



AUSTRALIA

U3AAA BULLETIN No. 29

JULY 2020



COVID uncovered hidden talents amongst the U3A Ballarat Hikers

This issue:

■ Member reports:

- 💡 Queensland planning for 2021
 - 💡 SA takes first steps towards restart
 - 💡 Victoria uncovers hidden talents
 - 💡 WA looks to happier times
 - 💡 NSW says keep safe, keep learning, and stay connected
 - 💡 U3A Online benefits from providing service
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From the Editor

In addition to State reports, this issue has first words from incoming U3AAA chairman Glen Wall, an interesting story of finding a way to legally cross State borders (Page 8), uncovers the hidden musicians in the front cover photo (Page 10), an overseas invitation (Page 12) and international news (Page 13).

This issue is dedicated to all those clever people who mastered a new skill during lock-down. How quickly online meetings have advanced from hunching too close to the screen, a picture of concentration with camera pointed up our nostrils and highlighting our double chins. Now the old hands loll back casually in front of a carefully curated background décor. For

those yet to attain this level of smugness, see tips on Page 9.

The internet has made so much possible in the last few months: working, meetings, shopping, social contact with friends or family, local or interstate, all from the comfort and security of our own homes. Back in 2006, the first subject I taught in U3A was computing. So often when I encouraged members to enrol, they laughed it off and said *I'm too old* or *why would I need that*. How they would have scoffed if I had said *you'll be sorry one day*. If I had predicted that one day they would be going to be very lonely and isolated, confined to their home, no visits from friends and family, no entertainment beyond TV and radio, I would only have been describing what old age is to many, pandemic or not. Thank goodness for U3A and hopefully a lot more people will be enrolling and taking full advantage of what we have to offer.

While this issue, understandably, may be deficient in photos, my drive for better photos continues. Here is a hint, photos snatched off websites are useless for reproduction. Contributors really need to contact the people in the story and ask for the original photo. At first I thought everyone must have the wrong camera settings but a local photographer has set me straight. In his experience, 98% of the time emailing is the issue. Photos are often shrunk to email. Please ask your photographers to submit photos in as high a resolution as possible and that should solve many of the problems. If people use a Windows platform, when they send to Mail Recipient, Windows defaults to a medium resolution. There is the option of original size at that point.

Deadline for next issue of Bulletin is Wednesday 28 October. Start collecting photos now.



*Claire Eglinton
U3A Lower North
South Australia*



From the Chairman

This is my first message as Chair of the U3A Australia Alliance since I was appointed to position in April 2020 to succeed Peter Alcock. On behalf of the Alliance I would like to thank Peter for his leadership of the Alliance over the past two years and I am excited about having the opportunity to lead U3AAA over the next two years.

I am looking forward to addressing the challenges confronting our organisation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the like of which we have not experienced in our lifetimes. The COVID-19 restrictions have caused shops to close and the members of our U3As to stay at home, socially distance and U3As to suspend face to face classes and activities. This situation is a significant challenge to our movement, but it also provides an unbelievable opportunity.

Think of all the ingenious ways we as seniors have found to keep in touch with U3A friends and family. How quickly we have learnt how to use functions on our phones and computers that we did not think existed. Who would have thought the use of Zoom would have spread so quickly. Don't forget that it was our generation that invented and developed the technology that younger generations have mastered.

A number of members of U3As have commented to me that they have become accustomed to being at home and using Zoom to participate in classes. Although it is recognised that we all need face-to-face connection the new normal post COVID 19 restrictions will include a mix of face-to-face and remote accessible (Zoom) classes.

The challenge for U3A is to maintain connection with our members through this time of restrictions and to modify our model of service delivery for the future to be a mix of face-to-face classes, remote access classes (Zoom) were members participate by accessing from home and increase the use of technology to connect with members.

The U3AAA vision is to support our member U3A networks improve the recognition of the movement by governments and the community as a valued contributor to the provision of benefits of positive ageing and lifelong learning which support mental and physical health and social engagement of seniors.

