BANYULE
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

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In the spirit of reconcililation, 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 2024

In this edition

Summertime is finally here. It only comes but once a year and certainly is the time for good cheer.

Before we take a break from U3A over the summer, we thank all volunteers for their involvement this year and we cheer on those who planned next year's program.

In this edition we reflect on the good times this term: art exhibitions, Seniors' Festival events, the Forum, excursions and the first-ever centenarian and nonagenarian afternoon tea. We thank retiring tutors and celebrate new (and newish) courses.

Enjoy!

Newsletter team

President's report

Golly we're running out of U3A time and will be in holiday mode before we know it. I want to share something with you that came from our members when asked to fill out a Satisfaction Survey earlier in the year. This was not just an exercise to be ticked off, we were genuinely interested in getting a 'snapshot' of the health of our organisation. Indeed, because of the survey, improvements have already been made and with a new Strategic Plan being developed in 2025, it will help inform new goals over the next four years. But so many people added extra comments and there was not one negative. Comments included:

"I do not live in Banyule and come because the program is more interesting to me than that of a closer U3A."

"It is rewarding that there are so many activities and subjects to choose from."

"Public Lectures have been great." "A way to exercise the brain."

"Great place to meet people. Everyone is friendly."

To all our tutors and speakers and excursion-leaders we are abundantly grateful. Sharon our Course Coordinator, Tanya our Venue Manager and Marg Fievez in charge of the lecture program are the architects who bring it all together.

We are on about providing quality learning experiences but much, much more. U3A Banyule strives to be inclusive and give members opportunities to meet new people and enjoy each other's company. And this is appreciated.

Our U3A group is a large one, in the top 10 in Victoria, and we want people to know they matter. We have worked hard to induct and inform people; to communicate openly through omails, newsletters and the website. We have social occasions for fun. The Spanish Night, Lingering Lunches, afternoon teas, Craft Sales, the Annual Lunch and Forum and the quiz days bring us together.

While we were thrilled with the positive feedback in the survey, we cannot rest on our laurels. If we are to continue to be a dynamic learning and social group, we must continue to plan opportunities to further deliver lifelong learning, enable inclusion through respect and courtesy, embrace diversity, and demonstrate the integrity that comes from honesty, fairness and transparency. These are always challenges in a big organisation but if people matter, then they are happy ones.

Have a relaxing and happy holiday period and see you in 2025. *Judith Craze*

A huge thank you to all our volunteers

Everything that happens at U3A Banyule is because we have members who are willing to step up and volunteer. In the recent survey, one member wrote, “I feel lucky to have something like U3A and thank those with the commitment to organise, develop and maintain it.“ Another commented, “I am extremely impressed that so many retirees have such a wide range of talent and commitment to make this organisation operate so splendidly.“

Indeed, we may be older adults but there is so much talent among us and we have all got something to offer. Just last week, it was wonderful to be able to hold a thank you for all our volunteers and to make significant awards, recognising those who are huge contributors.

- Heather Stevens received a Life Membership for her meticulous management of MyU3A system, initiating TryBooking, her work towards manuals for Office Volunteers and presentations to the OVs and her contribution to developing the Website.
- Nancy Cornwallis was bestowed with a great honour. Network Victoria recognised her as an outstanding tutor for her huge contribution to singing.
- This year a new award, was given in recognition of Edna Bird who loved U3A so much she bequeathed money to the betterment of her members. The Inaugural Edna Bird Award was made to Sharon Karasmanis for outstanding contribution.

A dynamic organisation needs to tell people who volunteer that they are valued and it needs to recognise and give thanks. I want to especially thank the Committee of Management for their time, energy and careful consideration in steering this wonderful organisation. Then there are the Support people who often work by themselves but contribute vital work and feed into the work of CoM. These two groups quietly make up the engine room and do a fabulous job. *Judith Craze*

A huge thank you to all our retiring tutors

Warmest thanks to our retiring tutors for their generous contributions, and for sharing their expertise in classes and talks for the enjoyment and education of our members.

