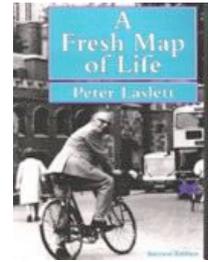
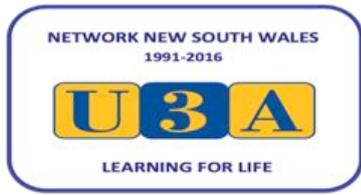




A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE U3A NETWORK NSW INC.

1991 – 2016

Prepared by Dr Ronald Browne AM



Life is Long if it is Full – Seneca (Roman Statesman and Philosopher, 5 BC – 65 AD)



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Prologue	5
Acknowledgements	6
Beginnings	7
Growth and Development	10
Epilogue	20
Appendices –	23
1. Services of the Network	23
2. Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers	25
3. Annual Conferences	27
4. Development of the website	29
5. Development of the Resource Library	30
6. Development of the U3A Alliance Australia	31

About the U3A Movement

The University of the Third Age (U3A) movement is a unique and exciting organisation which provides, through its U3A groups, life-enhancing and life-changing opportunities. Retired and semi-retired people come together and learn together, not for qualifications but for its own reward: the sheer joy of discovery!

Members share their skills and life experiences: the learners teach and the teachers learn, and there is no distinction between them.

*Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress;
working together is success. - Henry Ford*

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Photographs, inside front cover from U3A sources (except), L-R in rows*

Tai Chi in the Courtyard

*A Fresh Map of Life – book cover**

Balance 'n' Bones demonstration

*IRT Foundation grant presentation 2015**

Age is no barrier to U3A

Mel Davies, Jean de Hosson, Jan Bennett, Resource Library team

Highland Buskers, Southern Highlands U3A

Bench in honour of Betty Heaton, Bathurst

Griffith U3A, Orange Festival entry

Exercise class

Geology class

Southern Highlands U3A Choir

Classroom lecture

Art class

Cooking class.

PROLOGUE

This brief history has been written to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the New South Wales U3A (University of the Third Age) Network, originally named and structured as the NSW Council of U3A.

Our U3A groups individually, and collectively through the Network, are parts of the broader U3A Movement which operates in several formats in many countries and is a global success story.

Recording history depends on the availability of accurate information. The importance of this was recognised at the second meeting of the members who had met to establish in principle a Council of U3A in 1989, following the example set in Victoria. Motions were moved “*That an Official Archive be established by the NSW Council to provide a sound basis for a History of the U3A movement in NSW [and] That all individual U3As be encouraged to provide to the Council’s Archive copies of their records, purposes, courses, correspondence, newsletters, records of meetings, etc [and] That a volunteer archivist be appointed to organise and maintain the Archive.*”

Alas, these intentions were never activated. The growth of the U3A movement in NSW since 1989 has been exponential and as each U3A is autonomous in its operations, the feasibility of such a venture was really beyond the capabilities of a volunteer organisation. However, the retention of minute books of Council and Network meetings since 1989 in the custody of successive Secretaries has been invaluable.

Fortunately, I have had access to the minutes of all meetings of the Steering Committee, the Council and later the Network Committee, and to minutes of Annual General Meetings. Presidential reports delivered at Annual General Meetings reveal steady progress in the operations of, and services provided by, the Council. They also reveal several recurrent themes and issues which have surfaced over the 25 years of the work of the Council and the Network.

A number of former Presidents – Cecily Butcher, Don Kinsey, Mel Davies and Allan Haggarty – have provided their recollections, but unfortunately many of the other persons who made key contributions, especially in the earlier years under analysis, are not able to provide personal recollections for various reasons (longevity included). I have drawn to some extent on an earlier brief history, *Looking Back with the Future in Mind*, prepared by Cecily Butcher in 2011, and I also had access to copies of *Newslink*, the Network newsletter, from about 2009. Ern Hollebone and Mel Davies and Jan Bennett have provided summaries of the development of the Network website and the Resource Library respectively.

Of necessity however, the first ten or so years of the Network are dealt with somewhat sparsely, and the overall effect is one of recording highlights rather than capturing the personalities or the spirit of the time.

Interpreting all this information and recording it in a document is not just about memories of time past, not merely a record of events, dates and names, but aims to create a narrative that explains the ethos of the organisation. How did the Network commence and evolve? What is its purpose within the framework of the U3A movement? Who were the personalities whose passion and energy brought the Network to its current stage of development?

Recording a history provides context of time and place, and can be a valuable contribution towards understanding the broader society in which these people have lived and these events have taken place.

We are celebrating twenty-five years of the NSW U3A Network – an occasion to look back and see what has been achieved with a view to gaining some understanding of where the future may take us. To record even a brief snapshot of our development is to bring the past into focus – not just a jumble of facts and names – but an opportunity to think about our cultural ethos.

Our material is encapsulated in a slim volume – but the story will continue. If there are any serious omissions or errors in this record, please let the Network Secretary know and accept my sincere apology.

Ron Browne AM.

Acknowledgements

The inside front cover features activities from many U3As - the inside back cover features photographs from Network Conferences of recent years.

Photographs have been obtained from a variety of sources, including conference ‘galleries’ maintained by Pamela Hollebhone, and U3A websites.

The photograph of the IRT Presentation is by Greg Ellis, *Illawarra Mercury*.

The Fresh Map of Life book cover is by Palgrave MacMillan Publishing, UK.

The description of the U3A Movement is from the Home Page of the University of the Third Age, UK.

Thanks to Ainslie Lamb for her assistance in the preparation of this History, and to Allan Haggarty and Ern Hollebhone for their valuable advice in reviewing the text.

BEGINNINGS

U3A is a concept which arose out of a decision of the University of Toulouse in 1972 as part of the French Government's policy to provide stimulating activities for older people. Professor Pierre Vellas, a gerontologist, undertook - as a pilot program - a summer session inviting older citizens to engage in a series of lectures given by academic staff from various disciplines. The program was most successful – it indicated a thirst for knowledge without pressure on the part of those involved. Thus was the University of the Third Age, or at least the French version, born.

The concept was taken up by Dr Peter Laslett at Cambridge University, United Kingdom¹. However, rather than following a system based on university lectures, he encouraged a self-supporting, self-governing and self-directed movement in which people would bring together their skills and knowledge to share in their retirement. This is known as the Cambridge model of the University of the Third Age.

In 1984, the Cambridge concept was brought to Australia, and the first Australian U3A was established in Melbourne. U3A was established in Canberra in 1986.

On 14th May 1987, a public meeting was held in the Shoalhaven Council Building, addressed by Cliff Picton, Executive Director of the Australian Council on Ageing, and Barry Russell, Senior Lecturer of the College of Seniors, University of Wollongong. Barry Russell recalls: “The first U3A in New South Wales was born that night, and ... it was to lead the way in NSW with the foundation of a U3A.”² Barry also recalls that he negotiated with the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wollongong to set up the second U3A at Wollongong in NSW, but as the Vice-Chancellor wanted the final say in what courses were offered, this was not acceptable as it would breach the principles of U3A. However, Barry was invited to be the guest speaker at the Sydney University Great Hall at the formation of the Sydney U3A in 1988, which became the second U3A in NSW, and Wollongong U3A later became the third.³

Barry Russell subsequently made presentations on the U3A concept at over ten centres interested in setting up U3As, including Armidale, Tamworth, Port Macquarie, Newcastle and Brisbane. The idea caught on like a bushfire. A number of groups were subsequently established in New South Wales and other parts of Australia. Although the genesis of U3A lay within the University context, Laslett deliberately developed a model not dependent upon university staff or resources, although some U3As formed valuable relationships with locally situated Universities.⁴

By 1989 there were 10 U3As in New South Wales (plus five groups under the umbrella of Sydney U3A) and the idea of interested groups forming a statewide organisation to share experiences and ideas began to develop. Archival records indicate that the initial meeting of what was termed the U3A State Steering Committee was held at the Orange Civic Centre on 17th October 1989 on the initiative of the Orange U3A President, Geoff Cawthorne. Harry Mayfield of Hume U3A

¹ Essentially described in Laslett P, *A Fresh Map of Life*, Palgrave MacMillan (2nd Edition, 1996)

² *First Among Equals: The Story of U3A Shoalhaven Third Age of Learning 1987 -1997*, edited by Gwen Banks, 1997, p. 5

³ *Universities of the Third Age*, interview notes with Barry Russell, 2015

⁴ At the 1993 Annual Conference, reports presented to the conference noted that several of the U3A groups had formal links with universities, namely –

- Hume U3A with the University of Western Sydney Macarthur campus;
- Bathurst U3A with Charles Sturt University, Bathurst campus;
- Chifley Chapter with the University of Western Sydney Hawkesbury campus; and
- Sydney with the University of Sydney.

