



U3AAA BULLETIN

No 7 FEBRUARY 2013

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the first Bulletin for 2013 – a particularly newsy one. I would like to thank everyone who contributed, both for the excellent content and for meeting the deadline. Well done. U3A everywhere is on the up and up, it seems.

Congratulations to Victoria on reaching a membership of 100, to SA for getting on-going funding assistance, to ACT for all their activities in Canberra's centennial year and to the WA Network for getting started.

The next edition will be in June, deadline June 20.

Peter Flanigan

U3A Conferences 2013

NSW Goulburn April 4/5
Queensland Toowoomba April 23/24
Victoria Melbourne Oct 14/15

(Further details on state websites)

 PROUDLY NOT FOR PROFIT
Call 1300 888 225 or visit www.odysseytraveller.com

 ODYSSEY TRAVEL
Educational Travel Specialists for the over 50s since 1983

FROM THE CHAIR

Many U3A individual members and also U3As received New Year awards for their community contributions from the various levels of Government this year. We offer our congratulations to all recognised for their work in this and related sectors. We are very proud of these recipients whose often inspirational efforts contribute so much of value to their communities and thus our society.

The State Conferences in both NSW (Goulbourn) and Queensland (Toowoomba) are to be held during April. It appears that our own Victorian Asia Pacific Conference in October will be the sole opportunity to hold a formal Alliance meeting this year.

For many U3A organisations the December and January period would appear to be a time of peace and tranquillity however for many of our U3A volunteers it represents the peak of some intense preparatory tasks for the coming year. Duties including enrolment, class allocation and scheduling, accommodation arrangements and other related management issues occupy this period for many U3As to ensure their readiness for the commencement of Term 1. As the initial term commences the scenario shifts towards satisfying enquiries relating to the outcomes of their preparations upon individual members and their course choices. Whilst not all of these are positive experiences for those involved their perseverance serves to highlight the quality of our volunteers who cope with such issues and press on to deliver such value to the community.

Our Alliance website presents access to our various state networks contact points and I wish to highlight the value of the World U3As sister site offering similar details covering overseas U3As. We have reports from members who have utilised these details to contact and arrange reciprocal visits to various international U3As during their planned travels which offer an opportunity to meet, exchange knowledge and create friendships whilst enhancing the value of their cultural experiences. We recommend that you visit this site address: www.worldu3a.org

The Alliance hopes that all our Networks and U3As will have a successful year in their efforts to propel U3A and raise its level of recognition within their respective communities.

Lindsay Glen

Victoria

U3A Network Victoria is pleased to report that with the acceptance of our new Bayside U3A we now have 100 registered U3As within Victoria. This milestone reflects a growing awareness of U3A and supported by reports of significant membership growth figures by some of our Victorian U3As. Our Development Programme includes support and assistance to groups who show interest in the establishment of new U3As by guiding them through a process and introducing them to local support where necessary to ensure their viability.

Since our last bulletin Victorian Network has continued its preparations for hosting the Melbourne Asia Pacific Conference to be held in October this year. Registration details and forms for this two day conference will be circulated later in February. We also refer you to the U3A Asia Pacific website which will also carry full details: <http://u3a-asiapacificalliance.org/>

Early indications suggest a healthy contingent of overseas delegates from the UK, India and SE Asia intending to join us for this event. Preparations are well underway for the provision of an educational programme and we will be aiming to include an international panel session designed to enable the international U3As to outline how they adapt the U3A philosophy to accommodate cultural diversity.

The Victorian Network has had most welcome visits from Executives our fellow Queensland (President, Rhonda Weston accompanied by husband David) and South Australian Networks (President, Vale Pederson and Claire Eglinton Secretary) during the last couple of months to exchange ideas on how we may utilise our collective knowledge to leverage our respective community positions. Discussing various strategies and approaches utilised by other Networks to address common issues expands the knowledge of all involved. The enabling of collaborative relationships was a major driver of our original plan to form our U3A Alliance and it is pleasing that it is working accordingly.

Our Network together with Cardinia U3A and its affiliate Pakenham Outlook Community Centre won an Innovation Grant from the Department of Adult Community and Further Education to deliver a series of cooperative Course Leadership training workshops throughout Victoria. Six of these workshops were conducted in various locations during October and November with a further series to be held in other Regions during early 2013. These professionally conducted sessions are delivered to U3A members in conjunction with local Neighbourhood Houses and Community Learning groups to develop and exchange views on enhancing course delivery and administration. The success of this project highlights the value of developing community partnerships in delivering genuine benefit to the learning community.

