

President's Report

This AGM, my fourth in my five-year term covers the period of our activities in 2023. It was at the last AGM that the Constitution was altered to extend the length of the term of the executive committee members, and I am grateful to be here, in a time of growth and change in contrast to the Covid years.

Emerging from those years and looking to re-establish many of our social events, to develop new classes, along with supporting our long-term class tutors, prompted the committee to look at the possibility of larger premises at the Churches of Christ building. Now our membership is growing, and our classes are increasing the need for more space is evident. The Churches of Christ building we understand is to be sold and it is evident that many organisations have already moved on.

Many of you will recall that a few years ago, the Mayor, Jenny Hill had been encouraging Senior Citizens in Ryan St and us to consider a plan to bring our two groups together in their building. We held some joint conversations, but the purpose and timing didn't gel.

As the years have passed the circumstances have changed. Jenny Hill has urged us to talk with Senior Citizens about co-location in Ryan Street. Representatives from both committees commenced discussions midyear and those negotiations have gone very well.

This AGM gives us an opportunity to announce the plans to relocate our branch to share the space - with both organisations benefiting from this change.

The Senior Citizens Committee have been very generous accommodating the changes needed and they understand our branch autonomy as a member of the Queensland U3A Network.

U3A will have our own administration office with room for our current office arrangements. We will have a large U3A classroom, along with use of the library on a booking system for meetings and small classes. We will have the use of the kitchen area and the larger hall area for future social events, Friday Talks, and other joint events with Senior Citizens. Senior Citizens are planning building works for our classroom to be completed this financial year.

Our 2024 members will be asked to register a membership form for Senior Citizens (there will be no cost to U3A members to join) and all activities held will be available to both organisational members. If Senior Citizens members wish to join U3A to attend classes, they will pay the same U3A membership. All events (U3A classes/Senior Citizen activities) will continue to attract a donation of \$2.00. As time goes on the possibility of reduced U3A membership subscription will be considered.

Both committees' will operate on their own monthly cycle and hold individual AGMs. In the interests of planning, development and problem solving, the President of each committee, or nominated person, will attend each other's monthly meetings for continuity. Each President will report to their own committees as per usual.

Some highlights from the year are mentioned below.

March 2023

We held the AGM in a very pleasant venue at Oak Tree Village with the first order of business being changes to the constitution. There was a unanimous agreement to extend the term of the

three executive roles from three years to five years. The door prizes were allocated, and the election process proceeded with nominated persons returned to the committee. The catered lunch was enjoyed by all. Larry attended the U3A network conference in Rockhampton as a representative of the Townsville branch.

April 2023

The first meeting after the AGM the committee were tasked with updating the assets register, sending out the newsletter and new classes were planned. The Committee started looking at our current lease and alternative space.

May 2023

Pauline was off globetrotting; with no urgent business this meeting was cancelled.

June 2023

The return of the popular Friday Talks in 2023, highlighted our need to find a suitable venue which we were able to do due to a good arrangement with Wildlife Carers. We were pleased to support them with the donations from the participants in exchange for the use of the facilities, including the excellent Audio-Visual equipment.

With the support of Jenny, a member of both U3A and Wildlife Carers, we commenced Friday Talks in the new venue. Jenny prepared the venue and managed the A/V system each week. This activity continued through to November and is organised by a small group of volunteers from the committee.

Several new classes were approved:

- Dr Bill Laing - Climate Change and renewable solutions
- Moina Lettice - Crazy Stitching for Embroidery
- Peter Dean – Guitar classes

Larry continued to monitor and apply for appropriate grants to assist the continuation of the branch such as covering the cost of envelopes and stamps for the distribution of the newsletter.

July 2023

Early discussions with Senior Citizens continued.

August 2023

The small team continued to develop a list of speakers for Friday Talks.

We continued promoting Friday Talks through Triple T with a weekly community announcement introducing the guest speaker.

We promoted our organisation and contact details through the TCC community resource directory and update it annually.

Larry contacted TCC regarding applying for the Fee Waiver at Oonoonba Community Centre, as the History Group Venue.

The Tutors Lunch planning commenced.

With the looming TCC Seniors Expo Lorraine and Christine got to work on updating and producing flyers and pamphlets to hand out, and committee members volunteered to be on hand to speak with members of the public who approach the stall.

September 2023

Several grants were approved. The TCC grant covered the costs of the November social event; the hall was booked, and a bulk email sent to members requesting ideas for entertainment for the event.

A summary of the talks between the committee members and the Senior Citizens was distributed to committee via email and it was resolved to set up another meeting to discuss the dedicated room for U3A and the merits between a MOU and Contract.

Lorraine contacted the TCC regarding the removal of our canvas banners from fences. TCC explained that no banners without the TCC logo can be displayed on council land/fences. This policy change led to the loss of one banner and after negotiations the other banner was returned.

October 2023

The meeting between U3A and the Senior Citizens, reported that “Seniors” were very much in favour of U3A joining them at Belgium Gardens. Seniors confirmed that they would build U3A a dedicated room within their complex and will finance this.

Friday Talks neared the end of the season, with a wide variety of subjects and although the attendance was small, they were not lacking in enthusiasm.

The Magnetic Island Tutors Luncheon was held at Peppers Blue on Blue restaurant. Antonia and 12 members, plus some extra partners, attended and enjoyed the excellent meals and lovely venue. The Townsville Tutors luncheon held at the Sun Hotel had a large participation of members who enjoyed the opportunity to socialise once more.

The branch recorded 486 financial members.

November 2023

Discussions continued with Senior Citizens with the drafting of a MOU. A further meeting with Jenny Hill resulted in her once again supporting the proposed co-location. The U3A management committed to the co-location and expect to have it completed by the end of the financial year.

The Christmas social event held in November provided our members with a sense of belonging to the purpose of U3A. This was an opportunity to engage with our broader membership in a social setting.

We also enjoyed a publicity opportunity by participation at the Avanti Seniors Expo. Antonia, Lorraine, and I used this event to engage with the local community about the work of U3A, handing out membership forms, newsletters, and class brochures.

Friday talks had its final session in November, ending our program of speakers many of whom were U3A members themselves.

This meeting ended a busy year of attending to the governance of the branch, the needs of our members and advancing the plan for a better location.

To end this report, I pay a hearty tribute to all the Committee members who govern our Branch with diligence and good faith. Also, to all the tutors and other volunteers who provide so much time and skills and, to all our members whose loyalty keeps the whole organisation viable and worthwhile.