

U3A Banyule Inc A0013622D

ABN 76 751 606 570

Office: Upper Ground Floor, 275 Upper Heidelberg Rd, Ivanhoe
Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub (ILCH)

Mail: PO Box 454, Rosanna, Victoria 3084

Phone: 0418 749 228

Website: u3abanyule.org.au

Email: info@u3abanyule.org.au

*U3A Banyule acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and pays respect to their Elders.
The U3A movement is a welcoming place for all.*

Quarterly Newsletter June 2026

In this edition

Wow, this term's Newsletter provides a closer look at an exciting range of some of U3A Banyule's activities including lectures, yoga, cycling, art and knitted surprises.

Find out what the Movie Group's been up to, and take a look at the Lingerin Lunch article, especially its funny AI assisted photo.

An amazing article from member Ken Bowes shows us you're never too old to travel.

You even get to meet the News Team, an enthusiastic, energetic collection of nine volunteers

ENJOY!
Sue
Gunningham
Editor

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to the second Newsletter for 2026. It has been a busy time since our AGM in March. Our Committee of Management has met several times and new members to CoM, Anne Lombard and Karlene Lang, are settling into their roles and learning how U3A Banyule works. With many of our office bearers remaining in their roles we have had a smooth transition, enabling us to stay focused on our goals for the year.

This week we have been celebrating National Volunteers week. The theme for 2026 is 'Your Year to Volunteer'. It recognises the contributions of volunteers and encourages meaningful involvement. I am delighted to say two of our U3A Members were recognised at the recent Banyule Council Volunteers Dinner. Marg Fievez was awarded the 'Individual Volunteer of the Year' Award and Robert Bender, a 'Lifetime Achievement' Award. Both members are worthy recipients, who have contributed to many Banyule Community projects.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the wonderful volunteers at U3A Banyule for the time and effort they put in to ensure the smooth running of our organisation. Tutors, Committee of Management, Office Volunteers and members of our numerous sub-committees all do an amazing job.

If you would like to be a volunteer, please let one of our friendly Office Volunteers know and we will be in touch.

We have continued to extend our courses, excursions and lectures thanks to members offering new ideas. This year a weekly Bike Riding group was established. Next week a new Self Defence Course will begin.

We have expanded our online offerings in a pilot project with the U3A Network that aims to increase our male membership. The fantastic 'Lecture Series' continues to be very popular due to the knowledge of the presenters and the variety of topics covered. On July 24th we will be celebrating the 40 year anniversary of the formation of U3A Banyule. We were one of the earliest U3A groups to be established in Australia. The theme for the anniversary luncheon will be 'Honouring the Past, Looking to the Future'. The 40th Anniversary Working Party has quite a few surprises in store including a Special Edition Newsletter which will be a wonderful record of our history. We look forward to celebrating with you.



Janet Ringrose
U3A Banyule President

Meet Banyule U3A's Quarterly News team

Formed early in 2025, we were all new to the role. So we developed a model for sourcing, collecting and writing articles and photographing all manner of U3A activities for the Newsletter.

We're a cheerful, inquisitive bunch and have lots of fun in this volunteer role. If you see any of us around, feel free to suggest another article for us to follow up.



Front (L to R) Paule Cartwright, Marie-Rose Auguste, Dianne Williamson, Marian Power, Elizabeth Ainsworth, Sue Gunningham



Linda Duncan



Dianne Dell'Oro-Morgan



Megan Williamson

Welcome to Megan who recently joined us to help with the Newsletter's layout

Sue Gunningham (Editor)

NEW COURSE: Cycling Group

Sipping coffee in the sunshine after another of their excellent bike rides, the Cycling Group – under Dan Kean's leadership – provides an excellent example of exercising in the fresh air while enjoying the beautiful scenery of Banyule and beyond.

The group was formed this year and Dan plans a different route for each Tuesday morning. Bike paths are followed as much as possible. They meet at 9.30 am and are finished by 10.45am. Then the friendly staff at the ILCH Coffee shop has a table ready for them to discuss their journey and other important life matters. They currently have a dozen members. Not all have bike-riding backgrounds and some have e-bikes. They respond to a weekly email from Dan advising whether or not they can participate the following week.

