



AUSTRALIA

U3A AUSTRALIA BULLETIN No. 41

AUGUST 2024



COTA Queensland hosts debate on 'Age is no barrier'

This issue:

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From the Editor

Thanks to those who contributed to this issue. The variety of interests and priorities shown in the articles is so typical of the diversity within our organisations. It is always difficult to explain what a U3A actually is, as every one of them is different. Some meet once a week to hear guest speakers and others have myriads of different activities happening every day of the week. They are small, they are large, they are huge.

It sometimes seems that our only similarities are that we all want to make the most of our years of active retirement and we all need more volunteers. Even the curious fascination with mahjong and ukulele playing is not universal.

News from recent national meetings shows that the formation of a state network for Tasmania is well on track. We will be thrilled to welcome them to the U3A Australia national network. The remaining region without a network will be the Northern Territory. That could be fun as things are so spread out there and low key that one U3A was not aware of any other. Thanks to now having an online presence, we know of U3A Darwin and U3A Alice Springs but the rumoured U3A Katherine seems long gone.

U3A Online is announcing two new courses in this issue. They are challenging topics but U3A Online's future is their greatest challenge. Faced with a costly platform update to continue in their present format and falling membership, they are looking at alternative options. Of course, since COVID, online learning has become something most States have embraced to varying degrees, highlighted by our Online Activities think tank. The thought of melding them all onto one platform is very enticing.

No doubt U3A Australia president Glen Wall will have more to say on these and other topics in the future. No deadline for future issue as this is sadly my last. Thank you to everyone who has made the effort to contribute their best stories and photos over the years.



Claire Eglinton
U3A Lower North &
U3A South Australia

2024 Diary Dates

October 3-5: U3A Victoria Biennial State Conference, Storey Hall, RMIT University. Joint hosts: U3A Melbourne and U3A Network Victoria. Keynote speaker: Dr Norman Swan.

October 24-25: Western Australia's Biennial State Conference, Bunbury. Hosted by U3A Bunbury and U3A Network WA.

QUEENSLAND

Age is No Barrier was the topic of a recent debate presented by COTA Queensland at the Brisbane Exhibition & Convention Centre, Southbank, moderated by the Age Discrimination Commissioner Robert Fitzgerald. Thanks COTA for this review of the event.

We had an incredible time exploring the strengths and opportunities of ageing while addressing important barriers such as physical limitations, technological challenges, ageism, resistance to change, health concerns, and inter-generational conflict. The dynamic format, featuring two teams presenting diverse perspectives and engaging in lively debates, sparked thought-provoking discussions infused with humour, making for an unforgettable event.

Whilst the decision was that Age is a barrier and a win for the negative team, it is wonderful to know that we have dedicated advocates on the panel and in our community, working and volunteering to help ensure that age is not a barrier for older Australians.

We were honoured to have Robert Fitzgerald, the new Age Discrimination Commissioner, as our moderator. His expertise and passion for advocating for older Australian brought depth and insight to the conversation.”

[The role of Age Discrimination Commissioner is to address “barriers to equality and participation caused by age discrimination” and to ensure all Australians are protected from discrimination based on age in employment and education.

Commissioner Fitzgerald wealth of experience, includes having previously been NSW Ageing and Disability Commissioner, Aust. Productivity Commissioner, NSW Community and Disability Services Commissioner, and Deputy Ombudsman.]



Our fantastic panel included: Dr John Chesterman (public advocate), Noel Whittaker AM CTA (executive in residence and adj. professor, QUT Business School), Blair Martin (Queer Radio), Wayne Sticher (Cycling Without Age), Rhonda Weston AM (president U3A Network Queensland), Cintia Paolino (ECCQ’s multicultural partners manager), Dr Theresa Scott (snr lec. clinical geropsychology, UQ), Emeritus Professor Julie Byles (University of Newcastle).

The diverse expertise and engaging dialogue provided invaluable insights into ageing well and combating age discrimination. We hope everyone left feeling inspired and equipped to foster a more inclusive and supportive society for people of all ages.”

I was honoured to be invited to participate and represent U3A on the affirmative panel. A healthy dialogue highlighted valuable insights into ageing well and combating age discrimination and loneliness. Delivered with a mix of seriousness and humour this debate was a unique platform to bring these common issues to a wider audience.

