletin.

In SA we don't have a State newsletter so I thought members would read the national bulletin more avidly, looking to see who gets a mention. Obviously not. Does anyone read it other than our inner circle? How widely is it circulated? Does it appeal to the general membership? Perhaps not, and perhaps that is not its purpose. However, it should appeal to anyone who is interested in advancing the U3A movement.

As an administrator, I find it invaluable to check out what other States are doing, seeing if we can duplicate some of the good stuff in our own State. It provides me with ideas, goals, a way of assessing our local performance, a way of strengthening bonds between States when we meet so infrequently.

My aim is to keep this a simple, unsophisticated publication. No doubt this will always be prepared by a volunteer who already has their time fully committed to other U3A obligations. Anyone who makes a job too time-consuming soon finds that no one else will ever volunteer to take over the reins.



What can we do to enlarge our readership other than start printing photos of grandchildren? If you have any thoughts or suggestions on this topic, I would love to receive them at eclair5453@gmail.com.

In the meantime, a message to all my U3A friends and colleagues: read this carefully as I may ask questions at our next meeting.



Happy reading

Claire Eglinton

Clare Valley

South Australia

From the Chairman

Since the last Bulletin, I have assumed the Chair of the Alliance on behalf of the U3A Network NSW. Thank you to my predecessor, Julie Porteous, for her assistance in ensuring a seamless transfer of records and information.



Representatives of the Victorian, Queensland and NSW Networks, as well as U3A ACT and U3A Online, met at the NSW Conference at Belmont on late April. Votes of thanks were moved to Julie Porteous and Rhonda Weston, as the Chairs during Queensland's stewardship; to Iris Murray and Maria Licence as Alliance secretary and treasurer respectively; to Peter Flanagan, retiring Bulletin editor; and to Claire Eglinton, as incoming Bulletin editor. Taking on Alliance roles in addition to State responsibilities is greatly appreciated. Also, Allan Haggarty has taken on the role of Alliance Secretary, so the Alliance will continue to have the benefit of his experience.

Julie and I submitted a Discussion Paper on the future of the Alliance to the meeting, but there was insufficient time to deal with it. Nevertheless there was acknowledgement that the issues did need serious discussion at a face to face meeting, with all issues on the table, rather than piecemeal at irregular Alliance meetings. It was therefore agreed that I prepare a questionnaire based on the discussion paper, and ask each member Network committee to consider the issues and submit their suggestions and comments. At the time of writing, there are still some responses to be received, but the intention is to distil the results with a view to a re-draft of the MoU, culminating in a one day FIFO face-to-face in either Adelaide, Melbourne or Canberra for centrality. What I have seen so far is both considered and positive about the future of the Alliance.

The recent Federal election afforded an opportunity to contact the relevant Ageing and Health spokespersons (Ministers and Shadow ministers primarily) with a submission that the U3A movement in Australia would like to see a greater ministerial and policy emphasis on the positive aspects of ageing, and policies focusing on preventative health and wellbeing. You will have received copies of the letters and submissions made. Only one spokesperson responded – WA Greens Senator Rachel Siewert. Perhaps we should make our pitch when MPs are less pressured by actual elections!

Ainslie Lamb,
Chair,
U3A Alliance Australia
Contact: u3answ@gmail.com



2016-17 Diary Dates

2016:

7 September: Tasmania state meeting.

14 October: U3A SA AGM followed by quarterly meeting

11, 12 October: Combined **U3A Asia Pacific Alliance and AIUTA International Conference** at the Asia Pacific Trade Centre, Osaka, Japan.

More information: <http://u3a-osakainternationalconference2016.org/>

26 October: Deadline for next issue of Bulletin. Please submit any items you think worthy of inclusion, to eclair5453@gmail.com at any time. I need to create a stockpile.

11-13 November: U3A SA stand at SA Retirement Lifestyle Expo, Wayville

2017:

9-11 May: SA Riverland Rendezvous. Regional gathering and quarterly State meeting hosted by U3A Riverland.

18-19 May: Queensland Network conference hosted by U3A Twin Towns at the Tweed Civic Centre, Tweed Heads. All welcome.