New members are welcome, so if you'd like exercise coupled with good company, it's certainly worth considering.



Marian Power (News team)

FOCUS ON: Slow flow & Vinyasa Yoga



Fay Mohitian leads Slow Flow and Vinyasa Yoga on Thursday mornings and has a loyal band of followers who enjoy her gentle approach. She began her yoga journey in Melbourne as a way of coping with a busy life and as a means of recovering from injury.



Gradually for Fay, yoga became a way of living, a time to be present, mindful: not just on the yoga mat, but in daily life. She believes learning never stops and feels yoga is something we can weave into everyday life. Fay's goal is to inspire, support and remind us that yoga is for everybody, every mind, every age and every stage of life.

Linda Duncan (News team)

LECTURE - Back to the USSR - February 2026

Before this lecture we were entertained by the 1968 music of the same name by the Beatles.

Nick Szwed and his family were WW2 refugees from Belarus. His parents were prisoners of war forced to work on a German farm, so Nick has a keen interest in the changing politics of the area. He recounted the geo-political history and leadership of the USSR and Russian states, focussing on the impact on adjacent countries, and actions to influence other areas of the World.



We learned of many failed treaties and continuing incursions into states which were previously part of the USSR, but are now independent. Ongoing military actions have impacted adversely on the economics of current day Russia and the welfare of its population. This is in addition to the huge loss of civilian and military lives both within and external to the country.



Nick provided interesting insights about the KGB trained, Vladimir Putin, and how his KGB skills are used in his rise to power, current leadership style, and interactions with world leaders and local oligarchs. KGB skills include psychological manipulation, deception, disinformation, surveillance and destabilisation; traits which can also be observed in other current world leaders!

Most of the audience would have been aware of news reports about Russia/USSR since WW2 and the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, but it can be difficult to put these individual occurrences together to see the 'big picture'. It was enlightening to have these summarised in the context of changing times.

The title of Nick's presentation gave a clue to the content of the lecture – the collapse of the USSR into the Russian state, and the gradual restitution under the leadership of Putin 'Back to the USSR', as former areas of the USSR are absorbed into current day Russia.

Dianne Williamson (News team)

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY – From a tin shed to the United Nations March 2026

'The purpose of life is to discover your gift... The meaning of life is to give your gift away.' D. Viscot

Stephanie Woollard always wanted to make a difference to the world. In 2006, aged 19, she encountered a group of seven disabled women living in a tin shed in Nepal. The women made and sold wax candles. But as a marginalised group, selling their candles was difficult.

Using the last \$200 of her travel money Stephanie paid to have the women taught to knit. She brought the knitted items back to Australia to sell; proceeds going to the seven women.

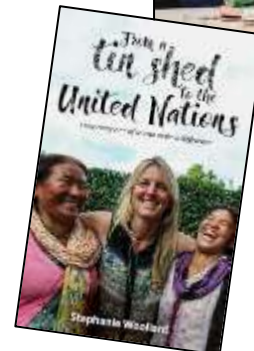
So began the 'Seven Women' foundation, with Stephanie fundraising at speaking venues to further promote the concept.

Money raised from sales and donations was used to teach new skills to disadvantaged women in Nepal. Some were taught to cook; some went on to open a small guest house. Some were taught to read and write, and went on to teach other women and children. Micro finance groups were organised by some women to financially help a different member of the group each month.

Stephanie later organised cultural tours to bring women from other countries to visit the classes, share their knowledge and skills and make a difference for Nepalese women.

Seven Women aims to socially and economically empower marginalised women through literacy, skills training and income generation. It has impacted over 5,000 women in Nepal and helped communities to create sustainable, long-term change.

Stephanie has received many local and international awards for her work with marginalised women, including the Order of Australia and the United Nations Award for Responsible Business. In 2023, Stephanie handed the leadership of Seven Women to two of the women from the original tin shed.