Most recently (2013) U3A ACT has negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Canberra to work co-operatively across a number of areas.

volunteered to chair the Committee, and participants came from the Forbes, Sydney, Wellington, Shoalhaven and Endeavour U3A groups, with an apology from Wollongong U3A, and U3A ACT (Canberra) attending 'as an observer'.



This photograph of the Steering Committee meeting of 12th December 1989 was found in the minute book. While the names of the attendees are recorded in the minutes, they were not allocated to the people in the photograph.

There was general agreement to the formation of a State Council of U3A, and as each U3A had been established independently with differing ideas of management and organisation, it was hoped that this would facilitate co-operation between member U3As. Other issues raised included how information could be shared, funding the organisation, and future State conferences.

A series of meetings of members of the Steering Committee followed over the next few months. In December 1989, a draft Constitution was proposed, but, while discussed at length, it was clear that there were many issues that required investigation and further discussion before a constitution could be endorsed. However, it was agreed in principle that the Council should be open to any group which was autonomous and which had a set of rules which clearly embodied the principles of the U3A movement.

There was some scepticism among U3As which had not been involved in the Steering Committee meetings. Some considered the proposal premature; others were not interested as they felt that U3As were autonomous entities, with their own approach to the principles of the U3A movement. In March 1990, the Chairman, Harry Mayfield (Hume U3A), circulated a statement to all U3As to make clear that the purpose of the Council was to provide a mechanism for sharing information, and specifically that it was "not an autocratic organisation, nor a case of bureaucracy gone mad."

The Steering Committee was aware that a network of U3As in Victoria had already been established, and had been provided with a grant of \$4000 from the Victorian Council of Adult Education to support its development. The issue of accepting funding from outside sources was a vexed one as the Laslett principles of the U3A movement specified that U3As would be self-funded. Laslett had been wary of external funding, particularly of accepting government funding, but the Victorian experience was that there were 'no strings attached' and the movement remained self-regulated. The Committee decided to 'closely examine' opportunities for funding through local municipal councils, the Board of Adult Education and the Office for the Ageing.

It was an important point in time for the development of adult community education generally. A number of reviews had been held, including the Commonwealth Government review culminating in the Aulich Report⁵, which inter alia acknowledged the value of the U3A movement to the overall

⁵ T. Aulich (Chair) *Come In Cinderella: The Emergence of Adult and Community Education in Australia* (1991), pp. 62-64.

health and wellbeing of its members, and recommended that State and Territory governments reflect “ the proven benefits of sustained educational activity into the so-called third age.” The potential and the argument were there for funding support.

Pending further investigation, it was proposed that each group contribute \$10 to meet expenses of printing, postage etc, and that a sub-committee be appointed to draft proposals for a Constitution. In relation to that issue, it was decided that the Victorian U3A Network be asked for a copy of its Constitution, as a guide. In the meantime Council meetings, comprising two delegates from each participant U3A, would continue to be held quarterly. The meeting also foreshadowed the concept of developing correspondence courses, with audio tapes and the mutual exchange of course leaders.

However, the momentum for the project appears to have declined. Sydney U3A had decided to withdraw from the Steering Committee, as it did not see a need for a Council, although some members of its regional groups continued to be involved.

The next recorded meeting is one held at the Woollahra Council Chambers on 14th April 1991, with further discussion about a constitution. At this meeting, Freda Whitlam of Chifley Penrith U3A assumed the Chair.

Eventually, on 23rd July 1991, Allan Meares of Endeavour (the South Sydney regional group of Sydney U3A) produced a draft constitution for the NSW U3A Council, which was adopted by that meeting. This included the following objectives:

- 1. To provide for mature people, in complete or partial retirement from paid to unpaid employment, programmes of learning activities which will give stimulation and development in their lives.*
- 2. To create a community of scholars in which there is no distinction, in terms of its membership, between those who teach and those who learn.*
- 3. To operate the U3A in such ways that learning is pursued without any reference to entry criteria, qualifications or assessment.*
- 4. To assist in dispelling the notion of intellectual decline with age.*
- 5. To exchange ideas and resources with other U3As, both in Australia and overseas.*
- 6. To encourage the establishment of similar institutions in other parts of Australia.*

The first Annual General Meeting of the Council, at which Freda Whitlam (Chifley Penrith U3A) was elected President and Kathleen Anderson (Chifley Penrith U3A) Secretary, was held on 25th February 1992 at Penrith.

At the next Council meeting, held in Dubbo in October 1992, representatives of 13 U3As attended and reported a total of 3000 members between them. Cecily Butcher (Orange U3A) reported on the Western Support Group (the precursor to the Network’s regional systems). It was decided to distribute a Newsletter three times a year, to apply for incorporation, and to look into the possibility of providing group insurance to cover all U3A member groups. Until then, individual U3As had to take out their own Public Liability Insurance.

It was agreed in future to hold an Annual Conference, in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting, to provide an opportunity for U3A members to meet together and discuss matters of mutual interest.

The first National Conference of U3A was held in Adelaide in October 1992, and NSW U3As were well represented. It was at this conference that a motion to form a national U3A body was defeated

by a handful of votes⁶. The NSW Council offered to host the next national conference in 1994 in Sydney, but this does not seem to have eventuated.

In June 1993, a group Public Liability Insurance Policy was arranged to cover all member U3As of the NSW Council who wished to join. This ensured that the premium contributions of member U3As could be kept as low as possible.⁷

Although a Constitution had been adopted by the Council, several issues remained unresolved, and further consultation was undertaken among the now 15 member U3As of the Council. In November, Allan Meares advised that the document previously adopted was intended as a draft for discussion, and had not been ratified. The final draft was presented to the Annual General Meeting in March 1994, and adopted. The gestation from the idea of a network to a formal incorporated entity had taken over four years.

President Betty Heaton (Bathurst U3A) in her 1994 Annual Report was pleased to be able to report on the achievements and status of the Network :

- The Constitution represented much hard work as well as a desire for co-operation and development;
- Membership of the Council was now 17 U3As with approximately 5000 members;
- A combined Public Liability Insurance Policy had been taken out, providing participating members with reduced cost premiums;
- Communication with member U3As was established through regular circular letters and a Newsletter;
- The Council had been invited as a ‘Peak Seniors Organisation’ to be involved in the implementation of the State Government’s Positive Ageing Policy and meetings held with the NSW Minister for Ageing which opened the way to approaching government from time to time for funding⁸; and
- An article in the “55 Plus” supplement to the Sydney Morning Herald had provided valuable and extensive publicity for the U3A movement in NSW, resulting in a surge in membership.

By 1994, the NSW U3A Council had established itself as a viable and valuable link for the development, promotion and expansion of the U3A movement in New South Wales.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

After the initial stage of establishment, successive committees focussed on developing a range of services and policy approaches to support the work of the Council and its member U3As. These are listed in Appendix 1, but it is opportune to throw light on some of these developments.

The U3A movement continued to grow rapidly in NSW, both in terms of membership of existing U3As and in terms of new U3As. Membership of the Council was open to any autonomous group of persons generally over the age of 55 (although an age limit was not specified in the constitution) which accepted the principles of the U3A movement, and paid an annual membership fee as determined by the AGM.

⁶ A national Alliance was finally formed in 2010 – see Appendix 6

⁷ The policy now covers all member U3As in NSW as well as some interstate U3As.

⁸ It would have been of some valuable assistance that Kath Anderson, previously Secretary and from 1993 Vice-President of the Council, was a past member of the NSW Legislative Council with an understanding of government operations. Later Council representatives on the Office of Ageing consultative group of peak seniors’ organisations included Betty Heaton, Harry Mayfield, and Mel Davies.

At the Council meeting in June 1994, there were 19 U3As affiliated with the Council, and news of another four in the early stages of formation. Chifley Penrith had over 400 members, Hunter (Newcastle) 300, Wollongong 250, Shoalhaven 210, and some others in the 100s. Endeavour applied for membership, but was not accepted as it was a region of Sydney U3A, not a separate U3A.

Sydney U3A had about 1200 members, but was not a member of the Council, leading to a perception that persisted for several years, that there were two U3A peak bodies in NSW - Sydney representing the metropolitan area, and the Council representing regional and rural NSW.

The Council discussed the issues of the availability and cost of suitable accommodation which seemed to be a major problem everywhere. U3As adopted a range of options – arrangements with local councils, TAFEs, and other sources. The President suggested that accommodation needs might be followed up collectively by the Council with the Peak Seniors Organisation and the Board of Adult and Community Education (BACE). The intention was not to obtain funding, but to seek support for accommodation and mutual co-operation.

