



BANYULE
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

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In the spirit of reconciliation, U3A Banyule acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and pays respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging. The U3A movement is a welcoming place for all.



Quarterly Newsletter December 2023

In this edition ...

Some say Christmas is not a season, but a state of mind. U3A Banyule is all about giving and receiving; we share our skills, knowledge and goodwill. Take a look in these pages to see what we've been up to this term.

The spotlight is on the Reading Aloud Group and Making Art Class, and you can see excursions, lectures and gatherings galore. We introduce new committee members and say goodbye to retiring tutors.

A huge shout out to all Office Bearers, tutors, volunteers and, of course, all members.

Volunteers are always needed to run this organisation, so over the break maybe ask yourself, What could I do?

The newsletter team



President's report

If I think back over another busy year of U3A Banyule, there are so many standouts. This year was a whirl of big meetings, the Special General Meeting for constitutional changes and the AGM but they are long gone; the new website is now functioning splendidly; Trybooking has been successfully implemented and we had afternoon teas, lingering lunches, singing, dancing, knitting, rambling, quizzes, excursions, physical classes to test stamina and so much more.

Think of all those who have made this possible. I say frequently that people matter and when that's the priority, then great things flow. We have a Committee of Management with Support Role People all focussing on the delivery of programs. We are auditing the current Strategic Plan and looking towards the next iteration in time for the AGM 2025. An important achievement is our new Letter of Agreement regarding our ongoing partnership with Yarra Plenty Library over the use of CMR1&2.

Trying to get the balance right when membership numbers are growing fast can be tricky. The bigger an organisation, the greater the challenge in delivering quality programs, events and opportunities for fun social occasions. But the greatest challenge of all is striving for all members to feel included. So it comes down to members being prepared to reach out, include others as well as being prepared to give a little. No matter how big or small the time commitment, volunteers are our lifeblood. It's about many hands making light work.

We have lots of members and tutors who are getting awards for their significant contributions. Most of the recipients were stunned and I am thrilled to say, very excited to be getting a well-deserved recognition. Many didn't know there were awards or thought they were for 'other' people. But a dynamic organisation knows its people, values them and celebrates their work. This year, for the first time, we are holding a special event, bringing together tutors, volunteers and those getting awards so we can truly thank everyone.

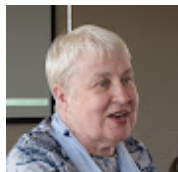
May this festive season bring peace in far-off lands. Remember to be grateful for the well-regulated and reasonably fair society that we enjoy – a society that so many could only dream about. A big thank you to you, our members, for all your support and my very best wishes.

Judith Craze



The Office Bearers elected for 2023–2024

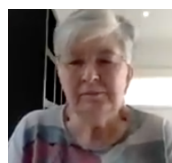
Judith Craze
President



Janet Ringrose
Vice-President



Margaret Jack
Secretary



Sharon Karasmanis
Course & Tutor Coordinator



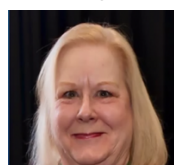
Inge Kearney
Office Manager



Tania Rostan
Course Information Manager
& Venue Coordinator



Dianne Williamson
U3A Victorian Network
Delegate



Heather Stephens
MyU3A Administrator



Milena Maranville
Volunteers Coordinator &
Governance Convenor



Willem Roodenburg
Technology Coordinator



Noni Crowther
CoM Minutes Secretary



Bee Mitchell-Dawson
Privacy and Data Security
Officer



Meet our new Course Information Manager and Venue Coordinator

My name is Tania Rostan and I was born and bred in Melbourne. I hold an engineering degree and my professional history is in consulting and corporate banking, specialising in project, risk and change management.

I've always had a strong belief in the importance of giving back to the community and embracing lifelong learning. Leaving corporate life behind me, I was keen to give back to the community.

My journey with U3A began after attending a public lecture that left me deeply impressed with both the quality of the lecture and the knowledge I gained. This experience led me to make the decision to become a member of U3A.

Upon becoming a member, an opportunity to volunteer arose, and I met with Marg Fievez, whose persuasive skills convinced me to take on her responsibilities as the Information Manager and Venues Coordinator.

What I cherish most about my involvement with U3A is the opportunity to meet a diverse group of people, each with unique life experiences. This journey with U3A has allowed me to engage with like-minded individuals and contribute positively to support lifelong learning and community involvement.



Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held via Zoom on Thursday 21 September. Mayor Peter Castaldo and 87 members attended the meeting. The technical support by Michael Maguire and the scrutineering by Joan Learmont and Valerie MacPhee were much appreciated.

The meeting was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the achievements of 2022–23 as well as explain some of the challenges to be faced in 2024 due to increased membership. We use 13 venues on top of the two rooms at ILCH and hiring costs are increasing.

Thank you to our incoming CoM members for nominating.

We thank the four people retiring from COM: Julie Vomero, John Kennedy, Kevin Whiting and Valerie MacPhee. We are still in need of three more people who are willing to join CoM as general members. If you are interested, please get in touch. This is not onerous work and you would be most welcome.

Congratulations to Kevin Whiting and Milena Maranville for being awarded Life Membership.



Annual Forum

The Annual Forum was held on Monday 20 November at the Heidelberg Golf Club, with 80 people in attendance. The highly relevant topic was 'Cyber Security – the impact and benefit globally and on us individually'.

Guest speaker John Lombard, CEO of Asia Pacific NTT Ltd, gave a fascinating and wide-ranging account of the rapid and costly development of cybercrime around the world. His presentation was perfectly complemented by the second speaker, Dr Geetika Verma, from the School of Science of RMIT University.

Geetika provided much practical information about how all internet users can take precautions to protect themselves from scams, the take-home message being "pause before you click". A lively question and answer session followed the presentation.

The Forum concluded with a sumptuous afternoon tea and participants enjoyed the chance to socialise. Thanks and congratulations are due to the organisers, especially Judith Craze and Maria Axarlis-Coulter.

Helen McKinnon



Cr Peter Castaldo, Maria Axarlis-Coulter, Judith Craze, Dr Geetika Verma, John Lombard

Acknowledgement and thank you to retiring tutors and talks facilitators

U3A Banyule is a learning organisation, and as such relies on the contributions from our generous tutors. Tutors contribute through a range of academic topics, everything from the discipline of languages to artistic and cultural groups and physical activities. We would like to sincerely thank and acknowledge the sustained and excellent service provided by the 2023 retiring tutors and facilitators.

Sharon Karasmanis

Maria Axarlis-Coulter

Maria has been Public Lecture Officer for the past 4 years and has worked tirelessly organising excellent speakers for a diverse range of topics resulting in a very well attended program. Maria has also organised interesting speakers for the Annual Lunch and the Annual Forum, which is a critical contribution for each event. We sincerely thank Maria for her commitment and expertise in managing this challenging role. See page 10.

Mimmo Cozzolino

Mimmo has taught art for 2 years, firstly as 'Pencil and paint', which then transformed into 'Making art anyway we can'. As an artist Mimmo has a great love of drawing as a medium for exploring ideas. Mimmo taught perceptual drawing as a foundation for the development of a regular art practice and put a lot of thought, structure and preparation into his classes. We are truly appreciative of Mimmo's generous contribution and commitment. See page 9.

Audrey Davies

Audrey has been teaching the Joy of Shakespeare for 6 years and is highly valued for her enthusiastic and well-prepared approach. Her classes are popular and always have a wait list. Audrey has taught short courses and weekly classes. The Richard III re-enactment was a highpoint in 2022 where members performed to a packed audience in the library theatrette. Class members really enjoy Audrey's classes and are appreciative of the thought and preparation of her classes. We thank Audrey for her sustained and generous contribution.

Glenda Hansen

U3A Banyule has been very fortunate to have such an experienced language teacher in Glenda, who has been teaching German for 3 years. Her aim is to develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills as participants gain a functional knowledge of German vocabulary, grammar and aspects of German culture and geography. Glenda introduced interesting and fun activities relating to cultural, geographical, and historical aspects of countries where German is spoken. We thank Glenda sincerely for her generous contribution to German language teaching.

John Jones-Parry

John is a highly qualified and accomplished photographer, and we have been fortunate to have had the benefit of his expertise over the past 2 years. His first course commenced with 'How to take better photos whilst having fun' which taught members how to control composition, light, and other important practical aspects as well as learning how to make photos that others find easy to 'connect' with. John's second year moved members to an intermediate level, building on their skills and knowledge. John has been very generous in being the official photographer at various U3A events. We are most appreciative of John's generous contribution.



