

U3A Melbourne City

A history of the first U3A in Australia

Diane Carole Roy and friends





U3A Melbourne City

A history of the first U3A in Australia

Diane Carole Roy and friends

© 2023 U3A Melbourne City Inc.

Level 5, 168 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, VIC, 3000 | u3amelbcity.org.au

Phone: (03) 9639 5209 | Email: office@u3amelbcity.org.au

This publication is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence (CC BY 4.0). You may copy, distribute and adapt the material but you must provide credit to U3A Melbourne City Inc. and Diane Roy as the creators.

Contents

Foreword	v
1. Introduction: Who we are	1
Lineage from Toulouse to Melbourne City.....	1
U3A Melbourne City is founded	2
U3A Network Victoria	3
Growing pains.....	4
2. Accommodation: An ever-present challenge	7
Under the auspices of the Council for Adult Education	9
Ross House to the rescue	9
Under the auspices of RMIT University	10
Return to Ross House and amalgamation with the Adult Education Association	11
The Greek Cultural Centre adopts U3A Melbourne City	12
3. Volunteer recruitment, office administration and IT	14
Profile of a volunteer	14
The development of volunteer engagement and support.....	15
Managing the office.....	16
Information technology.....	19
4. Course coordination and tutor recruitment	21
Course coordinators from 1985 to the present	21
Tutor recruitment	23
The 'language' U3A.....	25
Computer courses	26
Writing groups	27
U3A Orchestra	28
U3A Choir	28
Summer courses.....	29
5. Activities and events	31
Special events	31
Anniversaries	33
Let's Do activities	34

International connections	36
Forums and webinars	36
The Florey Institute	37
6. Communication and budget management	39
The public face of U3A MC	39
Participation in research.....	41
The newsletter and ebulletins	42
Budget management	43
7. The Life Membership program	47
John Besley (2009).....	47
Will Semler (2011)	48
George Boag (2012).....	49
Juliette Zeelander (2013)	49
Betty Caldwell (2015)	50
Helena Ling (2016).....	51
Jill Thompson (2016)	51
Tony Miles (2020)	52
Margaret Rees (2020)	53
8. Acknowledgements	54
Appendices	59
Appendix A	60
U3A Melbourne City Presidents, 1988 to 2022	60
Appendix B	61
Submission to Melbourne City Council, May 2021	61
Appendix C	66
U3A Melbourne City courses 1986.....	66
Appendix D	67
Handbook for office volunteers.....	67
Appendix E	68
Federation Square Flyer 2015	68
Appendix G	72
U3A Melbourne City Life Members (to 2022).....	72

Foreword

My role in the creation of this story of the birth and growth of U3A Melbourne City began at the end of 2021 when Sandy Jenkins, a fellow puzzler in the Cryptic Crossword class, asked whether I would be interested in working on something she called ‘the history project’. Sandy was also a member of the volunteer recruitment working party; someone had noted my entry of ‘editor’ and ‘languages’ as skills on my enrolment form when I joined U3A Melbourne City in December 2019. I was spotted. I had moved back to Melbourne after decades living and working as a teacher of academic writing in Europe, researching, writing, and teaching ethnomusicology at ANU in Canberra, then editing doctoral theses in Lismore, New South Wales, where I had first joined U3A in 2013. Some of these circumstances must have indicated me as a likely candidate for resurrecting the history project, first attempted in 2010. I agreed to give it a try, little realising what a rocky, yet interesting path lay ahead.

From the History Project brief submitted to the Committee of Management (CoM) in 2010 provided to me by Secretary Jane Tulloch, I learned two important things. First, there was disparity between versions of what a history project might consist of. Some participants on the team, in later notes, had referred to ‘the archive project’ as synonymous with ‘the history project’. This underlined the importance for me of matching a target audience with the skills that I could realistically offer as a researcher and storyteller, never an archivist. The second thing I noted in the brief was the fact that the archive of the State Library of Victoria (SLV) held important items concerning U3A Melbourne City. Reasoning that the SLV would be closed for fewer days over the Christmas and New Year break than the U3A Melbourne City office in Lonsdale Street, I resolved to begin my search at the SLV. By the time our office opened in the new year, I had managed to trawl through all U3A-related holdings in the SLV archive, relishing the silence, that glorious building, and the fascinating picture of this organisation whose story I had undertaken to tell, emerging beneath my eyes.

Like a blindfolded person in a room with an elephant, I had only managed to find the contours of one leg. After obtaining access to our own online and hard copy archives in the new year, I identified two more rich sources of data. The first was the memories and observations of people, which I already knew would be central to the history. To my mind, a volunteer organisation was always going to be the story of people, their identities and aspirations. The early focus on interviewing Life Members who remain with us and who were willing to be interviewed grew from that conviction. The second treasure trove was the collection of newsletters at various sites. The first tranche was in hard copy filed in our office, beginning with the first newsletter sent out in 1984 by ‘Your Steering Committee’, even before the first courses were launched in 1985. They are preserved thanks to the archiving efforts of a team headed up by Helena Ling in the day. Electronic versions from 2011 could be perused online thanks to Lan Wang, who had set up automatic filing at the National Library of Australia, accessible via Trove, a process that is ongoing. On file in either form, there were four to five issues issued per year from 1985 to 2019, plus extra news ebulletins to the present. I have scanned every one. This activity enabled me to put into the narrative chronological details and other important facts and observations which otherwise might have sunk into oblivion. Some gaps had to be written up in ‘suitably vague’ language, some details may be inaccurate, and for this I apologise, but I have done my best to smooth over some gaps by consulting with people as far as possible.

A third source of help has been current members and office-holders. Several of them are specifically mentioned in the Acknowledgements, but the incumbents of each portfolio have also been generous with their time, advice and feedback. Each section in this story has been finished off with the thoughts and observations of these volunteer office-bearers, to correct inaccuracies, to bring the narrative into the present and to look to the future. In almost every case, when I have sent the results of my efforts for ratification and feedback, thoughtful and enormously helpful advice has been given. In the event of an individual being indisposed or unable to engage with this ongoing editing process, I have been able to fall back on the excellent profiles of key volunteers written by Marilyn Harris and notes from the presidents in the newsletters.

I submit this account with the best intentions. In the main, it has been a satisfying and enjoyable process, just getting on with it step by step, groping through the sand-storm to find the shape of the entire elephant, meeting some fantastic people along the way. I hope the reader will be as surprised and impressed as I have been at the amazing organisation that has arisen out of the skills and hopes of the volunteers chronicled here. It is they who have given so much to the lives of countless members of the community of Greater Melbourne and beyond.

Di Roy

Chapter 1

Introduction: Who we are

This story of the first U3A (University of the Third Age) group to be established in Australia aims to portray who we are and how we came to be. Founded in 1985, U3A Melbourne City, referred to henceforth as U3A MC, is one of 104 Victorian U3As to date. It is estimated that there are over 240 U3As Australia-wide, with membership heading towards 100,000. The fastest growing adult education movement in Australia, U3A has attracted a great deal of community and academic interest as to its vitality and social value. It is hoped that this account of U3A MC's establishment and growth to the present will demonstrate its contribution, not only to the health and wellbeing of its members as they navigate the 'third age' of their lives after full or semi-retirement, but also to the community of Greater Melbourne.

