



AUSTRALIA

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Betty Tan, U3A Toowoomba, and her award-winning artwork

This issue:

■ *Member reports:*

- 👁️ *WA views dam good painting*
- 👁️ *SA enjoys the great outdoors*
- 👁️ *Queensland artists shine*
- 👁️ *NSW writes during lockdown*
- 👁️ *Victoria widens definition of Hobson's choice*
- 👁️ *U3A Online gets talkative*

■ *Thank you Tom Holloway*

From the Editor

Is it Spring fever? Victorians freshly out of lockdown are an excitable mob. Chairman Glen Wall's waxed lyrical for a full two pages talking of new beginnings like someone who has 'seen the light'. He is creating a framework for U3AAA's future so it may just be over-work.

Victoria has a must-read story of a U3A which increased its membership by 77% since 2019 despite lockdowns. Click on the link provided in their article to watch the video.

U3A Online has stretched their skillset by posting some Zoom videos of a few of their tutors. Find links on their Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/U3A-Online-128184030591120/>) page. While you are there, scroll through their cartoons which will make you smile.

WA submitted a photo of a most striking piece of public art: the world's largest if you think size matters. Queensland too has featured art so below is my favourite piece of U3A art for the year from Canberra showing size doesn't matter. Mixing humour and art is not easy but this one by Irene McHugh made me smile.

NSW's article is short but they may have had their minds on other matters. The Stop Press News is that NSW has a new executive replacing the office holders just elected in April. It is nice to know someone had a surfeit of nominations because in SA we had embarrassingly few.



Deadline for next issue of Bulletin is Wednesday 23 March. That gives you plenty of time to find some great photos and stories.

Wishing you a happy holiday season, surrounded by loved ones.

Claire Eglinton
U3A Lower North &
U3A South Australia

You are never too old to play Twister by Irene McHugh, U3A ACT.

Irene says: "I started painting about 4 or 5 years ago and absolutely love it, and now belong to a U3A art group in the ACT and to the Artists Society of Canberra. This picture is where I joined my daughter and grand-daughter in a game of Twister, which we play every Christmas Day after a big lunch. It always ends in a giggling pile of bodies and it shows *You're Never Too Old to Play Twister.*" Obviously you are never too old to become an artist, too.



From the Chairman

Think of November 2021 as a time of new beginnings

We understand from our federal and state governments that more than 80% of our population has been COVID vaccinated, the strict lockdown restrictions are being relaxed and we will be able to meet family and friends, go shopping, commence travelling and enjoy U3A classes and activities with our friends.

Even crowds permitted to go to the Melbourne Cup, Boxing Day cricket test match and concerts. Restaurants and cafes are reopening.

Why is November 2021 a new beginning?

At a recent online launch of a U3A digital literacy programme the mayor of a local council commented how great it was to see so many senior citizens in the area attending the launch using technology [Zoom] to connect.

Social isolation has become a major challenge for our members during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are now more than ever having to rely on technology and using a device, whether that be a computer, tablet, or smart phone, to get online to chat to a friend or have a family video call. Many of us are now embracing it as a great way to see family and friends.

However, for some using a digital device can be scary. The devices have become our key to a new world of social connection. To learn to use the key can be a steep learning curve when you have never experienced it before, do not understand technical language and may speak English as a second language.

During the launch the U3A organisation was complimented on its achievements in supporting their members to use technology to enable them to connect with friends and family, participate in classes and activities and access online services like telehealth, myGov accounts and scanning a QR code.

Strong digital literacy skills in future will be so important for us individually and as a community. Technology is evolving rapidly, and there is a strong need to support our U3A members to keep up-to-date on the different capabilities of devices and how we can use them fully in our daily lives.

Incorporation of the U3A Australian Alliance and applying for DGR status

The U3A Australian Alliance state network representatives have agreed to work through the process of incorporating the Alliance as a company under the provisions of the Australian Securities and Investments Commission Act 2001 (ASIC Act); and register the incorporated entity with the ACNC Charity Register which will enable an application to be lodged with the Australian Taxation Office for Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status for our organisation. An Information and Recommendation paper on the benefits to the U3A movement is being prepared for circulation.

This initiative is central to strengthening the national voice of the U3A organisation as an integral component of the proposed advocacy for resources and support work of U3AAA.