*L. Glen
U3A Network Victoria*

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Funding from Health SA through the Office for the Ageing took a while to arrive but it is here now and we are all proudly displaying the Health SA and Seniors Cards logos on our newsletters. It gives us quite a seal of approval and my GP has welcomed U3A publicity material in his waiting room which is an unexpected bonus.

It is 'all action stations' to satisfy one of the other requirements which is to raise membership by 5%. One would like to think that happened naturally, every year, but it doesn't. Sometimes groups have reached capacity for their venue, country groups may feel they have cornered every possible member within their small community and others have just reached that comfortable groove and fallen out of the habit of promoting their group. It is so easy to settle in with the familiar faces of our long-term members, satisfied that we have done a good job in creating a wonderful U3A. It was hard work in the beginning but now we can put our feet up and relax. Not so. Every U3A needs a constant stream (okay, for some it may just be a dribble) of new members. Not only new members, but younger members.

As governance guru Jean Roberts says on her website: "Member-based clubs are dependent upon effective recruitment, servicing and retention of members. Such clubs are only as strong and effective as their active members." Amongst the challenges she lists: "ensuring that there is a continuing inflow of new, and a minimal loss of existing, members". These points are so simple, obvious and essential to our survival, yet often overlooked.

Several U3As are doing some creative thinking to rise to the 5% challenge though we are yet to see all their applications to fund these projects. SA President Vale Pederson and the Campbelltown U3A are working with Yorke Peninsula U3A to put a new item on YP's programme by bringing mah-jong to the masses. Any other interested U3A should contact Vale. [She won't thank me for that.] Noarlunga U3A has double reason to be on a membership drive after recent difficulty in finding new committee members.

At our last Alliance meeting, Arthur Davies (Gawler U3A) raised an interesting point about Local Government responsibility for community welfare under the 2011 SA Public Health Act. Anyone currently tussling with their Council for help with venues, etc., can download information papers at www.lga.sa.gov.au/goto/publichealth. Remember that keeping our members active (mentally, physically and socially) helps them stay disability free and living independently in their own homes for longer.

During recent weeks it has been surprising to learn how accurately some smaller groups know their membership, with every decease or house move registered as one less member, however many groups, like my own, are rather vague about these matters. Those who maintain the databases will not be happy to read that Jean Roberts recommends all committees know, not only their exact membership across all categories, but also trends in membership recruitment and retention through the past five years at least; average period of membership; ratio of active to in-active members; ratio of new members to non-renewing members.

Phew! If anyone has designed a database which can calculate this sort of information, we would like to know ... and my treasurer will stop cursing.

As our Victorian neighbours seem to be inordinately successful at promoting the U3A movement and have built an enviable network of U3As across their State, Vale Pederson and I did a one-day fly-in fly-out to Melbourne to talk to the people who make this happen. I see this interstate cooperation as one of the great benefits of membership in the National Alliance. We have to thank Victorian president Elsie Mutton, who really went out of her way for us, and everyone at the Victorian Network office who generously shared their knowledge.

We did hope to discover some magical formula but of course it comes down to committed, talented volunteers who in some cases have made it almost their full-time occupations. Obviously, the bigger the pool of members the more chance one has of finding the necessary workers. Our SA constitution works against us by only allowing delegates to be appointed to key positions. With less than eleven U3As attending regularly, and not all delegates willing to hold office, it is a very small pond. We do need more delegates with specialist experience who are willing to take office but perhaps I am looking for that magical formula again. Anyway, ours is not a constitutional format I would recommend for any new State networks.

Back in Adelaide came a meeting with Tea Tree Gully U3A member Erica Majba who has great insight into matters of governance. Formerly in charge of Volunteering SA&NT's Golden Gurus programme, Erica has left me optimistic about our ability to source some publicity/marketing expertise through that body. Another outcome was an understanding of the need to build a package of member benefits for Alliance SA. It goes back to another Jean Roberts quote: "members should see membership as an investment rather than a cost".

Although not a fan of social media, I am not against online publicity and leave you with a tip about effective branding online from an About.com site: "one of the most often underestimated marketing strategies is to just get involved in the online community. This can be done by . . . participating in message board group conversations." When trawling sites like Your Life Choices which are dedicated to our age group, never miss an opportunity to leave a comment along the lines of "Dear Sad and Lonely, you really should join your local U3A. They are wonderful places to make new friends who share your interests and are very cheap to join". Hundreds of people will read that comment and take it as a personal recommendation, the best advertising you can get. This is a little bit of marketing we can all do. Never turn off: be a 24/7 U3A advocate.