As a member of U3A MC, you need never worry about feeling bored or lonely. In the words of the current president, Russell Huntington, 'As a new retiree, I found U3A provided me with a diverse and stimulating array of post-work opportunities – to learn, socialise, exercise and volunteer'.¹ Like other U3As around the world, U3A MC aims to create safe, welcoming communities where the over-50s can connect with each other to learn and teach, find stimulating retirement activities, learn new hobbies or develop old ones, make new friendships and, most importantly, enjoy life to the full. Members come from all over Greater Melbourne to a host of classes and activities held in locations in and around the CBD. U3A MC is proud to offer a dazzling array of courses and activities – something to suit every older, semi-retired person wanting to stay mentally, physically and socially active. A complete inventory of courses and activities offered at the time of writing can be found on the [U3A Melbourne City website](#).² If you want to keep your mind active, you can enrol in a language class, or an economics course, or in-depth analysis of current affairs. If you want to keep your body active, you may join walking, cycling, dance or yoga classes. Those who love the arts can participate in gallery and exhibition visits, drawing and painting classes, and art appreciation courses, or meet once a month to watch opera on screen from the New York Metropolitan Opera.³ From March 2020, classes were held on Zoom because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but face-to-face classes and indoor activities recommenced on 7 March 2022. Outdoor activities were able to recommence earlier, in February. At the time of writing, courses and activities had returned to their pre-pandemic methods of delivery.

Lineage from Toulouse to Melbourne City

Even U3A members are often surprised to know that the movement began in 1973 in France at the University of Toulouse. Initially called l'Université du Troisième Âge de Toulouse, the first U3A was established by Pierre Vellas, professor in the Faculty of Social Sciences. Vellas had run a summer school for seniors in 1972, encouraged in part by legislation in France in 1968 requiring universities to provide more educational services to the community. The enthusiasm of the 100 or so participants was the impetus for the installation of a year-long course to follow, consisting mainly of gerontological subjects in the first year, later expanded to include subjects from the humanities and

arts.⁴ Henceforth, the movement was known as the University of the Third Age, or UTA. By 1975, the UTA movement had spread to other French universities, to Belgium, Switzerland, Poland, Italy, Spain and across the Atlantic to North America, Sherbrooke in Quebec and San Diego in California.⁵ Meanwhile, at home in France, other kinds of UTAs sprang up, for housewives, retirees, and people with disabilities, but the French model has persisted in Europe to the present day, with most UTAs/U3As – the terms have become interchangeable in the European context – remaining attached to the local university.

By 1981–82, the movement had migrated to the United Kingdom, thanks to Dr Peter Laslett at Cambridge University. Assisted by Eric Midwinter and Michael Young, he forged a new model, one which would be adopted in Australia, and eventually by other Commonwealth countries, including New Zealand, South Africa, Cyprus and others. The British model meant independence from a university, with volunteer teachers rather than university professors, and an egalitarian learning model rather than a top-down, university-style transmission of knowledge. Tutors and students would be interchangeable, and while still affiliated with the U3A movement overall, each U3A would be autonomous, self-organising and self-funded, run by volunteers. While the term ‘university’ was retained in the name of the movement, it was used ‘in the original and mediaeval sense of an association of teachers and scholars united in the pursuit of knowledge.’⁶ This arguably more organic model was adopted from the beginning in Australia, including by what was to become U3A MC. A report in the first issue of the official newsletter in July 1985, *U3A City: Campus News*, proudly states that at the first tutors’ luncheon, it was announced that 90 per cent of the tutors were students in someone else’s class.

U3A Melbourne City is founded

A key figure in the transmigration of U3A from the United Kingdom to Melbourne was Dr Jack McDonnell, Director of Continuing Education at Monash University. He had travelled to France, then to Cambridge, to meet with the movement’s founders. Upon his return, he met with Jill Thompson (Executive Officer of the Adult Education Association [AEA]/Council of Education), and Anne Whyte (Community Education Officer, Hawthorn) over coffee to discuss what he had learned of the movement abroad, and whether Australia was ready to accept the idea of U3A. To that end, these three and Cliff Picton (Director, Australian Council for the Ageing) held a public meeting at the Conference Centre of the Council for Adult Education (CAE) on 26 July 1984 to gauge interest in establishing the movement in Melbourne. They



From left: John Landy AC, MBE, Governor of Victoria, with the four people responsible for the founding of U3A in Victoria – Dr Jack McDonnell AM, Dr Cliff Picton, Jill Thompson and Ann Whyte. Courtesy U3A Network Victoria. Photographer unknown.

are shown in the photograph celebrating U3A's 20th year in Victoria with the Governor of Victoria, John Landy AC MBE.

In the same year, a national survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics had ascertained that 13.6 per cent of adults were already participating in programs and courses for adults,⁷ suggesting a wide interest in adult education in the community. Given these conditions, it must not have come as a surprise that the interest in establishing a U3A in Melbourne from the 100-odd people in attendance was overwhelming, and so an interim steering committee was formed to take plans further. The steering committee commented in a newsletter circulated in November 1984 as follows: 'The aim is to be ready with the first pilot courses in March 1985. How many of these will run will depend on the flood(!) of enquiries from our potential members and our capacity to organise and publicise well.'

By 1985, three groups were formed in quick succession. The so-called City of Melbourne campus servicing Greater Melbourne was the first in 1985, and Jill Thompson was seconded for six months by the Adult Education Association to establish it. This was soon followed by Monash – later to become U3A Waverley – and U3A Hawthorn. In its first full year of operation, U3A Melbourne City had successfully fielded 43 complete courses, and by 3 July 1986 had become incorporated, with Nan Wingfield as the first president. (See Appendix A for a list of presidents from incorporation to the present.)

The Autumn 1985 edition of *Looking Forward*, a publication of the non-profit organisation Early Planning for Retirement, reported that this initial trio of U3A groups had 'taken off like an Apollo spaceship'. The writer continues: 'Not for it any of your humble beginnings. Before it has barely taken its first breath, it has more than 600 members and 40 courses organised'. By July, as reported in the *Sun News-Pictorial*, the collective membership of these first groups had swelled to 1,100. Ken Bradshaw, a member of the steering committee for the City of Melbourne campus, can be forgiven a certain degree of hyperbole when he said, as reported in the article, that U3A had 'proliferated, exploded and mushroomed'. By November, three long columns appeared in the *Sun*, showing a youthful Jill Thomson with two members in class.⁸ Thanks to the media and word of mouth, by the end of the third year there were over 700 members in the U3A City of Melbourne campus.⁹ An article of about 450 words with a photograph of City of Melbourne students in a drama class appeared in *The Herald*. The journalist writes: 'Armed with books, computers and even screwdrivers they are taking on anything from Latin to car care'.¹⁰ The trend of reporting the diversity of subjects continued in an article in 1987, with the following: 'When Oscar Moeller, 67, retired from his job as a purchasing officer, little did he dream that a few months later he would be teaching European history and German'.¹¹

U3A Network Victoria

As stated in the application for incorporation, the purposes of U3A City of Melbourne were:

- (a) To assist with the provision of:
 - (i) the opportunity of the Third Age generation to make a creative use of their leisure time through participation in programmes – mental and/or physical – with a mutuality of teaching and learning;

- (ii) facilities as may be available for all or any of the individuals of the Third Age group, irrespective of background, qualifications or financial circumstances, for the employment of their knowledge and/or intellectual horizons.
- (b) To:
- (i) promote the concept and adoption of Third Age learning as actively and widely as possible;
 - (ii) provide advice, guidance, leadership and practical help as and when required by any autonomous or associated organisation;
 - (iii) seek links with any other inter-State or intra-State or overseas U3A bodies or movements and provide co-operation in any possible way.

