U3A NETWORK NSW Inc.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, held at the Armidale Bowling Club, on Friday 9th May, commencing at 9:05 am

1. Welcome from the Chair: The President, Allan Haggarty, welcomed members.

2. Attendance and Apologies:

Committee members in attendance: Allan Haggarty, Ainslie Lamb, Shirley Cook, Barbara Caldicott, Geoff Hatch, Barbara Lucas, James Nichterlein, Sandy Freeman

Apologies: Des Davis and Pat Spilsbury

Voting Delegates registering their Attendance:

Shirley Cook (Armidale), Jenny Barnes (Bathurst), Lyn van Kampen (Bermagui), Dorothy Andrews (Brunswick Valley) Rae Jones (Central Illawarra), Oliver Millington (Clarence River), Helen Squires (Coffs Harbour), Barbara Thomson (Eastlakes), Sue Buls (Forster-Tuncurry), Carole Cairns (Grafton), Allan Haggerty (Griffith), Jean Pitkin (Hawkesbury), Glenys Webber (Inverell), Alan James (Kiama), Pauline Wiche (Lake Macquarie), Pam Hollebone (Manning Valley), Jo Smyth (Nambucca Valley), Brenda Emerson (Napen-Blue Mountains), Margaret Stratton (Northern Illawarra), Pat Maclaren-Smith (Northern Rivers), Di Delchau (U3A Online), Sue Moll (Port Macquarie Hastings), Robin Hodgins (Shellharbour City), Geoff Byrne (Southern Highlands), Barbara Caldicott (Sydney), John Sharkey (Tamworth Regional), A.E.Thomas (Tuggerah Lakes), Pat Turner (Tamar Valley, Tas)

About 50 other individual U3A members were also in attendance.

Apologies were received from ACT, Ballina/Byron Bay, Batemans Bay, Central Coast, Cootamundra, Goulburn-Mulwarra, Maitland, Newcastle, Norfolk Island, Noarlunga (SA), Oberon, Orange, Sapphire Coast, Shoalhaven, Singleton, Manjimup (WA), Snowy Mountains and Tweed Coast U3As, and Beverley Peken, Barbara Kelly, Warren H Harris, Jeanne Behrens and Rita Spencer

3. Minutes of the AGM held on Friday, 5th April 2013 (previously circulated) were amended in that the finishing time was changed from 10:30 to 11:15 am. The minutes were then confirmed on the motion of Barbara Caldicott and Barbara Lucas.

4. Reports: reports from the President, Treasurer, Secretary, Public Relations Officer, Regional Representatives, Webmaster and Resource Library, had been previously circulated in a composite document, and also made available on the Network website, were considered.

4.1. The President, Allan Haggarty, reported on the following highlights of 2013:

- Progress of the 3 Year Plan
- The application of the Grant received from the NSW Minister for Ageing (Andrew Constance MP) for the promotion and expansion of U3A in New South Wales over the succeeding 3–4 years;
- U3A Alliance Australia meeting, June 2012
Meeting with Ministerial Advisers concerning the prospects of leasing Crown Land for U3A accommodation,

Finances

The Report was received and adopted on the motion of Allan Haggarty and Geoff Byrne.

4.2 The Treasurer, Geoff Hatch, presented his Report and the Annual Financial Statements for 1st January to 31st December 2013. The Report and the Statements were received and adopted on the motion of Jim Nichterlein and Di Delchau.