28-30 June: NSW conference hosted by Sydney U3A at Sydney Town Hall and Castlereagh Boutique Hotel. Theme: The Third Age: Creative and Healthy Living.

4-5 September: U3A Victorian bi-annual conference.



Researchers need your help

We have had two requests for help from researchers. Firstly from Polly Fong, University of Queensland, studying the role of social networks for retirees, and secondly Claire Mitchell, University of Western Australia, looking at unusual sensory experiences.

- **Invitation to participate in research study on retirement.** When it comes to retiring successfully, researchers at University of Queensland think that there's more to it than financial planning. Their research shows that social planning may be just as important. The researchers are looking for people who are **retired** or **about to retire** to take part in a survey study which looks at the role that social networks make to retirement adjustment and well-being. If you are about to retire and would like to be involved, please go to the following link for more information: www.groups4health.com/g4r
- **Claire Mitchell, Provisional Psychologist's research on sensory experiences** involves an online questionnaire which takes 15-20 minutes at <http://bit.do/USEstudy>. They are looking for individuals aged 50+ to participate. The study has full approval through the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Western Australia.

QUEENSLAND

We have had an interesting time up here in Queensland since April and the last Bulletin. It's been exciting and has kindled discussion and activity. Many of the Queensland U3As are turning 25 or 30 this year – this needs celebrating and this we did at our recent State Conference.

2016 STATE CONFERENCE – RENEW AND RECONNECT



This year's conference was hosted by U3A Sunshine Coast at the modern University of the Sunshine Coast which borders a nature reserve and is not far from Mooloolaba beach pictured here. Unfortunately the weather did not live up to "Beautiful one day, Perfect the next" but we ignored the inclement weather and celebrated 30 years of U3A in Queensland. In 1986 U3A Sunshine Coast was the first to evolve with Brisbane following closely and the theme *RENEW AND RECONNECT* allowed us to review our history and thank those forward thinking members who laid the foundation stone for the future. Congratulations to Dawne Clark, President, and her committee who brought the conference together in a short time. As we all know, organizing a conference is not simple and is very demanding of your time, but with the wide variety of topics and speakers offered, all delegates had something of interest for them.



Speakers included Dale Jacobson, a freelance writer and short story teller who gave us an insight into her adventures in the Antarctic – amazing photos of icebergs and marine life. She left us with a quote from George Elliot "It's never too late to be who you might have been".

Another crowd pleaser was Professor Don Kerr from USC who spoke of his research into the development and evaluation of support systems for healthcare and the use of telepresence robots. We were introduced to "Giraff", a telepresence robot which Professor Kerr demonstrated at afternoon tea.

A very successful celebration dinner was held at the Mooloolaba Yacht Club and memorable entertainment was a 20 minute video compiled of slides from many of the U3As in Queensland showing their activities and joining in the celebrations.

Fiona Simpson, Member for Maroochydore, opened the conference. She spoke about her family's love for learning. The conference began with musical entertainment from the U3A Choir and ended with music to take us on our way home provided by Hot Ginger Chorus, a women's chorus specializing in barbershop singing.



Marilyn Wagland, President U3A Brisbane and another delegate about to cut the beautiful chocolate mud cake.



Professor Greg Hill with Dawne Clark, President, U3A Sunshine Coast

Professor Greg Hill, Vice Chancellor of USC closed the conference and spoke about the strong bonds between the University and U3A. Community engagement is a driving pillar of USC and many U3A students collaborate as "lab rats" for the nursing students and with other University students on their particular research projects.

Date Claimer – the 2017 U3A Network Qld Conference will be hosted by U3A Twin Towns at the Tweed Civic Centre, Teed Heads on 18 and 19 May 2017. All welcome.

REGIONAL MEETINGS

As reported in the previous Bulletin, Network has continued to make contact with as many U3As as possible and four of our Network committee joined Cairns, Atherton Table-lands and Townsville for a Presidents' Council meeting and to join about 60 of their members for lunch at one of the local restaurants along the



Strand. Greg Doolan, VP Network Qld, spent a day of discovery with various classes and turned his hand to fixing a troubling internet connection in the office. Cairns, as hosts, made sure we had a tour of their U3A premises and we met many of the volunteers in the office. We also came away with a better understanding of the challenges being experienced by the committee with brisk increasing membership numbers and we were able to make suggestions and discuss matters of common interest.