Valerie MacPhee

As well as Valerie's other critical role as Office Manager, she has also managed to run one of our book groups for the past 3 years, which has been really appreciated by the members. This group rotated in members' homes, and was run monthly, and really enjoyed by the participants. We thank Valerie sincerely for her generosity in keeping this group running, as well as her other multitude of responsibilities.

Joyce Parsons

Joyce has been teaching a Scottish Dancing class for 4 years. She is an excellent teacher, highly accomplished and yet encouraging and patient with her class. Joyce organised demonstration dancers for the Scottish and Irish nights. We thank Joyce sincerely for the joy she has brought to the Scottish Dancing members.

Lucille Sadler

Lucille has been teaching Intermediate French Level 3 for 6 years and is valued for her experience and encouragement along with well-prepared content and good oral skills tutelage. Lucille was a master at Zoom classes during Covid lockdowns and managed group discussions with great skill. Lucille is an encouraging teacher who sets a vibrant language learning curriculum around relevant current themes and information. We thank Lucille for her invaluable tuition and commitment to our members.

**Elizabeth Drummond and Helen Cochrane**

Elizabeth and Helen have worked tirelessly to coordinate and organise the weekly and fortnightly Thursday Talks. The topics have ranged widely, and a highlight was the excellent Gilbert and Sullivan concert. Facilitating talks involves all administration around securing and managing speakers, venues, technology, presentation, and members. The talks have been enthusiastically attended and highly valued by members, and they both deserve warmest congratulations for their generous contributions as they step down from this role.

Anthony Ward

Tony has been teaching Mahjong for the past 3 years, this group uses the 'Mahjong Players' Companion Book for Special Hands' and adheres to the Australian Twitters School of Mahjong rules. This is a very popular course with continually high enrolment of members. Tony recently initiated a tea break during the session to encourage socialisation amongst the members, which was well received particularly by new members. We sincerely thank Tony for his commitment and generous contribution to the Mahjong program.

Elizabeth Ward

Elizabeth started the U3A Recorder Group in 2018, and we have been fortunate that this group has evolved into an 'intermediate' standard group. The group led by Elizabeth plays mostly consort pieces with S, A, T, B parts. The music ranges from 14th Century up to contemporary compositions and arrangements. The group performed at the recent successful 'Afternoon tea with music' event held at the Ivanhoe Library. We thank Elizabeth sincerely for her 6 years of leadership of the group, and her generous commitment to music for U3A Banyule.

Kevin Whiting

As well as Kevin's role as Treasurer, and as member on multiple sub-committees, Kevin has worked tirelessly coordinating and organising the Monday lecture program, working with Roger Jones. This included administration in managing speakers, venues, technology, and presentation. Over the past years, members have enjoyed some interesting and captivating talks. We have been fortunate to have Kevin in this challenging role and thank him warmly for his generous commitment to the talks program. See page 3.

U3A Banyule celebrates Will Semler's 100th birthday

Over 60 U3A members gathered at ILCH on 9 November to honour centenarian Will Semler. President Judith Craze congratulated Will on turning 100 on 5 November and continuing to be an active U3A member. Wendy Kellock then gave an interesting account of his many achievements.

Will migrated to Australia from the Czech Republic in 1940. The Semler family had a large factory in Czechoslovakia making many items from wire, and they set up a similar enterprise in Melbourne, named "Bliss and Reels". Will's special skill was as a conceptual engineer. He and his late wife Gwen, who was also a keen U3A member, bought their family home in Ivanhoe 60 years ago, and Will still lives there.

Will's involvement with U3A began with story writing at U3A Melbourne City. He has published two books about his life, as well as writing a large number of stories. Judith Craze read a fine example of his writing to the gathering, "Sunset Over the Gunbower 2008".

The Mayor of the City of Banyule, Cr Peter Castaldo, attended the party to express his congratulations to Will. "Happy Birthday" and a rousing three cheers followed the blowing out of candles on a large birthday cake. All then enjoyed a slice of the cake, along with the beautiful afternoon tea prepared by Joan Learmont and her helpers.

Helen McKinnon



Will is an inspiration to us all! It is truly humbling to be in the presence of a man who has lived so well for a hundred years. Not that it was all plain sailing; he did have some great challenges and near misses! He told me about a time he and his wife Gwen were chased by elephants in Cambodia and I immediately thought that it is amazing that he has lived to tell this tale and many more. We wish Will a very happy birthday and look forward to celebrating with him for his next one.