Perhaps I will make new friends who share my interests at the Toowoomba High Country Encounter in April. See you there.

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

Proud to be sponsored by:



Government of South Australia
SA Health



NEW SOUTH WALES



Entry forms for the 2013 NSW Network Conference, on 4th and 5th April, just after Easter, in historic Goulburn, Australia's first inland city, are available on the Network's website www.nsw.u3anet.org.au. Hosted by Goulburn- Mulwaree U3A, the venue is the centrally-located Soldier's Club. Only 2 hours by road from Sydney, Goulburn is celebrating 150 years since being declared a city and with Canberra celebrating its centenary and only a further hour's drive away it's an ideal opportunity to be inspired at the conference and relive some history of the district.



The NSW Network's pilot TV ad to promote U3A, funded by a state government grant, went to air in January in the area covered by WIN in the Central West of the state. We will be monitoring the response as it is hoped the ad can then be screened in WIN's other regions and also PRIME's to cover the whole state. A separate promotional DVD will be repeated on SBS during Seniors' Week.

Following a successful website workshop run by the Network's Webmaster Ern Hollebhone and attended by representatives of some of the state's six non-metropolitan regions, websites for those regions are being established. This will make it easier for U3As in a region to communicate with each other and compare notes on what they are doing and how they are going about it. As the Network is now hosting more than 40 sites, with a view to maintaining continuity the weekend was also attended by a couple of prospective webmasters.

Aware of growing pains experienced by some of our U3A groups, especially along the NSW coast, in providing accommodation for an expanding membership, we have had fruitful meetings with key NSW government policy advisers and a senior public servant. Negotiations are continuing with a view to gaining access to CrownLand sites as has the Australian Men's Shed Association.

*Allan Haggarty
President*

QUEENSLAND

Somewhere we are reported to have celebrated Christmas, New Year and had a holiday from U3A. I can remember the first two; however the third one has completely passed me by. The good news is that in most places in Qld there is an unprecedented rush to either re-join or join a U3A. The challenge facing most of our U3As is finding sufficient Tutors to enable us to accommodate this enormous growth.

Thanks to Jim Hales we are submitting a grant application to the current round of Productive Ageing through Community Education grants. It is envisaged that we will be able to assist 3 more U3As to commence and we are in talks at present with interested persons in two northern cities.

Our website has recently undergone several changes and is now much easier to locate and has regular updates. <http://www.u3aql.org.au/>

I have been in a round of meetings recently with both Local, State and Federal politicians to keep the U3A presence in their focus.

The High Country Encounter, Autumn the 3rd Season - Qld State Conference to be held in Toowoomba on the 23rd and 24th April is all organised. Registrations are rolling in and it is shaping up to be a great event. Remember there are limited places for this conference.



Toowoomba enjoys autumn weather that is crisp and clear and the colours of the autumn are a delight to experience. Look up www.u3atoowoomba.com and you will find all of the information including the full program.

Looking forward to a rewarding and fun filled 2013.

Rhonda Weston
President

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Following our AGM in November, we had a number of changes in our General Committee. I have succeeded Garth Setchell as President of the General Committee and Jim Nichterlein has left the Committee as his term as Vice-President had expired, though he is still very active in U3A. Linda Tregonning has kindly stepped in to take Jim's place as Vice-President.

As is possibly the case with other U3As, one of the challenges for us is maintaining volunteer numbers to support our operations: manning two offices; upgrading computer systems; and increasing our operational efficiency (we recently introduced on-line membership); while at the same time bringing members with us as we go.

We are also seeking to better nurture the interrelationships between those in related areas (for instance in our publicity/marketing, E-Bulletin, and Newsletter teams) to capitalise on the talents of those in them and thereby continually improve the effectiveness of our operations.

But as always, an on-going challenge for us is meeting the need to increase the number of courses on offer, particularly in the popular areas such as current affairs; languages; and, increasingly, environmental and social issues, to meet the demand.

On another front, we are also about to embark on a significant upgrade to improve the appearance but also functionality of our website, though we still have a significant number of members who are not on-line. Our hope is that with the web upgrade we can improve its functionality, making the website easier to access and an increasingly more effective tool for members, course leaders, and our operational teams.

This kind of development is significant for us as our membership profile is slowly shifting to a younger age cohort, whose expectations of communications are likely to be quite different from those of previous generations. The implications of this shift are yet to be fully understood, but it undoubtedly presents both new opportunities and some challenges as regards the mix of activities we undertake and the ways in which we serve our members.