Jan Anderson has been our Monday afternoon lecture facilitator and has worked with Roger Jones this year to bring us an excellent array of talks on many interesting topics.

Sheila Colls has been an office volunteer for over 7 years, and taught Beginner French for over three years. Sheila has made a significant and very generous contribution to U3A.

John Morss tutored our Shakespeare group this year, always a full class. He brought a unique perspective to the works of Shakespeare, which members have really appreciated.

Bryce Normoyle was a new member this year and he introduced a golf program to our suite of outdoor programs.

Elaine Rees organised the Excursion Program with enthusiasm and care. All pertinent details were communicated to the participants, who were treated to an array of interesting excursions. That Elaine did all this for 6 years was an absolute credit to her.

Elizabeth Ward has been convening the Recorder Group for about 7 years. Feedback from her students described a very committed tutor. “She introduced us to such lovely music, led the group in developing our skill at playing some quite complex music. She is a capable leader, conscientious, very knowledgeable, and wonderfully patient with players less skilled than herself”.

Lynne Phillips has conducted the My Life Writing Course for the past 8 years, only stepping down in term 3 of this year. She encouraged members to write stories around a theme, with their own experiences of the topic as it relates to their life story. This popular class was always full and had a waitlist due to Lynne’s kind and caring nature and her expertise. *Sharon Karasmanis*

A huge thank you to all our retiring tutors

Elsa McCarthy

Elsa has been teaching Intermediate French for just on 10 years. We had already had the good fortune of her delivering German Conversation for the previous 5 years to our students.

Elsa is valued for her patient, inclusive and encouraging approach. Much thought and research went into her class preparation, a clear sign that the respect and the fondness was reciprocated by Elsa for the students. Her students love her classes and have gained confidence under her guidance. From one of her students: "Elsa McCarthy is one of the best tutors I've ever encountered. She's funny, approachable, down-to-earth and so knowledgeable. Even when I'm feeling a bit down, she lifts my spirits every time". Elsa, thanks for a decade and a half of generously giving to U3A Banyule. *Sharon Karasmanis*

Roger Jones

Thank you to Roger Jones, retiring Monday lecture facilitator. Joining U3A after retiring was a natural and obvious step for Roger, whose disposition toward intellectual curiosity has led to a lifetime of formal and informal learning. On reflection, Roger is happy that he ignored his parents' anxiety that he would become a professional student!

As a librarian, Roger enjoyed helping people to find information across a range of subjects so in working with Kevin Whiting on the Monday lectures, Roger has extended his own education while searching for topics to trigger the interest and broaden the knowledge of our members. Roger and Kevin aimed for variety, finding potential speakers by reading print and online newspapers, or by choosing a subject and then seeking experts in the field, and of course, in being open to suggestions from other members.

Hearty thanks, Roger! Your curatorship of the Monday afternoon lectures over the past 5 years has given us the opportunity to join you in exploring and widening our understandings across many subjects. *Jan Connor*

Only one Liz Waud with two hats

Yoga tutor

After decades practising yoga, Liz offered to conduct a yoga session for U3A members in 2021. Her gentle, calm, caring approach with the yogis she taught engendered confidence and loyalty to Liz and the practice of yoga.

People of a 'certain age' need to "move it or lose it "and Liz's teaching style resulted in positive feedback and a long wait list. Walking out after the class, conversations centred around how much better we felt after Liz's class. From the curated background music, the smooth transition between yoga movements and the variety of levels of movement encouraged, Liz anticipated all our needs. *Anne Lombard*

Newsletter editor

Liz has been outstanding in this role. Her skills include writing articles and sourcing them from others, layout, speedy production, and efficient, encouraging leadership of our small Newsletter team. Nothing was ever too much trouble for this very gifted editor. *Helen McKinnon*

Nonagenarian And Centenarian Afternoon Tea

We held our annual Nonagenarian and Centenarian afternoon tea on Monday 21 October. What a very special afternoon it was as eleven members regaled us with tales of their long lives. It is a privilege to hear about events and ways of doing things from a different period in time, and how fortunate we are to have U3A members who can enrich our lives through their insights.

