



AUSTRALIA

U3AAA BULLETIN No. 38

AUGUST 2023



WA and Victorian presidents Peter Alcock and Annie Grigg with their Cobb & Co courtesy carriage at the 50th anniversary celebrations in Rockhampton. 1973: not quite horse & buggy era.

This issue:

■ Member reports:

- 👤 *Victorians excited by science*
 - 👤 *SA in a pickle*
 - 👤 *WA celebrate with panache*
 - 👤 *Queensland has cake and eats it*
 - 👤 *NSW beat school children*
 - 👤 *U3A Online has a new Moodle*
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From the Editor

This issue we have made Victoria our lead story to encourage everyone to read about the wonderful coordinated effort the Victorian network is making into increasing science courses. Times are changing at U3A Online. Jean Walker reports that ironically their membership is shrinking as more people become IT savvy. Jean puts it down to an increased ability to access a multitude of alternative learning opportunities available on the internet.

The biggest news this issue is contained in our Chairman's pages. We have been repackaged and born again. Isn't it delightful to be present at a birth rather than a funeral. Congratulations and sincere thanks to Victorian VP Glen Wall for all the time he has put into being midwife at the birth of U3A Australia. Now we have this baby we will have to give some thought to how we look after it. It's previous entity, the Alliance was shifted from hand to hand like some unwanted orphan but for U3A Australia to flourish it will need to be in safer hands than someone who is probably overwhelmed by having just taken on presidency of their own State. Ideally it deserves to be someone's sole focus and supported by a well-resourced State office as it has been in Victoria.

At a recent webinar I learned reporting of elder abuse cases has increased by 40% in the last couple of years. By definition elder abuse is an act that causes harm to an older person, carried out by someone they know and trust. This could be a family member, friend or carer. The harm could be accidental or deliberate. Elder abuse can be physical, emotional, financial, social, neglect, sexual or chemical. The average age of the person being abused is 79-80 years.

It is estimated that around one in 20 older Australians is experiencing some form of elder abuse. That is concerning enough for awareness of this issue to be on the agenda of every U3A. Like domestic violence it is frequently perpetuated by those nearest and dearest and boundaries get confused. Many victims either don't realize, or are too ashamed to say, they are victims, and don't want to get a loved one into trouble by reporting.

In my home State of SA over 50% of cases are financial abuse and over 75% of cases are emotional abuse (financial and emotional abuse often occur together), over 80% of abuse is committed by a family member, over 65% of abuse victims live in the family home, and over 19% of cases involve dementia.

If U3A members are aware of the problem, they can not only support and advise their fellow members and friends, but recognise it so they don't fall victim themselves.

Deadline for next issue of this Bulletin is Wednesday 25 October.
Heads may roll if not in by 28 October.



Claire Eglinton
U3A Lower North &
U3A South Australia

From the Chairman

THE U3A ORGANISATION IN AUSTRALIA HAS AN OFFICIAL NATIONAL VOICE.

Pleased to announce that on 18 July 2023 the U3A Australian Alliance (U3AAA) of State U3A networks incorporated as U3A Australia Ltd.

This is a significant development for the U3A organisation in Australia as we celebrate the 50-year anniversary of the U3A movement worldwide and in 2024 the 40-year anniversary of U3A in Australia.

The principal purpose and membership of U3A Australia Ltd:	
<p>Principal purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advance and support an effective and sustainable U3A movement in Australia;• Represent U3A networks in Australia; and• Support lifelong learning, health and wellbeing interests, and the reduction of social isolation, of retired and semi-retired people. <p>The membership consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• State associations that represents the U3A movement in each state or territory of Australia;• U3A Online; and• Only one state body can represent each state or territory of Australia as a member at any one time.	<p>U3As in Australia: 250</p> <p>U3A Members in Australia: 97, 000+</p> <p>Volunteer hours: 14,000 /week 1.7 million p.a. \$45.2 million+ value p.a.</p>

IMMEDIATE BENEFITS TO THE U3A ORGANISATION AND OUR MEMBER U3As

NBN COLLABORATION

NBN have officially confirmed that NBN will nationally collaborate with U3A Australia to support the delivery of an NBN U3A Australia National Digital Literacy support program.