Wendy, a long-time friend of Will's, gave a wonderful speech outlining Will's difficult passage to get to Australia and how he flourished here. She spoke of his commitment to U3A and the longevity of his contribution. Thinking of Will's sharp intelligence, I thought of the importance of keeping that love of learning at the forefront of our lives.

This modest gathering was about teamwork and community; the coming together to share a spectacular achievement. The warmth and goodwill was palpable. I'd like to think that in every way Will's afternoon tea was also symbolic of our U3A Banyule. *Judith Craze*

Photos Milena Maranville

Murder at U3A Banyule!

On 4 October, Aoife Clifford and Emma Viskic gave a talk about their careers, their writing processes, what inspired them and how they got published. The books *When we Fall* by Aoife Clifford and *Those Who Perish* by Emma Viskic were both shortlisted for the prestigious Ned Kelly Awards.



Harriet Poirot, an honorary U3A Banyule member (AKA Sue Lees), wrote this report for us following the talk.

Bonjour. It is I – the great Harriet Poirot.

I saw the flier, I heard 'Murder at U3A' and I knew that they needed ME. It was my 'little grey cells' they needed, NOT 'the little grey cells' of Hercules Poirot.

"His 'little grey cells' are no more! They never were any good. Always he comes to me, and he says "Harriet – tell me who did it?" and then he runs to Agatha, and he says 'Agatha, I know who did it!'"

Brothers!!!!

So, I began at the start – why were we here? Who decided that THIS would be THE Place for murder!

Haha – Sue Lees, so innocent! 'All I did was ask a simple question. Can you, do it? How was I to know what that would lead to?'

Who has come for murder I ask? An interesting, suspicious crowd for sure. Which U3A member is hiding their desire to murder? The smart Year 9 Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar students who have just finished a unit on writing crime – yes, they could concoct the perfect murder!

And of course, the two experienced crime writers – Aoife Clifford and Emma Viskic – wouldn't they like to have another murder as a bestseller. Yes – they would be the ones to watch and listen to very carefully. How do they construct their murders?

But first – I had to check out Heather at Fairfield Books. Lots of great Aoife and Emma books but where are mine? Blast that Hercules again!

I muse. Always I think and watch. What is their secret? How did they do it?

But – horror! They tell us that their characters tell them what to do, decide who did it. Whoever would have thought that possible!!!

Harriet Poirot

Watch out for more popular authors coming to U3A Banyule next year in conjunction with Fairfield Books

Spotlight on ...

Reading Aloud Group

Led by their enthusiastic tutor, Ann Ritchie, the “Let’s Read Aloud” class has met almost every Friday afternoon from February to October, to read aloud Homer’s classic tale, *The Iliad*. This somewhat unusual activity revived the practice from the past of families reading to each other around the fire on cold winter evenings, or an individual reading to an elderly relative. Ann led a group in the same activity at U3A Darebin in 2022 and enjoyed it so much that she offered it at U3A Banyule for 2023.

The Iliad is an epic poem that covers the quarrels and fighting near the end of the Trojan War, which started because Paris kidnapped the beautiful Helen. It is a story of kings and soldiers, whose battles are manipulated by the interference of the gods. There are many graphic descriptions of gruesome deaths, as well as heart-rending passages about loss and grief. The class read all 24 books, taking turns to read aloud. Ann provided much interesting background information, and the gift of her passionate interest in the genre.

On Friday 20 October, the class celebrated finishing their reading of *The Iliad* with a special afternoon tea, including glasses of bubbles. Ann presented each participant with a beautifully printed Certificate of Completion. The class’s next challenge is to read aloud Virgil’s *Aeneid*, and in 2024, Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick* (featured in the list of The Greatest Books Never Read) will be on the agenda.

Helen McKinnon



Ann Ritchie is in the back row on the left.

Spotlight on ...

Making Art Any Way We Can Semesters 1 and 2, 2023 Tutor: Mimmo Cozzolino



Our Group drawing from life in Art Gallery 275, next to our rooms at ILCH.



Alexandra trying out hand printing at a workshops Mimmo ran with Louise.



Patsy at the watercolour painting workshop run by U3A classmate Glenda with Mimmo.