Stories ranged from describing some impressive musical talents, to wartime adventures both in Australia and overseas and daily life in Australia in the 1930s and 1940s. There were tales of fires in Mentone and floods (including a house travelling down the Yarra) in Alphington.

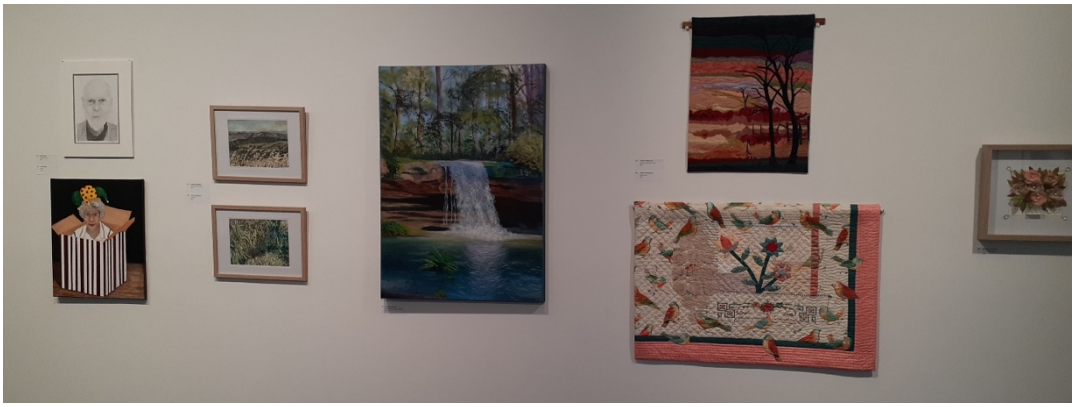
Judith McCall remembered a day trip from Ivanhoe to Research, by train and small bus, to visit a farm and learn about milking cows and how cream was made (not from a separate udder as she'd presumed!). Kevin Portsch and Val Eagling told us of his early and lucrative career as a 15-year-old SP bookie in Northcote High School. Will Semler, our centenarian, spoke of his war time in Czechoslovakia as a German prisoner of war, being rescued and ultimately moving to Australia. During the journey he became enamoured with some Roman Sandals, haggling the price down from 1 pound to 2 shillings and 6 pence, only to find them on sale at the next boat stopover for 6pence.

It was a very interesting and informative afternoon, topped off with a delicious afternoon tea and evidence that you are never too old to participate in group activities and even make a few new friends.
Janet Ringrose & Helen Hodson

The Age of Creativity – Banyule City Council exhibition

Did you see this Older Adults' art exhibition displayed at ILCH for Seniors' month in October? I do hope that you managed to catch it – it was fabulous. I was delighted and blown away to discover that, of the 37 artists presenting, 15 are members of our U3A. Covering many media from oil, water and pastel paints, mosaics, printmaking and rich use of textiles, you could feel the wisdom and creativity coming from lived experiences.
Congratulations to U3A Banyule members who exhibited their works. *Jan Ramp*

Margaret Blyth	Maggie Brown	Glenda Dixon	Marcia Giles	Hester Joyce
Anne Knights	Beth Leighton	Maxine Marks	Jenny McKinnis	Elaine Rees
Kevin Ritchie	Annalisa Rizza	Frances Springbett	Moira Styles	Dianne Williamson



New classes

Drama with confidence

On 14 November the Drama Group gave us a performance of the sorts of things they have been working on during the year. The four actors gave individual renditions ranging from Banjo Paterson through Atticus Finch (*To Kill a Mockingbird*) to Shylock from *The Merchant of Venice*. Along the way, we had two hysterical self-written sketches, two personal reflections and *The Highwayman*, recited by all the group. It was great fun and the audience was suitably impressed by the actors' presentation of their diverse material.