Our next Regional Meeting will be hosted by U3A Noosa later this year.

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT - VOLUNTEER GRANT

Network Qld has received a Volunteer grant of \$1500 to benefit our volunteers who use their own cars when volunteering and also to provide professional training for committee members in Good Governance and Communication.

QLD STATE GOVERNMENT – MINISTER FOR SENIORS

We are delighted to acknowledge Queensland Government funding of \$23,000 for a U3A awareness campaign: Connecting Seniors to Lifelong Learning. Mr Brent McCracken, Regional Executive Director, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services made the announcement on behalf of Minister O'Rourke at our Presidents' Council Meeting on 3 June. We are planning to use community newspapers and radio as part of the campaign and developing posters and rack cards to distribute wherever we are able. Another addition to the awareness campaign will be bumper stickers – some love 'em and some don't but we are trying most things on a small budget. Thank you to U3A South Australia for sharing some ideas with me. We are also revitalizing some video clips on U3A which we will be posting on Facebook sometime later this year. We know it is a small budget but we hope to make a big impact. And, we're also considering our next move to acquire State funding for U3A Queensland.

PARTNERSHIPS

We are continuing with our quest to form partnerships with NFP organisations which have similar objectives and a focus on senior people in the community and we have begun discussing a formal collaborative agreement with COTA Queensland. Age-friendly Communities is a State Government initiative which is being backed strongly by COTA Queensland and the Community Reference Group that I sit on.

Julie Porteous
President
U3A Network Qld Inc



NEW SOUTH WALES

The Network Annual Conference at Belmont in April hosted by Eastlakes U3A, was a resounding success, with three excellent plenary speakers, eight workshops, and the Conference dinner. 177 delegates attended the Conference, representing 43 U3As – a high point for attendance. We were pleased to welcome the Presidents of the Queensland and Victorian Networks, as well as U3A ACT (which is a member of the NSW Network.)

NSW Conference L-R – Julie Porteous (President, Queensland Network), Ainslie Lamb (President NSW Network and current U3AAA Chair), (Allan Haggarty (NSW Network and U3AAA Secretary), Elsie Mutton (President, Victoria Network).



The Conference was also the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the NSW U3A Network. A Brief History has been prepared by Dr Ron Browne AM, a former President of the Network, and is available from the Network website at www.nsw.u3anet.org.au under the 'Publications' menu. As part of the launch of the History, three long-serving members of the Network – Cecily Butcher (member of the Network Committee 1992-2012, including President), Mel Davies (member of the Network Committee 1996-2010 including President, and Manager of the Resources Library 2006-16) and Ern Hollebone (Network Secretary 2000-2008 and Webmaster 2008-16) were honoured for their service. At the AGM Ainslie Lamb was re-elected as President, Ian Robertson was elected as Vice-President, and Geoff Hatch re-elected as Treasurer. Secretary Jean de Hosson retired from the Committee, and subsequently Rowena Simone was appointed by the Committee as Secretary.

MORE MEMORIES OF THE 2016 CONFERENCE AT BELMONT



Exercise by the Lake

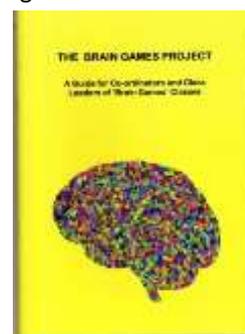


The Middle Eastern Dancers



Ever-smiling Eastlakes U3A crew

Our *Balance'n'Bones* DVD continues to sell well. It will shortly be joined by a program of exercise for the mind, *The Brain Games Project*. This is a guide booklet for course co-ordinators and leaders of Brain Games programs and classes, and has been produced with a small grant from the IRT Foundation Community Grants program. Copies have been distributed to our NSW and interstate members, and if sufficient copies remain will also be available to other U3As – details later.