Ballina/Byron Bay U3A reported that in order to register its name for incorporation, it had been requested by the Office of Consumer Affairs to obtain the permission of Dubbo U3A to use the initials 'U3A'. Eventually, the Office of Consumer Affairs recognised the State Council as the appropriate body to refer to (although it's successor Fair Trading NSW no longer does) but the issue presaged later problems encountered when organisations other than U3As attempted to use the acronym. In 1996, a suggestion that the Council register 'U3A' as a Trade Mark was considered but it was felt to be unfeasible and too expensive.

At the 1995 Annual General Meeting, President Betty Heaton reported that the number of member groups in NSW and the ACT had increased to 25. Newsletters were now produced on a quarterly basis, an exemption from sales tax had been negotiated, and the Council was involved in the celebration nationally of Adult Learners Week. This development indicated an acknowledgement that U3A was not just a Seniors' group, but a relevant aspect of adult community education, epitomising the value of lifelong learning. As such, it would be eligible to apply for special purpose grants from the NSW Board of Adult Community Education, such as for equipment or special projects, in the future.

The national conference proposed to be hosted by the Council in 1994 did not eventuate. However, a Conference was held in April 1995 in Canberra to celebrate the 10th birthday of U3A ACT, with the conference theme *How can we build a better U3A?* Over 200 delegates from Australia and New Zealand attended, including representatives from the NSW Council and four individual NSW U3As. Later that year, Dr Peter Laslett, the co-founder of the Cambridge model of U3A, visited Australia and addressed a U3A gathering organised by U3A ACT. Nineteen members of the NSW Council attended the gathering. One unsettling note at the conference, was a presentation by two delegates from Sydney U3A who suggested there was a bifurcation of the U3A movement in NSW. This was based on their perceptions that Sydney was a more 'academic' U3A than those 'in the country', and that while there was much to be gained by the smaller U3As from mutual co-operation, they concluded that the Network "would do nothing for us"⁹.

As the Council began to settle into its routines, and new members joined, several adjustments were made to the constitution to provide some flexibility for representation at Council meetings, and the composition of the Committee of Management, at the 1996 AGM held at Orange. Although the Council had been established on the basis of quarterly meetings of representatives of all member

⁹ U3A Canberra Conference Papers, April 1995, presented by Frank Stevens (p.17) and Rose Leaf (p.33)

U3As, with a committee to administer the decisions of the Council in between meetings, it was apparent that with U3As distributed throughout the State, distance prevented all from participating in all meetings, which were held at different locations each time. It was suggested that Council meetings be held only twice a year or additionally whenever it was necessary to hold one. It was necessary to amend the constitution to reflect this reality. However, after September 1996, this format lapsed, and thereafter the minutes record only annual general meetings of the Council, with the Committee meeting quarterly.

The 1996 Annual General Meeting also adopted a 'Charter', comprising *The Aims of U3A* and *Guiding Principles for the Operation of U3A*, as follows:¹⁰

The Aims of U3A

1. *To provide for mature people, in complete or partial retirement from paid to unpaid employment, programmes of learning activities which will give stimulation and development in their lives.*
2. *To create a community of scholars in which there is no distinction, in terms of its membership, between those who teach and those who learn.*
3. *To operate the U3A in such ways that learning is pursued without any reference to entry criteria, qualifications or assessment.*
4. *To assist in dispelling the notion of intellectual decline with age.*
5. *To exchange ideas and resources with other U3As, both in Australia and overseas.*
6. *To encourage the establishment of similar institutions in other parts of Australia.*

The Guiding Principles for the Operation of U3A

1. *Members will be encouraged to learn and teach, or in other ways to assist in the operation of U3A.*
2. *Members will receive no payment for contributions as tutors (course leaders, etc), convenors or organisers.*
3. *Young persons will not be prevented from joining, but the interests of Third Age people will provide the criteria for the organisation of U3As and its programs.*
4. *U3A will be financed principally by annual membership fees at levels which enable access to persons on limited means.*
5. *The program of activities will be as wide as the human resources of its membership permit.*
6. *No qualifications from a local university or tertiary institution, but organisation and financial autonomy will be the guiding principle at all times.*
7. *Every U3A should be encouraged to affiliate with the NSW Council of U3A Inc for mutual encouragement and support.*

During this year, a Start-Up Kit (a guide for people interested in establishing a new U3A group) designed and prepared by the President, Cecily Butcher, was approved by the Council. It explained issues such as the background to the U3A movement, incorporation, insurance, administration issues, and suggestions for classes and courses, recognising the differences between small rural and larger regional U3As.

Don Kinsey was elected President at the 1997 Annual General Meeting held in Lismore on 30th April. Don was then President of Northern Rivers U3A, but had not up to that time been a member of the Committee. He recalls that at the time, he felt that many U3As did not understand the role of the Council: it was "seen as a potentially controlling function" and he identified "a need to modify the constitution to establish more clearly a role for Council as a facilitator or adviser, but never as a

¹⁰ A copy of the original Constitution is no longer available. The Minutes of the AGM of 8 May 1996 record the adoption of the Charter and some discussion of the wording, but not the full text. The text reproduced here is as presented in the 2011 brief history *Looking Back ... with Future in Mind*, prepared by Cecily Butcher.

central controlling body.”¹¹ The reality was that by now the Council was perceived not so much as comprising its member U3As, but as the Committee of Management. He therefore initiated a process intended to facilitate networking among groups on a regional rather than a statewide basis, similar to the Central West Regional Network which had been working successfully for many years. With the development of the internet and email as methods of communication, there was support and more opportunity for the exchange of information between U3A groups, and for the Council to communicate more with its member groups.

To that end, he proposed further amendments to the Constitution, which redrafted the Objectives to:

a) promote interaction, information exchange and networking among member U3As and, as far as practicable, with all U3As throughout Australia and internationally.

b) provide a consultative, advisory, and coordinating service for affiliated members of Council, recognising the autonomous nature of individual U3As.

c) provide a coordinated interface, as required by Members, with government and other bodies outside of the U3A movement.

d) promote and assist the formation of U3As within the State of NSW.

e) be non-sectarian and non-political.

This was adopted at the 1998 Annual General Meeting, along with reports from Council members who had organised consultative preliminary meetings to establish regional networking. The initial proposal was to divide the State into four regions, each with an Adviser to whom U3As could relate on a personal basis for information and advice.

Copyright issues were also discussed at the 1998 Annual General Meeting, and it was agreed to make enquiries into how U3A groups could ensure that they were covered and protected as required for compliance with copyright law in the delivery of their programs. Council had also obtained a better insurance deal for members, and this led to attracting interest from U3As in other States. The Council also adopted the following view on government funding - in response to a request from a Shadow Minister - that U3A would not want regular funding, but that one-off funding for individual projects such as accommodation and resources would be more acceptable and productive.

U3AOnline was established as a pilot “virtual U3A” project in 1998, by a group of U3A internet enthusiasts¹². Gwen Banks (Shoalhaven U3A) represented the Council in the discussions and negotiations on the project, for which a substantial grant of Commonwealth money had been obtained. Gwen perceived the initiative as an opportunity for people isolated by distance, circumstance or disability to participate in U3A courses, rather than as an extra resource for existing U3As, although that might eventuate in the future¹³. The absence of a national U3A body to sponsor the initiative was a reminder of the limitations of the U3A movement in participating in the information technology revolution. The issue did however foreshadow the potential which the internet provided generally for the Council and individual U3As to utilise in the immediate future for networking, conferencing, and communication generally.

It was agreed at the 1999 Annual General Meeting to provide seeding grants, in the form of a loan, to any group which was in a relatively advanced process of establishing a new U3A. The recently imposed GST, which had superseded Sales Tax, was discussed as groups were concerned at the cost

¹¹ Notes from Don Kinsey, July 2015.

¹² Dorothy Braxton of U3A ACT, Jack McDonnell of the Victorian U3A Network, and Dr Rick Swindell of Griffith University, with formal sponsorship for the purpose of Commonwealth funding from Adult Learning Australia.

¹³ Report to Council, January 1999.

and reporting implications if it applied to their operations. It was agreed to write to the Federal Treasurer setting out what U3A did and asking what were the implications for U3As. A possible national organisation was considered by the Council, and potential logistic problems as well as opportunities such as what the body could offer, were canvassed.

By the 2000 Annual General Meeting, membership of the Council had increased to 34 U3As. The issue of GST was resolved with advice that charity groups with an annual turnover of less than \$100,000 may decide for themselves whether to register for the GST and receive an Australian Business Number (ABN) or not. Those with an ABN could be exempted from collection of GST, but lost the right to claim a refund on goods purchased. Council recommended that U3As apply for an ABN and exemption status.