Drama classes are incredibly rewarding. They can help with confidence boosting; finding your creative side when you didn't know you had one; having the courage to try new and 'out of your comfort zone' activities and find a new identity or find the old one that maybe got lost as the years went on.

The performances are a testament to that. Without naming names, some quite startling changes have occurred.

A student who came up with a comedy routine that is so funny and so unexpected; other students that I have challenged with the classics, Australian poetry, American writers, original manuscripts, and the list goes on. I am so very proud of their achievements and to see this happen is why I approached U3A Banyule with my idea of the Drama Class.
Lynne Bartlett

Poetry group

The Poetry Group led by Ann Ritchie recently attended an Artist in Residence display of bonsai curated by Kevin Ritchie in the Mugga Artists Studio at ILCH. The theme of the display was 'From the Wild' and the attendees hunted for poems in the library that fitted the theme. They then chose lines from the poems to share, write out and display for Banyule Art.

The group has been looking at poets chronologically to watch the changing development of poetry and to see how the history of the time affects the writers. The group members do not go deeply into poems but just try and work out their meaning together.

Tutor, Ann Ritchie, is hoping to have some more workshop activities in 2025. The group will study "Love is Stronger than Death", a collection of poems edited by Paul Kelly. *Ann Ritchie*

Annual Forum

Olympics then and now

"When you can officially call yourself an Olympian, that's pretty special."

Tim Cross, 32-year-old, born and bred in Melbourne, playing with Team Ireland, Hockey, Paris XXXIII Olympiads 2024

"Cultures, languages, champions, uniforms, flags of all countries. Overwhelming."

Sue Harbottle, nee McKenzie, Team Australia, Swimming, Mexico City XIX Olympiad 1968

Fifty-six years separate the Olympic experiences of our two guest speakers at this year's Annual Forum. Tim Cross spoke to us on video. In his absence his mother, Lorraine, attended and contributed to the Annual Forum.

Tim's memories of Paris? He is still processing them. Many months of intensive preparation, then two weeks meeting the best in the world, and then it is over. Accommodation in a converted warehouse, (and yes, the beds were cardboard) food stalls everywhere open day and night, buses running to venues every ten minutes. Going to Roland Garros and having a chat with Andy Murray is Tim's personal highlight. An onsite team of masseurs, physios, psychologists; Xray and MRI facilities. Cameras following the Olympians everywhere. Drug tests happening randomly. The emphasis on professional behaviour. Sportswear, shoes, expensive watches, being showered on the Olympians. Tim still has gift boxes he hasn't opened.

Sue was only seventeen when she arrived in Mexico City in 1968. No immediate TV coverage, and Sue smuggled a tiny camera inside her glove to photograph the opening ceremony. She lined up at the post office to send telegrams home. There were a couple of doctors and physios. Sue met Prince Charles, and at the closing ceremony was among the Olympians who jumped the fence and ran onto the field. A first! Another first was the closing ceremony being filmed in colour. Other firsts included Mexico being the first Olympics held at high altitude. This hasn't been repeated. And The Black Salute raised awareness of civil rights issues around the world.

When Tim and Team Ireland arrived home, they were met by the Irish President; when Sue and her fellow Olympians arrived back in Australia, they went home. The most significant "Then and Now"? In 1968, 4,700 men and 780 women competed in Mexico City. This year, 5250 men and 5250 women competed in Paris.

Jan Connor

Sue Harbottle at the AGM displaying her official swimsuit and hat as Australian representative in women's breaststroke Mexico City Olympics 1968

Lorraine Cross, mother of Tim Cross with Sue Harbottle, jointly holding the Olympic Torch, which in the 2000 Sydney Olympics, Sue was a torch bearer

Tim Cross, Melbourne born and bred Olympian who played Hockey for Team Ireland at the Paris Olympics 2024.