The Alliance delegates have agreed to meet as often as necessary using Zoom technology to prepare an advocacy action plan on behalf of the member networks to raise the profile of the U3A movement in Australia highlighting U3A's valuable contribution to the support of the mental, physical and social engagement of seniors in Australia.

The advocacy will be focused on securing greater support from Government and other sources to support our movement in Australia to continue to make its valuable contribution to the engagement of seniors in the future.

Please stay safe and keep contact with your U3A members and friends.

Glen Wall

Chair,

U3A Alliance Australia



QUEENSLAND

Many U3As in Queensland are emerging from hibernation caused by the COVID-19 crisis. Some will remain closed until Term 4 and one is even thinking of remaining closed for the rest of the year. That U3A has very particular circumstances requiring members to use public transport and travel in a lift.

The closure of the Queensland border affected more than one of our U3As. Others were impacted by the requirements of landlords in addition to those of the Health Department. Many of our U3As lease or hire local government owned premises which required COVID Safe plans that took account of requirements of both levels of government.

It was pleasing that U3A presidents shared their COVID Safe Plans on a President's Email Discussion Group set up by the Network, thus avoiding the complete reinvention of the wheel by many.

The Queensland Network Committee back before standing close became a threatening action.

U3As that charge per class session have suffered severe financial loss.

Fortunately, many of the local governments in Queensland have provided COVID Hardship payments or grants for which incorporated associations can apply.

It seems contrary that a U3A would garner new members during the shutdown but one of our very progressive U3As declared that they were still open for business – they were just not holding activities in venues that had been closed – ergo, if the class or activity was being delivered via Zoom or alternative platform, new members could be signed up to join in. They signed several new members.

The Queensland Parliament has recently passed a Bill that will impact on all incorporated associations in Queensland. Some of the requirements come into immediate force while others will be introduced within the next two years.

There are changes to clarify the duty of care and diligence of committee members. The requirements for financial diligence will bring the responsibilities of committee members into line with those of company board members. There will be penalties introduced around the use of information garnered as a committee member. There will also be requirements for disclosure of conflicts of interest and remuneration received as a committee/board member.



U3A NETWORK QUEENSLAND STATE CONFERENCE IN 2021

It was devastating to have to cancel the 2020 conference which was to have been hosted by U3A Redlands. The good news is that next year's conference will be held in Stanthorpe. The early announcement is being made to encourage attendance from other States.



Nurture your mind and body at the
Coolest Conference in the State.
Granite Belt U3A will host the Coolest Network Queensland
Conference
in Stanthorpe
12th and 13th May 2021
Explore the Delights of Granite Belt Wine and Food
on 11th May
2021

Stanthorpe is a very friendly and welcoming town.
We would love to see you there!!
Contact Julie 0417 074 520 for more information.



Gail Bonser
President
U3A Network Qld Inc.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

It is times like these where network organizations can show their true value, distributing vital information, support and reassurance to member organisations, letting isolated and sometimes overwhelmed committees know they are not alone. Our application for grant funding for the gallons of sanitizer you will be using, one example of very practical support.

U3A SA's first Committee of Management meeting by Zoom had 21 attendees from as far afield as Mt Gambier. Unfortunately, three urban U3As couldn't find a proxy or we would have had a first-ever 100% representation. We must aim for that in the future. Our October meeting will be face-to-face, but Zoom should become a familiar part of the U3A landscape: cheaper, safer, more inclusive, less time consuming and more environmentally sound than traipsing half-way cross the state.

One screen shot from the State meeting showing only a portion of the attendees.



The Zoom meeting was facilitated by U3A Campbelltown member Glenda Sherwin-Lane. Glenda is their computer tutor and features on this video made by the Be Connected program: <https://www.beconnectednetwork.org.au/network-stories/videos>

Members are divided between those eager for a full resumption of activities and those who think better safe than sorry. Restrictions on space and cleaning are proving dealbreakers for some U3As who have deferred to Term 4. Our Forum discussion displayed these differences of attitude along with differences in finding ways to exist despite shut down. Some tutors showed an adaptability to online presentations or just directing members to other online resources. U3A Adelaide's website and U3A Gawler's newsletter had links to many alternative resources; U3A Campbelltown assisted tutors make the most of their new Zoom licence; U3A Murraylands showed a flair for member communication which could be an example to all. Kudos to those who maintained phone contact with members who lack computer skills.