U3A NETWORK NSW CONFERENCE 2017

At the Sydney Town Hall and
the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel

will be hosted by Sydney U3A

28 – 30 June 2017



Theme:

The Third Age: Creative and Healthy Living

Keynote speakers:

Professor David Christian – ‘Big History’
Margret Meagher, Arts & Health Australia

More information will be available shortly.

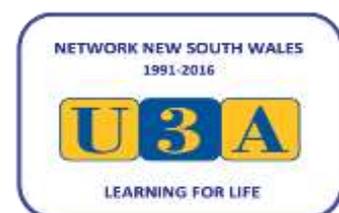
INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Earlier this year, Ainslie received an email from Margaret Robertson of the Toronto (Canada) U3A. Having made that contact, it was a pleasure for Ainslie and Jean to meet later in April with Nancy Christie, President of the Toronto U3A and of the Ontario U3A Network, in Sydney where she was visiting with family. It was a nice opportunity to exchange information and ideas.



Several U3AAA identities will be attending the IAUTA Conference in Osaka in October. Ron Browne and Ainslie Lamb will be taking in the conference as part of a trip to include Tokyo and Kyoto. In the meantime, Ainslie has been invited (at the suggestion of Rhonda Weston) to submit a paper to the *Annals of Social Sciences Journal*, published in Lublin Poland, about ageing in Australia. Once (assuming) it is published, it will be uploaded onto the Network website for anyone interested.

Ainslie Lamb,
President
U3A Network NSW Inc.
(u3answ@gmail.com)



VICTORIA

The annual Presidents Briefing was held in May and hosted the largest gathering ever. Approximately 100 presidents and representatives heard Gerard Mansour, Commissioner for Senior Victorians, outline the results of his survey on seniors isolation in the State. Gerard was asked by the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Martin Foley to provide advice about the important issue of isolation and loneliness of Victorian Seniors. The investigations included a literature review, a listening tour of Victoria where seniors told of their experiences, input was also received from a number of community organizations. A report "Ageing is everyone's business" has been released. U3A is recognized as one of the organizations that promote feelings of self-worth and belonging, address negative perceptions towards ageing and act as a safety net for people at risk of loneliness. I guess a question for us all is "can we do more" as an organization in responding to the needs of seniors who are isolated, lonely, vulnerable or disadvantaged.

Sue Noble, Chief Executive Officer of Volunteering Victoria, spoke on the barriers to volunteering and what the definition of volunteering is, the question was asked 'What would Victoria look like without volunteers?' Presentations were also given on Good Governance for U3As and the need to have a good Code of Conduct policy. The new Network Treasurer spoke about the need for each U3A to be aware of the important role of the Treasurer and to always make sure the Committee of Management are aware of all financial matters, transparency must be top of the list.

In June each year Victoria asks its member U3As to update their contact details. These details are held in the Network Member database. This year we introduced an internet-based system to make it easier for them. They are sent a login number and password unique to their U3A. All they need to do is log in and update their details. They can go in and make any changes as necessary at any time and we are hopeful this will mean that the details we hold at the Network Office will always be up to date. This database was built for Network by the same company that built the U3A online membership management system.

Victoria is experiencing growth across many Regions, so I guess we are all doing something right in bringing healthy active ageing to the senior members of the community.

Preparations are underway for the opening of Seniors Week at Federation Square. This is an opportunity for U3A to showcase what they do both in the metro and regional areas.

The Victorian state government has allocated \$2.2million over the next four years (2016-2019) for age-friendly projects in rural council areas, and for innovative partnerships within metropolitan councils and regional cities. This is a great opportunity for regional U3As to form partnerships with their local government and like-minded organizations to receive some of this money.

I had the pleasure of attending the NSW state conference in April and met some new members of the Australian Alliance. Always good to talk face to face. Congratulations to the organizing committee this was a conference that I am sure all who attended found something worthwhile to bring back to their U3As.

Date for your diary 2017: Planning is under way for the U3A Victorian bi-annual conference on Monday 4 and Tuesday 5 September.

One of our regional U3As shared these words of wisdom. "Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere" How true is this.