During 2000, a development company proposed to create retirement complexes under the name U3A Retirement Village, and reserved the names U3A Pty Ltd, U3A Online Pty Ltd, and U3ACom Pty Ltd with the Department of Fair Trading. The company approached several U3As on the Mid-Central Coast for their involvement in the scheme once the villages were established. The U3As were offered classrooms dedicated to U3A use, but the developer proposed to retain control of the program. The relevant U3As refused this offer, but the incident alerted the Network to the fact that 'U3A' was not the exclusive property of the U3A movement. The Network wrote to both Fair Trading and the developer objecting to the use of the acronym, due to its use in Australia since 1984. The nature of any negotiations has not been recorded in Network minutes, but ASIC records indicate that the companies did not trade and were finally deregistered in 2005.

In the same year (2000), U3A Online registered a company limited by guarantee, U3A Online Resources Pty Ltd., as a vehicle for seeking corporate sponsorship. This created some concern with the Council, which regarded the action as a commercial venture and thus not a 'genuine' U3A, even though it was led by U3A members and aimed to extend the benefits of U3A to persons who might not otherwise have had the opportunity to join a U3A. This led to some frostiness, but in any event the method of incorporation did not achieve the desired result, and the company was deregistered in 2004. U3A Online then incorporated as a not-for-profit association (as had other U3As) under the *Associations Incorporation Act (NSW)* and became a member of the Network.

These events raised two issues – the use by persons or organisations not part of the U3A movement to appropriate the acronym 'U3A' and the ability to raise funds from corporate donors, which normally requires 'deductible gift recipient' (DGR) status from the Australian Taxation Office as a 'charitable' (a legal term) entity – which have continued to be under regular consideration by the NSW Network, as well as in other States. They were issues which reinforced the argument for a national approach. They also raised again the prospect of registering 'U3A' as a Trade Mark, a suggestion which was regarded as unlikely to succeed at this time.

From 1995, Council meetings including AGMs and occasionally guest speakers had been held over one day at a different venue each time. In 2001, for the first time, the Annual General Meeting and an associated Annual Conference was held over two days. This innovation permitted more time to invite interesting guest speakers, to include workshops and a conference dinner, and 'coffee and chat' time to encourage U3A people to get to know each other. This format has continued with great success.

In her Presidential address to the 2001 Annual General Meeting at Forster, Mel Davies noted that the issue of regionalisation was gaining momentum. She also noted that "a particularly pleasing development over the past year had been the establishment of active liaison with Sydney U3A". The 'academic divide' had been extinguished.

Network Management Committee meetings continued to be held three or four times a year at venues ranging from Bathurst, Penrith, Nowra, Dubbo, Orange and Lake Macquarie, until August 2001, when a decision was made, for convenience and initially at the invitation of Sydney U3A, to hold meetings at the Sydney U3A office in Young Street. This venue continued until September 2005, when meetings were moved to the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts building in Pitt Street. The Committee continues to meet in Sydney currently at the Masonic Club in Castlereagh Street.

A major development in 2003 was the establishment of the Network website by Peter Anderson (of Bateman's Bay U3A) with support from Ray Gall and Ern Hollebone. In addition to maintaining the Network website, the web administrator assisted member U3As and other ancillary activities such as the Resources Library to set up sub-domain sites, and provided on-going support for their web administrators, as well as links to other relevant sites. This development is described further in Appendix 4.

As the Council grew in numbers, regional meetings were also encouraged: by 2003 the number of U3As in the Council had risen to 40, with 13 (interstate) associate members. At the Annual General Meeting in 2003, it was decided to make formal constitutional provision for the appointment of Regional Advisers, to support regional groupings and their member U3As. The member U3As were initially allocated into 6 regional areas, and Regional Advisers appointed for the South, Central, Northern, Western and Outer Sydney regions (not including Sydney U3A) with U3A ACT as a region in itself. [This allocation changed in later years.]

This decision was intended to facilitate networking on a localised scale, but may have caused some U3As concern that it could threaten their autonomy. Aware of this concern, President Phil LeFevre advised at the 2004 Annual General Meeting, that *"this year saw the birth of regionalisation. The objective of the scheme is nothing more than facilitating Council being better able to help U3As and for them to more readily have access to any help Council can give."*

Subsequent Committee of Management meetings over several years discussed and refined the role of Regional Advisers, (RAs) while also grappling with meeting the additional expenses that RAs would incur through travel and communication with their allocated groups. It was apparent that smaller and newer U3As appreciated the support that RAs could give them, and the benefits of connection with 'neighbouring' U3As through sub-regional meetings. However, not all U3As, especially those in coastal areas, felt a need for an RA.

In 2005, President Gerard Bakkers reported to the Annual General Meeting on a discussion he had had with the President and Secretary of the Victorian U3A Network, in which both Networks were supportive of developing a national U3A body. He noted that "we are on a similar wavelength". Special mention was made of the work of the Treasurer Ian Tayler, in being able to reduce the public liability premium contributions to be paid by a large proportion of U3As, while at the same time ensuring the financial viability of the Council's work.

2006 was a particularly fruitful year in the development of the Network. A Special General Meeting held in association with the 2006 Annual General Meeting, decided to change its name to U3A Network NSW Inc. as a more accurate expression of its evolution from a council to a body providing a range of services to its member U3As.

During the year, the Committee discussed ideas such as developing a generic brochure about U3A, a template constitution, an electronic communications network, developing *Newslink* as a nationally distributed publication, copyright issues affecting both U3As and the Council's activities, and a guest tutor scheme. Guidelines for co-operation between the Network Committee and host U3As for organising the Annual Conference and AGM were developed.

In 2006, the Committee decided to rename the Regional Advisor position 'Regional Co-ordinator' but this was not altered in the constitution, and did not dispel the perception of some of oversight rather than support, "an affront to U3A autonomy". A role description for 'Regional Co-ordinators' was developed as a means of clarification and explanation for member U3As. A later suggestion to refer to RAs as 'Regional Liaison Officers' was adopted by the Committee but did not transfer into operation. It was gradually recognised that the effectiveness of 'regionalisation' was more usually dependent upon the manner in which the appointed RA approached the role, rather than upon the role itself.

The Resources Library, initiated by Mel Davies, Rhonda Byrne and Jan Bennett, was established to provide access to 'off-the-shelf' courses and programs developed by U3A members which they were willing to share with other U3As. The material submitted by U3A members was prepared utilising Powerpoint and lecture notes which were made available on compact disc or by download from the sub-domain of the Resources Library on the Network website. This innovation was especially appreciated by smaller and isolated U3As which had otherwise limited access to such resources.

A proposal by Mel Davies to develop a Five Year Plan was endorsed, and at a subsequent meeting of the Committee, this was developed to commence from 2007. Considerable work was also done by Ern Hollebhone and Ray Gall, with valuable support from Peter Anderson, to invigorate the website, and to establish sub-domain sites for member U3As.

A suggestion was made during general discussion that the Committee set about planning for a national body. As a result, a meeting was held in Sydney later in the year with representatives of the Victoria U3A Network and U3A Online to discuss the idea of setting up a network of Presidents of all U3As in Australia. The intention was to set up a pilot scheme but at that time the idea was considered unworkable.

In 2015, Mel Davies reflected that "*this period was in retrospect I think the most important period for Network to date. Back in the mists of my first career, nursing, I trained under a Matron formidable who said that changes are inevitable but can be controlled by how you manage, react to and work through the change process. I think we followed that path. On occasion the castle may have shaken a little, but it stood and still stands firm.*"¹⁴

In 2007, Pat MacLaren-Smith (Northern Rivers U3A) was elected President at the Annual General Meeting held in Lismore. The Five Year Plan was approved, dividing Network activities into the following areas - Administration of the Network; Website; Regionalisation; Publicity; Courses and Content; Conferences, and Financial Development.¹⁵ Individual Committee members were allocated aspects of the Plan to develop and monitor. It was also agreed that Regional Co-ordinators would meet after Network Committee meetings to discuss common challenges. The adoption of a planning approach meant that the major aspects of the Committee's activities were regularly reviewed at subsequent meetings in a coherent and sequential manner.

Over the following year, the Committee agreed that Copyright licences would be negotiated for U3As which needed them. The 21st Birthday Celebrations of U3A ACT in Canberra provided another opportunity for interstate U3A representatives to meet together informally.

¹⁴ Reflections by Mel Davies in correspondence with the author, 2015.

¹⁵ At the conclusion of the first Five Year Plan, planning changed to a Three Year cycle, but continues to work within the same areas of activity, except that 'Courses and Content' has become more broadly Education.

Long-serving members Gerard Bakkers, Ray Gall, Mel Davies, Ern Hollebone and Betsy Coroneos, all retired from the Network Committee at the 2008 AGM. The change with a number of new members elected to the committee led to the development of a Policy Manual for all members of the Committee so that new members were appraised of past policies and role descriptions to ensure both continuity and continuing relevance. This practice has continued with regular updating.