These latter purposes – concerning promotion, outreach and connection with other U3As in Australia and abroad – justified U3A MC’s participation in forming a Victorian network of U3As to achieve those ends.

In October 1986, representatives of the eleven existing U3As in Melbourne met to review their first two years of operation. Their aim was to propose a body to provide an information hub, and to act as a link between U3A groups. A constitution for the group, to be known as U3A Network Victoria, was approved on 30 March 1988.¹² Among the items on the constitution were the guarantee of autonomy for individual groups, the possibility of representing any individual group to the public or to other groups or organisations, and the necessity for an executive committee. On the first executive committee were two U3A MC members: Tom Timpson (Secretary) and Shirley Harrison (Assistant Secretary). This committee also eventually decided to drop the word ‘campus’ to describe any U3A group, in order to clarify the movement’s independence from an established university, and to underscore its relevance to the community at large, not just to people with an academic background or interest.

U3A City of Melbourne and U3A Network Victoria briefly parted company in the late 1980s over disagreements on several issues, one of which, as suggested by anecdotal reports, concerned allocation of funds. But by 1999, these concerns had become irrelevant, and the decision to rejoin the network was unanimously agreed upon after discussions by President John Besley and Vice-President Don Graves with the network’s officials. The brief to represent U3A matters to government, and the ability to foster the establishment of new U3As across Victoria were the main reasons why rejoining was considered to be the right and timely move, which was officially ratified in 2000.

Growing pains

During the early years, members of U3A MC were central in carving out what U3As would become in Victoria, not only in Melbourne. The basic principles adopted in the British model, expressed as ‘purposes’ in the application for incorporation in 1986 (reproduced above), were further debated at many levels, including at biennial conferences, the first of which was held at Monash University in February in the same year. Guest speakers at this first conference were HE Dr Davis McCaughey, shortly to be appointed Governor of Victoria, and Dr Eena Job, sociologist, author of TV documentaries and plays, and Secretary of the Queensland Division of the Australia Association of

Gerontology at the time. The one-day conference itself, entitled ‘Learning is Living’, consisted of 20 workshops with an eclectic mix of topics, including four directly concerned with physical and mental health for third agers, and the rest covering modern art, local history recording, travel photography and other activity-related topics. The program looks like a showcase of possibilities for courses, a taste of what to expect from U3A membership for newcomers to the idea.

But the elaboration of the identity-forging and self-promotion struggles in these early years for U3A MC and the groups that followed is evident in a souvenir booklet supplied to delegates.¹³ In a short article, ‘The Wider Significance of the University of the Third Age’, the authors convincingly argue for the value – not only for members, but for the community at large – of the U3A approach to meeting the demands of increasing numbers of third-agers wanting to keep learning, stay connected and contribute to the community. The educative bent is also the focus of the second article in the booklet, ‘Why Educate Older People?’. Here the authors subtitled their comments thus: ‘A philosophical exploration of the need to educate people who are traditionally expected to retire and do nothing’. But the first social sub-committee had also already been established, although Nan Wingfield, as Chair of the steering committee, took pains to explain: ‘While a social programme is important, and has been asked for by many members, it is seen by the committee as an ancillary activity to the main purpose of U3A – learning’.¹⁴ A more holistic understanding of the link between learning and social connection through common interests was to develop over the following decades through energetic debate, and the personalities and views of those that carried the organisation forward.

Echoes of the original four goals for the UTA movement proposed by Professor Vellas in Toulouse in 1973 can be heard in these deliberations in 1986 in Melbourne. In Toulouse, for example, Vellas had proposed four goals for the UTA movement:

- (a) raising the quality of life of older people;
- (b) realising a permanent educational programme for older people in close relations with other younger age groups;
- (c) co-ordinating gerontological research programmes; and
- (d) realising initial and permanent education programmes in gerontology.¹⁵

However, by the time of the second Australian conference in 1988, and those to follow in 1990 and 1992, only the first of Vellas’ four goals was supported unequivocally, as presaged by the addresses and debates that took place in the struggle to settle on the values and goals that would define the Australian movement. On the organising committee for the 1988 conference, held at Melbourne University on 22–23 August, was Don Graves, vice-president of U3A MC at the time. He also collated and edited the published proceedings.¹⁶ Main conference themes were the notion of learning for its own sake versus the economic value of education, and the value of purposeful learning and social connection for elderly community members. One member of the expert panel for the conference, Don Edgar, Director of the Institute of Family Studies, saw the promotion of adult education as not just addressing ‘social justice’, but as ‘a task that focuses on adults as active participants in the growth of a productive learning culture’.¹⁷ Another expert panel member, John Halfpenny, Secretary of the Trades Hall Council, declared that ‘our values towards education should bubble up from the bottom and not filter down from the top’.¹⁸ Dr Iain Wallace, Director of Swinburne Institute of Technology and TAFE, referred to U3A’s ‘loose links’ with orthodox

universities, underlining the difference between the European and British models, and further suggested that U3As become repositories of accumulated knowledge gained from their members.

At the 1990 conference, held at Deakin University on 10–12 July, the social value of U3A groups was emphasised, and it was noted by Jack McDonell that while the trend in Europe was to offer subjects on health, of the 243 subjects offered in 1990 by U3As in Australia by 1990, only two mentioned health and four mentioned nutrition. The first courses offered by U3A City of Melbourne had already bucked the trend. Among courses offered were Art Appreciation, Clear Thinking, Current Affairs, Australian and European History, Philosophy, Music/Opera, Literature, Languages, Genealogy, Social Sciences and Public Speaking (see Appendix C). As regards Vellas' aim to educate older people 'in close relation' to young people, this has not been pursued as a goal in general, although U3A MC's relationship with RMIT University, discussed in the next chapter, echoed the European model in some respects for a time, allowing for interaction between younger university students and U3A members. Nevertheless, connection with fellow elders is prized as the most important benefit of belonging to a U3A group, as surveys of members have shown.

Also debated at the 1990 conference was the issue of 'outreach', the philanthropic impulse. The upshot of discussions came down, in general, to accepting that U3A should not seek to duplicate existing community services. This is not to say that U3As, including the Melbourne City group, have not reached out into the community. At the 1992 conference held in Adelaide at Flinders University, 29 September to 1 October, at which the representatives of Victorian U3As outnumbered those from any other state, including the host state, outreach activity by U3A groups was still a central theme. Three sessions were led by Victorians: Alison Carlson gave an account of U3A Network Victoria's forum held at Senior Citizens Week, 'which was designed to discuss with representatives of various welfare organisations and local governments, the extent to which U3As might (and, importantly, might not) be able to offer "outreach" activities for people other than their own members.'¹⁹ Mary Longman gave an account of the establishment of a U3A at the Victorian Institute of the Blind, and Sheila Moore reported on Nunawading City U3A's involvement in a survey of the City of Nunawading aimed at assessing the 'quality of life' of residents over 70, because at the time the city was surpassing the national rate of growth of the ageing population. This aspect of the philanthropic impulse would not contravene U3A's aims, and would eventually grow into regular participation in research by a stunning variety of organisations, as described in Chapter 6.