NBN will co-design with U3A an upgraded program for seniors in Australia who are facing barriers to digital inclusion – with the intent to increase both broadband connectivity and digital ability.

This national partnership will be the vehicle to create the new ‘digital mentor’ program – initially set as a test and learn with the objective for use with multiple national partners in FY24. The new ‘digital mentor’ program will build on the learnings in Seniors Education and Awareness from previous pilots of the Live Life Connected program with U3A Victoria.

This collaboration will provide additional support to expand the Digital Skills Mentoring program to benefit member U3As.

OFFICEWORKS BUYING GROUP

Officeworks have agreed to set up a U3A Australia National U3A ‘Favourable Price’ organisation-buying group for member U3As who wish to participate.



The Officeworks communications department is preparing promotional packs to assist U3A Australia promote the Buying Group to Member U3As.

<p>In addition to ‘favourable pricing’ on Officeworks products, Officeworks will also provide assistance with:</p>	
 <p>Marketing Campaign Support. Help with a marketing campaign, promotional materials or branded stationery.</p>	 <p>Tech Issues? Speak to a Geek. Geeks2U can sort out tech problems with on-site, remote and same day services available.</p>

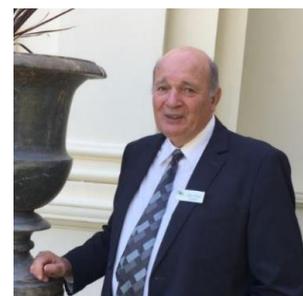
The unanimous agreement of the U3A State delegates to form U3A Australia Ltd and the positive responses of U3A members at state conferences (face to face) and Zoom online meetings is an indication of the goodwill, collaborative sharing and collegiate spirit shared amongst all U3A state networks.

In discussion with representatives of member U3As and the results of sample surveying of member U3As it appears generally that 10% of the membership of U3As are volunteer tutors/leaders and that typically they connect with the other 90% of U3A members weekly. Extrapolating to a national Level, we have close to 10,000 volunteers connecting with approaching 90,000 seniors weekly.

In closing, I again acknowledge the good work of our member networks, member U3As in each state and the commitment of their committees, tutors and leaders to ensuring U3A in Australian can look forward to a bright future.

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

Glen Wall
Chair,
U3A Australia



VICTORIA

Victorian U3As supported August National Science week with a three-part awareness campaign. Aims of the campaign are to encourage more science courses at U3As and also to recruit more members through this interest. This campaign is a response to U3A course co-ordinators requesting efforts to bring more science to U3As.

In the first part of the campaign, Network's Facebook page and the Network website advertised all Victorian U3As which offer science courses. This advertising included links to the U3As' websites. U3As themselves were invited to note their science courses on their own homepages with directions about signing up.

In addition, a number of on-line lectures were available to all U3As and to the public via Network's on-line platform; the on-line lectures were also advertised on Network's Facebook page and website and also through Network's monthly bulletin Network News. On-line lectures covered topics with a general science base and with a social impact. First-up lecture was on the AUKUS treaty.

The National Science Week campaign has been developed through the Network Education Program, working with the marketing sub-committee and with Member Services. Science Week is also the occasion for the Network Education Program to launch its science community of practice, supporting new and existing science and technology-based classes.

Communities of practice (COPs) aim to strengthen existing tutors and courses and to encourage inexperienced members to offer courses. Existing communities of practice cover technology, First Nations discussion groups, meditative practices, and scribblers art with a writing COP in development as well as the science group. U3A tutors and activity leaders within these disciplines can use group discussion forums and can also access course guides created by U3A subject matter experts to assist first-time leaders.

Forty-plus U3As offer science-related courses at present. It is hoped that the focus on this subject will encourage other U3As to move into this intriguing field.