We have often talked about the negative effect on membership of both genders retiring later. Hundreds of thousands have now lost their jobs. Thirty percent of job losses are in the 60-65 age group with mature age women worst hit. Sadly, some of these people will never find full employment again. Looking for work when you are over 50 can be a soul-destroying process. These people have the skills and energy to refresh U3A so let's make sure they know U3A is a place where their skills will be valued, and a new circle of friends awaits.



One (unfinancial) member who is hanging out for the Gawler book group to resume is Aston (*pictured above courtesy of Lesley Carnogursky*) who acts as table decoration when the book group meets at Fran Mason's home. The number of participants before the coronavirus struck was 11, which was the number of chairs able to be placed cosily around the Masons' dining-room table. Conversation could go on long into the evening over supper which is provided by the person who chose that month's topic. Aston is shown the door when supper is served.

This book group has the name 'Book Club with a Twist' because, rather than everyone reading the same book, a topic is chosen from a list put together at the beginning of the year, resulting in a wide range of genre and books themselves that some members would never have attempted otherwise. Last year they read autobiographies, short stories, poetry and suspense thrillers, as well as ones from childhood, ones that had been turned into film, that could be read in a day, had a one-word title or an Australian author. They can be non-fiction as well as fiction. Fran says, in 2.5 years they have only doubled up on a book twice.

Recently over lunch at a local restaurant, they decided to continue communicating online until at least the end of Term 3. They are looking forward to resuming monthly face-to-face meetings once daylight saving starts, taking turns at those homes which have an outside table and chairs, so that they can maintain the required distance. What a good solution but Aston will have to wait a while longer before he is once again centre stage.

Claire Eglinton
Secretary
U3A South Australia



NEW SOUTH WALES

At the Network administrative level, the 2020 U3A conference and AGM, scheduled for April-May, had to be cancelled. This led to some concern that the AGM could not be held live within the legislated time frame, but Fair Trading has acknowledged that compliance is impossible and that associations have up to a year to conduct 2020 AGMs. The Network will be conducting a Special General Meeting online to amend the constitution to enable the AGM to be conducted online, and assuming that is successful, aims to hold the AGM and 'annual' elections in September or October.

In the meantime, the Network has provided regular advice to U3As on compliance with COVID19 regulations and protocols. The Network committee is also reviewing some of its administrative activities for possible improvements in delivery of services such as the annual conference and the website.



Network committee officers: From left, president Laurene Mulcahy, vice president John Sharkey, secretary Geoff James and treasurer Denise Challis.

At the grass roots level, the coronavirus pandemic has done little to stem the thirst of U3A members across the State to continue learning and sharing their knowledge and experience. U3A has adopted the attitude of 'keep safe, keep learning, and stay connected'.

Although all U3As have had to abandon live meetings, creativity and resilience have come to the fore. Many U3A groups accessed Zoom as a replacement for live classes. Those U3As more experienced and proficient in the use of Zoom are providing technical advice and support to other U3As newly accessing the application.

Others are maintaining regular contact through email to send and receive lessons in a range of subjects, including creative writing, languages, brain games, current affairs and philosophy discussions. Film groups watch films on YouTube or streaming services and then discuss it via Zoom. Physical exercise and yoga are promoted through YouTube clips, and the U3A Balance'n'Bones DVD. Virtual tours are undertaken of major international galleries and museums. Facebook pages provide an avenue to upload photographs and to share practical advice about topics such as birdwatching, photography, painting and drawing. Not every effort is successful – a ukulele group found that Skype made it impossible for the group to play together because of a few seconds' delay in transmitting, but that didn't discourage them from meeting regularly to discuss theory and play the occasional 'kerplunk'.