While this chapter has given an account of the origins of the U3A movement in Europe, of its migration to Australia, and of the struggles encountered in establishing it in Melbourne, Chapter 2 focuses in more detail on the greatest challenge of all for U3A MC: accommodation. The ongoing search for secure, affordable and amenable accommodation could be said to have defined its character to a great extent, as obstacles and problems have been faced and overcome. Chapters 3 to 6 describe the development of operational areas where volunteers work to keep the organisation moving forward, and how challenges have been met. These include: administrative functions such as managing membership in the face of changing demographics and conditions; introducing and maintaining new technology; recruitment of tutors and course coordination; management of volunteers; organisation of events, activities, public forums and exhibitions; marketing and communications; and the fundraising and financial management that keeps the organisation afloat. Chapter 7 concludes the story with cameos of some of the truly amazing individuals who have served the inner-city community so well, by giving their energy and many talents to making U3A MC what it is today.

Chapter 2

Accommodation: An ever-present challenge

Chapter 2 focuses in more detail on U3A MC's constant search for secure, affordable and amenable accommodation. This ongoing quest could be said to have defined its character to a great extent, as obstacles and problems have been faced and at least partly overcome. Anecdotal reports from older members often sound a nostalgic note, back to the days when every newsletter, from the late 1980s until the move to RMIT in 2001, had issued an invitation like the following from *U3A City News*, February 1991:

U3A Open House 1991

Open House will commence on Tuesday, 12 February, 1991. Call in any time between noon and 3.00 p.m. We shall be in the Boardroom Annexe as usual. BYO lunch if you wish. Come in for a yarn after the long break. Best wishes. Leah Healey.

Not only does U3A MC lack a social hub in 2022, but its 1,100 members are obliged to attend classes across 13 venues across the CBD, South Yarra and Carlton, and 80 per cent of funds is spent on rental for venues, some of which are owned by the City of Melbourne Council (CMC).²⁰ The struggles of the U3A Committee of Management (CoM) to resolve problems and challenges over the decades are made more poignant by making brief mention of the fortunes of two other metropolitan U3As – Hawthorn and Port Phillip.

U3A Hawthorn shares with U3A MC its longevity; it was founded within a few weeks of U3A City of Melbourne. But there is a quite shocking dissimilarity. Under the patronage of the Vice-Chancellor of Swinburne University, U3A Hawthorn, with a membership of 1,400 in 2021, has its office at their so-called Sinclair Avenue Campus.²¹ This modern, pleasant venue, with ample parking and public transport close at hand, includes five classrooms and a hall seating 120 people. Other locations are used around the region for the large number of courses and activities offered by U3A Hawthorn, but Sinclair Avenue is the welcoming, multi-functional heart of the organisation.

Similarly, U3A Port Phillip, founded as recently as 2003, enjoys a permanent central hub in Albert Park, the Mary Kehoe Community Centre, provided by the Port Phillip City Council. It is a 'spacious Edwardian house', housing the main office, three classrooms and a hall, which are in constant use.²² While extra venues accommodate extra courses and activities, the Mary Kehoe Centre remains the home of U3A Port Phillip. Perusal of the photograph of the building on the cover of an online and hard copy publication in 2021, *The Story of U3A Port Phillip and its People 2003–2021*, explains why U3A Port Phillip is so proud of this building. As with the case of U3A Hawthorn's accommodation, it could be proposed that the donation of this venue implies a validation of the contribution made by U3A to the community, and the myriad volunteers who give their time, energy and skill to make it work.

Such validation and investment have not been accorded to U3A MC by the City of Melbourne Council. In May 2021, a submission to Council by current president Russell Huntington asked them to consider supporting U3A MC by providing accommodation. On behalf of the mentioned 1,100

members who remained enrolled despite the pandemic, and after pointing out the alignment of the CMC's strategic goals and those of U3A MC, he explained the needs and the proposed solution in the following excerpt from the report, which can be viewed in full in Appendix B:

Our Accommodation Needs

As advised, we conduct our classes in 13 different locations across the city. We have an office but no central location for members to meet socially. We appreciate that the City of Melbourne provides multiple bookable spaces that are low cost and of high quality. However, they are scattered between South Yarra and Carlton and access is restricted to a few hours per week.

We would be delighted if the City of Melbourne could provide U3A Melbourne City with the following facilities:

1. A dedicated Community Centre for Seniors within easy public transport that would include:
 - a. A 2-desk office area from which to provide face to face services to members who might number as many as 10 people at any one time. This could be shared any other senior groups besides U3A MC.
 - b. A meeting room or two to allow 10 people to meet.
 - c. An area that members could catch up with other members including hot water supply to allow making of tea/coffee facility
2. At least three classrooms able to accommodate up to 25 members in a class and which might be opened to create a space for large member get togethers.²³

In response, what can only be described as circular communication took place. In her replies in October and November 2012, Melbourne City's recently appointed Director of Community Development advised the president to explore the Council's Hubs and Bookable Spaces on the Council's website. Ironically, three of the venues on this list are already being used by U3A MC.²⁴ The only other avenues of enquiry suggested were Flinders Street station, whose spaces for hire are managed by VicTrack, a Victorian State body, and Melbourne Connect, a facility completed at Melbourne University in 2020 with whole floors and 'boutique offices' available for lease. The Munro community hub development next to the Victoria Market, still under construction, was also mentioned. Reading between the lines of the reasons given for not being able to come up with a solution for U3A MC's difficulties, it could be proposed that setting a precedent for providing accommodation to any community group is to be avoided at all costs. In the meantime, U3A MC, which aims to support the wellbeing of the City of Melbourne's 14,000 odd community members over the age of 60²⁵ by providing courses and activities, and organising social events, lacks a physical central hub where volunteers and members might feel at home, or a curious community member might feel free to drop in and ask questions.

The following sections take the reader back to the beginning of these accommodation dilemmas and struggles, which, sadly, have defined one aspect of U3A MC's uniqueness, from its establishment to the present.

Under the auspices of the Council for Adult Education

From foundation until the beginning of 2001, U3A MC flourished under the auspices of the Council for Adult Education in Flinders Street. At the same time, the Adult Education Association (AEA) was hosted by the CAE, and so was also competing at times for administrative staff, office space and facilities, and classrooms. On 26 May 1987, Don Graves, U3A MC's secretary at the time, made a submission to the Adult Education Review Panel, Policy Co-ordination Division of the Ministry of Education. It was a pitch for CAE to keep in mind the justification for continuing to support U3A MC, despite the limits on resources.²⁶ It mentioned three of the pillars of the U3A approach to adult learning: education 'for its own sake'; the diversity of members in terms of socio-economic status, educational achievement, and cultural background; and adherence to the principle of self-help, and self-determination, like those of the CAE. Membership had increased from 420 to 640 over the period 1985 to 1986, and the number of completed courses had grown from 43 to 92. The need to find alternative accommodation became more pressing. By 1999, with around 750 active members, and the number of course enrolments continuing to increase, Don Graves, now president, was constrained to announce in the February newsletter an apology for the deferral or cancellation of some courses, explaining that the CAE had increased the number of its own daytime classes, with accommodation for U3A 'drastically curtailed.'²⁷ The next president, John Besley, took pains to explain to members in 2000 that the CAE's need to remain financially viable meant that increasingly, a U3A room booking would be over-ridden in favour of a CAE class. Frustration and bad feeling were increasing among the membership, highlighting the necessity of renting extra rooms elsewhere.²⁸

Ross House to the rescue

Although U3A MC remained officially under the auspices of the CAE until the beginning of 2001, with administrative activities and some classes still hosted there, extra accommodation was found in 1991 at nearby Ross House in Flinders Lane. The five-storey building claims to be the only community owned and administered heritage building in Melbourne, and possibly Australia. The aims and objectives of the Ross House Association (RHA) include providing resources for small non-government organisations within the community if they are non-political, non-religious and non-profit. At the 1991 annual general meeting of the RHA, Yvonne Hopkins, a U3A MC member, was invited to stand for office, and was elected to RHA's Committee of Management shortly afterwards.²⁹ Three of U3A MC's classes were immediately installed at Ross House, to join more than 70 other organisations hosted there at the time, at a very modest rental. However, other venues around the CBD had to be used, such as Legacy House, which hosted Current Affairs and Painting, the Welsh Church Hall for dance classes, and the Collins Street Baptist church for choir practice. Even though U3A is not listed as a tenant in RHA's annual reports during the rest of the 1990s, the attachment of volunteers and members to Ross House deepened.