Right: U3A Warrnambool members proving that science can be fun.



*Susan Webster
Vice President
U3A Network Victoria*



Network Victoria
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

“If you are in a pickle, stay out of the kitchen.” So says U3A Inner North’s Jenny Rossiter who reports that Inner North is in a pickle of a pleasant sort as it embraces one of the fastest growing sports in Australia (and the world): pickleball.

Pickleball is a low impact sport, easy to learn and play, bringing together elements of tennis, badminton, and table tennis to create a sport that’s fun for all ages and skill levels, hence its popularity at U3A. It is played on a badminton sized court, with players using a bat (called a paddle) and a small, perforated plastic ball. It is usually played in doubles.

Margaret: I joined pickleball because it was something new, as well as being a social activity. It certainly makes you work up a sweat and we have lots of laughs.

So why stay out of the kitchen? The kitchen is a non volley area close to the net. You are only allowed to hit the ball in the kitchen if it has bounced first. Like any sport, pickleball has its own terminology e.g. kitchen, dinking, falafel, dill ball, flapjack. You don’t need to speak the language to start play. The actual pickleball rules are very simple and easy to learn.

Iwona: I like playing as it is very social and casual. It doesn’t matter if I miss the ball.



The rapid growth of pickleball in Australia resulted in the establishment of the Pickleball Australia Association in 2020. There are now more than 5000 members and 15,000 players spread across our 7 state and territory associations with more than 100 affiliate clubs, community groups and businesses.

Paul: Since retiring from playing squash many years ago, pickleball now allows me back on a court again. It gives my wife and myself an opportunity for assisting with maintaining our fitness and we look forward to our weekly dose of pickleball.

Quite a few U3As around Australia have already introduced pickleball into their program.

Cathy: Never having played a competitive racquet sport my whole life, at 64 years of age I discovered pickleball. It has given me, for the first time, the confidence to play a competitive sport! Thanks to Jenny’s coaching and dedication I’m part of a great team.

More than 36.5 million people played pickleball from August 2021 to August 2022, according to a new report by the Association of Pickleball Professionals. Pickleball around the world is exploding. It may soon become an Olympic sport. A professional pickleball tournament has recently been established in Australia and this year pickleball is being played for the first time at the Australian Masters Games.

The 19th Australian Masters Games will be in Adelaide in October with more than 50 sports on offer. In addition to pickleball, this year new sports will include 'indoor interactive cycling', and 'yoga sports'. Game headquarters will be on the Festival Plaza from 7 to 14 October so easy to reach by free public transport.

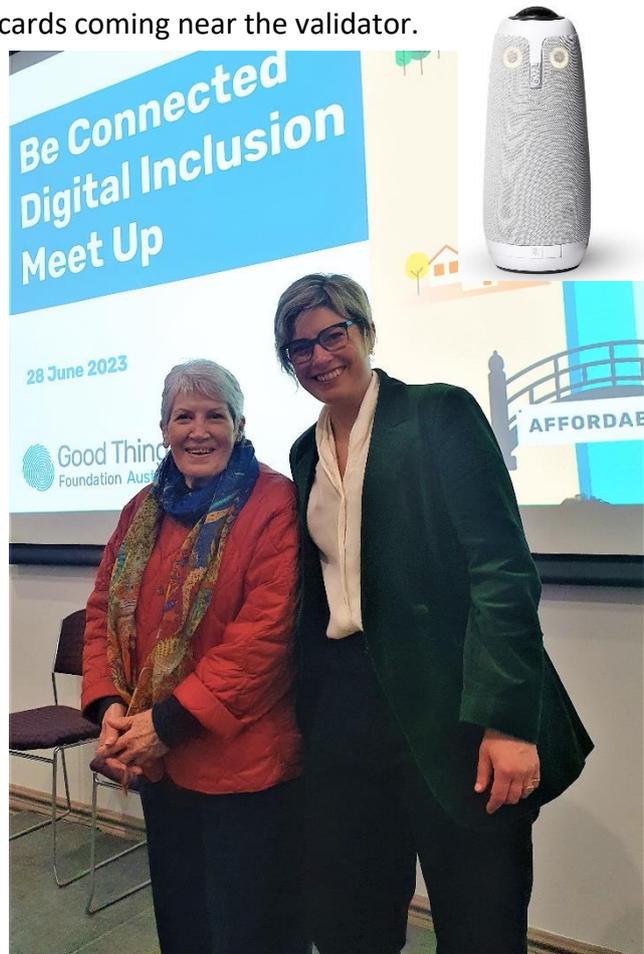
Speaking of public transport, take care that you are not accidentally charged when you use the new-style automatic validator. These machines have been upgraded so that fee-paying commuters can tap and pay their fare. To avoid being charged, please ensure that your Visa or Mastercard cards are kept separate from your Seniors Card so that when you validate there is no risk of a payment being debited to your account. Those of us who have been in the habit of swiping our whole wallet or handbag across the validator, now must remove our Seniors Card to validate to avoid credit cards coming near the validator.