At the 2008 Annual General Meeting of the Network at Warilla, further discussion of the idea of a national alliance led to the following motion being passed: “*This meeting endorses a proposal for developing a national U3A body, and endorses the NSW U3A Network to proceed with appropriate arrangements.*” The Network set up a sub-committee to provide direction to proceed with liaison with interstate U3A Networks and development of the proposal¹⁶.

During 2008, two members of the Committee reported having attended the Annual Conference of Adult Learning Australia (ALA), where the priorities of ALA were stated to be *Education for Seniors* and *Reconciliation*. The Committee agreed to join ALA. The anticipated strengthened relationship with ALA unfortunately did not eventuate so membership subsequently lapsed, although informal contact has been maintained from time to time since¹⁷. The Committee also considered and agreed to a policy on Sponsorship. Ron Browne attended and made a presentation at the Illawarra regional consultation of the National 20/20 Summit (a Federal Government consultation) on the topic of *Preventative Health for the Ageing Population*, emphasising the value of U3A to older people’s health and wellbeing.

In 2009, President Pat MacLaren-Smith reported that she had met with the Federal Minister for Ageing (the Hon. Justine Elliott) to appraise her of U3A in NSW and to raise the issue of Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status to facilitate donations by corporations to U3A. Additionally, a small delegation from the Committee met with two senior Ministerial Advisers of the State Government in the Ageing and Education portfolios, who were keen to learn what U3A groups do in their communities. This resulted in a grant of \$15,000 being provided by the then NSW Minister for Education (the Hon Verity Firth) to assist the Network with promotional activities.

During the year, Ian Tayler and Ainslie Lamb undertook a review of the Network Constitution, which by then had undergone 8 amendments since its adoption in 1996. The review also provided an opportunity to review the role of Regional Advisers and other aspects of organisation such as the ability to hold electronic meetings and postal voting as provided in new legislation affecting incorporated associations. The review was followed by extensive consultation with member U3As of a range of proposals for change.

The Network also produced and distributed to all member U3As a Public Relations Handbook prepared by Colin Jones of Dubbo U3A on behalf of the Network, providing a comprehensive guide to promoting their work in their communities. *Newslink*, which had been edited by Mel Davies for several years, was re-developed by its new editor, Graeme Eggins of Northern Rivers (Lismore) U3A as a vehicle to provide information and news for U3A committees, and was made available on the website. A 12-page brochure about U3A and the Network was produced gratis by Odyssey Travel.

The Committee also became aware of an application by a private company to register ‘U3A’ as a trade mark. The Committee informed the Trade Marks Office of its objection to this, and after a

¹⁶ The subsequent development of the Alliance is set out in Appendix 6.

¹⁷ Ainslie Lamb made a presentation on U3A *Adult Community Education And The Older Citizen* to the ALA stream of the AVTRTRA Conference, Gold Coast, in April 2014.

considerable period of delay the private application lapsed. However, it motivated the Committee to adopt a logo and to apply for registration of the logo as a Trade Mark with the hope that this would deter further misappropriation of the 'U3A' acronym.

By 2010, the Network had expanded to 59 member U3As in New South Wales/ACT, as well as the several interstate 'associate members' who over the years had joined the Network primarily to enable them to take advantage of the favourable Public Liability Insurance cover and premiums negotiated by the Network.

At the 2010 Annual General Meeting, the Network adopted the Revised Constitution which removed some inconsistencies and anomalies which had crept into the document, incorporated legislative changes, and which was intended to make the Network more responsive to and representative of its members. Regional Advisers were replaced by 6 elected Regional Representatives, plus a Sydney Metropolitan Representative. The revised constitution also made allowance for postal voting for elections of the Committee and on major issues, and for the use of electronic committee meetings.¹⁸

In 2011, President Ron Browne noted that following implementation of the revised Constitution, all regions were now represented on the Committee. He reported that the grant from the Education Minister had been principally applied to the production of a promotional DVD narrated by the actor Henri Szeps, the production of a coloured brochure and the allocation of Innovation Grants to several U3As to promote their activities and to support smaller and remote U3As. It was also noted that a new logo had been designed for the Network, and an application made for it to be registered as a Trade Mark.¹⁹

The 2011 Conference was held in Sydney, hosted by the Network Committee with substantial and significant assistance from Hawkesbury U3A in handling registrations and other organisational aspects of the Conference. The keynote speaker was Dr Barry Jones AO. The Conference marked 20 years of the Network's operations, and a brief history entitled *Looking Back with the Future in Mind*, prepared by Cecily Butcher, was launched at the Conference Dinner. The first face-to-face meeting of U3A Alliance Australia was held in conjunction with the Conference, as representatives of all State Networks, U3A ACT and U3A Online attended the Conference. The significance of these events was marked at a civic reception hosted by the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Ald. Clover Moore.

During 2011, the Network obtained funding of \$130,000 over a 4 year period, from the NSW Minister for Ageing, the Hon. Andrew Constance, to be applied towards the promotion and expansion of U3A in NSW, and to continue to support smaller and remoter U3As. The Network began working more closely with COTA NSW and the Office for Ageing, which resulted in the Network being represented at discussions in relation to the State Government's Whole-of-Government Ageing Strategy.

There was some concern that a national model of *Work Health & Safety* legislation commencing on 1st January 2012 might have adverse application to U3A Networks and U3As, but the secretary obtained clarification that the legislation did not apply to not-for-profit organisations that did not employ any workers but were wholly maintained by volunteers.

¹⁸ The Executive of the Network, and where appropriate the Committee on single issues, have since regularly adopted an electronic format for decision making between Committee meetings, but the first experimental 'online' full Committee meeting was held in September 2015.

¹⁹ The Trade Mark application was approved and registered in 2012.

The Annual General Meeting in 2012 marked the completion of the Five Year Plan. President Ron Browne noted that the Plan had identified a number of activities to be undertaken but that to achieve these, first and foremost, it had been necessary to attract additional funding from outside the Network. He was pleased to report that goals set by the Plan had been substantially achieved.

In 2013, President Allan Haggarty reported that the Committee had developed and were implementing a new Three Year Plan, adopting the same objectives and structure as the previous Plan. The number of U3As in the Network continued to grow, reaching 60 in NSW/ACT plus several more new interstate members. The President commenced negotiations with the NSW Department of Crown Lands to enable U3As to lease premises to meet accommodation needs, but the Department subsequently entered into a review of Crown Lands and this initiative was unable to proceed further.

Relationships with the State Government Office for Ageing continued to be co-operative, especially as the Network had produced an exercise DVD *Balance'n' Bones*, which was distributed to 100 community libraries as well as to member U3As.

At the 2014 Annual General Meeting, Allan Haggarty noted a further 5 new U3As had been formed, bringing the total to 65. During the year, the Committee had developed 'The Blue Book', a reference handbook which contained readily available information on the structure, services and policies of the Network, as well as general information on a range of issues of relevance to U3As. The *Balance'n'Bones* DVD had also been well received by interstate U3As and individual purchasers. The Network also distributed a special edition of *Newslink* to all NSW State and Federal MPs, designed to raise their awareness of U3A and its contribution to 'positive ageing'.

At the 2015 Annual General Meeting, Ainslie Lamb was elected President. During the year, the Network received a small grant from the IRT Foundation to develop a *Brain Games Project*, as a companion educational initiative to the *Balance'n'Bones* DVD. The Network also joined the NSW Ageing Alliance, a collective of not-for-profit organisations concerned to promote appropriate age-friendly State government policies. During the year, another NSW (and 2 interstate) U3As joined the Network, with 2 or 3 more in the early stages of formation.

The Network continues to provide a wide range of services to its members, including generic promotional material available by download from the website, and proactive support for the establishment of new U3As, as well as insurance, copyright licences and website support, and the Resources Library.

After 25 years, the Network continues to flourish and grow, and carry on the vision of its founders, while embracing new technologies and promoting the valuable contribution that the U3A Movement makes towards lifelong learning and healthy ageing through mental and physical activity and social interaction in Australian society.

EPILOGUE

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. The more things change, the more they stay the same. Equally, there is an oft-quoted sociological adage, in the context of a dynamic environment, that “organisations have to change to stay the same.” The Network is certainly not exempt from this.

While the Network has grown from a group of 10 in 1991 to its present size of 67 U3As and about 30,000 members over a 25 year period, it is evident from Network records that many issues crop up regularly, as the members of each generation of committee members builds on the legacy of their predecessors, and adapt to change.

Of course, services like the insurance scheme, the Resources Library, and the website have been delivered successfully since their initial implementation.

