



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 March 2025

In this edition

This issue begins with the success of the 2025 Office Volunteers training day & New Members morning tea. It ends with the 2024 U3A Awards day.

We also meet our new yoga teacher, hear about an impromptu outdoor tai chi class & visit the beach with a U3A excursion group. We accompany the Short Walk group & dance freely at an Express Yourself class.

International Women's Day is celebrated with a lecture about suffragette Louisa Lawson & a talk by an international movement striving to educate, empower, and enable women and girls. Another article unpacks our enrolment data.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

2025 Newsletter team
Sue Gunningham
Jan Connor
Marian Power
Elizabeth Ainsworth

President's Report

Firstly, I'd like to welcome Sue Gunningham to the role of Editor of the newsletter and her news team, which has grown to eight since this newsletter went to print. I'd also like to thank Jan Ramp and Barbara Sekules who are retiring from the Newsletter team after many years of reporting, and for supporting Sue to get this newsletter out.

And what an edition it is! In every way it captures the essence of our busy U3A Banyule.

I'm delighted with our smooth start this year. The very effective enrolment period at the end to 2024 gave us a wonderful springboard for opening 2025 so calmly. That plus the work put in prior to our official start date, to ensure everything was in readiness to support all the varying aspects of our organization from Day One.

Our start-up training sessions; for Tutors, Office Volunteers and our New Members' Welcome were all well attended and purposeful. In fact, with 55 in attendance, the New Members Welcome was our biggest ever. New members were appreciative of the briefing, and I hope it serves them well when navigating U3A Banyule. Our aim is to have members for a very long time, not just a dip in then out.

We've had such a great response to the program on offer; a program that seems to be ever-expanding, thanks to some unexpected offerings from members who volunteer their time. How good is that? We have so many people with so much to offer and that's what makes us a dynamic organization.

Behind the scenes a lot is going on to take U3A Banyule forward. After a Gap Analysis, at the end of 2024, we were delighted to report to our community against the goals and targets set in the 2022-24 Strategic Plan. It very gratifying to note we far exceeded what we set out to do in 2022.

Our focus now is to create a Strategic Plan for the next four years. Remaining relevant and responsive to our members, and ensuring we remain dynamic, requires a plan. A planning day in February examined data and garnered feedback. The feedback is now being synthesised into a Strategic Plan for 2025-2028.

Currently the Executive members of the Committee of Management are finalising all the materials and organizing for the AGM that is fast approaching. It will be held at Heidelberg Golf Club on March 31st at 1.30-4pm. Covid necessitated AGM's be held on Zoom and we continued with that format, but

this year it will be changed. Members are instead invited to our 'live' AGM and afternoon tea.

While I will remain on CoM, I will be stepping down as President after nearly three years. It's been a privilege working with so many wonderful people who volunteer because they believe in U3A Banyule. Their contributions both huge and small make a difference, and for this I am grateful. After being a member for six years, I'm still in awe of the fact that given no one gets paid, we are in the top 10 of U3As in terms of membership and have one of the biggest programs on offer.

It's people power, and it's pretty amazing!

*By Judith Craze
President U3A Banyule.*



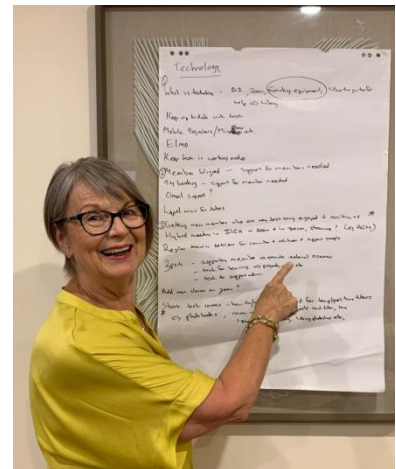
Developing the next Strategic Plan for 2025-2028

The process to develop our next Strategic Plan commenced during the latter part of 2024, as the 2022-2024 Plan was coming to a conclusion. A Strategic Planning (SP) Team is guiding this development.