Under the auspices of RMIT University

Accommodating growth was mentioned by Jack McDonell as the most common difficulty experienced by U3A groups when he introduced the nine workshops to be run concurrently at the 1990 conference. The workshop entitled 'See How We Run' was devoted exclusively to this problem. Indeed, U3A MC's increase in membership and consequent demand for classrooms for an increased number of courses throughout the 1990s meant that the CAE could no longer operate as host to U3A MC. For example, in 1997, Don Graves commented that although 16 new tutors had volunteered that year, making up a cohort of 80 active tutors, some courses had to be postponed due to lack of accommodation.³⁰ By the end of the decade, it was evident that new accommodation arrangements had to be found. Ironically, given the adoption in Australia of the UK model for U3A groups, which championed their independence from orthodox universities, U3A negotiated a mutually beneficial relationship with RMIT University, which had achieved its university status in 1992. A memorandum of understanding was drawn up and signed in 2000, and the impending move was announced to the membership in a newsletter.³¹ The move was effected officially in 2001, although eight classes had already successfully migrated across from other venues since July the previous year.

Instrumental in negotiating this arrangement was the mentioned secretary at the time, Don Graves, whose service to U3A MC had also included filling the roles of president, vice-president, and course coordinator. He had instigated the Australian and World Events course in 1985, and continued to teach it until 2002, a year before he passed away. In the same year, he wrote, on behalf of U3A MC, an eloquent response to a call for public input to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Ageing, an inquiry held in anticipation of an ageing Australian population. On his passing, U3A MC donated a gift to his family to honour his formidable contributions. The family in turn passed on the donation to Knox Private Hospital, earmarked for textbooks for trainee doctors in ICU.³² At his funeral, President John Besley paid tribute to Don's facilitation of the negotiations between U3A MC and RMIT University, mentioning his integrity, attention to detail, and generosity in giving his time, effort and skill.³³ These were certainly characteristics that had paved the way for U3A to flourish for a time under the wing of RMIT.

For U3A MC, their accommodation problems were greatly eased. As well as having the use of rooms for classes, members could use the university's library and its internet connection. They could enrol in elective courses run by the university, and join the choir. The benefits for RMIT included being able to fulfil their brief for more community involvement, and for sharing in the goals of providing lifelong education and community support.³⁴ Professor Ruth Dunkin, vice-chancellor and president of RMIT University at the time, spoke at U3A MC's annual general meeting in November 2000. She expanded the notion, explaining that the university's mission was 'to contribute to economic, social and environmental improvement and sustainability by supporting innovation among organisations, individuals and communities.'³⁵ There was also the opportunity for collaboration on research and community projects.

Perhaps the greatest benefit for the university was the mentoring program 'Making Connections', where U3A members connected with Foundation Studies students from abroad to assist them making the transition to living in new surroundings, adjusting to Australian culture, and enriching their experience of university life. There were four intakes per year of these students, aged from 17 to 24 years, from China, Indonesia, Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Vietnam, United Kingdom, Singapore,

Malaysia, Thailand, India and Mauritius. Mentors from U3A MC received two 2.5-hour sessions by way of training.

The relationship between U3A MC and RMIT University was not to last indefinitely. In September 2005, U3A MC was notified that the memorandum of understanding which had defined the relationship would expire in June 2006. U3A's use of rooms for classes, and administrative space and staff would cease. U3A MC's president at the time, Barry Fenton, relayed the reasons to the membership thus: 'RMIT have cited demands on their facilities compounded by the difficulty of maintaining their ageing portfolio of buildings.'³⁶ While U3A MC members were still able to enrol in elective courses offered by the university and attend lectures, they were not able to assume a welcome at tutorials, which compounded the discord between the two organisations.³⁷ It was suggested that the CAE would provide auspice to U3A MC until it could re-establish itself elsewhere. However, RMIT University was still prepared to cater for the increasing interest of U3A members in computer studies, an arrangement that was to founder by the end of 2008.³⁸ At the same time, U3A's designated Electives Coordinator, Valerie Evans, stepped down from the ongoing struggle to maintain at least partial access to courses for U3A MC members, signalling the end of that aspect of the arrangement between U3A MC and RMIT University.³⁹

Return to Ross House and amalgamation with the Adult Education Association

From 2006 until 2017, U3A MC's administrative centre and some classes returned to Ross House, with the use of other venues around the CBD, including St John's Church, Southgate, the CAE in Flinders Street, Legacy House in Swanston Street, the Welsh Church Hall in Latrobe Street, and for the time being, Building 48 at RMIT. Via the next newsletter, the membership was invited to a 'Members All' coffee morning on the fourth floor of Ross House thus: 'This is a chance to meet each other as well as some committee members, tutors and volunteers and learn a little more about your U3A and what happens behind the scenes.'⁴⁰ Nevertheless, despite feeling at home at Ross House, U3A MC still had to face practical logistic matters contingent upon growth, such as recruiting and keeping administration staff and tutors. Under the previous presidency of John Besley, these challenges had been addressed in the Strategic Plan 2004–06, for which a SWOT analysis had been undertaken. A reduction in member numbers, together with over- and under-subscription of courses had been noted. As to the causes to be managed, it was ascertained that there had been a lack of succession planning, resistance to change, a low public profile, and a failure to manage natural attrition of membership and officers. The action list included the resolve to explore reasons for the class subscription problems, to establish better communication with tutors, to explore ways to raise the profile of U3A MC, and to explore the possibility of a computerised administration system.

The ongoing struggle to understand and manage these difficulties had not been done in isolation. Back in February 1997, a joint meeting of the Committees of Management of U3A MC and the AEA had already been held. After all, they had similar goals and similar problems with funding, space and facilities at Ross House. The AEA ran similar courses and activities to U3A. It had also been concerned since the late 1990s about a downturn in numbers, partly due to the frustrations of tutors and students with the difficulty of securing space to run courses, and the last-minute cancellations and consequent bad feeling. Both were having increasing difficulties with

accommodation, and running costs for both were getting out of hand. Negotiations finally came to fruition in March 2004, when the amalgamation of the AEA and U3A MC was effected. This brought in 110 new members to U3A MC, increasing the numbers to 800. The minutes of the AGM on 18 November 2004 also mention a public awareness campaign run by Pat Thomas as having contributed to an increased enrolment of new members. Jeanette Bosisto, course coordinator at the time, successfully recruited new tutors.⁴¹ By the end of 2007, with the exodus from RMIT University complete, the aims of U3A MC, as stated by Barry Fenton, were to increase funding, to grow the membership, to increase the rate of volunteering, to source new tutors, and to expand accommodation further.