Welfare officers in U3A groups keep regular contact with members who live alone to maintain contact in times of social isolation, especially those not familiar or comfortable with modern technology. Electronic bulletins and newsletters are popular methods of keeping members regularly informed of online activities and other information of general interest.

Some U3A committees have also taken the opportunity to undertake online surveys of their members for future planning, and to upgrade their administrative procedures. As the pandemic enters its next phase, some are planning a return to their venues, subject to the adoption of COVID Management Plans, in Term 3.

U3A is alive and well in NSW.

Ainslie Lamb

Newsletter Editor

U3A Network NSW Inc.



COVID-19 prompts first cross-border U3A class

In what is believed to be a first for U3A in Australia, members of classes in Northern NSW and Queensland met together recently to learn from one another in a virtual classroom. The online meeting using Zoom involved members of both Northern Rivers and Brisbane U3As.

Although fewer than 20 members were involved, all found the virtual meeting stimulating, especially as Covid-19 risks mean normal face-to-face classes have been severely restricted or postponed for months.

The Zoom meeting was first suggested by a member of both U3As, John Reid (*pictured right*), who was originally a member of the Lismore-based U3A but recently moved to Brisbane.

John arranged for a guest speaker for the Northern Rivers group but also suggested that Queensland members be invited.



The group's co-ordinator, Graeme Eggins (*pictured below*), agreed.

"The whole Zoom session went like clockwork," Graeme said. "Our speaker discussed modern monetary theory challenges and took questions from members in both States.

"His presentation with Q&As took up virtually all the first free 40-minute Zoom session but we moved effortlessly into a second session to discuss other topics.



"These included biotechs, pandemic themes such as Bunnings benefitting from people carrying out more DIY home improvements, and market momentum.

"Everyone was really energised by the joint meeting," Graeme added. "It is really great to have new blood come into an established group and also to see how different classes learn about the same subject, which in this case was investing in retirement.

"One of the many advantages of meeting on Zoom is that effectively any number of people can attend so we did not have to worry about venue size and, of course, absolutely no hand sanitising or social distancing."



ZOOM TIPS AND TRICKS

To look your best use head-on natural lighting. Harsh lighting from behind darkens your face, you are harder to see and it can irritate others.

To avoid triple chins and nostril shots, make sure your webcam is eye level or higher.

Be punctual and check settings ahead of time. To test your settings go to zoom.us/test.

To rename yourself e.g. to include your State or U3A name, hover over your name on participants list, click More, and choose C Rename to change the name others can see.

Unless you are speaking, stay on mute. Even if you move away from the computer others can still hear you. Press and hold the spacebar to quickly mute and unmute your mic, right from your keyboard.

Untidy or busy backgrounds are distracting as is behaviour like doing other tasks, checking emails, looking at your phone, etc.

Make sure you say goodbye or at least wave when leaving the zoom meeting. The host should leave last (just like a real-life party).

VICTORIA

This year, the 38th Victorian Seniors Festival was moved onto the world wide web, through online performances, Zoom recorded interviews and storytelling. From May through to October 2020 they are posting weekly video performances and interviews. From July through October they are posting monthly radio entertainment. With physical distancing rules in place, the hosts meet and feature video performers from the comfort of their own homes. Radio content is recorded separately and put together by radio producers to adhere to physical distancing restrictions.

This is the link to the radio performances:

<https://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/festivalsandawards/listen-now>

This is the link to the video performances:

<https://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/festivalsandawards/watch-now>

A number of Victorian U3As are being featured in the Reimagined Festival. First up is U3A Ballarat Hikers group. In the video posted on YouTube, the group's leader, Andrew Parker, explains how the COVID-19 pandemic putting a stop to hiking in a group inspired a lightbulb moment resulting in socially distanced hiking with some music and singing added. The link to their Festival [video can be found here](#). Or straight to the performance by The (Virtual) Bush Basher Band <https://youtu.be/1049VaPXFxg>.