Rhonda Weston AM

President, U3A Network Queensland Inc.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Strathalbyn is a picture-perfect town on the banks of the River Angas, 60km southeast of Adelaide, where the Adelaide Hills meet the Fleurieu Peninsula. This year it celebrated 185 years of European settlement, but more importantly 25 years of having its own U3A. In June U3A Strathalbyn president Colin Forbes welcomed 55 members and guests to their 25th anniversary celebrations. Secretary Jasmine Hunt provided some history from the archives.

A special occasion deserved a special speaker and Laine Anderson (*right*), gave a fascinating account of her book *Long Flight Home*, the story of the pioneering 1919 flight from England to Australia, by two of SA's favourite sons, Ross Smith (pilot), brother Keith (co-pilot/navigator), and two mechanics in the Vickers Vimy aircraft now housed at Adelaide Airport.



Presentations were made to founding members Jill Bishop (*left*) and Marion Nefiodovas, and Pat Eglinton, Jen Binney and Judith Stephens in recognition of their 20+ years of leadership. Others were acknowledged for their contribution as group leaders and committee members.

A history and highlights slideshow screened before catching up and reminiscing over afternoon tea.

U3A Strathalbyn's membership of 105 enjoy a program of 14 activities including Petanque, Social Art, Italian, Walkaerobics and Philosophy in a Climate of Change. Throughout June, the display windows at Strathalbyn Library showcased what U3A offers the local community.

Claire Eglinton
Secretary,
U3A South Australia



NEW SOUTH WALES

FUN WITH PORTRAITS

Art is in the eye of the beholder but I think we need to appreciate that art is in the hands of the creator so that we, the beholder, can marvel at the creations. Plus, who thought we could have fun and laughs while suffering the challenges and doubts of creation.

The Portraits with a Laugh class at U3A Milton Ulladulla Campus has proven to be not just the agony of trying to produce a portrait but great fun with tutor Glenn Kilby who describes the head as a potato, the eyes as almonds, the chin as an avocado and the tip of the nose as a macadamia nut. Glenn assesses our efforts and adds his special touches that demonstrate to us the importance of being an artist not just making a copy. His touches convert the face we are reproducing into something unique and different: we get the picture and learn to include these techniques.



Right: Tutor Glen Kilby describing our next challenge.

We started with pencil 7B, progressed onto charcoal, adding smudges with our fingers, very messy, then experimented with creating a black background with a soft pencil and using the rubber to reveal the face.



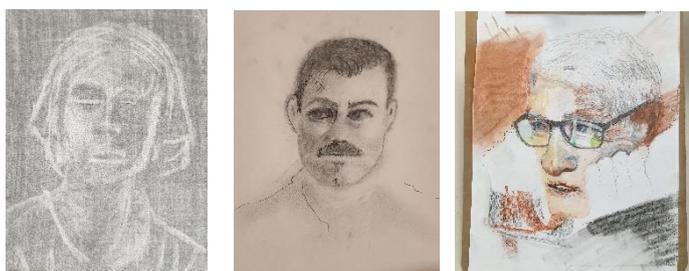
The first sheet of paper used for our first portrait was black with a swash of white paint for the background of the face. Such a challenge.

In a later lesson Glenn gave us a sheet of red paper and using white chalk we drew the face, adding charcoal for emphasis and wowing us with the end result.



The last effort was using biro first for the outline, then whatever else we thought helped, and of course, Glenn in his usual way added his touch, this time, introducing splotches of water colour. What a difference a little colour makes.

U3A is full of wonderful courses that challenge us and can help us learn a new skill. Try Art, you may surprise yourself.



CHANGING OF THE GUARD IN NSW

A record number of delegates attended the Zoom AGM for U3A Network NSW on 20 June: a total of 36 U3A members made up of 22 voting delegates and 14 non voting participants.

Charles Walker, president of Kiama U3A, took the chair as the returning officer and declared all committee positions vacant.

There was only one nomination for each Regional Representative position so the following were declared.:

Roger Curran – Far North Coast

Jean Lewis – Central Coast/Hunter

Doug Barber – New England and North West

Laurene Mulcahy – South Coast

David Davis – Metropolitan

Alexander Gosman – Southern Highlands and Monaro

Geoff Johnson – Mid North Coast

Vacant – Riverina; Central and Far West

(Since then Denis Simond has filled the casual vacancy of Riverina and he is also the NSW representative on the board of U3A Australia Ltd.)