However perennial issues include the relationship between council/network and its members, dealing initially with the notion of government by a council but as the organisation grew, devolving to an elected committee; endeavouring to marry that concept with forms of ‘regionalisation’ to provide advice and support whether it was wanted or not; eventually evolving to incorporate the regional concept into the democratic election of the committee.

The desirability of the Network Committee receiving financial support from outside sources has been a vexed issue over the years. Laslett envisaged U3A as a self funded movement, and this is essentially still the case. Laslett advised against accepting government grants, but on the broad issue of external funding, opinion is divided. Some individual U3As have received support in funding or in kind from Councils and sponsors and the acceptance of this support has not undermined the basic self supporting character of U3A nor comprised its independence.

At about the time the U3A Network was formed in New South Wales, there had been a number of reports from both Federal and State governments relating to the provision of continuing and community education for adults²⁰ and proposing various approaches to the issue, including TAFE and Community Colleges. While most Governments have since retreated from earlier rather meagre support for evening classes and other classes for personal development, the economic imperatives of the economic rationalist period witnessed support focussing more on vocational education and training (VET). With the exception of the Victorian government, which provides generous support to U3A, there has been limited acknowledgment of support for U3A classes and activities by governments, but in a recent article²¹ Dr Barrie Brennan argues that “*The contemporary climate appears to be suitable for the recognition of U3A as a provider of Adult Education in NSW. U3A would be a provider of adult education for a special sector, those in their Third Age, and especially assist in the learning of older persons in the new technologies that are a feature of contemporary Australian society.*”

Specific support for the U3A movement even as an adult community education provider remains unlikely, especially in the current economic climate, although Broadband for Seniors (provided by the Commonwealth Government) and Tech Savvy Seniors (provided by Telstra in association with State governments) has been available for some time to assist and encourage older citizens to become technologically literate. Governments also offer one-off grants for specific purposes which meet their policy objectives, and there will be occasions when U3A, either through the Network or

²⁰ The Aulich Report *Come In Cinderella: The emergence of Adult and Community Education in Australia* (1991); The Cavalier Report *The Provision of Adult Education in New South Wales* (1986); the Ministerial Council on Education *National Policy on Adult Community Education* (1997); *Ministerial Declaration on Adult Community Education* (2001).

²¹ B Brennan, *in correspondence with the author, 2015*

as individual groups, will qualify for grants for activities which meet the grant criteria such as local arts or volunteer activities. It has been suggested that it may be more productive to focus on the health and wellbeing benefits of U3As, than on education.

In New South Wales, all recurrent administrative costs of the Network are met by the Network's members. The policy on grants and sponsorship is that external support is accepted only for specific purposes and not for recurrent funding. The 2009 grant from the State Government was applied chiefly to promotional productions, such as a promo DVD. The 2010-14 four year grant from the State Government was applied to supporting the promotion and expansion of the U3A movement in New South Wales, and support for smaller and remoter U3As to participate in regional meetings or Network Conferences.

What has been of benefit has been the opportunity to develop relationships with local and State Government at a policy level, for example to contribute to Councils developing Positive Ageing policies and to the New South Wales State Government's *Whole-Of-Government* approach which embraces all relevant Departments dealing with matters affecting older citizens. It is both relevant and essential that the U3A movement continue to impress upon government the value that U3A provides in terms of promoting mental and physical health benefits and social interaction that is so important for seniors to maintain their independence in the Third Age, and to stave off the Fourth Age of dependency.

The associated issue of 'deductible gift recipient' (DGR) status, which is normally required to attract corporate sponsorship and tax-deductible donations, has also been a Network concern over many years. There is hope that the Network's – and its member U3As' – 'charitable' status might open this door, especially as the legislative definition of what is meant by 'charitable' for this purpose was reviewed by the Commonwealth government in 2013. The Network continues to work on the issue.

Over the years, the attention of the Network Committee has been drawn to the fact that other individuals and organisations other than *bona fide* U3A designated and approved groups have sought to use the acronym 'U3A'. Where these occurrences have been identified efforts have been made to dissuade inappropriate use of the term. The Network endeavoured to deter such use by registering its logo as a trade mark, but it appears that business names law does not prohibit the use of 'U3A' in a business name. Some retirement villages encourage co-operation with local U3A groups, eg to offer some of their programs on site, or to entertain residents through choir and similar performances, but the Network remains opposed to 'closed shop' U3As within retirement villages. In the intermediate zone lies a not-for-profit company established by an individual (who is a U3A member with extensive educational travel experience) under the name of Travel U3A, which is not part of the U3A movement as such, but provides opportunities for educational travel designed with the interests of U3A members in mind.

The U3A movement has continued to grow, although historically there have also been some U3As formed in the early days which have lapsed (eg Gundagai, Dunedoo, Tamworth in its first incarnation), or have undergone changes of name or have been absorbed into another entity (eg Hume, Endeavour). Obviously, U3As must be initiated and owned by local people, but the Network has an important role in providing start-up and ongoing support for new U3As. Individual membership continues to be more prevalent among women (about 75%) than men, although it is acknowledged that the Men's Shed movement has provided a similar social environment as U3A in recent years.

The idea of a national body has been another perennial issue. It first surfaced in the early 1990s, but took until 2010 to come to fruition through the initiative of the NSW Network, and has still to realise its principal objective of effective advocacy at a national level, as discussed in Appendix 6.

The Network is an evolving and dynamic organisation and has the momentum to continue to prosper in the future. We should strengthen our resolve to attract more people to continue their learning in their senior years as this can, in turn, foster their zest for living.

In a paper published in 2009²², Martin Formosa of the European Centre for Gerontology identified several challenges facing the U3A movement across the globe. These included the question of whether U3A, as its membership aged and the next generation enjoyed a different lifestyle, would continue to grow; whether U3A was sufficiently socially inclusive and representative of the population at large in terms of gender, ethnic background and culture, and disability; whether it made adequate provision for a ‘fourth age of learning’ for people in aged care residences who retained their interest in learning new things; and whether it adopted new technologies to encourage ‘e-learning’.

These challenges are relevant to our own Network²³. We need to embrace them so as to ensure the continuing availability to older lifelong learners of the positive ageing benefits and companionship that U3A provides.

²² M. Formosa. *Renewing Universities Of The Third Age: Challenges and Visions For The Future* ,Magazine of Thinking and Analysis. 2009 No. 9 (pp. 171-196).

²³ See also R Browne and A Lamb *U3A Faces the Future – The Charter and the Challenge*, keynote speech at 2014 Network Conference at Armidale, May 2014.

APPENDIX 1 - THE ROLE AND SERVICES OF THE NETWORK

The Council's, and later the Network's, role was to provide support and services for the members of the Network, which continue to assist members in administering their groups, and in providing quality courses for their members.

1993 – A group insurance scheme to provide U3As with Public Liability cover, at cheaper rates than they could obtain as individual organisations. While the underwriter has changed from time to time, this service remains important not only for NSW U3As but for many interstate U3As.

1993/5 Establishment of a quarterly newsletter (originally *Newsletter* edited by Betty Heaton, Cecily Butcher and Gwen Banks, later *Newslink*, edited by Mel Davies (1999-2008), then Graeme Eggins (2009), currently Ainslie Lamb (2010 -).

1997 A Start-up Kit to assist new groups to establish themselves as a U3A and to join the Network. The Kit is updated from time to time.

1999 – The concept of providing regional support for U3As, especially those which were smaller and in more isolated areas west of the Great Dividing Range. The history of “Regionalisation” has been one of evolution, and will doubtless continue to be so.

2003 The establishment of a website at www.nsw.u3anet.org.au through the efforts of Ray Gall, Peter Anderson and current webmaster Ern Hollebhone. The website provides a gateway into the Network for internet visitors; information about U3A for both the browser and the U3A membership; and sub-domain links to other U3As and relevant websites. A brief history of this development is set out in Appendix 4.

2006 Establishment of a Courses and Resources Library, which enables U3As to access ‘off-the-shelf’ courses of high quality prepared and donated by U3A members, as well as convenient access to other external educational resources. The concept was developed by Mel Davies, Rhonda Byrne, and Jan Bennett. A brief history of this development is set out in Appendix 5.

2008/9 Provision of a group Copyright Licence through the Copyright Agency Ltd. and similar licences with the Australian Performing Rights Association and Screenrights. These licences ensure that U3A groups and tutors do not breach copyright of authors, performers and film-makers, when using or downloading teaching materials from books, magazines, DVDs, audio and videotapes, CDs and internet sources.

2009 Appointment of a Public Relations Officer (Colin Jones (2009) (Pat Spilsbury, 2009-2013). Production of a Public Relations Handbook by Colin Jones (available on the Network website). A one-off Ministerial Grant of \$15,000 provided by the NSW Minister for Education enabled production of a promotional DVD (2010), as well as assisting the promotion of U3A in local areas and on the internet. A promotional brochure was also produced gratis for the Network by Odyssey Travel.