Sue Gunningham (News team)

SOCIAL CONNECTION: Lingering Lunch, March 2026

We had our first Lingering Lunch for the year at the Sir Henry Barkly hotel, Burgundy Street, Heidelberg. Needless to say it was a joyful occasion, with lots of chatter and plentiful good food for all 26 attendees.



Photo created by Paule's clever granddaughter & AI

Intrigued by the name, I discovered Sir Henry was the second Governor of Victoria and between 1856 and 1863 was a founder of such institutions as the National Gallery of Victoria, the Melbourne Observatory, the Royal Society of Victoria and the Acclimatization Society of Victoria.

I'm sure he would have been tickled pink to see us all leaving his namesake armed with our doggy bags!

Paule Cartwright (News team)

CHAIR YOGA



Thursday mornings a group of U3A members find peace, strength and wellbeing under gentle guidance of Brooke, their yoga coach.

On hearing 'yoga', you may think of contorted poses or standing on your head. 'Not for me,' you may say, particularly if you are somewhat unsteady on your feet. But in chair yoga almost every routine is done while sitting on a chair or using it as a prop.

We cleanse and de-clutter our minds with some deep breathing and meditation. Our bodies settle down. Then, through a series of moderate exercises, done at one's own pace and capability, we start to feel more flexible and stronger, even sprightly.

Oh the challenge of trying to do the Tree Pose on one foot! I cannot yet stay as still and upright as a tree; sometimes needing a chair for balance. But I am slowly requiring this less and less. After class we enjoy a coffee at the cool little 'Sycamore Tree' café next door.

Marie-Rose Auguste (News team)

OUT AND ABOUT: Urban sketching

Urban sketchers' motto: 'See the world one sketch at a time.'

On the first Wednesday of each month from 2-4pm, Diane and Annalisa coordinate an urban sketching group. The group meet at different locations around Eaglemont, Ivanhoe and Heidelberg to sketch historical and modernist buildings and streetscapes.

The essence of an urban sketch is not to be perfect, but to capture life on location and the feel and beauty of a place - to sketch in the moment, rather than worrying about the final result.

Our first venue was Eaglemont station where we all set up with our different art mediums; pencil, ink, watercolour paint and a range of sketch books. Some brought small stools and others used available seating. As it was summer, we all remembered our hats and sunscreen.

It's a warm, friendly group who support each other and learn by doing, watching and sharing ideas. The group ranges from beginners to a trained artist. No experience is necessary, so come along if you would like to try your hand and remember 'drawing is just a line going for a walk'.



Urban Sketchers at Ivanhoe East & at Eaglemont Station



Dianne Dell'Oro-Morgan (News team)

New class: ART FOR ALL

Upon entering the room I could sense the participants' eager anticipation. The course was started by Jenni Colvill, who describes herself as a 'Convenor' rather than a 'Tutor', because she likes to join in with the class activity.

Sessions begin with a brief presentation about one of the Art schools. When I visited, *Expressionism* was the topic. Edvard Munch and Gabriele Munch are among the main proponents of this school.



Its members were politically active and persecuted by the German Nazi Party for 'degenerate work'. Many were forced to emigrate to Europe and the USA. Jenni included paintings by these artists in her presentation



Portrait of Marianne von Werefkin by Gabriele Munch 1909

After each presentation, participants choose what they want to paint, having brought along their own art materials. Some copy a painting - but it's very flexible.

Marian Power (News team)

OUT & ABOUT: Off to the movies

This monthly Monday morning 'course' at Westgarth cinema is a great opportunity to catch up with some of the latest movie releases in the company of U3A friends, both new and old. The mornings end with an optional lunch at a nearby café accompanied by lots of chatter, laughter and an informal discussion about the movie viewed. Signing up for a free 'Palace membership' enables us to see a movie for \$10, which we each pay directly to the theatre.



Milena Maranville is the Tutor and organiser for this event. She advises us of the range of movies available. We each select a movie, so the group is usually split across a few theatres. The number of participants varies each month from about 12 – 20.

In February all participants chose to see 'Hamnet'. In April members chose to see a variety of movies including 'The Magic Faraway Tree', 'I Swear', and 'Father, Mother Sister, Brother'.