The Hikers shouldn't be confused with the Ballarat Bushwalking group led by Laraine Gunning: <http://bushwalkersu3aballarat.blogspot.com/>

SIGN UP FOR UPDATES FROM U3A NETWORK VICTORIA

Network Victoria publishes a number of online newsletters which may be of interest to our friends and colleagues in other parts of Australia.

We have been regularly distributing COVID-19 information for our 106 Member U3As through our COVID-19 newsletters: <https://www.u3avictoria.com.au/news#covid>

We are resuming our monthly Network News bulletins from early August: <https://www.u3avictoria.com.au/news#Bulletin>

We publish a quarterly externally focussed newsletter about our activities for peer organisations and funders – with the latest edition of U3A Avenues due to be released by the end of July: <https://www.u3avictoria.com.au/news#avenues>

Please contact Tracey Swadling via adminmanager@u3avictoria.com.au if you would like to receive our newsletters.

*Tracey Swadling
Administration Manager
U3A Network Victoria.*



Network Victoria
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

U3A in WA is opening up again after a nearly four months' hiatus. Many groups were unable to meet due to the premises they used being closed down. In Mandurah, for instance, the whole Seniors' Centre which normally caters for a multitude of groups has been closed to all.

It was with regret that Naturaliste U3A in conjunction with the State Network was forced to cancel the 2020 State Conference which was due to be held in October.

Now there are glimmers of light on the horizon and activities are resuming. In many cases there are still restrictions on numbers but at least we seem to be heading in the right direction.



The U3A choir in Perth have started up again (using social distancing, of course)

A large number of members decided to use the time creatively and we saw some interesting publications including one called KIT (Keeping in Touch) from Wanneroo U3A. This was put together by Cheryl Cundall and Constance O'Brien and appeared weekly for 15 weeks. It included puzzles, games and a variety of items of interest. Another called INFORMAL came from U3A (UWA) Perth. This latter replaced the usual quarterly, INFORM, and proved a vehicle for many contributions or poems, stories, etc. Congratulations to the editor, Peter Bifield, for his imagination and enterprise in putting this together.

The interim period was not all the Dark Ages thanks to the internet and Zoom. North Coast (Hamersley) was one of the first groups to move to virtual meetings thanks to the enterprise of a few people, led by WA network president Peter Alcock. He was quick to realise that if we were to use Zoom, we needed to buy the professional package. The early meetings had relatively few participants, but this quickly built up until we were getting over 60 with U3A members from other groups joining the Friday program of talks and other activities.

Other groups such as Mid North and Joondalup U3A also started their own programs on different days in the week. On one occasion, one of the participants, Anne, was from the UK. She told us she got up at 6 am so that she could join in. The talk that day was on Howard Florey, the Australian scientist who was director of the Sir William Dunn School of Pathology in Oxford and his work on making penicillin available to the world in the 1940s. One of our local members who knew her and also knew that she was a descendant of the Florey family, had alerted Anne to the talk. It was wonderful that a talk given in Perth WA could be shared by someone half a world away. Such is the power of modern technology.

Peter Flanigan
WA Network

U3A ONLINE

While all the local U3As have had to close down, U3A Online has been busier than usual. It's hard to see any benefits of the pandemic but one small one has been a much-needed boost to our finances as well as providing a valuable service to members.

Many U3As have become organisational members and then purchased courses to share with their members, either by working in combination from their homes by studying at the same time and accessing our discussion forum for each course.

Others have encouraged their members to become an individual member so they can do as many courses as they like in that year.

We have had some good feedback from participants, from informing us of the odd hyperlink that isn't working, or pointing out some outdated fact, as well as praise and gratitude for being able to continue to study at home. With more than 70 courses we do not always have the capacity to constantly check everything ourselves (although we do try to undertake regular revisions) so any feedback is useful.

Which reminds me to remind you that if your committee and/or contact details change, could you please ensure they are sent to our website admin at: mitchells257@gmail.com. This is the only way we can update our U3A directory.