U3AAA achievements

It is pleasing to report that the Network members of the Alliance have been working collaboratively to strengthen the awareness of the U3A movement in Australia. Achievements include:

- Reaching an agreement to work through the process of incorporating U3A Australia.
- Drafting a U3AAA brochure promoting the value of the U3A organisation in Australia. A draft is being considered by the U3AAA at the November meeting prior to circulating.
- Strengthening the voice of the U3AAA organisation in Federal Parliament by connecting with the Parliamentary Friends of Ending Loneliness
- Improvements to the functionality of the U3AAA website to enable enquiries to the website to be received more efficiently and actioned in a timely manner
- Forming a Technology Futures Think Tank to look at long term technology requirements of our member U3As. Including investigating the implementation of a standardised national membership management system and arranging for support to implement digital literacy awareness programs.

These achievements will contribute to lifting of the profile of the U3A movement in Australia and its recognition as a significant provider of learning, wellbeing and social engagement programs for seniors. As the national profile of the U3A movement lifts, more support will become available to our member networks to assist in widening the reach of our organisation and grow our membership.

The Technology Futures Think Tank will contribute to the building of the capacity of U3As to broaden the scope of activities to engage both the technologically competent and the technologically challenged.

U3A is contributing to a Fairer Australia for Seniors

The U3A movement has a place in the new beginning and can make a significant contribution to the post COVID rebuilding and revitalising of our local communities. We are already known for the important contribution that member U3As make to the lifelong-learning and wellbeing of seniors.

In closing I acknowledge the good work of our Member U3As in each state and the positive way in which they have responded to the needs of members during the pandemic.

Let us all look forward to the future with optimism and enthusiasm.

Glen Wall
Chair,
U3A Alliance Australia



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Barbara Alcock, chair of Better Hearing WA, is married to Peter Alcock, WA president of the U3A State Network. This has resulted in a partnership that has benefited both groups. The U3A Film Crew, of which Peter is also an active member, recently produced a short film about Qsign, a program designed to help people in nursing homes who have difficulty hearing and making themselves understood.

Auslan is the Australian sign language for those who cannot hear in the normal way. Auslan is unique to Australia — there are other signing systems around the world.

Barbara recently spoke to U3A North Coast (Hamersley) demonstrating some of the signs from Auslan. It is not a system that can be learnt in one or two sessions – the experts you see on TV news programs have spent at least five years to learn the full range. A person who loses hearing late in life is unlikely to be able to use it. That is why the much simplified system Qsign has been developed. This has a vocabulary of 20 signs such as eat, sleep, medicine, pain, and stop, — based on Auslan signs. It has been developed in conjunction with Edith Cowan University and Brightwater Retirement Homes. Inability to communicate with residents of nursing homes has long been a problem and it is hoped that Qsign will help bridge the gap.



Barbara Alcock shows Bill Berry how to applaud using Auslan

All systems are go for the 2022 WA State Conference to be held in picturesque Armadale, some 20 Km south-east of Perth on 20-21 October. By that time COVID will be a dim memory, travel will be open to all (at least all those who are vaccinated) and this is a great time of the year to visit Perth and the south-west of WA. Contact Sheila – U3A Armadale – 0439 9263 33 for more details.

ART IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Painted sheds, wheat silos and other rural constructions have really taken off in recent years but, near Collie, WA, an outdoor mural on a dam wall has claimed the title of the largest outdoor painting in the world. U3A members from Mandurah recently took a trip through the south-west of the State and viewed this colossal work by Australian artist Guido Van Helten which was completed earlier this year.

Rory O'Brian reports that U3A Mandurah did a day trip to Harvey Dam, Wellington Dam and the Ferguson Valley. After morning tea at Harvey Dam they headed south to Wellington Dam. The weather provided a few showers but did not spoil the viewing and some sun peeped through to improve their photos.

It was at Wellington Dam they were able to view the massive painting covering the dam wall. The artist used local heritage photographs with sepia type colours to emphasize that effect. Overall the painted wall is vast and spectacular.

These stops were just allowing time to build up their appetites before their ultimate destination: Evedon Retreat for their Christmas in July lunch.



Wellington dam on the Collie River (photo Rory O'Brien)

*Peter Flanigan
WA Network*

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Outdoor groups have managed to avoid many COVID restrictions. Walking in nature is so good for physical and mental health and making new friends, cheap and easy to organise that I am surprised every U3A doesn't have a walking group for every day of the week.

We think of walkers doing it to keep fit but a recent UK study found that it was mental health which benefited most. Lead author of the study, Dr Peter Coventry from University of York, said: "We've known for some time that being in nature is good for health and wellbeing, but our study reinforces the growing evidence that doing things in nature is associated with large gains in mental health. While doing these activities on your own is effective, among the studies we reviewed it seems that doing them in groups led to greater gains in mental health."

