

**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 September 2026

### In this edition

Hi everyone, the news team hope you've checked out U3A Banyule's 16-page, 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary booklet – it's a bumper read!

Our U3A continues to offer wonderful options to members.

This edition showcases an historical walking tour in Williamstown and visits an Islamic Museum in Thornbury. We also learn some secrets from our amazing catering team, and long-time member, Rita Ferguson, (now 101) describes her 1996 visit to Japan on a U3A tour.

**ENJOY!**

**Sue Gunningham  
Editor**

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to our third Newsletter for the year. Winter has certainly been challenging and I hope you are keeping warm and well. Our Newsletter team has again done an amazing job bringing together an edition to capture some of the wonderful things that happened over the last few months.

A highlight was celebrating 40 years of Banyule U3A. In July 1986, a small group of passionate individuals came together with a singular vision - to explore the possibilities of establishing a U3A campus for the North Eastern region of Melbourne. That humble, grassroots initiative blossomed into a strong, vibrant organisation with over 1100 members in 2026. Jump onto our website and have a look at the booklet produced to commemorate our journey.

Anne Grigg, the current president of U3A Network Victoria spoke at our recent anniversary luncheon. Did you know that as a member of Banyule U3A, you are also linked with **U3A Network Victoria** and are part of the 102 Victorian U3As that represent 44,000 members across Victoria? That is a very large community. You can access what U3A Network Victoria has to offer via their regular Newsletter.

To register to receive the U3A Network Victoria Newsletter use the link:  
<https://u3avictoria.org.au/news/>.

More recently, as an organisation we joined U3A Online. This opened a vast array of courses our members can now access. Instructions for doing this appeared in recent editions of 'What's On?'

What can we look forward to in months ahead? This is always a busy time as we prepare our courses, lectures and excursions for next year. Member Wizard will send an email reminding you to pay your membership renewal to ensure your eligibility to enrol in classes for 2027. Other highlights to look out for include Seniors Month Activities in October.

The wonderful Drama Group Annual Performance will be held on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November and our choir will also be celebrating a very successful year with their annual concert. We will finish the year with the Annual Lunch in early December. I hope to see you at one of these events.



**Janet Ringrose  
U3A Banyule  
President**

## OUT & ABOUT: Excursion to Williamstown - June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2026

My fellow travellers and our organiser Ann Shepherson boarded the 9.30 am 'Williamstown train' at Platform 10, Flinders Street Station.



It was a clear, sunny day in Williamstown and the coastal breeze on our cheeks was invigorating. A short walk from the station and we arrived at Nelson Place, a picturesque shopping strip where we stopped for coffee and conversation. Then a guide took us on an historic walk along the Strand. He pointed out particular buildings, recounted historical facts and shared anecdotes about various houses. He also explained some local monuments such as one related to a group of immigrant Irish-famine orphan girls in 1848-50, who came out to Australia under the Earl Grey Scheme.

The guide told us about ships in dock, including the Spirit of Tasmania, there for repair, and the HMAS Castlemaine. Being a local resident, he was able to give his stories a humorous, personal flavour.

Originally Williamstown was occupied by two indigenous groups; the Marin-balluk and the Yalukit-Willam clans. After European settlement, Williamstown contended as a site for the capital city of Victoria until this bid was negated due the absence of fresh water.



While the town is still a working port, its character is evolving in parts, from industrial to gentrification. I was surprised to see black swans with cardinal bills swimming in the shallows.



After a leisurely lunch we returned to Melbourne feeling exhilarated, refreshed and relaxed.

*By Guest writers: Ann Brown (text) & Anne Shepherson (photos)*

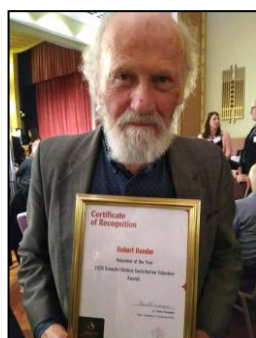
## BANYULE COUNCIL AWARDS: Congratulations to our Community volunteers

Our U3A volunteers are vital to our organisation and some of them also volunteer for other community services. At the 2026 Banyule Council Volunteer Awards night in May, two U3A members were honoured with 2026 Banyule Volunteer Awards.

Margaret Fievez was awarded 'Volunteer of the Year – Individual Volunteer Award' for her exceptional, long-standing contribution spanning environmental conservation, lifelong learning, cultural connection, migrant support and community development across Banyule. She has been involved with U3A, Friends of Wilson Reserve, Ivanhoe Reading Circle, Adult Migrant English Service and the Beyond Words program.