The Greek Cultural Centre adopts U3A Melbourne City

By 2013, the U3A MC office had been moved from two small rooms in Ross House to a larger open plan area on another floor, a move aimed at better serving administrative staff and visitors alike. And yet, of necessity, this space still had to be shared at times with other groups or activities. Besides, the decision to search for alternative accommodation and facilities was accelerated by the prospect of demolition work to be undertaken in the course of building Melbourne's underground Metro Tunnel, which, it was feared, would make classes in Ross House difficult to run. The works seriously threatened the amenity of Ross House, which was by then 132 years old, and in need of repair itself. In 2015, Judith Goddard, a member of the Accommodation Working Group had already visited the Greek Cultural Centre (GCC) in Lonsdale Street, which had opened in the previous year. In further meetings with GCC's director, Jorge Menidis, his expression of willingness in working with U3A was noted. The centre was offering four rooms on the second floor, each accommodating 18–30 people, and with movable furniture, overhead projectors and electronic whiteboards.⁴²

While Committee of Management meetings began to be held at the GCC from January 2016, a strategy was developed for moving U3A MC's administrative centre and several classes from Ross House to the GCC, and for explaining it to the membership. U3A MC's volunteer office staff and members had come to regard Ross House as home, despite the mentioned shortcomings. It was central, and easily accessible for members via trains and trams, not to mention the vibrant atmosphere of Flinders Lane. Some volunteers and members, according to anecdotal reports, also enjoyed feeling that U3A was part of a community of not-for-profit organisations, and that U3A had a profile as part of the social fabric of the city. But the Committee of Management, with Pam Davies as president, undertook the difficult task of researching the practical and legal realities of the situation in which U3A might potentially find themselves being affected by demolition work associated with the proposed Metro Tunnel, and public liability issues possibly arising from it.

At a meeting of the Committee of Management in April 2017, it was decided to draft a strategy for the move, and to inform the volunteers and membership of the reasons for it.⁴³ On behalf of U3A MC, Vice-President Jen Holling met with the Melbourne Metro Rail Authority to establish the scope and timing of the construction work. Advice was sought from Justice Connect, a legal agency providing a pro bono service, concerning legal implications of remaining in Ross House once demolition work had begun. These deliberations led the Committee of Management, with Pam Davies at the helm, to vote unanimously in favour of the move to the GCC, which was effected on 8 September 2017.⁴⁴ In the September issue of *U3A City News*,⁴⁵ reasons for leaving Ross House were explained to the membership, and the benefits of being housed at the GCC were itemised. The

president's report in the *Annual Report 2017* restates the benefits of being housed in the GCC, not the least of which was security of tenure at least for the next three years.⁴⁶

While some classes are still accommodated at Ross House, U3A MC is now administered from its own designated, multifunctional office space on the fifth floor of the GCC. Several classes are held on other floors of the GCC, and at various locations around the CBD besides Ross House, including the City Library, Library at the Dock, Legacy House, the Multicultural Hub, the Community and Public Sector Union building, the Boyd Community Hub at Southbank, the Melbourne Men's Shed at Federation Square, and venues adjacent to the CBD, the Kathleen Syme Library and Community Hub in Carlton, and the Dance of Life Studio in Fitzroy. The only venue missing is a welcoming central hub which is more than a functional office, where the needs of volunteers and members to connect socially, to have a feeling of owning the organisation, and to feel valued by their governing City Council, could be met.

Chapter 3

Volunteer recruitment, office administration and IT

In order to get the first U3A in Melbourne City up and running in 1985, the fifteen members of the first steering committee distributed the necessary key roles among themselves: Vera and Lloyd Saltmarsh set up and coordinated office functions as the first office managers; Ken Bradshaw took on responsibility for course coordination and liaison with tutors, assisted by Shirley Leembrugen; Shirley Harrison edited and produced the *U3A City: Campus News*; and Bob Wright managed the budget. But development and refinement of U3A MC's operational areas over the decades through such measures as the *Strategic Plan for 2014–17*, overseen by Carolyne Cohn under the presidency of Max Worlond, has given rise to eight groups and committees of management links, which are itemised on U3A MC's organisational structure 2022 chart: Accommodation, Volunteer Recruitment, Course Coordination, Activities and Events, Administrative Management, Marketing and Communication, Funding and Development, and Technology. The first, Accommodation, warrants a chapter of its own (see Chapter 2). The chapters to follow give an account of the key functions of the remaining areas of operation, profiling key people and important milestones in the development of each. While any of them could be the starting point, the story begins with a portrayal of the portfolio of Volunteer Recruitment, including ways of engaging with volunteers, on the grounds that they are the bones, flesh and blood of the organisation.

Profile of a volunteer

While securing space has always been a challenge for U3A MC, the difficulty of finding members willing to volunteer in various roles has waxed and waned. The first newsletter of 1985 declared that 'from our 252 registrants, 42 (after 6 months) have given assistance in the office and many are continuing to do so, and an additional 40 have given help in other ways, primarily by acting as tutors to a class'.⁴⁷ Besides tutoring, however, 'help in other ways' now includes functions such as office work, promotion, class support, choir and music ensemble direction, fundraising, accounting, archival work, and information technology. At least one such volunteer has been profiled in the five newsletters per year since foundation by a dedicated profiles reporter, currently Marilyn Harris.

The experience of John Ogilvie exemplifies both one typical method of recruitment, and the multifaceted service provided by U3A MC members over the decades. Having ticked the 'willingness to volunteer' box on his enrolment form in 2017, John was asked by Fran Sciaretta, volunteer recruitment officer at the time, if his hearing was good. His assurance that, although his 'knees were shot', his hearing was excellent, guaranteed his success as a volunteer in the office, taking inquiries and enrolments over the phone, an important function he fulfilled from home during the COVID pandemic, and now carries out in the office one day per week. During the pandemic, it must be mentioned that John assisted Julie Nankervis and Fran Sciaretta in calling older members to check how they were managing. Having worked with IBM for most of his professional life, John has also

applied his IT skills to various accounting functions, assisting Paul O'Brien to process PayPal payments and arrears, and assisting Dawn Gibson, another long-serving office volunteer, to upload courses onto the online spreadsheet each term so that members can manage their enrolments. He also manages the office volunteer roster. Currently, John is representative of around 20 such volunteers fulfilling these functions, along with others discussed later in this chapter, in the 'Managing the Office' section.

The development of volunteer engagement and support

While tribute has been duly paid to the contribution of volunteers in newsletters, recruitment and management of volunteers did not appear as a specific operational area in the management structure of U3A MC until the 2009–10 presidency of Jill Thompson, when it first appeared in the annual report as 'Volunteering Working Party'. Tutors were naturally included in the volunteer category from the outset, but the responsibility for ongoing support and management of tutors eventually migrated over to the course coordination area of operations, discussed in the next chapter, as their experience and initiative largely determines the courses that are offered. Here, however, the focus is on the activities shouldered by all other volunteers, without whom the organisation could not function. One typical call for office volunteers in the September 2000 newsletter begins with 'HELP PLEASE! Office staff needed', pointing out to the membership that 'your volunteer day at the office is a vital part of keeping your organisation afloat'.⁴⁸

Lan Ping Yeh and Fran Sciaretta have both made considerable contributions to the development of the volunteer management portfolio. Fran started volunteering in the office in 2008, and in 2010 took on the role of volunteer coordinator, vetting all volunteer offers received and referring them to appropriate team leaders for interview. She also took on the role of organising the office roster. Her role involved recruiting and training office volunteers, and keeping them abreast of all matters relevant to their jobs through regular communiques. More importantly, she developed a cohesive and supportive team through regular volunteer meetings and social events. It is a testament to her organisational and people skills that the office has never had to close due to lack of volunteers, to the extent that Fran herself would step in when no-one else was available. From 2011 to 2013, while a member of the management committee and convenor of the Volunteering Working Party along with Helena Ling, Fran devoted herself to developing and implementing strategies for the recruitment, retention and recognition of volunteers, and the re-vamping of the annual volunteers' celebration. Other ways in which to recognise and reward the contributions of volunteers are enshrined in one of several documents compiled by the Volunteer Working Party in 2011, and conscientiously archived by Lan Ping Yeh.⁴⁹ Fran also was involved, along with Helena, in producing *Working in the Office: A Handbook for Office Volunteers*, published in January 2016 (see Appendix D for a list of topics covered).