The Secretary, Public Relations Officer, Webmaster, and Resource Library manager reports were adopted in globo on the motion of Pam Hollebone and Pat Maclaren-Smith

5. Election of Office-bearers and Committee (2014-15)

The Returning Officer, Geoff Byrne, reported as follows: All members nominating as office-bearers or committee members were eligible for election. The following persons were declared elected for 2014-2015

President Allan Haggarty (Griffith U3A))
Vice-President Ainslie Lamb (Northern Illawarra U3A)
Treasurer Geoff Hatch (Hawkesbury U3A)
Secretary Jean de Hosson (Southern Highlands U3A)
General Committee Members: Barbara Caldicott (Sydney U3A)
Rita Spencer (Port Macquarie-Hastings U3A)
Regional Representative – Committee Members:
North Coast & New England - Shirley Cook
Mid-north Coast Region – Des Davis
Central Coast Cumberland – Sandy Freeman
South-western-Monaro – Jim Nichterlein (U3A ACT)

There were no nominations for Representatives of the Metropolitan, South Coast and Central Western Regions.

The Report was adopted on the motion of Geoff Byrne and Pam Hollebone, and the new committee confirmed by acclamation.

The President thanked the Returning Officer for his work in conducting the election.

6. General Business:

REGIONS

It was proposed by John Sharkey on behalf of Tamworth Regional U3A THAT the NSW Network Committee reconsider in the next 12 months the allocation of U3A regions for representation on the Network Committee of Management, especially groups west of the Great Divide Seconded: Jenny Barnes (Bathurst)

In order to illustrate this motion, maps showing the existing regions and an example of a possible change was shown in regard to the Central Western Region. John Sharkey was then asked to speak to the motion. He explained that the matter of Regions was
discussed in committee at Tamworth as a result of Cecily Butcher’s asking for expressions of interest in nominating for Regional Representative for the Region.

It was judged that the Central West/Hunter/New England Areas, in particular, needed to be re-examined to look at their boundaries. It was noted that Liverpool (a metropolitan U3A) did not form part of the Metropolitan Region while those on the South Coast and Southern/Monaro looked to be more workable.

Both Ern and Pam Hollebone spoke to the motion and wondered whether it might be time, in view of changing demographics, to consider increasing the number of Regions – even if it meant a change to the Constitution.

Mel Davies also commented on the increase in the number of U3As – particularly around the Hunter Area – since the original regions were developed.

Allan drew attention to the fact that, when the regions were being designed, prior to the upgrade of the Constitution in 2010, extensive discussion and consultation with the U3As then in the region took place. The wishes of the U3As were taken into consideration – even when this resulted in slight anomalies as regards the geographical location of some U3As. For example, Liverpool U3A requested that it not be part of the Metropolitan Region and its wishes were followed. There were other such cases. However, it had already been decided to look at the regions and that is already on the agenda for 2014.

It was asked whether the various U3As knew their Regional Representative. Jean de Hosson spoke to this issue first and stated that, while not every U3A had been physically visited by its Regional Representative, every U3A had been contacted by its regional representative either by phone or email or both. Hence, yes, they were all known by their respective U3As.

Sandy Freeman, the Regional Representative for Central Coast/Cumberland, also spoke of the role of the Regional Representative. She explained that, although her region too is disparate, it is possible to fulfil the role. She explained that the U3As are all autonomous groups. The Role of Representative is to be a friendly face, or voice – a support if wanted. They are certainly not there to tell 20 or 25 year old groups what to do. It means that there is someone from whom they can get feedback and who can present their concerns or suggestions to the committee. Some U3As, especially the newer ones, have requested support, others not so much.

Sandy mentioned that there is no reason to restrict contact between U3As to the regions. Some U3As set up Cluster Meetings where U3As decide to come together for a day to exchange ideas. One such Cluster held by Eastlakes U3As and other U3As that belong to a different region, but are geographically close, were invited and attended.

The Regional Representatives had a separate Meeting towards the end of last year. They are aware of the problems involved and it is part of their plan to discover ways in which they can better allocate things and contact people – phone, email, Skype and such are all part of their forward planning.

Sandy commented that the motion under discussion was well timed. She reminded delegates again of their autonomy and that Representatives are not “in charge” but are
there as a support person - someone who can represent their needs and concerns - and nothing else.

Allan asked if there were any who wished to speak against the motion. There were no speakers.