About 100 U3A Nunawading members attended a talk on mindfulness by Dr Craig Hassed, Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences and the Mindfulness Co-ordinator at Monash University in late July. Pauling Chong, Committee of Management member and Leader of our Empowerment and Zumba classes, arranged the presentation by Dr Hassed, one of Australia's leading experts and author of several books on the practice.

Prior to the talk, the audience was entertained by Nalanda Robson, daughter of member Tippy Robson, playing the gu-zheng, a traditional Chinese musical instrument, which resembles a zither.



From left: U3A Nunawading President Valerie Donlon, Paulina Chong, Nalanda Robson, Dr Craig Hassed.

Dr Hassed's presentation explained the physical and mental benefits of mindfulness which is described as "a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.

Elsie Mutton.

President.

U3A Network Victoria.

Live Learn Enjoy



NETWORK Vic
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The State network, U3A South Australia, had a quarterly meeting in July and we are now finalizing the latest round of internal grant funding. It is a little more challenging this year as we have been advised we can only spend 20 percent of the money on capital items (which our funders define as items worth more than \$100). We have overstepped the mark in the previous two years and had to plead ignorance so can't risk that again.

The late acquittal of the previous round by one U3A held up the returns for the whole State and finally we were forced to submit incomplete paperwork to the government. The grant committee agreed that no further grants should be approved to U3As who have not returned receipts. Most groups have been very conscientious in their support of our excellent grants officer but it only takes one to throw a spanner in the works and make it a stressful job.

The latest round of grant applications, reveals that the smallest U3As, who have most need to increase membership and build programs, seem the least likely to apply for funds. There are no guarantees that this funding will continue after its current 4-year term so we hope that all U3As will grab the chance to set themselves up for the future with publicity materials, expanded course offerings and membership drives.

We want to avoid a vicious cycle of an aging membership lacking the energy and interest to keep the group attracting the new, younger faces it needs to provide fresh energy and ideas. All U3As need to keep bringing in a younger cohort on a regular basis to share the workload. While some people are staying in the workforce longer, there are many over-50s who struggle to find paid employment and would be thankful to find their knowledge and skills valued by a community group.

For some time we have been asking U3As to keep a record of their members' ages and at our next quarterly meeting it would be interesting to learn the average age of their membership. Database minders should take that as a warning to start doing the arithmetic. President Bernie McSwain has also requested that delegates bring along their membership forms to the next meeting so we can compare and perhaps improve our efforts.

Some ideas worth copying from previous meetings include: Strathalbyn, which has never had a main street presence, turned a disused shop into a pop-up office for a week taking enrolments and promoting U3A; Kapunda took the initiative of obtaining Canadian movie on food waste *Just Eat It* for public screening; Campbelltown had a technology catch up session for group leaders and committee to find out who needed an update on how to use the various bits of technology on the club premises and encourage wider use of things like the electronic whiteboard; Adelaide Hills, inspired by a Microsoft Cloud Computing for Not-for-profits workshop attended by president Marjolijn Haraghey, has taken a giant leap towards keeping all their documents accessible on cloud. And a final note from Murraylands new

delegate Clyde Leach who spoke of disruptions caused by preliminary work before their building starts: musical appreciation had to endure some chainsawing with their Chopin.

This year the Nice killings made us all a little more aware of France's national day. On 14 July many U3A French language groups celebrate what we call Bastille Day. (In France, it is formally called La fête nationale and commonly Le quatorze juillet, i.e. the 14th July, but never Bastille Day.) Within my own French group it is often forgotten as it falls within the holidays but sometimes we gather at the home of our most talented cook, Margarete Bisazza, for lunch which is always a French gourmet extravaganza.

One group which always celebrates Bastille Day in style is Ellie Geach's French group at U3A South Coast. This year their program began with talks about the French Revolution, a rendition of La Marseillaise, followed by comic skits in French, alternating with traditional French songs and concluding with a French-flavoured afternoon tea.

Ellie said the programme of skits and music was entirely the work of her continuing French class, some of whom were beginners in 2015, and that she has always used song in her classes. "Most people are so hung-up about singing that they forget to be inhibited about their accent!"