Spotlight on …

Noel Griffith…and also retiring Tutor of Music Appreciation

I had the absolute delight of meeting Noel and Pat after Noel presented his last class ever of Music Appreciation to our members from his home. Noel, who turned 95 last week, has been the tutor in Music Appreciation for over 28 years with U3A, all from the Griffith Residence. Can you believe that?

Noel's preparation for classes was always scrupulous and thoughtful, using symphonies and concertos as focus, with his meticulous handwritten notes on form and structure of music as well as at times offering sessions on music theory. Up to 35 members would be accommodated in the Griffith lounge room each month to foster their music appreciation and socialise with like-minded people over the morning tea break during each 2-hour session.

This increasingly could not have been possible without the support of Noel's beautiful wife of 71 years, Pat, who grew up in regional Victoria, and came to Melbourne to study nursing. Pat tells me that she met Noel at the St James' Anglican Church Youth Club in Ivanhoe. More revealing, their very first date occurred when Noel invited Pat to his 21st birthday party. Now that's a date which starts a lifetime.

There is an amazing parallel story that interweaves itself through their married lives together. Noel began volunteering at age 16, when asked to be the church organist at St James, then also at St Georges' Anglican Church in East Ivanhoe.

Kindred spirits, both Noel and Pat committed themselves as individuals to serve others in need, with the confidence that their endeavours would be given the respect and support of their partner. Between them, for example, they provided Christmas dinner and other meals, held fund-raising music recitals for charities, offered accommodation in their home for individuals and families associated with the Austin Hospital and La Trobe University and mentored handicapped people.

When I asked Noel and Pat what made them give so much, Noel checked with Pat and replied, "I suppose that it is just in our nature". In 2017, Noel was awarded an OAM for services to the community.

U3A Banyule has been enriched by having them within our community. No wonder Noel's class was so popular that no-one left and no-one else could join!

I asked Noel whether he had a favourite piece of music. At his very last class, Noel chose to speak to Edward Elgar's *Coronation Ode, Land of Hope and Glory.* This piece particularly resonated with him. What an apt way to sign off from a highly fruitful tutorship with U3A Banyule. Thanks, Noel.

Jan Ramp

Wednesday afternoon talks: Kate Thwaites – Federal MP for Jagajaga

On Wednesday 30 October we had the opportunity to hear from Kate Thwaites and have a Q&A session.

A local Federal member has the responsibility of:

Representing constituents – acting as a link between their constituents and the federal government and helping constituents with a variety of issues.

Speaking for local interests – communicating the needs of their region to the government and promoting their policies to the community. Kate is 'local' having lived in Jagajaga since she was a child.

Kate is also Assistant Minister for Women, Ageing and Social Security. She assists the Minister for Women – Katy Gallagher and the Minister for Social Security – Amanda Rishworth. As well, Kate is responsible for a new portfolio as Assistant Minister for Ageing, a part of the ministry of Health and Aged Care. The agenda is to support people to age well, and to value the contribution older people make to the community. It was pleasing to note, in terms of community involvement, that Kate did already know many people in the audience from their contributions to different groups in Jagajaga.

Kate's BA in Journalism and Master's in International Development, combined with a professional background as a journalist and her work in international aid, government, and public service, has helped to fuel an interest in decision-making at a political level. In a world where basic values of humanity and behaviour increasingly need to be protected it was heartening to hear that Kate's core belief is that we are all better off as a community when we respect each other and feel equal and supported. The intelligent questioning from the audience covered issues such as aged care, climate change, renewable energy. Kate also gleaned aspects of interesting political history from the audience. It was a two-way conversation!