In May members chose to see 'The Devil wears Prada 2' and 'The Sheep Detectives'.

What will we see next month? That will be decided a week before our movie date, when the Cinema releases its program.

Dianne Williamson (News team)

Do you have an article idea for the quarterly Newsletter?

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 U3A office. You are invited 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.

CREATIVE KNITTING GROUP: Easter bunnies



Once again, based on the 'Random Acts of Kindness movement' which originated in the USA, Banyule U3A's creative knitters made and gifted 50 bunnies and chickens to ILCH last Easter. Staff hid the items around the library for children to find. This caused great excitement and staff reported bunnies were 'jumping off' the shelves.

Feedback from parents and children was overwhelmingly positive. A parent emailed U3A to say she used the opportunity to explain to her children about being part of a caring community.



Diana Mc Cormack (Guest writer)

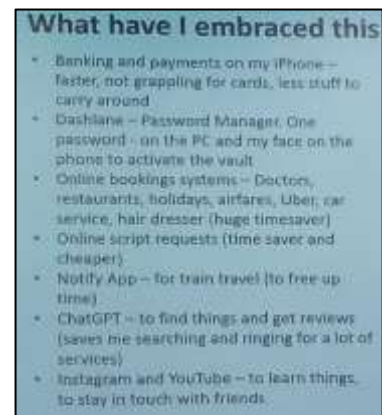
Makes one proud to be a member of U3A doesn't it? Sue Gunningham (*Editor*)

LECTURE: 10 E-things we need to consider to make our lives easier

Maxine O'Brien spoke about using technology in daily life and offered advice regarding cost, complexity, privacy and scams.

She recommended:

- Upgrading to the latest technology compatible on your phone/watch/tablet/hearing aids/glucose monitor or fall notification. She also suggested turning things on/off around the home and monitoring who is at the door, messages etc. These devices can be tricky to set up – ask trusted IT savvy friends, family, the IT help desk at U3A, the library or Neighbourhood house to help. Remember to set reasonable parameters for alerts.
- Downloading a password-keeper on phone, tablet, and home computer and using one password/face/fingerprint access to all those passwords to make it so much easier.



Maxine also explained the difference between Passwords and Passkeys – Passkeys are unique to your hardware, while Passwords are used on any device anywhere.

She said using two-factor authentication makes accounts more secure and urged us to be alert when doing online banking or bank transfers, and to use bookmarks rather than entering URLs and to use the 'hover' function on email addresses to discern the sender.



Maxine O'Brien

When booking restaurants, take-away, hairdressers, home maintenance etc, Maxine suggested seeking an App for online bookings and checking Chat GPT for recommendations. Apps can also help with transport; the Public Transport App gives real time information. Uber can be good, but an audience member reminded us to be careful, as Uber drivers only have TAC insurance cover.

The audience raised the issue of internet ads. Suggested 'fixes' included using *DuckDuckGo* or *Firefox*, turning off Notifications and checking Privacy Settings. Maxine told us to always execute security upgrades because they help keep you safe and that backing up your files externally or to a cloud-based App may be well worth the cost.

It was a very informative session.

Linda Duncan (News team)

Banyule Annual General Meeting - March 2026

We had an excellent turnout of 54 members this year at our Annual General Meeting, held at the Ivanhoe Library (ILCH). Added to this a further 45 proxy votes were received by the office.

Our President, Janet Ringrose, presented a slideshow outlining some of the key achievements from our 2025-2026 year. These included:

- Membership has grown to 1165 people
- Member Wizard was introduced to improve our computer administrative system
- We received a BCC Highly Commended Award in the Community Initiative category
- New 'Ten Year Award' for tutors was introduced
- The News team was expanded to eight and the Quarterly Newsletter was refreshed
- Our Strategic Plan for 2025-2028 was completed; key areas identified as:
 - Organisational
 - Learning Programs and Sustainability
 - Relationships/ Communication
 - Digital Information & Technology

Janet expanded on some of these key areas by saying the aim was to encourage more members to volunteer to become tutors, in order to widen the range of classes available and to increase the number of excursions offered by U3A Banyule.