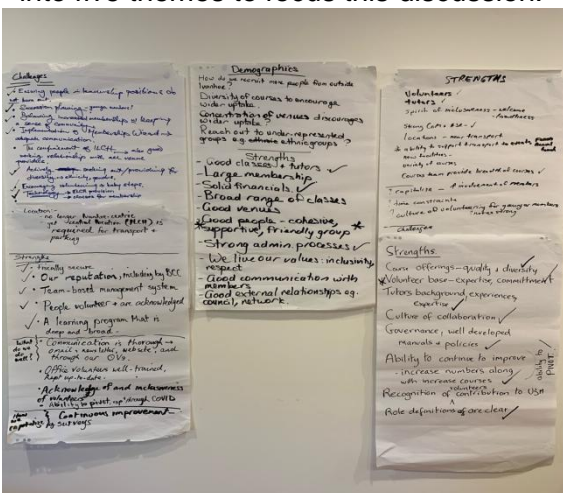
Preliminary work to inform the new plan included the 2024 Member Satisfaction Survey and a gap analysis of achievements for the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan. An analysis of U3A Banyule member demographic data, Census data, and the Banyule Community provided an interesting basis for understanding our membership base.

Nineteen members of the Committee of Management and Support Role position holders attended a full day SP Workshop on 21 February 2025 facilitated by past member Mary Anne Bennie, and supported by Noni Crowther who recorded the discussion and collated the ideas generated.

Attendees were allocated to five tables for dynamic table-based discussion and some of the posters recording issues and goals are shown in the photos. Ideas from the preliminary work were distilled into five themes to focus this discussion.



Facilitator: Maryanne Bennie



Work of the SP Team is continuing through March and April with weekly meetings to draft updated statements of Purpose, Mission, Vision and Values statements and to set goals and actions for the next few years. The new SP to guide our organisation's direction will be finalized in the next few months.

By Milena Maranville & Dianne Williamson on behalf of the SP Team

Office volunteers training day – January 2025



The photo shows most of our wonderful, dedicated Office Volunteers who attended a 2-hour training session two weeks before the start-up of classes. The session was organised by the Office Support Team of Inge Kearney, Heather Stephens, Pam Dedman and Kaye Mitchell.

Currently we have 38 Office Volunteers. They are the frontline of U3A Banyule and most volunteer one day a month from 10 am – noon in our ILCH Office. (There is an additional 1-3 pm session on Thursdays). A few of our Office Volunteers come twice a month. Their commitment is crucial to the smooth running of our organisation.

What do Office Volunteers mainly deal with? They respond to and record phone queries both immediate and in response to SMS queries from the previous day and offer face-to-face assistance to members and the broader community at the U3A Office. This might involve contacting tutors or Committee members, assisting members with accessing online MyU3A, and receiving and recording payments.

Consider thanking these volunteer members for their contribution.

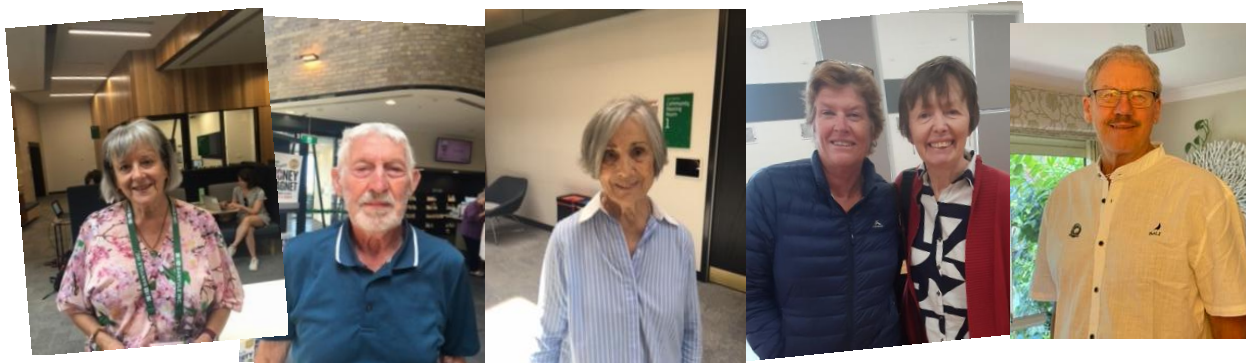
By Jan Ramp

New member's morning tea – February 2025

Many of our 49 new members (which includes 12 men), were welcomed to Banyule U3A at this special morning tea. Participants were given information about U3A and shown how to navigate the MyU3A website.

We began 2025 with 854 members (800 Full members, 40 Associates and 14 Life members). Our overall enrolment including external tutors comprised 675 women and 195 men (870). Many thanks to all who helped organise the delicious food.

By Sue Gunningham (News team)



Here are some of our new members. Please make them feel welcome if you see them around.

Focus On: Express Yourself Movement classes

Late November 2024 I attended a 'Come & Try' movement workshop run by tutor Lucy French. The advertisement hinted at music, movement, dancing, introspection and enlightenment; bare feet were optional.