SA encourages all U3As to take advantage of the Be Connected grants for Get Online Week 16-22 October.

Last year Australians reported losing \$3.1 billion to fraud and scams, an 80% rise from 2021. With figures like that we should be taking every opportunity to educate our members about the dangers.

Right: State president Glenda Sherwin-Lane with Good Things Foundation CEO Jess Wilson at the recent Be Connected event in Adelaide. Meeting Owl inset top right.

SA is currently buoyed by the success of our recent purchase of two Meeting Owls which are all-in-one, 360-degree camera, microphone and speaker units for hybrid meetings. Their purchase, along with full accessories, was enabled by a SA Health grant of \$5,000. Very appropriate name as many U3As in the past used an owl as their logo and some still do.



[My apologies. I had a rather stunning photo of two gentlemen playing nude pickleball in America but insufficient room to include it. 😊]

*Claire Eglinton
Secretary, U3A South Australia*



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Excellent news from Western Australia is that U3A Perth has rejoined the State Network.

[A little explanation for those from other States who don't know the WA system. U3A Perth has over 1,000 members in 10 branches throughout the Perth metropolitan area. These branches (Joondalup, Lesmurdie Hills, North Coast [Hamersley], Dianella and Districts, Rockingham, Canning River, Melville and Districts, Swan Hills, Wanneroo, Western Suburbs) operate their own programmes at their own venues but are not autonomous bodies. It is rather like a network within a network. As you can imagine their withdrawal from the State network shot rather a hole in that organisation and its operations and we are all glad to see them reunited. The Editor]

Down at U3A Margaret River they celebrated the 50th anniversary of the founding of the U3A movement in Toulouse, France, very appropriately with a French-themed dinner on Bastille Day. Later in the year Perth will celebrate with a New Orleans jazz concert.



Celebrating in style: Bunty Paramor, Jenny Bunbury and Deb Cochrane at the Margaret River dinner.

NATURALISTE U3A:

Colleen Liston reports that in June Myles Pollard presented a workshop for Naturaliste U3A. Myles used his teaching skills, together with his acting and directing charisma, to get the 30 attendees up on their feet (one from their walking frame) and engaged in games which stimulated memory (for most of us) and problem-solving skills, enhanced our social interactions, developed our abilities to focus, self-express, to be creative and to enjoy imaginative play. We all had a wow of a time and learned a lot about ourselves.

Myles is a WA local and has appeared in an impressive list of films but many will remember him from TV series such as Home and Away and McLeod's Daughters.

Right: Nealma and Myles playing tennis.

Myles has acted with several respected theatre companies and is patron of the Cinesnaps program for school students' short films project. He directs short films annually for the



Creative Arts Initiative, a program that educates and up-skills tomorrow's film makers.

Naturaliste approached Myles last year asking if his workshops on the challenges and stigmas of mental illness offered to school children could be adapted for U3A members. Myles, who is known for being generous with his time and talents, replied: *My workshops could absolutely be extended for an older audience. I'd love to talk with your members about my program and its benefits.* What a nice bloke.