There will also be a focus on training the U3A community and office staff in using and understanding the Member Wizard more fully.

U3A Banyule will also strive to build and strengthen connections across its members and encourage the social interaction so essential for the health and well-being of the U3A community in general.

The slideshow also revealed that in 2025 U3A Banyule used over 14 venues across the Banyule area in order to deliver its extensive program of some 150 different events including classes, excursions and lectures. It was a very successful AGM, followed by a delicious afternoon tea organised by Gina Jones-Parry and her team.



Sue Gunningham (News team)

40th Anniversary sneak peek

Members of the U3A Banyule Quarterly News team have been looking through many of U3A Banyule's old newsletters. Here are some surprising facts we found.

Did you know we actually began life as U3A in 1986, as *Yarra Valley U3A*? Two volunteers, demonstrating exercises for older people at Plenty Hospital, discussed the idea of setting up a local branch of U3A. Soon after, on 7/4/86 together with another four people, they met to discuss the idea further. They organised a public meeting at Heidelberg Town Hall on 24/7/86 with a view to establishing a U3A campus in the N.E. Region of Melbourne. Some 900 people attended that meeting!

The rest, as they say, is history!

(This sketch, drawn by an anonymous member, appeared in a Yarra Valley U3A Newsletter in the 1980s)



Sue Gunningham (News team)

Meet U3A Member: Ken Bowes

I'm constantly awed by all our U3A friends do and achieve. When I heard about Ken Bowes and his travels, my sense of awe was taken to another level. I was very keen to share his piece, so we can all be inspired. Here is Ken's story in his own words.

Paule Cartwright (News team)

Experiencing travel has been a major interest in my life. My first overseas trip was New Zealand in 1953, and the most recent in March this year (2026) when I visited five countries in North West and Central Africa with a tour group, then went on to Cape Maclean in Malawi alone.

The weather conditions, (floods and lightning) and bad roads made Malawi difficult and tiring but completed my travels to the 193 countries recognized by the United Nations.

Which country is my favourite? Obviously Australia, with its stability, beaches and deserts - but others too, depending on one's interests. For example, Pakistan and Nepal for mountain scenery, Antarctica and Africa for wildlife, Russia for the trans Siberian railway, India and Africa for colour and vibrancy, Venezuela (Angel Falls) and Brazil for waterfalls, France for culinary experiences, Europe for art, architecture and cathedrals, the USA for national parks, Iran, Libya, Turkey and Egypt for archaeology, and South East Asia for resorts. Other countries could be added to this list.

Incidents and frustrations have occurred - cancelled flights, missed connections, airport delays, difficulties obtaining visas, luggage delays, security checks, an assault in Somaliland and minor illnesses. Travelling 'economy' can also be a pain, and managing family, work and finances cause other issues.

Overall the most challenging countries I've visited were Northern and Central Africa. I found the 'terrorist countries' (e.g. North Korea, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon) relatively easy.



Ken Bowes

I've travelled with my wife, family members, tour groups and alone. In retrospect, I now feel it's more enjoyable to revisit areas I found interesting, rather than visiting a different country, just to add to my list.

Travel, like bungee jumping is not for everyone, but it does add to life's experiences and develops tolerance, acceptance, a non-judgmental attitude and a feeling of humility by comparing lifestyles.

Aldous Huxley once wrote '*To travel is to discover that everyone is wrong about other countries.*' The only way to find out if he was right is to visit. As an advanced 90 year old, I hope my scattered thoughts inspire you to keep travelling, if health and circumstances permit.

Ken Bowes (Guest writer)

2026 Important Dates

Monday 8 th June	King's birthday. Office closed
Tuesday 9 th June	Semester 2 Courses & Lectures appear in Word Wizard
Monday 15 th June	Nonagenarian's Afternoon tea.
Friday 26 th June	Semester One, Term 2 courses conclude
Monday 29 th June	School holidays begin – No U3A classes until 13 th July
Monday 13 th July	Semester 2, Term 3 classes commence
Friday 24 th July	40 th Birthday celebration lunch – Montmorency RSL