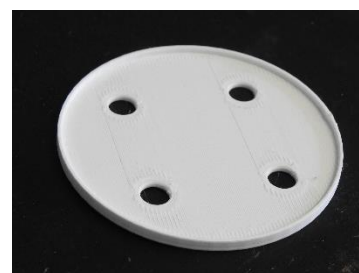
Of course some U3As are luckier than others in the availability of local options for communing with nature. U3A Lower North members take full advantage of the Riesling Trail which runs the length of the Clare Valley linking all the villages along the former rail corridor.

Clare walkers taking a break in front of a magnificent wattle.

Fit or not, Third Agers appreciate a good seat.



What is special about this button? Well, it was made by U3A Aldinga members. Nine people clustered around the TV in a private home for a recent one-off session: a very basic introduction to 3D printing. A free program, produced a very large but simple drawing of a button. Another free program produced the code for the 3D printer. White filament was used on the machine's black table so the members could see how everything worked. The machine speed, was increased to produce the button in about 20 minutes. The button was 60mm in diameter and 3mm thick. It had to be thin to print that fast, said Aldinga's Brian Arthurs. Just as well they didn't want a full Cockney Pearly King outfit.





Also taking it outdoors, U3A Lower North artists create an attraction by painting *en plein air* each year at the Royal Flying Doctor Spring Fair.

A marquee contained an exhibition of paintings for sale. Murray Stoltz (pictured) offered to donate 100% of sale of his painting to the RFDS.

Both U3A Lower North's art groups (based at Auburn and Burra) are

very active with visiting experts, exhibitions, gallery and studio outings providing excellent promotion of U3A and what members can achieve.

To celebrate Get Online Week (18-22 October) U3A Campbelltown took to a local shopping centre, promoting the Be Connected eSafety online program which is part of Campbelltown's Basic Computing course. Course students assisted, using android tablets and iPads purchased with previous and current grants from Good Things Foundation.

Tutor/president Glenda Sherwin-Lane also gave a demonstration to a group of relatively new members using its smart TV and in-house laptop.

Glenda Sherwin-Lane (R) and popular Campbelltown Mayor Jill Whittaker who is also a U3A tutor.



U3A Campbelltown will follow up these events with a workshop for students to try before they buy, in time for Christmas.

A few more sessions like that should encourage even more members to investigate the courses offered by SA's new Statewide online course sharing initiative (see SA website).

*Claire Eglinton
Secretary
U3A South Australia*



QUEENSLAND

AIUTA Arts Awards 2021

Members of two Queensland U3As were winners in the AIUTA 2nd International Art Awards. Top poetry award went to Maggie Cadman of U3A Southern Gold Coast. Silver in the Best Colour in the Creativity Category went to Betty Tan (see front cover), U3A Toowoomba, a second-time winner in this competition. Excellence awards for Best Expression of Abstract Painting or Drawing went to Kay West and Leslie Masterson of U3A Southern Gold Coast.



Leslie Masterson (right), Kay West (left) and her winning piece below.



New U3As in Queensland

U3A Gladstone incorporated in August 2021, bringing the number of Queensland U3As to 35. Gladstone's membership is climbing steadily and at last report was around 50.

U3A Network Queensland has a target of opening six new U3As during the currency of the Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025. Demographic data for Queensland supports the potential establishment of U3As in a number of isolated areas of Queensland.

Network Queensland uses the term isolated more broadly than geographic isolation – the term refers to localities where there is currently neither an established U3A nor one within accessible distance.

The Network committee is also currently working with local governments in two other localities to establish U3As.

Given the spate of recent research which indicates that social connectivity is essential to the maintenance of good health and the fact that our U3As are all about the maintenance of physical and cognitive health, well-being and social engagement, the establishment of new U3As is an imperative.

State Parliamentary Inquiry into Social Isolation and Loneliness

An election promise made during the last election campaign was fulfilled with the establishment of a Parliamentary Inquiry into Social Isolation and Loneliness in Queensland. The U3A Network Queensland made a submission to the Inquiry and was called as witness.

There were good reasons for U3A to be involved: firstly, the U3A movement can be part of the solution to social isolation and loneliness.

Secondly, in The Report of the (Older) Persons 2021, analysis of the data conducted by level of vulnerability using indicators, such as: low personal annual income, living with disability, non-English speaking at home, recent bereavement, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, domestic violence and homelessness, the higher vulnerability group was more likely to be female, be aged 70 or over, live in Queensland and live outside capital cities.