Regardless of individual political persuasion, it is great to have the opportunity to meet politicians and to get to know their background, values, and personal interests. Importantly it is also an opportunity to query them, to politely offer additional or alternative arguments, and to judge their commitment to their constituency and their governmental responsibilities. *Sue Lees*

U3A Banyule Seniors' Month Events Come and Try …

Senior singalong with our Audacity choir

At Rosanna Uniting Church on 1 October our Audacity choir entertained an audience who joined in and sang with gusto. Our U3A branch also acknowledged the U3A Network Award given to Nancy Cornwallis for her work leading the choir.

Photos: Milena Maranville

Watercolour Painting with Maxine Marks

Attendees were treated to an informative yet non-threatening introduction to some techniques using watercolours. Tutor Maxine, together with her ongoing students as helpers, offered wonderful support to the attendees.

Here's a couple of reasons people chose to attend.

"I am interested in trying my hand with the creative side of art, after studying Art History in my past."

"We're always open to new experiences post-retirement. Perhaps we can explore an artistic avenue."

"I have tried a couple of open workshops on watercolour. This one has been great, everyone here is so helpful."

"I have been experimenting with painting in watercolours through YouTube. I wish to learn how to correctly apply the techniques."

Come and try knitting

From long lost unfinished masterpieces, to experimenting with Tunisian style knitting and seeing our favourite Bluey characters coming to life, our knitting morning was a huge success. The tutor, Diana McCormack, provided an overview of the benefits of knitting and then with the help of volunteers from our regular knitting group, visitors were able to seek advice and assistance or just try their hand at knitting.

One lady brought along a jumper she had knitted her son to take on his regular trips to work in the Antarctic. It was now in need of restoration. One of members was able to help her and the beloved garment was on its way back to the owner.

Another visitor had brought along a jumper she had started many years ago. At the end of the session, with help she was well on the way to being able to finish her beautiful jumper at home.

Our team displayed all the goods they had knitted for the upcoming craft sale and spoke about their work knitting for various hospital and charities. It was a fantastic morning and even inspired this lapsed knitter to find the needles again.
Janet Ringrose

Out and about with U3A Banyule

Excursion to Alowyn Gardens

A group of us have just had a magical day at Alowyn Gardens in Yarra Glen. A few had been here before but for most of us the extent and the beauty of these gardens was a revelation. What to look at first? The Wisteria Arbour was stunning and seemed to go on for ever, the Perennial Border was a mass of colour, the roses were at their best and the vegetable garden was amazing. Add to that a Zen Garden, a French Provincial Garden, a wonderful plant nursery and the very pleasant Wisteria Cafe where we lunched. Many thanks to Ann Shepherdson for organising this lovely outing and for driving some of us up there. *Marcia Giles*

Excursion to the State Library

Our State Library is a treasure trove! A huge one at that. We saw original Suffragette materials, books with delicate hand-painted plates from the antiquities and the children's room. We travelled right up to the upper reaches, just under the dome, to look down on the magnificent reading room. We got to travel down into the catacombs below where there is all manner of cataloguing and storage; even quarantine facilities for all incoming materials. Our Library is the fourth most visited library in the world and rightly so. Thank you to Ann Shepherdson who organised our wonderful excursion and the ensuing lunch for our group. *Judith Craze*

Dates for your diary

You will not be able to enrol in classes for 2025 unless you have renewed your membership

Monday 2 December	Course Enrolments Open for 2025
Thursday 12 December	U3A Banyule Office closes for 2024
Thursday 23 January	New members welcome morning tea
Monday 27 January	Australia Day holiday – Office closed
Tuesday 28 January	U3A Banyule Office Opens
Monday 3 February	Semester 1 Term 1 Classes commence
Friday 7 February	International Night
Monday 10 March	Labour Day – Office Closed
Friday 4 April	Semester 1 Term 1 Classes conclude
Friday 18 April	Good Friday – Office closed
Monday 21 April	Easter Monday – Office closed
Tuesday 22 April	Semester 1 Term 2 Classes commence