I know you will all be looking forward to getting back to meeting face to face and hopefully that won't be too much longer.

Jean Walker
President
U3A Online



AN INVITATION TO WRITE AWAY YOUR TROUBLES

Louise Moss is a U3A member in the UK. Louise was among the section of population asked by the government to stay at home for several months. She says: "I live alone and within days, I felt depressed, lonely and cut off from society. I wondered what I could do to help others who felt the same and started to put short stories on my website. It grew and became Writers Against Covid-19. Each day, a new short story is published on the website, selected to bring a smile to the face and lift the spirits. Now <https://www.writerscircle.net/>

"I was delighted when Australian author, Hazel Girolamo, sent me her story, Floral Tribute. It's a great story, clever and funny, despite the odd spellings! She had me stumped with the word *chook*, too.

"I have been writing all my life and have had many articles and stories published in the past. I have written several novels which you can find on Amazon, including Countdown to Extinction, which took over thirty years to write. I would be pleased to hear from any writer who can write a short story to put a smile on people's faces."

Louise Moss Twitter: @19Writers and <http://www.louisemoss.com>

OPEN LETTER TO THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
FROM AIUTA (Association Internationale des Universités du Troisième Age)
et de la FIAPA (Fédération Internationale des Personnes Agées)

The pandemic caused by Covid19 has caused hundreds of thousands of deaths in Europe and worldwide: more than 70% of these deaths are of people aged 65 or more.

AIUTA (International Association of Universities of the Third Age), has been at the centre of programmes and policies, for many years, all over the world in the service of education, health and well-being of the elderly. The university programs for lifelong education of the elderly constitute, in this period of confinement, a precious help for the elderly, faced with isolation and anxiety linked to uncertainty.

FIAPA (International Federation of Associations of Elderly People) is committed to defending the fundamental rights of older people to dignity, consent, citizenship, promoting an inclusive society and bringing about a paradigm shift allowing to recognize the driving role of seniors in our societies. Its global programmes to combat mistreatment and ageing, its commitments in the context of gerontological emergencies (climate disasters, pandemics, acts of war) make it a central partner in the fight against post-traumatic stress.

The AIUTA Governing Board, which is comprised of representatives of Universities of the Third Age not only from within the European Union but also from every other continent, along with FIAPA members and their representatives, empowered to present collective complaints under the European Social Charter and having participatory status with the Council of Europe and consultative status with the UN (ECOSOC):

- 1) Affirm the essential place of seniors in our society
- 2) Demand maximum protection of seniors in terms of public health
- 3) Recognize the essential role of seniors in inter-generational social networks
- 4) Suggest that everything should be done to guarantee the role of seniors as the depository of the memory of our societies
- 5) Call on European and international authorities to mobilize resources to ensure lifelong learning for seniors which are linked directly to their mental and physical health in particular for all the actions to be taken in the context of the pandemic and its medium and long-term effects

In particular, AIUTA and FIAPA Request:

- That the European Union and the governments of its constituent members show greater sensitivity towards the elderly, who represent an increasingly large proportion of the European population and who have made a fundamental contribution to the construction of Europe.
- That the European Union and the governments of its members pay more attention to the elderly who are the keepers of our history. European memories are part of the “at risk” universal heritage: if our seniors are not nurtured those memories are going to be lost forever. The current policies concerning the elderly are totally insufficient and lacking, both from social and educational viewpoints.
- That the European Union take the initiative to organize a Round Table as soon as possible. This initiative should make it possible to study and define concerted actions to help ensure the well-being, education and health of elderly people across the European Union. AIUTA (International Association of Universities of the Third Age) and FIAPA (Fédération Internationale des Associations de Personnes Agées) can play a leading role in the preparation and organization of this Round Table in cooperation with the national associations of the elderly and in particular FIAPA (International Federation of Elderly) in mobilizing the experiences accumulated in each of the countries of the European Union.

Signed:

Alain Koskas, FIAPA PRESIDENT

Francois Vellas, AIUTA PRESIDENT