I wasn't disappointed. Skilfully selected music filled the hall, to slow us, excite us, uplift us, have fun and calm us and soon we were adrift in a musical landscape of many colours touching our whole bodies from the inside out.



Sometimes Lucy read poetry over the music, her voice strong and reassuring. Our key task? - 'Keep moving to the rhythm, even if you sit down.' We danced freely, independently, roaming the hall, arms waving, feet sliding; bodies in motion.

At the end of the warm up we were invited to quietly make our way to some tables and spend time expressing on paper with colourful crayons what had come up for us in the dance. Everyone created something unique that was personally meaningful.

After a short break we continued to dance, but this time the music encouraged us to experience a deep feeling of heartfelt connectedness, inside and out, and this was followed by a beautiful, serene meditation.

By the time the class ended, I felt energised, uplifted, and at peace. I enrolled in the 'Express Yourself' classes this term.

By Sue Gunningham (News team)

Meet the new Yoga teacher

The new tutor of our Wednesday morning yoga class is Tim Race. Years ago a friend invited Tim to take yoga for U3A in Hawthorn. He enjoyed the role, so offered to take this class for Banyule U3A when the opportunity arose. Class members appreciate Tim's wisdom and gentle approach.

Read more about Tim below.

By Marian Power (News team)



Hi, I'm Tim Race and I teach Hatha Yoga. I've been trained as a teacher at Gita Yoga, and been learning with them for about 10 years.

A Gita class starts with a period of warming up the muscles, activating the breath and stretching the body. After this we practice a sequence of yoga Asanas, which are specific body postures that are practiced with care and a deep concentration.

The Asanas aim to balance and tune up the body for general health, and yoga is designed to support our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health.

Our U3A class is for the over 50s, and our bodies are the result of the lives we've lived. Our bodies don't work as well as they used to, and as we grow older we want to slow down the overall decline that aging produces, so we can stay active, involved and clear minded for as long as possible. Did I mention that yoga can be fun as well?

By Tim Race

Wednesday Afternoon lecture: March 2025
Louisa Lawson and *The Dawn*: Australia's First Magazine for Women

Many people interested in Australian women's history would know Louisa Lawson was a lifelong writer and poet, and that her eldest son Henry inherited her talent.

Not so many of us would be aware that in 1887 Louisa bought a second-hand printing press and taught herself and a handful of women how to use it, from setting type all the way through to compositing, printing and binding. She set out to create a voice for women.

The story of Louisa's determination was the focus of the U3A Wednesday lecture during International Women's Week. It was presented to a most appreciative audience by Leigh Hay, published writer and poet, broadcaster and book reviewer, and the editor of *The Lawsonian*.



Louisa Lawson. (source : Wikipedia)

Louisa Lawson was born in 1848. In order to escape the family's grinding poverty, at the age of 18 she married a gold prospector. Living in a tent on the goldfields, she gave birth to five children. Her husband took up a selection with little arable land, but then became increasingly absent as he struck out again for gold, leaving Louisa to raise the children, tend the animals, manage the crops and, in his name, run the local post office.



First edition 15th May 1888
 (Source: wikipedia)

Louisa was never a woman to submit easily to disappointment. She took her four surviving children, now teenagers, to Sydney and in 1888, set up the printery and established *The Dawn*, a monthly magazine for women about women's lives. She only employed women and in 1889 there were ten women producing the magazine, running to 32 pages. Louisa intended that her readers keep the magazine, so she would only use good quality paper, sewn together with cotton. Even the advertisements had to be illustrated with woodcuts and lithographs.

The Dawn was sold in bookshops and mailed to subscribers. In 1895 Louisa offered an annual subscription as a marriage gift for brides!

Women could, and did, express their opinions in *The Dawn*. It grew to include children's pages and items of interest to the whole family. Most significantly, Louisa used the magazine as a platform to advocate for women's rights and she became a leading figure in the emerging women's suffrage movement.

Louisa published *The Dawn* for 17 years, until 1905, and had over 1000 women subscribers. Only failing health caused her to cease publication of the magazine. Louisa continued to write daily, mostly poetry, until her death in 1920.

Thanks Sue and Andrew Lees for organising the Wednesday lectures.