Public Lecture on Tips for Fire Safety in the Home

The importance of fire prevention and safety was the focus of the last public lecture for 2023. Forty-five participants valued the presentation and discussion led by Retired Senior Service Officer representing Fire Rescue Victoria, Mr Paul Henderson. With over 40 years' experience, Paul engaged the audience with advice and demonstrations on matters such as smoke detectors, safe use of chargers and appliances, correct disposal of batteries and appropriate response to house fires. Using the results of current research, he cautioned against the use of fire blankets and home extinguishers unless people were trained and confident with them.



Fielding a large variety of questions, Paul's thoughtful advice was welcomed by those in attendance.

Participants appreciated the helpful illustrated brochures on 'Home Fire Safety' including the checklist. The session concluded with afternoon tea organised by Joan Learmont and helpers.

Maria Axarlis-Coulter

Maria with Paul Henderson



Villa Alba Excursion

On 14 September a group visited Villa Alba in Kew. The Villa's architectural style and tower are local landmarks in the area opposite Studley Park.

Villa Alba was built in 1882 as a wedding gift for Anna Maria by her husband William Greenlaw, the General Manager of the Colonial Bank of Australasia.

The Villa is now a museum and many visitors come to see its painted and stencilled Victorian-style decorated interior.

Photos Elaine Rees



Creative Knitting during Seniors' week

On Wednesday 11 October, the Creative Knitting Group welcomed knitting newcomers into their group and helped people get started with knitting projects. Members and others ranged from beginners to experienced knitters with specific problems, all availing themselves of the very experienced group we are so lucky to have. About 55 people attended, the room was buzzing with activity, Diana opened the session with a summary of the history and benefits of knitting. A delicious morning tea was served throughout the morning, and people had a wonderful time, chatting, knitting and socialising. Huge thank you to Diana and her knitting group, the feedback indicated that people thoroughly enjoyed themselves. People were supplied with wool and needles to take home. Thank you to Banyule City Council for funding this event.



Thank you

As we are nearing the end of this year, it is important to thank all those who work behind the scenes. There are so many but I am sure they know to whom I am referring. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge four people who have retired from key positions after making huge contributions.

Valerie MacPhee has been in charge of the Office for 13 years. She was also a Vice President for 3 years and a Committee member and she was on the Governance and Facilities sub-committees. A super effort Valerie, a job well done and much gratitude!

Marg Fievez, another huge contributor, retired at the start of this year from her role as Course Information Manager and Venues Coordinator. Marg has been on the CoM; Courses Sub-Committee, My U3A Advisory Team, and Facilities and Equipment Sub-Committee. If you need to know something, Marg is an amazing resource!

Maria Axarlis-Coulter has sat on the Committee of Management, organised Monday Public Speaking lectures from 2020–23 and worked closely with me over the past 3 years to organise the Annual Lunch and Annual Forum. She has been a wonderful moderator at these two key events.

For the past 4 years Kevin Whiting has been on the Executive of the CoM as Treasurer and then active on the Governance and Membership Sub-Committees. Kevin has initiated many improvements to our management across the board; his work in completely overhauling and streamlining our financial management has been a standout.

Judith Craze

Volunteers required

Do you have 2 hours a month or a fortnight to join the Office Team? We are looking for members with a good level of communication and interpersonal skills to join the team now, or from the beginning of Semester 1 2024. Members need to have adequate technology skills to assist members using MyU3A to renew or enrol in classes.

The main responsibilities are: General enquiries about U3A Banyule: assisting members who do not have access to technology or do not want to use technology to renew membership and enrol in classes, guiding members on how to do things online themselves, and assisting tutors with copying and printing class lists. Training and mentoring is provided, and you will be rostered on with an experienced person. We also run more formal training and refresher sessions twice a year. You can also talk to a member of the Office Support Team, Heather Stephens, Inge Kearney and Milena Maranville. It's a rewarding role, and a very important contribution to U3A Banyule. Please reply to the Office Manager Inge Kearney if you are interested, by email info@u3abanyule.org.au



Dates for your diary

Mon 27 Nov	Awards presentation & Tutor and Volunteer Thank You
Mon 27 Nov	2024 Course Program available for viewing
Mon 4 Dec	Semester 1, 2024 Course Enrolments commence
Mon 22 Jan	U3A Banyule Office opens
Tues 23 Jan	New tutor and freshener training
Wed 24 Jan	New members welcome morning tea ILCH
Mon 26 Jan	Public holiday Office closed
Mon 5 Feb	Semester 1 classes commence
Mon 11 March	Labour Day Office Closed
Thurs 28 March	Semester 1 classes conclude