"In earlier days (when I had more energy) we celebrated Bastille Day with a champagne luncheon and a similar programme of plays, music and slides of La Belle France for a crowd of over 100 people."

Our records show, back in 2012, Ellie organized a choral workshop for U3A South Coast conducted by Frank Pellé-Rolland. Participants were warned it involved 4 to 5 hours rehearsal per day with the program consisting of works from the classical repertoire, both French and English.



Ellie Geach, U3A South Coast

Combining her passions for the language and choral singing, Ellie has attended two choral workshops in France, but says "nowadays I'm reduced to watching the Tour de France on TV." Indeed Ellie has earned the right to sit back with her feet up as she started teaching French for U3A in 1996 (yes, 20 years ago). She admits to taking a few years sabbatical in the early part of this century but has now added German to her portfolio. What a fantastic contribution to U3A. *Merci mille fois Madame Geach.*

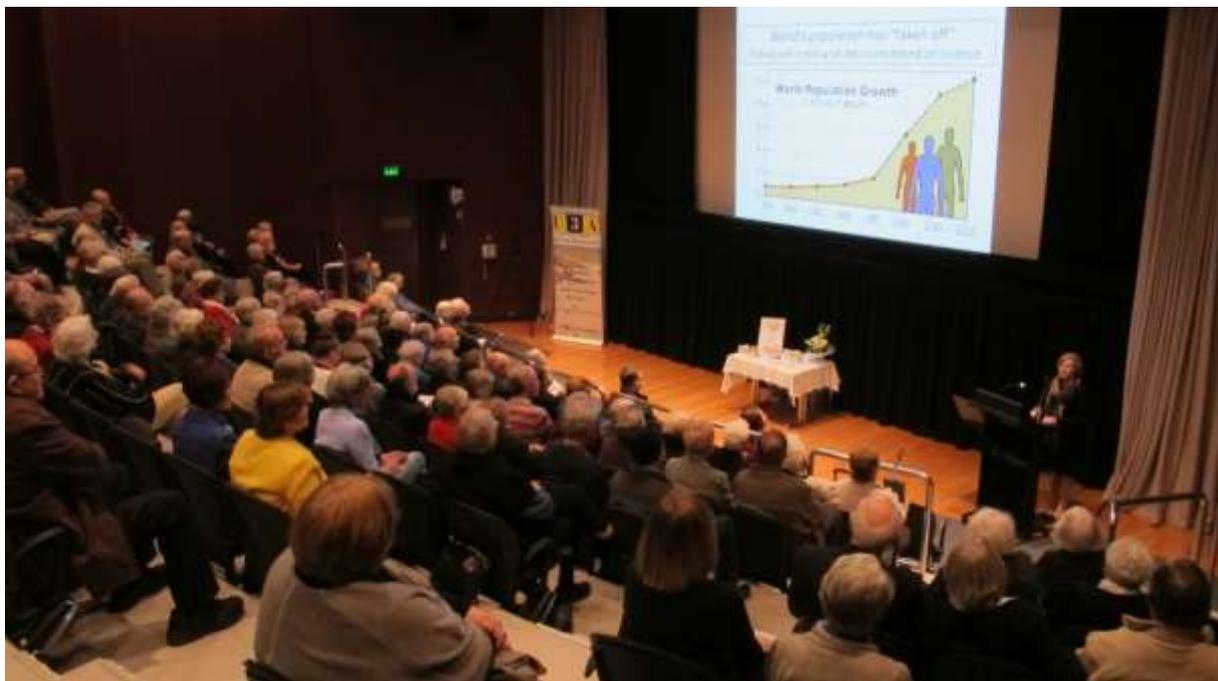
Claire Eglinton
Secretary
U3A South Australia



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

A very successful seminar, “Pearls of Wisdom” run by U3A North Coast (Hamersley) for U3A (UWA) Perth was held in the WA State Library Theatre on July 20. The seminar is an annual event and always attracts a good attendance. The pearls theme helped celebrate the 30 years since U3A was founded in WA.