**Marg Fievez**



**Robert Bender**

Robert Bender was awarded 'Volunteer of the Year – Lifetime Contribution Award' due to his establishment of the Friends of Wilsons Reserve group in 1996, and years of dedicated volunteer service as the driving force behind work on weed control, habitat restoration and monitoring of site conditions. He also works to help others appreciate the environmental significance of the wildlife and native vegetation along the Yarra River corridor. Robert has created a lasting legacy for the community.

Congratulations to these two extraordinary U3A Banyule members.

*By Dianne Williamson (News team)*

## A SHOUT OUT TO OUR WONDERFUL CATERING TEAM

Quote from Gina; 'A balanced diet is a biscuit in each hand' - so we try to offer a variety!

The U3A catering department is a key part of many U3A events. I met with the catering co-ordinator Gina Jones-Parry. Gina moved to Melbourne 5 years ago and said U3A has been a wonderful way to meet new people and provided her with a fabulous source of new friendships and information.

Gina has been co-ordinating the catering team for 18 months after taking over from Fiona Wilson who held the position for 7 years. Gina said, "Fiona left big boots to fill but she was, and continues to be an inspiration and great support".

The team consists of 30 enthusiastic volunteers, who each tend to cook items they know and enjoy, with Gina co-ordinating to ensure a pleasing balance of flavours. They cater for about 12 regular events a year plus a few extra afternoon teas at lecture events. Most event numbers are between 40-60 people, with end of year Choir breakup stretching to 100!



*Gina Jones-Parry*

### Here are some of Gina's catering tips:

- 3 savoury and 2 sweet pieces per person
- Choose bite sized finger food to avoid need for cutlery and crockery
- Avoid runny or sticky pieces
- Choose food you can leave out of the refrigerator for 2 hours (no oysters!)
- Use seasonal produce and always include some fruit and vegetables.

It is difficult to know how much people will eat, so Gina often brings takeaway containers to avoid waste and give people a treat to take home.



Gina kindly shared one of her easy, tasty no fail recipes which she makes for many events. It can be made as is or fancied up for special occasions and also freezes well.

### CHOCOLATE BROWNIES

#### INGREDIENTS:

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 150gm butter          | ½ cup plain flour     |
| 1 ¼ cups caster sugar | 1 tsp vanilla essence |
| 3 eggs                | Nuts optional extra   |
| ¾ cup cocoa           |                       |

#### METHOD:

Preheat oven to 160°C

Place butter, sugar and cocoa in saucepan over low heat and melt butter.

Cool pan then add vanilla essence, flour and beaten eggs.

Spoon mixture into 20 cm square cake tin lined with non-stick paper.

Bake 30-35 mins

Cut into squares and serve.



*By Dianne Dell'Oro-Morgan (News team)*

## NONAGENARIANS AFTERNOON TEA - JUNE 2026

About a dozen nonagenarians and some carers attended this annual event.

A PowerPoint presentation profiled some of the interesting world happenings of 1936, the year our youngest nonagenarians were born.

It was the year actor Robert Redford was born and the year George V died in England, unleashing the Edward and Mrs Wallis Simpson dilemma.

In Australia, Collingwood won the premiership against Fitzroy, in America, Fred and Ginger tapped danced across the big screens.



This year's prompt was 'Now I'm 90, what advice would I give to my 70 year old self?'

These included 'Find people you can trust. Become an avid golfer and learn to improve your swing. Get involved and stay connected. Exercise and keep fit. Take up hobbies and look forward to doing something every day.'

Much laughter followed Aubrey's suggestion of 'Not to give advice nor take advice!'

Martin's funny response began with him telling of a recent frustration with technology, then said he'd tell his 70 year old self to "... Look after your passwords - in case you can't remember the name of your first dog, address of your first house, or any other backup security questions!' 😊



Another delicious afternoon tea was put on by Gina Jones-Parry and her catering team.

*By Sue Gunningham (News team)*

## MEMORY LANE ARTICLES - collected as part of U3A 40th Anniversary collection

### • The Missing Tutor

Everyone was in the hall at Ivanhoe Pde for the 2 pm lecture, but the tutor had not arrived! I kept phoning her for 20 minutes, but no response and no message could be left.

Eventually I called the lecture off. U3A members were unbelievable. They chatted for a while, then went home.

When the hall cleared I went to the tutor's house; blinds all drawn, no sign of anyone. I began to fear the worst and worried, as I didn't have an emergency contact number.

Two hours later the tutor phoned me. She was very sorry but she was away on holiday, having mixed up the lecture dates! All's well that ends well!