By Jan Connor (News team)



Mudgee NSW 2023 -
 A statue was unveiled to commemorate Louisa Lawson's contribution to the suffrage movement



Focus On: Short Walk sessions (Fridays 9.30 -11.30 am)

In the wilds of Warringal Parkland, tucked in a picnic shelter, a group of intrepid explorers nurse their sore feet while sipping mugs of tea and nibbling homemade biscuits.

The Tuesday *Short Walk Group* meet fortnightly to enjoy a 5-7 km stroll along formed paths to soak up the delights of Banyule's many parks and trails. Most locations are well known, but do you know where Swilk Reserve, Kalparrin Gardens or Wombat Bend are?

This is the joy of the walking; discovering new places or revisiting old favourites, while chatting and solving the world's problems - or instead, walking quietly, listening to the birds and rustle of leaves. Recent medical studies have shown time spent in the natural environment has many benefits.

Participants need to provide their own transport to and from the venue. Car sharing is encouraged. Lois and Margaret, the leaders, provide a list of requirements for each particular walk well before the day, so participants can decide whether a walk is OK for them.

Walking groups have always been part of Banyule U3A's program, with walks ranging from a stroll along the Yarra to exploring Mungo National Park NSW: not actually a day walk! The care the leaders take in researching the walks (length, track condition, availability of toilets and café, history and stories of the area) results in good fun for all and a low number of accidents.

By Elizabeth Ainsworth (News team)





Special Class: Tai Chi in the Park

In January, during the summer break, Aruna Morris, our U3A Tai Chi instructor conducted a special, class in the Golf Links Park.

About twenty U3A members attended and enjoyed following Aruna's instructions while listening to music beneath a lovely old gum tree.

We performed various movements including *push the mountain* and *grow the lotus*, to name just a couple.

Thanks Aruna for the extra class and for being a happy, peaceful role model for how Tai Chi can improve our lives.

By Anne Lombard

Thursday afternoon lecture - International Women's day (Fundraiser) – March 2025

Soroptimist International *Soro = Women, Optima = Best (Latin for: The best for women)*

Fiona and Gayle from Deakin Soroptimists addressed an audience dressed in purple, green and white colours for our U3A International Women's day morning tea.

Purple = Justice, dignity. Green = hope. White = sisterhood



Soroptimist International is a global volunteer movement of 65,000 members across 118 countries with representation in the United Nations. The movement works on grassroots projects to help women and girls achieve their individual and collective potential, realise aspirations and have an equal voice in communities worldwide.

Soroptimists work to transform the lives and status of women and girls through education, empowerment and enabling opportunities. Their projects include:

- Birthing in the Pacific – minimising the risk of maternal and infant mortality by up-skilling and training midwives and birthing attendants in PNG
- 'Tools for Trade' scholarships to a second year female apprentice as recommended by Polytech
- Raising money for the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
- Major Project – Blue Dragon, based in Vietnam, aimed at ending human trafficking by offering meals, education and support for street kids and rescuing people from sex trafficking, forced labour and slavery.

A Soroptimists group meet regularly at ILCH and would welcome new members. E: sideakin@siseap.org



Our guest speakers,
Fiona & Gayle
from Deakin Soroptimist

After the talk, attendees were invited to donate to Soroptimist. Many thanks to the team that supplied a sumptuous afternoon tea.

By Sue Gunningham (News team)

Out and About: Seaside Train Trip – Sandringham February 2025

Remember when a train trip to the beach was a special day out?

Just after 9 am, a group of U3A members boarded the 'second front carriage' from various stations on the Hurstbridge line and travelled to Flinders Street. From there we crossed the concourse to platform 13; the Sandringham train-line. So easy! We were at the beach by 10.30 am.

The weather could have played tricks with this excursion, yet it turned on a sunny day in the mid twenties with a light breeze; perfect!

Outside Sandringham station our facilitator, Kim Harley, gave suggestions for various activities, and then we dispersed, some for coffee first, others strolled the shops and surrounding streets known for their street art, and some headed straight to parks and gardens. Some of us paddled and a couple of members had brought their bathers.

At 12.30 pm we reassembled for lunch at the Sandringham Hotel, and what a chatty time we had talking about our morning. Turns out, Sandringham has two good Opp shops. There is also a walking path near the road above the seafront, and the views of the bay are beautiful.

By mid-afternoon, most of us were heading back to the station after a terrific day beside the sea.

Thank you, Kim, for organising the day, for your impressive train timetable skills, and for the experience of finding out how easy it is to have a day at the sea by train.

By Jan Connor (News team)



Lois and David celebrated their 49th wedding anniversary by coming on the excursion. Congratulations!