The speakers this year included Professor Lyn Beazley, former WA Chief Scientist. In a very lively presentation she covered a range of new developments in science and technology. It was an optimistic view of the future. Human ingenuity will be able to overcome the problems of an increasing population and the effects of climate change. She particularly emphasised the growing contribution women were making in a great range of fields. STEM – science, technology, engineering and mathematics – was where the new jobs will be. Girls (and boys) please note.



Lyn Beazley shows a population graph. “We can feed the world”, she said. She came down firmly on the side of genetically modified crops which give increased yields. “Humans have been breeding and modifying food crop for thousands of years.”

The second speaker was the Right Honourable Fred Chaney, former senator and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. He continues to work in this field long after he has left politics. We are still looking for solutions fifty years after the referendum that gave Aboriginal people citizenship rights. “It must all start from respect”, he said. “We must treat Aboriginal people as equals. Above all we must listen to them and not impose solutions on them”

“We may be able to feed everyone”, he said, “But can we all live together peaceably?”



*The Rt Hon Fred Chaney
receiving thanks,
after his talk, from
Sandra Greenaway.*

*All speakers were
presented with a polished
mother of pearl shell
from Broome.*

(Photos Peter Alcock)

The seminar was concluded with “Wit and Wisdom”, a wide ranging review of timeless stories, poems and fables from across the millennia by Grace McAlpine from Mandurah and by a short skit on two notable literary wits, Dr Samuel Johnson and Oscar Wilde, presented by Jim Barnes and Peter Flanigan. Congratulations to Glenda Batten and her committee.

STATE CONFERENCE

A State Conference will be held in Perth later this year on 5 and 6 October. It is being organised by the U3A Network WA committee under the leadership of president Don McDonald, and will be held in the Uniting Church rooms in the city. The aim of the conference is to bring together representatives of all U3A's in the state with particular emphasis on those occupying leadership positions in the various groups. There will be visiting speakers and presentations from U3A groups of successful programs they have run. These will be followed by group discussions to maximise the opportunity for all delegates to be involved.

A Lotteries West grant has been applied for to assist with travel and accommodation of country delegates.

Details will be available on the U3A Network WA website in the near future.

BUNBURY AND MARGARET RIVER TRIP

Sheila Twine (President Mandurah U3A) and David Smeeton also from Mandurah U3A took a recent trip to the southwest of the state and met with representatives from Margaret River and Bunbury U3As. Bunbury has been in existence for 27 years while Margaret River was formed about 4 years ago. The new group is very active and has a wide range of courses running. Sheila and David, both part of the Conference Committee, urged representatives of both groups to attend.



*Ginn Fourie (course giver),
Maggie Leggott,
(President),
and sitting, secretary,
Gail McMahon,
from Margaret River*

*Rhonda Braid (teas),
Elwyn Harries (treas)
and, sitting,
Joan Birkett (Pres)
from Bunbury.*



*Peter Flanigan
WA Network Vice-president*



U3A ONLINE

In 2000, when U3A Online was teetering on having to give up the dream of giving a U3A experience to those older people who were isolated from attending a local U3A, Griffith University in Brisbane saved the day by offering a platform to present the courses from, a dedicated administration site and maintenance of those sites as well as helping to convert courses to the online format. They also managed the domain and email accounts for U3A Online.

Sixteen years later and U3A Online is now independent of any help from Griffith University having taken control of the domain and email accounts and shifting the hosting to Catalyst, who also look after the maintenance of the U3A Online site – at a substantial cost.

U3A Online will be forever grateful to Griffith for enabling it to become the organisation it is today offering a U3A service to many isolated people from many countries although predominantly Australia.

The Members Lounge general discussion forum now regularly features TED talks as the basis for a discussion and those that get involved find it very stimulating.

New courses are regularly being added and there is now a 'Photography – Improving Your Camera Skills' and even a 'Play Ukulele by Ear' course. Several other courses are currently being developed.

An online course leaders' staffroom has been set up to enable the leaders to share their experiences and to help them feel less isolated. They can communicate in forum style or get involved in a live Chat with other leaders.

A number of committee members have attended the other State conferences and have also been involved in other promotional activities. The Facebook page continues to do well.

Di Delchau
Secretary