To end on a very positive note, the first of our 'Canberra Conversations', celebrating Canberra's 100th birthday, got off to a roaring start with the venue overflowing and a very enthusiastic audience.

Robyn Beetham



Robyn Beetham, ACT President (left) and immediate past U3A ACT President, Garth Setchell (right), with the President of the Woden Daybreak Rotary Club, following presentation of the Club's 'Community Achievement Award' to U3AACT for its service to the Woden Community – October 2012.



The Working party of interested members has been established to develop a strategic plan for U3A Online to take it into the future. Being done online makes the task more long term but they are working well and managing the online consultation well.

U3A Online has joined a partnership with the Chronic Illness Alliance Inc and the National Ageing Research Institute Ltd (NARI) to seek a grant from The Productive Ageing through Community Education (PATCE) Program to develop courses to help people deal with chronic illness. U3A Online will host the courses. The grant applications were required to be in yesterday so we now just wait for the outcome.

The New Year has resulted in a great number of new members as well as a healthy number of renewals --- renewals being not as common with U3A Online as with other local U3As --- which is very pleasing. We have had to issue a number of refunds to people 'accidentally' joining U3A Online instead of their local U3A which seems to indicate that people are looking to be able to use the Internet to join and renew their memberships.

We have also issued a large number of Site Licenses to other U3As so it is good to know that we can help in this way.

The number of members enrolling in courses with Leaders is quite high for this run and all writing courses were full. Members are also getting involved in the Forums on the Members' Lounge with the Book Group proving to be very popular.

The committee has trialled an online face to face meeting using Flash Meeting and it was very easy for all committee members to use and I think it will become a regular means of us meeting face to face online. We are fortunate to have Tom Holloway on our committee and he is able to set up the meetings for us --- there is no cost to doing this which is great. ☺ There is no limit to how often or for how long we have the meetings.

*Di Delchau
President*

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



The big news that the U3A Network WA was granted incorporated status on 24 Dec 2012. At this stage we have only 7 members (compared to Victoria's 100!) but are hopeful that this number will grow. We have a website and a newsletter and even a presence on Face Book. Norma Vaughan, our indefatigable secretary, is doing her best to get us all up to speed with the digital age though I think Face Book is a bridge too far for most people. Things will change.

Finances are one of our concerns. So far grants have proved elusive. Nevertheless we enter 2013 optimistic that things can only improve in this department.

The newly formed Margaret River U3A has gone ahead with leaps and bounds – fancy getting 15 courses up in your first year of operation! Congratulations, Margaret River. It was also good to see the first newsletter from Naturaliste U3A. Lots of things happening there.

U3A (UWA) Perth is by far our largest member. With nine regions they are a sort of network in themselves. Recently they won a substantial grant from Lotteries West to run a film course with the Fremantle Film and Television Institute. Ten members will be involved in a ten week course to learn the mystic arts of film making which they can then pass on to other members. Hopefully this will inject important media skills into the entire organisation. Another recent innovation is the Perth U3A Choir. They will be heard for the first time by most members at the AGM in April.

The second edition of the WA Network's Newsletter, edited by Norma Vaughan from Mandurah U3A, has recently been distributed and a lively issue it is. Congratulations Norma!

Peter Flanigan, President

Odyssey, Celebrating 30 Years of Educational Travel!

Odyssey Travel, a not for profit organisation specialising in educational travel for the over 50s, will be celebrating 30 years.

During these 30 years, our educational programs have evolved to cater for the demands of our travellers. Our new *French History by Rail* program, reflects some of these changes. Our *Winter & Summer Odyssey with a Twist* programs or our Shakespeare program offers the very best in performing arts around the world.

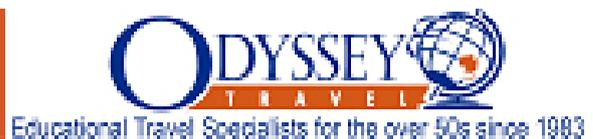
To celebrate our anniversary, we are offering a \$300 discount on all Odyssey-operated international programs operating in 2013 (T&C apply. Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer.)

Since 2012, Odyssey has been guaranteeing program departures. This change, along with smaller groups has been well received. Odyssey's prices continue to fall against our published prices. These reductions are reflected across the majority of markets and as the demand for Odyssey programs grow, we are seeking to pass back as much of the savings realised.

www.odysseytraveller.cominfo@odysseytravel.com.au 1300 888 225



Call 1300 888 225 or visit
www.odysseytraveller.com



(Advertorial)