2024 Awards Afternoon

Last November 70 people gathered at the Ivanhoe East Bowling Club to thank members who give of their time and talents to make our organisation the special one it is. A range of presentations were made including the presentation of a U3A Banyule Life Membership, Significant Service Awards, and the inaugural special new award, the Edna Bird Award.

A special vote of thanks was given to Noel Griffith OAM on his retirement, and a U3A Victorian Network's Tutor Recognition Award went to Nancy Cornwallis, Audacity choir tutor and leader.

The U3A Banyule Edna Bird Award, dedicated to the memory of our benefactor and former member, Edna Bird, will be awarded annually, in recognition of an outstanding contribution to U3A Banyule. Our inaugural recipient was Sharon Karasmanis.

Sharon joined U3A Banyule in 2019 and very quickly accepted the role of Course Coordinator, a role she still maintains. As Course Coordinator, Sharon has displayed enormous skill and outstanding commitment to U3A.

A Life Membership was awarded to Heather Stephens in recognition of her excellence of service and her leadership, particularly in relation to the development of the online essentials of our new website 'Try Booking' link up, and the upcoming implementation of the new myU3A platform. Heather has contributed to our organisation intensely over an extended period of time.

There were 13 individual Significant Service Awards, and two team awards. The awards encompassed tutors or course organisers, special leadership and organisational responsibility roles, and those who give in many operational ways. We all recognise the commitment and critical contribution made to the smooth running of our organisation and the development of relationships these people bring to the success of the U3A Banyule program.



Sharon Karasmanis

Significant Service Awards Individual

Sue Beshara; Jan Brown; Judith Craze; Noni Crowther; Roger Jones; Lynne Phillips; Rosemary Polya; Jan Ramp; Elaine Rees; Tania Rostan; Robyn Stephens; Elizabeth Ward; Fiona Wilson

Significant Service Awards Team

Short Walks Team - Lois Lee and Margaret Miller
Website Redevelopment Team Penny Braybrook, Mary Wilson, Heather Stephens, Barbara Sekules

Thank you to the catering team for providing delicious finger food. Of course, there was champagne provided to celebrate.

By Sue Beshara
Photos: John Jones-Parry



Sue Beshara (L) & Heather Stephens (R)



Elaine Rees

What the enrolment data shows us

When you enrol in U3A we ask you for information about yourself. This article explains how we use some of that data.



Gender: The Committee of Management (CoM) is currently developing a new Strategic Plan for the next cycle. One item of focus is ‘To increase the percentage of men in the organisation.’ Currently 22% of our members are men.

Data from the last two years show male percentage is low in the early months, but increases to 22% as the year progresses. Men tend to register later than women. Membership composition is tracked throughout the year, so at any time we can compare progress with the previous year’s data.

Age: CoM monitors average age of members to check trends. If the average age rises too high, ‘membership duration’ will drop and there will be a higher turnover of members. This would impact the maintenance of ‘organisational knowledge,’ and reduce the pool of members experienced in management and support roles. (About 90 people are needed to fill these roles without anyone taking on more than one role).

Country of Birth: We compare our members’ countries of origins with the census data for the City of Banyule. We currently have a similar percentage of migrants to the census, although our country of origin mix reflects the migration pattern of 40 years ago, not the current migration pattern in Banyule.

By Kevin Whiting

Do you have an article idea for the quarterly Newsletter?

U3A is a volunteer organisation and relies on members helping in some way to keep the organisation viable. The Newsletter team are volunteers and constantly seeking articles and photos of members participating in U3A activities.

If you have an idea for an article, or a photo you would like to submit to the Quarterly Newsletter, please contact Sue Gunningham (Newsletter editor) via My3A office. You are welcome to submit an article or if you prefer, a team member can interview you about your idea and write the article for you. We welcome your assistance.

Some dates for your diary

Check omail and MyU3A for other upcoming events

21st March 2025	CoM meeting
31st March 2025	AGM Heidelberg Golf Club (<i>No U3A afternoon classes</i>)
4th April 2025	Semester 1 Term 1 Last day
7th April-17th April	<i>SCHOOL HOLIDAYS No classes</i>
18th April 2025	Good Friday - <i>No classes</i>
21st April 2025	Easter Monday - <i>No classes</i>
22nd April 2025	Semester 1 Term 2 Classes begin
25th April 2025	ANZAC Day – Office closed
16th June 2025	Nonagenarians afternoon tea
4th July 2025	Semester 1 Term 2 Last day