While U3A is not the solution for all persons with these vulnerability factors, our programs can help to mitigate a number of them.

October was Seniors Month in Queensland

U3As across the State held events to mark Seniors Month in Queensland. These included mystery enactments, promotions, open days and a whole lot more. Network sponsored a short story and photography competition with the theme 'Still Learning'. Substantial prizes were on offer to the winners in each category. A panel of U3A members with special expertise selected winners in each category. The announcement of the winners and presentation of prizes will be an online event with international input.

Gail Bonser
President
U3A Network Qld Inc

NEW SOUTH WALES

The spirit engendered by the Network Conference in April was considerably dampened by the resurgence of COVID in NSW and its attendant restrictions over the past three months. Some U3As continued to utilise technology to maintain contact with their members and to offer some courses, others closed down for the duration.

Now that the State has reached 80% double vaccination, several U3As are coming out of hibernation for face-to-face activities, others are waiting until 2022 to recommence.

Out of the gloom has come an innovative book project: *Holy Crap – What ARE They Doing Now?* initiated by Newcastle U3A. The idea was to invite U3A members across New South Wales to provide stories of what it means to be a Third Ager. Sixty-nine individual U3A members from 16 U3As responded to the invitation. Manager of the project, Beth Elliott joyfully comments that the stories *definitely have that ‘bellyful of laughs and bucket-load of tears’ . . . and everything else in between . . . and through them all, the wealth of lived experience of we Third Agers shines through as well as a deep compassion for one’s fellow human beings*. Beth also comments that the project has uncovered a collegiality that was universal. It didn’t matter which U3A the contributors were members of: *they all came together as one, with one voice, one organization, and that has been the most inspiring part of this project*.

The book is to be launched at the Newcastle Writers Festival's 10th anniversary in April next year (providing all goes well COVID-wise) which will undoubtedly help bring U3A into public notice. The Newcastle Writers Festival attracts top Australian authors and media personalities and it’s a big event on the Newcastle calendar. More news next year.



*Superb Fairy Wren
Photographed by Roger Griffiths,
U3A Hawkesbury.*

*Ainslie Lamb
U3A Network NSW newsletter editor*

VICTORIA

HOW ONE U3A'S MEMBERSHIP GREW DURING THE PANDEMIC

U3A Network Victoria holds four meetings with the Members Council a year. These meetings feature presentations by Member U3As about successful initiatives and outcomes of interest to other U3As. At the September meeting, U3A Hobsons Bay / Williamstown presented their experience in the last three years of tackling not only the COVID-19 pandemic but also working successfully through the challenge of renewing their U3A.

In 2019 their membership was 106. By 2021, that had grown to 188, a 77% increase achieved during Melbourne's numerous lockdowns.

They identified that they had a small number of long-running classes and an elderly membership. Their venue is an old cottage on a school campus.

When the pandemic first hit, their committee was not able to participate with online courses due to their age and lack of experience with technology. New committee members were recruited and the long-standing committee members were supported respectfully and gracefully to step down from their roles. The retired committee members were also supported to remain engaged in U3A activities.

The number of people on their committee was expanded in 2021 to make roles more manageable. They used this as an incentive for people to get involved, taking on smaller portfolios. They also created a succession plan to avoid the previous challenges of people remaining in place for extended periods. In fact, they recently had three people volunteer to step into the secretary role – and had to hold interviews as a result!



Williamstown Light-house more commonly known as the Williamstown Timeball Tower, is situated at Point Gellibrand, in the Melbourne suburb of Williamstown. The Williamstown tower was built in 1849 of local bluestone. It was originally a lighthouse, and later served as a timeball tower from 1861 to 1926.

Their growth despite lockdowns is the result of a number of successful strategies:

- Member engagement strategy
- Tutor engagement strategy
- Increased in the number and range of activities by 220 percent, from 16 to 51
- Increased level of digital skills in committee and membership, supported by U3A Network Victoria through grants, Zoom mentors program, implementing a new website (<https://u3ahbwilli.org.au/>) and the U-MAS membership management system
- Increased awareness of their U3A in the local community and with the Council
- Committee's focus on quickly adapting to changes in the COVID restrictions

This is the link to the recording: <https://vimeo.com/600785689/dc5a8ce79b>

U3A NETWORK VICTORIA'S LIVING WITH COVID STRATEGY FOR U3AS

Network developed a series of workshops for Victorian U3As on the various challenges they face in reopening and operating in a COVID normal manner. The initial session of this series was designed to reflect the issues confronting U3As as the Victorian Roadmap was rolling out, and to provide ideas and support which each U3A could then adapt to their local circumstances.