2011 – A Ministerial Grant of \$130,000 over four years was provided by the NSW Minister for Ageing. Revised Constitution adopted, providing for direct regional representation on the Network Committee.

2012 - Registration of U3A Network NSW trade mark/logo.

2012-15 – Production of generic leaflets and other promotional material for member U3As. Support for small and remote U3As to attend Conference. Support for regional cluster meetings.

2013 – Production of *Balance'n'Bones* exercise DVD. Production of *The Blue Book* Network Reference Manual.

APPENDIX 2 – PRESIDENTS, SECRETARIES AND TREASURERS OF THE COUNCIL/NETWORK

The story of U3A in New South Wales owes a debt to all those who have served on its Committees. It has not been possible to record the names of all who have served, but the leadership of Presidents, the perpetual contributions of Secretaries, the resourcefulness of Treasurers who have maintained the financial viability of the Network, and the lengthy service of some officers deserve special mention.

Presidents

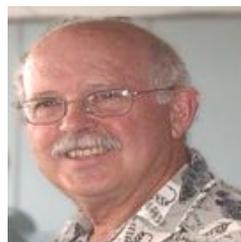
- 1989 - 1990 Harry Mayfield (Hume U3A), Chair of Steering Committee)
1991 – 1993 Freda Whitlam (Western Sydney – Chifley Chapter) elected Chair of the Steering Committee (1991) and first President of the Council (1992)
1993 – 1995 Betty Heaton (Bathurst U3A)
1995 – 1997 Cecily Butcher (Orange U3A)
1997 – 1999 Don Kinsey (Northern Rivers – Lismore U3A)



Freda Whitlam



Cecily Butcher



Don Kinsey

- 1999 – 2002 Mel Davies (Lake Macquarie U3A)
2002 – 2004 Phil LeFevre (Milton/Ulladulla U3A)
2004 – 2007 Gerard Bakkers (Macarthur U3A)
2007 – 2010 Pat MacLaren-Smith (Northern Rivers [Lismore] U3A)



Mel Davies



Philip LeFevre



Pat MacLaren-Smith

- 2010 - 2012 Ron Browne (Northern Illawarra U3A)
2012- 2015 Allan Haggarty (Griffith U3A)
2015 - Ainslie Lamb (Northern Illawarra U3A)



Ron Browne



Allan Haggarty



Ainslie Lamb

Treasurers

1989 – 1992 Betty Mayfield (Endeavour/Sydney U3A)
1993 Allan Meares (Endeavour/Sydney U3A)
1994 Lillian Edghill (Bathurst U3A)
1995 – 2004 Gerard Bakkers (Hume, later Macarthur U3A)
2004 - 2008 Ian Tayler (Lake Macquarie U3A)
2008 - 2009 John Green (Tamworth U3A)
2009 - Geoff Hatch (Hawkesbury U3A)

Secretaries

1990 – 1992 Kathleen Anderson (Western Sydney – Chifley Chapter)
1992 – 1995 Cecily Butcher (Orange U3A)
1995 – 1996 Kaye Overton (Dubbo Chapter U3A)
1996 – 1998 Gwen Banks (U3A Shoalhaven TAL)
1998 – 2001 Ray Gall (Shellharbour U3A)
2001 – 2008 Ern Hollebone (Manning Valley U3A)
2008 - 2013 Ainslie Lamb (Northern Illawarra U3A)
2013 - 2016 Jean de Hosson (Southern Highlands U3A)

Long service members of the Committee

1989 - 1994 Harry Mayfield (Hume U3A)
1991 - 2014 Cecily Butcher (Orange U3A)
1994 - 2007 Gerard Bakkers (Hume, Macarthur U3As)
1997 - 2007, 2009-10 Mel Davies (Lake Macquarie U3A)*
1998 - 2006 Ray Gall (Wollongong U3A)
2000 - 2008 Ern Hollebone (Manning Valley U3A)**
2002 - 2008 Rhonda Byrne (Eastlakes U3A)
2004 - 2011 Ian Tayler (Lake Macquarie U3A)
2007 - 2012 Ron Browne (Northern Illawarra U3A)
2010 - 2015 Des Davis (Port Macquarie Hastings U3A)
2008 - current Ainslie Lamb (Northern Illawarra U3A)
2009 - current Geoff Hatch (Hawkesbury U3A)
2010 - current Allan Haggarty (Griffith U3A)

*Also served as Resources Library Manager, 2006-2016

** Also served as Webmaster, 2008-2016

APPENDIX 3 - ANNUAL CONFERENCES

Annual Conferences, in association with the Annual General Meeting of the Council/Network were initiated in 1993, and have become an important feature of the Network’s operations. Initially they were a one-day event, providing opportunities for discussion of matters of mutual interest, and the incorporation of the Annual General Meeting. From 2001, they were expanded to two days.

These events provide a range of opportunities for U3A representatives and members to hear significant guest speakers, to meet and exchange ideas and information through workshop sessions, and to socialise. Recent guest speakers have included luminaries such as the State Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AD CVO (2010); NSW Ministers for Ageing - the Hon Andrew Constance (2012) and the Hon John Ajaka (2013); and former Commonwealth Minister for Science and Patron of U3AAA, the Hon Barry Jones AO (2008 and 2011). Other key-note speakers have addressed the conference on significant issues affecting third age learning and wellbeing issues.

Conferences also generally include workshops where delegates can share experience, or gain new information and knowledge about a wide range of topics both administrative and curriculum based.

Conference Dinners are held during the Conference, providing opportunities for social interaction and, often, entertainment provided by U3A members – as actors, musicians, or after-dinner speakers. Since 2014, a slide show illustrating some aspect of each U3A in the Network has been presented, an innovation of current secretary Jean de Hosson.

In more recent years, the Annual General Meeting has been expanded to incorporate a Members Forum to discuss matters of common interest. Opportunities have also been provided for special interests to meet together the day before or during the Conference, eg Regional Representatives, and smaller or larger U3As.

Conferences are hosted by a U3A group, which organises the venue, program, speakers and other activities, although the Network Committee is responsible for conducting the AGM and Members’ Forum, and facilitating the special interest meetings.

Conference hosts and locations since 1993 :

Year	Location	Host U3A
1993	Penrith	Western Sydney - Chifley Chapter
1994	Forbes	Forbes College for Seniors
1995	Emu Plains	Penrith – Chifley Chapter
1996	Orange	Orange U3A
1997	Lismore	Northern Rivers - Lismore U3A
1998	Canberra	U3A ACT
1999	Bathurst	Bathurst U3A
2000	Toronto	Lake Macquarie U3A
2001	Forster	Forster – Tuncurry U3A
2002	Wollongong	Wollongong U3A
2003	Dubbo	Dubbo Chapter U3A
2004	Wingham	Manning Valley U3A
2005	Argenton	Eastlakes and Lake Macquarie U3As
2006	Merimbula	Sapphire Coast U3A
2007	Lismore	Northern Rivers – Lismore U3A

2008	Warilla	Kiama, Northern Illawarra, Shellharbour and Wollongong U3As
2009	Orange	Orange U3A
2010	Penrith	Nepean Blue Mountains U3A
2011	Sydney	U3A Network NSW (with organisational support from Hawkesbury U3A)
2012	Port Macquarie	Port Macquarie Hastings U3A
2013	Goulburn	Goulburn Mulwaree U3A
2014	Armidale	Armidale U3A
2015	Mittagong	Southern Highlands U3A
2016	Belmont	Eastlakes U3A



APPENDIX 4 - THE NETWORK WEBSITE – www.nsw.u3anet.org.au

The first rumblings about the creation of a website for the then NSW Council of U3A surfaced when Vice-President Ray Gall and Secretary Ern Hollebone brought up the matter at a Committee meeting on 11 July 2003. The Committee gave Ray the carriage of the project, approving the establishment with costs up to \$1000. Ray reported back at the meeting on 24th October that he had discussed the matter with Peter Anderson, ex member of U3A and of the Committee. Peter had created a website for the Network for \$100 (!!!) with anticipated running costs of \$200 per year.

The project was up and running but dormant while a search was made for someone with enough IT savvy to take over administration. At the Committee meeting on 3rd June 2006, Ray announced that Peter had offered to act as consultant to the project, supporting Ray as the Webmaster.

A major step forward happened when Peter attended the Committee meeting on 11 January 2007 to explain to members the workings of his proposal:

- ❖ The Network was to acquire a domain from “A Small Orange” (ASO) a provider in Georgia USA;
- ❖ The domain (u3anet.org.au) would also be able to host an almost unlimited number of sub-domains, enabling the Network to offer websites to member U3As at a nominal cost (\$50 per annum);
- ❖ The complexities of HTML would be avoided by the use of Wordpress, a blogger’s program but capable of use as a Management System.