U3A MANDURAH:

Members learnt a lot during their visit to the Recycling Centre in Boddington

Right: Eugene Smallberger explained the operation.

Afterwards they enjoyed a hamburger lunch [recyclable packaging we hope] at the park alongside the Hotham River and a visit to the local craft centre.

Sounds a very balanced day: a little learning, a little eating out, a little shopping and a whole day spent with friends.



Peter Alcock
WA Network



QUEENSLAND

The Queensland State conference held in Rockhampton and celebrating 50 years of U3A worldwide was the place to be. Professor Francois Vellas, international president and his wife Chantal were guests of honour, joined by 190 delegates from around Queensland. State presidents and delegates from Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia also joined in the celebrations. The guest speakers were inspiring and informative. The conference opened with Professor Vellas and Professor Maria Chester taking us on a journey into the formation of U3A, where we sit in the world today and the international plan for the future.

Right: Rhonda Weston AM, Henry Cope, Cheryl Wicks, Francois and Chantal Vellas.

Below: Rhonda Weston AM, Cliff Picton, Professor Vellas, Annie Grigg (Victorian network president) and Glen Wall (U3A Australia president).



Cliff Picton and Jim Hales looked down memory lane and shared with us the history of U3A arriving in Australia and the formation of U3A Network Qld Inc., and Glen Wall educated the delegates on the purpose and importance of U3A Alliance Australia (U3AAA). The delegates were engrossed and enlightened by speakers whose topics ranged from the digital world to the medical world, ageing and climate change.

Our AGM was held, as usual, in conjunction with the Network annual conference and we were delighted to welcome Ruth Northcott as the new Network secretary. Ruth brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to our committee and is a great team player. We also welcomed Rick Aindow and farewelled Alison Taylor, Bronwyn Pedler and Margaret Cook. Larry Frazer was elected treasurer, stepping up from assistant treasurer.

The Queensland Network State Conference 2024 will be held in Beaudesert 28 – 30 May.

We welcomed U3A Douglas Shire (Port Douglas) our 36th Qld U3A. Douglas Shire have been members of Cairns while they were getting established. Having a nearby U3A mentoring the fledgling group builds a firm foundation for the development of new groups. A very big welcome to Douglas Shire and a big thank you to U3A Cairns for their support.

The Network committee has implemented Member Wizard as a management tool to assist with the efficient managing of our organisation. Member Wizard is a valuable tool for all committees. It offers secure methods of information storage and a complete financial package. On a group level, members can pay their dues online, register and pay for classes and events, and receive texts and emails. In addition, it makes it easy for members to interact with the organisation. Member Wizard, an Australian company built for U3As and serviced locally, has already been taken up by over half of the Qld U3As who have found it suits their needs perfectly.

We are delighted to announce that Her Excellency the Hon. Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM has accepted my invitation to become the patron of U3A Network Qld Inc. Dr Young was the Queensland chief health officer during the Covid years and is a remarkable woman.

Colin Maddocks, representing U3A Network Queensland, is assisting the AIUTA/FIAPA study into the rights and protection of older persons. The aim of the study is to identify new approaches at motivating countries to adopt a charter of rights for older persons. He was approached by Francois Vellas, AIUTA president, to assist with understanding international challenges, particularly as they relate to Australia and the Pacific region. Colin has started his desk research and hopes to be assisted by some Australian colleagues who have experience in this field. He is due to report back to the core study group by the end of August. The core study group comprises; Francois Vellas (AIUTA president), Dolors Vidal (University of Girona), Albert Evrard (Professor ITC, Belgium), Alain Koskas (FIAPA president), Marvin Formosa (Professor University Valetta, Malta), Silvia Aulet (University of Girona) and Montserrat Amoros (AIUTA GB member). Colin welcomes questions and input from U3A members. His contact email address is: colin.maddocks78@yahoo.com

*Rhonda Weston AM
President
U3A Network Qld Inc*

NEW SOUTH WALES

The U3A NSW Network Conference entitled *U3A: Emerging from COVID* was successfully held on 18/19 April in Deniliquin (south-west NSW) with a full two-day program geared at engaging participants in a relaxed and informative gathering.