*By Joan Learmonth (Course Coordinator 2016)*

- **Just another day in the U3A Office**

“Morning lady” the cheery Greek card players called when I arrived for office duty in the shared Council rooms in Ivanhoe Parade. The flick of playing cards accompanied the click of my key as I let myself into the office to begin the morning jobs.

Check handwritten notes in the diary, check toilet paper supplies in the ladies toilet, do a general tidy, dust and vacuum. After answering some phone calls and helping members in person, I decided it was cuppa time. I had earlier refused a cup of ‘rocket fuel coffee’ from the card players.

Tea bag in my mug, I waited for the kettle to boil. Water in and I took a large sip. I spluttered, coughed and desperately spat it out- it was horrible!!! What was in the water? Stewed cockroach that’s what!

Then loud voices erupted in the card kingdom. Hands began slapping tables, then fists onto chins. I grabbed the key to lock the door as the card leader raced in.

‘OK lady! It’s OK lady! We no hurt anyone.’

Well you could have fooled me. Office duty had never been so eventful.



*By Elizabeth Ainsworth (News team)*

- **(1996) Our U3A Yarra Valley (now U3A Banyule) goes to Japan**

*(Joan Learmonth interviewed 101 year old Rita Ferguson, a long-time U3A member. Rita still has the photo album she made of the trip, with all the information and photos).*

In August 1996 we were invited to visit Nagoya, Japan to see their equivalent of our U3A. Prior to this visit, the city of Nagoya had been given a very considerable amount of money for the well being of their older community.

One of our members knew someone from Japan and asked if a small group would like to come to Melbourne and visit our organisation. This resulted in about 10 citizens from Nagoya coming to Victoria to see how we operated. They were impressed with how our U3A was set up and how it ran.

They particularly liked the link with La Trobe University.

As a consequence of this visit, 20 of our members were invited to Nagoya and what an amazing experience we had!

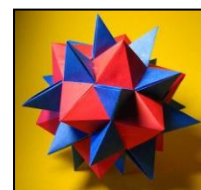
An agent arranged our fares and other aspects of our trip. We arrived in Nagoya on 14 September 1996 and were treated like ‘rock stars.’ We were given a civic reception with a 10-course meal of exquisitely presented dishes, a separate official dinner to meet our host families and taken on many sight-seeing trips around Nagoya. A range of special dance and music performances were also performed for us. All this was paid for by the Japanese.

Our group was amazed at the facilities of this Japanese version of U3A, the set up being so superior. There were a wide range of classrooms, all for U3A. These included a craft room, a ceramics room, a horticultural room, reading booths, art rooms, paper-folding rooms, a greenhouse, and many more.

Classes and activities were very formal; more like a university than a U3A. Our members were able to take part in all the classes and had enormous fun.

We stayed with host families and slept and ate on the floor. We were dressed in kimonos and shown a number of traditional customs. We even had ‘wisdom shaken into our heads!’

Rita said, ‘I’d never had such an experience before and will never experience another like it.’



## U3A Banyule 40th Anniversary luncheon

Wearing items of red to signify our Ruby Anniversary, 180 of our members met at Montmorency RSL for our celebration 40th birthday lunch.



On arrival, we were given a glass of bubbles and ushered into a room decorated in ruby colours. Each table setting held the gift of a ruby knitted bookmark as a souvenir of the event.

Members chatted, met friends and admired the beautifully decorated birthday cake before taking their seats. President Janet Ringrose welcomed the group and Banyule Mayor, Alison Champion, spoke of the important role U3A Banyule plays in keeping seniors connected and engaged in the community. This was followed by a wonderful performance by our U3A choir.

Then the U3A Victoria President Anne Grigg and our history tutor, Jane Davies, spoke on the theme of honouring the past and looking to the future.

During our meal, a slide show displayed many photos of members, classes and events - a lovely reminder of people with whom we have shared past experiences and classes.

We all sang 'Happy Birthday' and our oldest member, Will Semmler, cut the birthday cake. Life members and 10-year tutors were honoured by the President and given gifts made by our talented knitters, painters and card makers.



The celebrations ended with everyone singing a U3A theme song led by Geoff Vaughan, who embellished the words from an earlier English version.

As members left they received a fabulous anniversary booklet prepared by the News team which provides a potted history of U3A Banyule including illustrations, text and photos from our Newsletters dating back to 1986. This booklet is available on our website for members to view and/or download.

We thank all the creative U3A members who gave their time and skills to organise and deliver this special event: photographers, singers, history researchers and writers, speakers, decorators, event planners and others.

### Happy 40th Birthday U3A Banyule!



*By Dianne Williamson (News team)*

## OUT & ABOUT: U3A Visit to the Islamic Museum of Australia - July 2026

What a treat lay in waiting for the U3A Banyule members who were given a guided tour of the Islamic Museum of Australia. Tucked away in the former industrial heart of Thornbury, the building is an impressive reimagining of what was previously a water bottling company.