The first workshop had 210 U3A representatives attend. The following topics were covered:

- Reasonable care and diligence for committees as defined in the Victorian Incorporations Act
- Reopening advice based on the Victorian roadmap
- Developing and implementing a COVID Policy
- Example Vaccination Attendance Policy Statements
- Examining vaccination recording – adaptations to the U-MAS and MyU3A membership management systems; myGov sign up help; member hesitancy for recording information, privacy considerations
- Examining enrolments for 2022 – fees, dates, summer schools, timetabling, class sizes
- Implementing terms and conditions of membership and other policies
- Outlining what Network continues to offer such as the support of the member services manager; Network office, marketing support, the U3A support centre on Network's website; training modules for Zoom and other IT how-to's.

The follow up series of four sessions included:

1. How to assist your members to get the vaccine passport onto their digital device. A mentor session. The intended audience for this session are mentors from each U3A
2. Enrolment issues: fees, 2022 dates, Summer School enrolments, 2022 timetabling
3. Terms and conditions and policies: What terms and conditions are suitable for your U3A. The policies that are useful to have for a U3A
4. Victorian QR codes and vaccination status digital proof

2022 STATE CONFERENCE DATE AND VENUE SET LET'S GO TO BENDIGO

The 2022 Victorian State Conference will be hosted by U3A Bendigo on 3-4 October.

*Tracey Swadling
Administration and
Operations Manager
U3A Network Victoria*



U3A ONLINE

From 18-25 October, U3A Online took part in Get Online Week. We received a grant from Be Connected and with it organised an online series of free talks by some of our course writers. These were put on our Facebook page or the links emailed directly to interested people.

The talks included:

1. Portable Learning: learning on the go _____ Mardi Sands
2. Presenting Family History Creatively _____ Rick Aindow
3. History of Afghanistan _____ Gordon Holding
4. The Life of Henry Lawson _____ Jean Walker
5. The benefits of U3A Online for isolated people __ Belinda Stephenson

This proved to be a popular activity and we had a good roll up of participants. It also taught us a lot about how to set up online activities such as this.

We recently received this note from a new member – the sort of comment that makes us feel we are providing a worthwhile service: “My current lifestyle with both family and medical, prevents me from being part of my local U3A for a while (I’m missing the stimulation) so online sounds the perfect solution.”

Jean Walker
President
U3A Online



UNIVERSITY STUDY: DEMENTIA

A University of Melbourne trial called HOMESIDE, explores the effects of music and reading/word-based interventions for people living with dementia and their family caregivers.

Hilary Farmer from the Homeside team says the interventions are designed to be personalised to each person’s preferences and needs, and delivered by the family caregivers, who are trained and supported by health professionals throughout the 6-month study. They hope that the interventions will offer opportunities for people with dementia and their family caregivers to share meaningful moments together and give caregivers tools that can help in the care and management of their loved ones.

Watch the YouTube invitation: <https://youtu.be/g5EfX0dcGDs>. More information can be found at their website: <https://www.homesidestudy.eu/about>

Anyone interested should email: homeside-australia@unimelb.edu.au

Retirement of Tom Holloway

Tom Holloway has lived long enough to have several retirements. Tom's background included 25 years with IBM and after retiring from that in 1990 he taught website design and set-up at Warwickshire College and University of Coventry. His retirement from that career was followed by years of being active as a 'community worker' principally on making fund-raising videos and setting up websites for charities in the UK and in India.

For over a decade Tom Holloway contributed to the World U3A organisation as a committee member, editor of the U3A newsletter *Signpost* and as Secretary General of World U3A Online. His international outlook no doubt framed by his lifestyle of dividing his year between the UK and India.

Tom created and for many years managed our U3AAA website. It was a kind and generous gesture when we had no one local offering to do it. Many U3A members will remember his visit to Australia as part of U3A Network Victoria's Melbourne Conference in 2013.

In recognition of his support, the U3A Australian Alliance has donated to the schools Tom supports in India. These schools are <http://youngzoomers.club> and <http://itsmyschool.club>

Tom was surprised and delighted by this gift and sends his thanks.

“This has come at a good time, since I've asked Radha (who manages my work in Hyderabad) to investigate giving all 20 students a cheap low laptop table. This is because the students all work squatting, as you can see here.”

Of course it is not in Tom's DNA to fully retire. His globetrotting days may be over but, as I mentioned last issue, anyone tuning in to the international study group chats will see Tom there as convenor logging on from his flat in the UK.