The materialisation of a targeted policy regarding the management of volunteers, signified by the naming of it as an operational area, was accelerated by the appointment of Carolyne Cohn as secretary of U3A MC in 2011. In this role Carolyne gained a broad understanding of the organisation and was able to apply her insight and expertise to undertaking the management of the Volunteering Working Party three years later. She built on what had evolved through the efforts of

such active volunteers as Jeanette Bosisto and Fran Sciaretta to take steps to formalising it as a portfolio of responsibility. Carlyne articulated the importance of understanding the motivations of volunteers, of making sure that the role to be taken up is clearly defined, of being flexible if the role is the 'wrong fit', and of being patient, recognising that fulfilling a particular role is often a learning curve for the volunteer. She still affirms, at the time of writing, the importance of having the volunteer understand the whole organisation, and how their role relates to it.

Jane Tulloch, current secretary for the Committee of Management and convenor of the Volunteer Recruitment portfolio, has re-invigorated the brief. When Jane took it over soon after joining the Committee of Management as secretary in 2019, she made the following important observation: while volunteers themselves were responsible people, the line of communication from the various working parties reporting back to the Committee of Management had atrophied, leaving some groups without a clear voice. Jane has put in place a systematic procedure for various volunteer working groups to report to the committee, with the aim in mind to clarify responsibilities and accountability. Part of this procedure entails having regular meetings with volunteers to ensure clear communication.

One ongoing challenge, however, concerns the recruitment procedure itself. While the two major sources of prospective volunteers are the database of members and a word-of-mouth approach based on noticing the potential skills of one member by another, the fact remains that ticking boxes alone, despite a well-developed volunteer application form, can never provide enough information, particularly about motivations, and longevity of commitment. In this sense, finding the right volunteers for roles as both office helpers and tutors remains the main challenge.

Managing the office

As suggested above, the 20 or so office volunteers, such as John Ogilvie, who work tirelessly in the space between management, the membership and the general public, need to have a wide array of skills. They also need to be trained, and be prepared to train new volunteers. Whether face-to-face or during the COVID pandemic, when the office was administered remotely, office volunteers have needed to cover the following areas:⁵⁰

- membership data – new and renewing members
- class enrolments – year-long classes, short courses each term, webinars/forums, Let's Do groups and special events
- payments – memberships, events, donations
- ad-hoc room bookings and cancellations
- financials – PayPal processing, daily takings reconciliation, banking, arrears management
- data creation and management of all course details in the MyU3A database
- dissemination of Zoom class links to participants
- waitlist management for classes
- class attendance tracking and withdrawal of members absent without apology
- assistance to tutors and class assistants

- answering queries from potential members, members, tutors and venues about a vast range of issues to do with U3A Melbourne City.

In the words of the current manager of the Office Administration portfolio Kai Simpson, also a member of the Committee of Management:⁵¹

Admin is the engine-room for U3AMC. Without us there would be no management of memberships, no central administration of class enrolments, no assistance to members, etc., etc. It is a function that is absolutely crucial for the operation and viability of the organisation, but is one that is typically hidden in the background and often ignored.

Overseeing the allotment of these roles to volunteers according to their skills, preferences and willingness to learn is a crucial part of Kai's responsibility. The role requires fortitude, and a high degree of entrepreneurial, leadership and organisational skill, attributes that she inherited from her Estonian immigrant parents. Kai studied mathematics at the University of Melbourne in the 1960s. There she was first exposed to computers, which were to become so important in her professional life. By the time Kai retired and joined U3A, she had become 'a business systems analyst in computing needs',⁵² perfectly suited to keeping U3A MC's administrative practices and procedures up-to-date and running efficiently.

After enrolling in U3A MC in 2014, Kai joined the team consisting of Helena Ling, Fran Sciarretta, Dawn Gibson and Paul O'Brien. Helena had approached Paul to assist with some IT tasks in 2013, less than a week after he joined U3A MC. Like most volunteers, he had ticked the box on his enrolment form, and had indicated that his career had been in IT. Later that year, Fran invited Paul to become an office volunteer, a role he has fulfilled from 2014 to the present. This team managed the administration of all office functions until 2019, including incorporating new technology as it became available.

One of Kai's most significant contributions was to lead the MyU3A Project Team in developing and implementing the MyU3A portal in 2015. Initially the team consisted of Fran, Helena and Paul, with some involvement by Lan Ping Yeh. By April 2015, Helena had invited Kai to head up the team.⁵³ MyU3A replaced paper-based methods and Canopus, the existing Microsoft Access database system, which was limited to use in the office by one or two people at a time. Canopus offered no self-service capability. Consequently all member contact and activity had to go through the office, either by post, email, phone or in person, including all payments, and all enrolments. The implementation of MyU3A introduced new technology to the whole organisation, not just office administration. It revolutionised the administrative procedures concerned with managing enrolments and communicating vital information to the membership.

Helena Ling was also central to the newsletter team, so it was not surprising that first mention of the coming launch of MyU3A to the general membership was made by her in the September newsletter. In November, the following formal announcement appeared:⁵⁴

We have an exciting new development for U3A Melbourne City – the introduction of a new online membership and enrolment database – which will mean no more forms! You can read more about this in the last two pages of the newsletter.

Helena Ling, Newsletter Team

Volunteers would be able to manage their 2016 memberships and enrolments online from 12 November 2015, and full members could log on for the first time on 26 November 2015. In another bulletin later in the month, Kai, by now the team leader, encouraged members to embrace the new technology:⁵⁵

We recommend that you use the [MyU3A Online Member Portal](#) to select your classes, instead of coming in or trying to ring the office, particularly on Thursday. It is **QUICK AND EASY** and you will have immediate feedback as to the status of your enrolment.

The link was supplied, then a set of clear step-by-step instructions were spelled out for members, many of whom would be unfamiliar with such online procedures at that time.

In the early stages of installation, Kai had been helped in the enormous task of converting and loading the Canopus data onto the MyU3A database by Ken Steele from Geelong U3A, where MyU3A had been developed. Kai, however, wrote virtually all of the U3A MC specific documentation, including training materials, herself, and was responsible for organising the training of volunteers in its use. Kai is acknowledged by fellow team members as the ‘driving force’ behind the entire MyU3A project.⁵⁶ Her responsibility for ongoing training for not just members, but also tutors, course coordinators, volunteer coordinators and finance officers, to name only some, continues to the present.