The Committee thanked Peter for his assistance, approved the plan, and appointed Ray to act as webmaster. By the end of the year, the domain was hosting the Network website (www.nsw.u3anet.org.au) and websites for U3As in Byron Bay, Batemans Bay, Wollongong and Snowy Mountains, as well as websites set up by Peter for the Network’s “Remember When...” and the Resources Library.

Following the AGM in 2008, Ern Hollebone assumed the role of Administrator, and following intensive training with Peter, began a campaign to expand the domain. He conducted a mini teach-in at the computer lab in Shellharbour City U3A, resulting in more interest in the project from member U3As. Ern has conducted workshops for Regional Representatives and for some U3As.



Concentrated promotion of the scheme has enabled the Network to boast that their domain now hosts 57 websites - 43 U3A websites, 8 training sites; and 2 local sites (*Remember When* and the *Resources Library*), 3 Regional sites and 1 Support site, as well as links to other U3A sites across the country. It is gratifying that, among the sites are 6 interstate U3As from Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia.

Ern Hollebone (Webmaster 2008 - 2016)

Footnote - From February 2016, the Web Administrator is Bert de Hosson.

APPENDIX 5 - DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESOURCES LIBRARY

In mid 2006, an article was published in *Newslink* which began as follows:

“An examination of U3A programs reveals an amazing variety and scope of courses and activities on offer. Many, many hours are devoted to the development of these, yet most of them will only be offered once. What a waste! In addition, consider the organisational expertise and wisdom built up by each U3A over time as a result of lessons learned through experience, which we all know is often the best teacher! Think how valuable such information would be for a new U3A. So – why don't we share?”

The article went on to announce that the Network's Management Committee had decided to implement a system of storing the information – a **Resources Library**, whereby such knowledge, experience and expertise could be made available for wider use. U3As and U3Aers would be encouraged to provide copies of courses/information already successfully presented. These would be stored centrally and made available on request. There would be no charge other than to cover costs.

From these simple beginnings has grown the U3A Network NSW Resources Library, the significant holdings of which are now stored and delivered electronically (free of charge) with the option of supply on CD (for a small charge) on request. More and more requests are being made for courses and information. As part of an outreach policy, the Resources Library service is available to U3A and U3Aers anywhere, regardless of whether they are members of U3A Network NSW. To create more interest, in June 2010, the Resources Library distributed a CD to all member groups, giving 4 examples of courses which are available through the Library. The response to this has been very positive.

The Library now has its own site on the Network's website (courses.u3anet.org.au) with a catalogue that can be downloaded and a facility on the Library website to other useful sites, such as that of the World Nuclear Society's site on Radiation, and Southern Cross University's Aged Services Learning and Research Centre.

The principal aim of the Library is to provide material which will assist U3As in the development and enrichment of their programs. A significant number of the courses available have been contributed by U3Aers themselves in the true spirit of U3A – sharing. The Resources Library is one of the Network's success stories – and there are plans in hand to make it even better!

Mel Davies (2006-2016) and Jan Bennett (continuing) managers.

APPENDIX 6 - DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE – U3A ALLIANCE AUSTRALIA (U3AAA)

U3A began in Australia in 1984 in Melbourne. Since then, the U3A movement in Australia has grown to encompass about 300 independent groups over all States and Territories. For many years there had been a desire by some members for a national body of some sort to foster a greater national public awareness of the work and benefit of the U3A movement to seniors, and to assist in the interaction of U3As across the nation.

According to the Council minutes, one of the first moves to set in motion activity to examine the feasibility for establishing a national U3A body was made at an interstate U3A gathering in Adelaide in 1992. Apparently, there was not majority support for the idea and it lapsed for a considerable period of time. From time to time the NSW U3A Council revisited the idea, including an opportunity at a meeting of State representatives in Canberra in September 1995, at the time of Dr. Peter Laslett's visit there. Among other proposals was a suggestion proposed by Dr Rick Swindell at the 2007 NSW U3A Network conference (Lismore) that U3A Presidents from across Australia could 'meet' on-line to carry out most of the functions of a national U3A body, but the idea did not receive support at that time.

Nevertheless, the idea continued to bubble away, and at the NSW U3A Network Conference at Warilla (2008), Ron Browne and Ian Tayler successfully moved that "... *this meeting endorses a proposal for developing a national U3A body and authorises the Network Committee to proceed with appropriate arrangements. Furthermore, it is suggested that consideration be given to an arrangement similar to the National Trust where State and Territory bodies maintain their organisational independence*".

The arguments presented in favour of establishing a national body included:

- U3A being more widely publicised to enhance the opportunity for more people to join and enjoy the great benefits of involvement in U3A;
- the desirability of undertaking an advocacy role at the national level on behalf of seniors in respect to expanding life long learning opportunities;
- the sharing of information, ideas and resources between existing U3A groups to mutual benefit;
- maintaining a register of U3A groups in Australia; and
- establishing links with other relevant seniors and educational bodies in Australia and overseas.

The movers stressed that the intention was to investigate and negotiate for a network which was slender, co-operative and essentially organised online.

It was stressed that any new national U3A organization should not add an additional hierarchical layer, as the independence of existing Networks and U3As was considered paramount; and that there be minimal financial cost in conducting any new venture along these lines by the use of electronic technology and the co-operation of existing U3A Networks in administering the Alliance's activities.

Immediately after this, the NSW Network Committee set up a sub-committee to advise on how to carry the idea forward. Ron Browne and Ainslie Lamb travelled to Melbourne twice to consult with the Victorian Network, and once to Adelaide to consult with the South Australia Alliance of U3As. Mel Davies held discussions with the largest Perth based U3A, and Ron Browne with Hobart U3A. U3A ACT and U3A Online were committed to the development from their participation in the 2008 resolution.

Slowly but surely, support evolved, and the first face-to-face meeting of the Presidents of the NSW, Victorian and ACT Networks together with U3A Online took place in conjunction with the NSW U3A Network conference at Orange in March 2009, to establish U3A Alliance Australia (U3AAA). Since that time the Alliance of U3As in South Australia, the Queensland U3A Network and initially U3A UWA representing Western - now U3A Network WA Inc. - have joined U3AAA.

The Alliance is currently formed through and operates on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding adopted in 2010. The business name 'U3A Alliance Australia' has been registered, pending a more formal organisational system. Dr Barry Jones AO has accepted to be the Patron of the Alliance. A logo was adopted in 2012. A Bulletin which contains information on the activities of each Alliance member is published quarterly and is distributed via its Network members. It is also available at www.u3aaa.org

Chairmanship of the Alliance rotates through its member networks. The NSW Network held the Chair in 2010-12, followed by Victoria 2012-14, Queensland 2014-16, and it reverted to New South Wales in 2016.

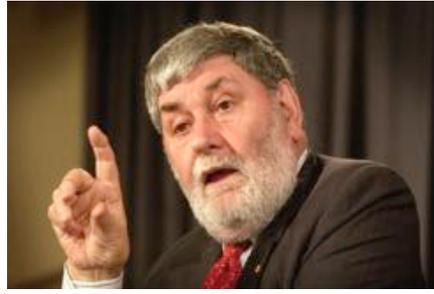
At various times, the Alliance has made submissions on national issues. These include a submission to the Commonwealth Advisory Panel on the Economic Potential of Senior Australians (2011) and a submission to the Philanthropy & Exemptions Unit of the Australian Government Treasury on the Consultation Paper 'Definition of a Charity'(2012). Meetings have also been held with Commonwealth Government and Opposition spokespersons on Ageing, on the relationship between the functions of the U3A Movement and the importance of 'positive ageing' and 'preventative health' policies.

U3AAA has also developed an association with the U3A Asia Pacific Alliance.

Following Page :
CONFERENCE GALLERY



*Ron Browne AM
Sydney 2011*



*Barry Jones AO
Sydney 2011*



*Noelene Brown, Ambassador for
Ageing, Port Macquarie 2012*



*NSW Governor, Professor Marie Bashir AO
Nepean-Blue Mountains 2010*



Conference Dinner

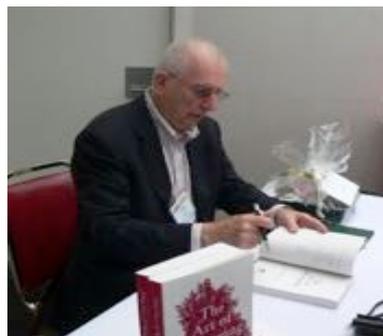
Coffee and chat time



Workshopping



Hon John Ajaka MP, Armidale 2014



*Professor Hugh Mackay,
Southern Highlands, 2015*



Entertainment