Some of the program highlights included: history of Deniliquin and surrounds; round table discussion/introduction of U3As attending: “what is working? what isn’t”; scam awareness, mental health issues, technology update, long Covid; network website, status of U3A Australia, future of U3A Network NSW.

President of the NSW Network, Denis Simond:

I am pleased to report that our recent State conference at Deniliquin was a success, it was an event to share ideas and to have fellowship with colleague U3A members and guests.

Again I thank the team from Deniliquin U3A for organising the venue and for their attention to the details that made our short stay in Deni so pleasant. Thank you to all who contributed to the program and a special thanks to our visitors from U3A Network Victoria, Glen Wall, Chair U3A Australia and Kevin Whelan, NFP Technology Volunteer of the Year 2022. We also welcomed Jessica Cotter from NBN, who outlined how NBN may be engaged with U3As throughout Australia when U3A Australia Ltd is incorporated. Thanks to NBN and Jessica for her valuable contribution to our conference.

From U3A Northern Illawarra – Ainslie Lamb:

We had a very successful annual debate with Bulli High School in March. We thank both teams for their fantastic contribution to what is a wonderful community event. U3A successfully took the affirmative position *that Social Media is detrimental to society*.

This was the fifth annual debate with Bulli High School, and we also thank the principal and debating teachers for their support, and Wollongong Lord Mayor Gordon Bradbery who has adjudicated the debate each year. The intergenerational event is appreciated by all participants and the audience (an opportunity to invite grandparents as potential U3A members) and the topics are chosen to reflect this. Previous topics included: that the generation gap is widening; that zoos should be abolished; that history is fake news; that it’s a great thing to live in the digital age.



Jean Lewis
Regional Representative
Central Coast/Hunter Region NSW



U3A ONLINE

Those of you who are members of U3A Online, may have seen the article I wrote in our last newsletter regarding the cost of upgrading our website and the downturn in membership.

The U3A Online website is a complex platform which needs expensive software, security and ongoing maintenance to keep it running smoothly. We need to have a commercial IT company to do immediate fixes of problems and necessary updates. It is not something our small volunteer committee can do.

We were recently confronted with a quote for upgrading Moodle and Drupal software that was beyond our current means and we had some concern about being able to keep the site going. However, after some consultation with Catalyst, our IT company, we have come to an agreement that we will upgrade Moodle but will move what we need from Drupal into Moodle and therefore not have to upgrade that. It's a bit technical but hopefully it will work and will leave us safe for at least another two years.

However, what happens after that, is unsure as we will have very little left from our reserves. Hopefully, a solution can be found by then and we will be looking around for grants and funding during the next year. We cannot depend on membership fees as our numbers are decreasing and we would prefer not to increase the fee, although that may have to happen.

When U3A Online was initiated in 1998 we had over 4000 members, we now have about 800, so income is much reduced. This was to be expected as retirees have gained more IT skills and are able to navigate the web and find other resources and learning platforms, unavailable back then. However, we do feel we provide a worthwhile service to both individuals and U3As and we are certainly not ready to give up yet

So, if you can spread the word, invite friends and acquaintances to join, we would be most grateful. If you haven't ever looked at our website, (<https://www.u3aonline.org.au/>) please do, and see the range of courses and services we offer. U3A Online is unique in the world and it originated here in Australia. There is no other fully online U3A anywhere else. As such, it would be a sad day if we have to close.

On a brighter note, we have a new course which I'm sure would be of interest to both individuals and U3A groups, the History of Ancient Egypt. It was written by a member who has done several years of study in this subject which culminated last year in a PhD.

We are also planning a series of Armchair Travel courses and these will be announced on our Notice Board page when they are ready.

Jean Walker
President
U3A Online