With galleries across three levels the Museum, founded in 2010, showcases a breath-taking collection of Islamic cultural artefacts and historical accounts of the history of Islam and its contribution to the creation of the modern world.

Of particular interest was a gallery describing the contributions made by Muslims to Australian life including the so-called 'cameleers' who helped open up the heart of Australia, assisting with the Burke and Wills expedition and interacting with local indigenous peoples.

Our escorted tour began with an informative and pictorial account of the constituent elements of Islam and how the continuation of cultural practices often leads non-believers to misunderstand the role of women within the practice of Islam. Sayings attributed to the Prophet adorn the walls of the first gallery.

In another gallery dedicated to *Islamic Contributions to Civilisation*, we learned the world's oldest continuing university, founded by Fatima al-Fihri in 859 CE is located in Fez in Morocco.

Art created by Muslims in the modern era, including here in Australia, was the focus of yet another gallery, including a painting of Waleed Aly by Abdul Abudullah. The portrait was shortlisted for the 2011 Archibald Prize.



We were also introduced to the Islamic decorative arts, especially tile-making with its complex geometric patterns. We watched a short film explaining the Hajj (the annual pilgrimage to Mecca); one of the 5 pillars of Islam. Other spaces were filled with large-scale canvas prints of all the important mosques in the Islamic world. Architects are obliged by Islam to ensure these buildings are contextualised to the local geography and culture.

All too soon our wonderful tour came to an end. After expressing our heartfelt appreciation to our enthusiastic and well-informed Museum guide many of us wound down at the Museum café.

Thank you, Ann for organising such an informative day out!



*By Anne Brown (Guest writer)*

## Lecture: World Elder Abuse Awareness Day - 15 June 2026

### World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

**Monday 15 June**

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) is a global opportunity to stand together against the abuse, mistreatment and neglect of older people. Elder abuse can take many forms, including financial, emotional, psychological, physical, sexual or social abuse, and often involves someone known to the older person, such as a family member.

If you or someone you know is experiencing elder abuse, support is available. Seniors Rights Victoria provides free, confidential legal advice and information, call their Helpline on 1300 368 821 or visit [seniorsrights.org.au](http://seniorsrights.org.au) for more information.

**For national support and resources in multiple languages, contact 1800 ELDERHelp (1800 353 374). If someone is in immediate danger, call 000.**



*Who knew there was such a day? ...* A recent study of elder abuse prevalence in Australia found that 14.8% of those 65 years and over had experienced at least one recognised form of elder abuse over the previous 12 months. This suggests that 160,000 older Victorians are experiencing elder abuse each year to a level they are willing to identify to researchers. Women are more likely to be targeted than men, but men often don't speak up.

On 17<sup>th</sup> June, Banyule Council invited U3A and community members to a talk at ILCH to increase understanding of the importance of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. 25% residents of Banyule LGA are over 60, 5% were over 80 in the last census.

Gary Ferguson from Senior Rights Victoria presented information about the various types of elder abuse (emotional, financial, social, physical, sexual and neglect) and provided information on how to access support. He covered ways to prevent elder abuse from occurring.

Seniors Rights Victoria states that older people have rights such as to live in safety, be treated with dignity and respect, and make their own decisions even if they seem to be wrong to others. If you or someone you know is experiencing elder abuse, you are advised to contact Senior Rights Victoria. You will be able to speak confidentially to a social worker, advocate or lawyer who can provide options so you can choose your preferred course of action. This a free service.

Call Seniors Rights Victoria 1300 368 821 Monday to Friday 10 am-5 pm.

Check their website for resources [www.seniorsrights.org.au](http://www.seniorsrights.org.au)

For nationwide assistance and to access additional resources in 20 different languages, call the Australian Human Rights Commission on 1800 ELDERHelp (1800 353 374) or [Elder abuse: recognising types and where older people can get help](#) If it is an emergency, always call **000**.

Thanks to Gary Ferguson for an informative talk, Sue and Andrew Lees for organising and Banyule Council for providing afternoon tea.

*By Linda Duncan (News team)*

### 2026 Important Dates

|                     |                                             |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Wed 16th Sept       | U3A Network Victoria State Conference       |
| Thurs 17th Sept     | U3A Network Victoria State Conference       |
| Fri 18th Sept       | Classes conclude. Semester 2 Term 3         |
| 21st Sept – 2nd Oct | U3A Banyule Office closed (school holidays) |
| Mon 5th Oct         | Classes commence. Semester 2 Term 4         |