A new committee consisting of the nine regional representatives was elected with David Davis taking on the role of acting president and Jean Lewis as secretary. Pauline Ward, is co-opted as treasurer. (Regional representatives usually fill the positions of president, secretary and treasurer but the 2024 constitution allows for a U3A member to be co-opted.) They are still seeking a regional representative for the Central Far West encompassing Bathurst, Orange, Dubbo.

Laurene Mulcahy
NSW Network



*I want AI to do my laundry and dishes so that
I can do art and writing,
not for AI to do my art and writing so that
I can do my laundry and dishes.*

Author Joanna Maciejewska on Artificial Intelligence

VICTORIA

Celebrating Science Week

Australia's annual Science Week – this year 10-18 August – has become a focus for many U3As, both for creating special events for members and for promoting the U3A movement as a source of informal and fun science learning.

The state body in Victoria promoted Science Week with a number of online lectures available through its website. Those accessing the website for the first time will see a pop-up leading to the Online Activities page with a selection of science lectures.

The offering covers a range of topics from the molecular level to cute and cuddly and then right through to the massive and definitely non-cuddly with AUKUS submarines. Science Week may be finished but the links are still on the website so check them out.



FOR EXISTING U3A MEMBERS,
INTERESTING SPEAKERS, SCIENCE,
FOR EVERYONE, MEMBERS OF
OTHER U3As. OPEN FOR EVERYONE

Science Week 2024 -
Ecology by Professor
Euan Ritchie



Polymers
with
Joaquin Martinez and Shaz Sivanesan

FOR EVERYONE, FOR EXISTING U3A
MEMBERS, INTERESTING
SPEAKERS, MEMBERS OF OTHER
U3As

Science Week 2024 -
What is a polymer?



SCIENCE, OPEN FOR EVERYONE

Science Week 2024 -
AUKUS, Implications
and Possibilities!



SCIENCE, OPEN FOR EVERYONE

Science Week 2024 -
From Flower to Honey
Pot

Online Science Week offerings on the Network Victoria website

U3A Network Victoria has also used social media advertising to alert the general cohort of older folk to the science lecture series. The demographic specification for ads appearing in Facebook and Google was women and men over 50 years old throughout the state of Victoria. The purpose of the campaign is to widen general knowledge of the U3A movement among seniors and to alert seniors to U3As near them.

When the campaign is over, the Network Victoria marketing team will analyse results to see how effective the campaign has been in alerting seniors to U3A and to hone its own marketing skills for future work.

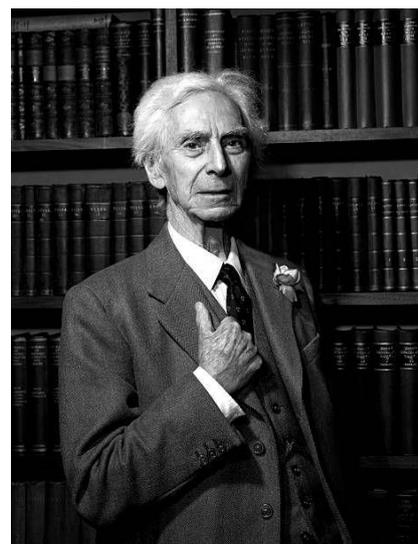
Susan Webster
Vice President
U3A Network Victoria



U3A ONLINE

We have a new short course available called Recent Philosophers. This is a one-unit course which takes a brief look at more recent philosophers, some from the 19th and 20th centuries to those philosophers we see on our television screens, and in newspapers and discussion groups today. The course examines their thoughts about the moral and ethical issues which we face today: climate change, euthanasia, fake news, human nature, treatment of animals, treatment of our fellow humans and war.

This unit could be for a one-off session or form the basis for a longer course.



Noam Chomsky and (R) Bertrand Russell

We have another new course almost ready, Introduction to the Sun, which studies the sun from its formation to its ultimate fate some several billions years in the future, and its current stage of evolution. So keep a lookout for that being available shortly.

To find out more go to the U3A Online website: <https://www.u3aonline.org.au/>

Thank you to those U3A officers who have sent in new contact details for our website's 'Find a U3A' directory of Australian and New Zealand U3As. We can't update them if you don't send them into us. Contact us at: enquiries@u3aonline.org.au

Jean Walker
President
U3A Online



“The hardest thing to learn in life is which bridge to cross and which to burn.”

— Bertrand Russell