THE MOTION WAS THEN PUT - Carried

Using Skype for Communication

It was proposed by John Sharkey on behalf of Tamworth Regional U3A THAT the Network Committee investigate means by which their meetings and general organisation may be facilitated through the use of communications technology - from audio conferencing to Skype. Seconded: Sue Moll (Port Macquarie-Hastings)

John was asked to speak to the motion. He explained that, with modern technology communication both within and between U3As can be more effective. He mentioned the internet, U3A websites, the sharing of Newsletters, emails, Skype – anything – we can improve communication. As John said, it is not that there is no communication BUT that, with modern technology, we can improve it.

Allan commented that the Network is very aware of the electronic age. We use email almost on a daily basis. Executive decisions are often made by email and other methods of communication are also used. The Australia Alliance also meets electronically by Flash. However it is of limited application. It’s a good way of transacting the odd item of business. The last electronic Alliance meeting lasted for an hour and three quarters and only two items of business were transacted. Also, during that time, there were numerous “drop outs” and studying body language was not easy. In other words, there are limitations to that form of meeting. However, if the motion is passed, the committee is very willing to examine any means of improving communication – particularly considering distance between members.

There were no speakers against the motion. Shirley Cook spoke in favour of the motion. She stated that a barrier to the creation of more regions was the cost of bringing delegates to a central meeting. If an effective electronic method of communication could be established, it would make the creation of more regions more cost effective.

Allan stated that the number of face-to-face meetings is kept to a minimum due to limited resources. However, the amount of work covered at such meetings is enormous. He commented that the average Agenda and accompanying reports would be approaching 30 A4 pages. In most cases we get through about 95% of the matters on the Agenda. He commented that nothing quite measures up to the ability to be present with others when discussing matters and added that work is also done during lunch when matters that might not want to be brought up in a formal setting can be discussed.

THE MOTION WAS THEN PUT - Carried

Mel Davis asked for clarification regarding the right of a person to speak at an AGM. The position seemed to be that anyone could speak BUT only a delegate could put or vote on a motion.

7. Votes of thanks
The President thanked the retiring members of committee Pat Spilsbury, Barbara Lucas and Cecily Butcher for their service to U3A through their time on the Committee.

Special thanks were extended to Cecily Butcher who has been outstanding in her lengthy and valuable contribution to the Network, long before it was a Network. She served as secretary to the fledging state body then called the NSW Council of U3A from 1992-4 and then as President in 1994-5. More recently she was Vice President of the Network and Regional Representative – and before that, regional advisor – for the Central West Region. This latter position she held until today.

When the first 20 years’ history of the Network was recorded, it was Cecily who was the author. When Allan’s U3A (Griffith) began in 2003, it was Cecily who travelled to Griffith to address the public meeting outlining the advantages of U3A. Her involvement continues to today as Cecily is currently the President of Orange U3A which celebrated its 25th Anniversary recently.

We will all miss Cecily and wish her well. Unfortunately, she was not able to attend the Conference. However, though it is not the usual practice, the President presented to Cecily, in her absence, a special plaque that comprises the Network Logo and the words:

“Cecily Butcher in deep appreciation of your distinguished service and contribution to the NSW Network U3A. 1991-2014.”

There was spontaneous applause at this announcement. The President told the meeting that he would guarantee that Cecily would receive the plaque and be told of the spontaneous acclamation she had received.

Before closing the meeting the President thanked Armidale U3A conference organising committee, especially Shirley Cook, for hosting the Conference and the AGM. The Vote of Thanks was carried by acclamation.

Before the meeting closed, Pat Turner, the delegate from Tamar Valley (TAS) addressed the meeting. In the absence of a state body in Tasmania, they and some other U3As in Tasmania had applied for membership of the NSW Network because they needed help and support. On behalf of Tamar Valley, she wanted to thank both the Network and the NSW U3As for their help and support.

The meeting closed at 9:53 am

Confirmed: ……………………………………. Date: ………………..
Chairperson