Of course, office administration and information technology have been integrated only since the advent of computers. For the decade that followed foundation in 1985, the burden of office administration – analogue fashion – was largely shouldered by U3A MC’s first president, Nan Wingfield, among other tasks. In an interview conducted by Jeanette Bosisto in 2012, she describes Nan Wingfield’s running of the office in the early years as being ‘like a military exercise’. She explains Nan’s efficient system for allocating members to courses using a team of office volunteers, with plastic bags hung over the backs of chairs and a series of stickers. Jeanette’s interview goes on to mention the introduction of the first computer spreadsheet for managing membership administration by Vera Saltmarsh, the first designated office manager, along with her husband Lloyd. This new system was run concurrently with the old card system, kept as a fallback for those who were more comfortable with the latter. Jeanette Bosisto herself, as well as taking over course coordination after the death of Don Graves, volunteered in the office from 2002, soon after joining U3A MC.

After Nan Wingfield stepped down in 2007, having covered the brief through the moves from Ross House to RMIT and back again, office management was taken on by Ailsa Miles, Anne Riddell and Eva Meredith, who was also a member of the Ross House Association’s committee of management. Eva had already served on the U3A MC Committee of Management for a total of eight years, including filling the roles of treasurer and vice-president, since joining in 1988, but her more specialised contribution involved the RHA. Having served on several of its sub-committees from 2005 to 2007, she became chair of RHA’s committee of management in 2008, putting her in the perfect position for negotiating the tricky relationship between the two organisations. For this enormous contribution, Eva was awarded Life Membership in 2010.

The current Office Administration leadership team consists of Kai Simpson, Dawn Gibson, John Ogilvie, Paul O’Brien and Neil Rickards. One of the team’s essential responsibilities is to manage the mentioned 20 front-of-house volunteers, who take mostly fortnightly shifts. Apart from managing the roster, team leaders are responsible for training and mentoring these office volunteers. Of course,

during the COVID pandemic, these tasks were eased, but a leadership team including Kai Simpson, Dawn Gibson, John Ogilvie, Paul O'Brien and Jenny Earle continued to carry the load of administering essential functions remotely. Whether face-to-face or remotely, this group performs a large number of tasks behind the scenes, seven days a week, all year round. Tasks such as planning, data analysis, course data updates, newsletter and website submissions, and tutor orientations among others. The office never really closes, and support staff monitor emails and voicemails to the office from members and prospective members 365 days of the year.

Information technology

The following are just some of the retrospective milestones in the development of U3A MC's IT capabilities, and some key people responsible for them. The introduction of the MyU3A portal described above had been preceded by Canopus in 2006 as a relatively more efficient means for managing membership enrolments and renewals. Canopus' first trainer was Aija Khoo, whose assistants for entering data manually had to be co-opted from the membership, usually by means of calls made in the newsletter.⁵⁷ The employment of Canopus had been preceded by Vera Saltmarsh's earlier introduction of computer spreadsheets. Appeals for more specialised computer expertise appeared in the newsletter around this time, specifying the need for 'a knowledgeable person prepared to manage our IT health and performance, and solve problems ... You would be held in the greatest esteem.'⁵⁸

Even earlier than this, in 2003, construction of a website for U3A MC had begun. This was a pro bono contribution from Anni Leary, the daughter of office volunteer Valmai Leary. Anni was thanked for her significant efforts by the outgoing president, John Besley. She continued to manage it for several years, until a new website was built for U3A MC by a team of students from the Department of Information at the University of Melbourne. This was officially launched at the AGM on 19 November 2009. It was hoped that it would improve communication between members, and enable officers to manage content 'with speed and ease'.⁵⁹ It included tutor profiles, online membership details and volunteer applications, news updates and a members' noticeboard. Members were coached in orienting to the new digital state of affairs, and encouraged to go online to receive a colour version of the newsletter. Previously it had been converted to greyscale for printing. The transition was eventually accepted; a survey revealed that while 76 per cent of members had email in 2012,⁶⁰ by 2016 the proportion had risen to 92.7 per cent.⁶¹

Just as revolutionary as the installation of MyU3A portal in 2015 was the rolling out of Microsoft Office 365 in 2019, a boon, especially, for administration during the COVID pandemic. President Jen Holling wrote the following testament in the 2019 annual report:⁶²

An important achievement this year has been to build our IT Team. We are grateful to the IT Team for the progress they have made in updating the hardware and software for our office and providing us with the essential skills necessary to support our technology needs. The Committee also initiated a trial of Microsoft Office 365. Following the success of this trial by the IT Support Team, we will implement this across the organisation in 2020. Office 365 will be the operating software supporting emails, file storage and other forms of communication. This will be a welcome improvement for the volunteers as it enables greater transparency and collaboration across the groups. This

year we built a team to review and update our website. Redesigning and building a website is a huge task and we are grateful for the enormous contribution and skill of the new team as they have created a modern and user-friendly website for us all.

Lan Ping Yeh, and then Tony Brotherton, spent a lot of time and effort trialling, setting up and implementing Office 365.

With the onslaught of lockdowns in Melbourne from March 2020, when live classes ceased, the next major challenge for the IT team was to initiate and manage the installation of Zoom. Twenty classes had shut down immediately, so the pressure was on. A Zoom team was quickly set up, including the whole IT support team, Mike Dorahy and Colin Patterson, and Kai Simpson and Julienne Wight initially. In the April issue of the newsletter, President Jen Holling announced the introduction of Zoom technology, pressed into service in a determined effort to continue the life of U3A MC. The first phase was a trial by ten willing tutors in Term 2. Four Zoom licenses were to be purchased, with more to come, contingent upon the results of the pilot study. The fact that by April 2020 42 classes could be offered online, augured well for the success of the IT team in getting classes onto an online platform.

Towards the end of 2021, Peter Lawson took over the IT brief from Tony Brotherton. At the AGM in 2019, Peter had approached President Russell Huntington and volunteered to help with IT. He was quickly put in touch with Tony, who had been leading the IT group for a number of years, including the implementation of Office 365 as mentioned. As Marilyn Harris wrote in introducing Peter to the membership soon after his acceptance of the brief, 'We were so fortunate that, after taking early retirement in 2019, Peter joined our U3A just when he was most needed, bringing with him all the technical expertise from his professional life.'⁶³ This expertise is considerable. After graduating from Monash with a science degree and a DipEd in the 1980s, Peter taught high school science for four years, before changing his mind and taking a computer course, quickly joining Shell. Peter worked in his profession for the next 30 years in companies in Australia, the Netherlands, Oman and Scotland.

Peter explained that maintaining the Microsoft system for U3A MC is a continuation of the work he had done for Linfox Logistics, a company delivering supply-chain solutions across ten countries. He derives a certain degree of satisfaction from the fact that all members of the IT team can become involved, since it is not too technical an activity. He explained further that cloud-based services are a boon for volunteer organisations with limited bandwidth. The team also maintains a fleet of six computers that are used in the office and loaned out to class tutors based at the Greek Centre. Keeping them updated with security updates certainly has its challenges. Further challenges for the future concern the need to implement a data archiving policy where aged files are archived from the system so that succeeding volunteers are not swamped with old and irrelevant documentation. All companies struggle with this, Peter said, and volunteer organisations like U3A are no different.

Peter is by no means a stereotypical computer nerd. As well as keeping abreast of IT matters, he also takes classes in Spanish and guitar. Also an avid reader, his favourite author is Lois McMaster Bujold, an American writer of speculative fiction. He is a trainer of puppies, in support of his wife Mei's work for Seeing Eye Dogs Australia. As part of his agreement with Mei concerning his decision to retire early, Peter had committed to having 'a forward plan of activities.'⁶⁴ Joining U3A MC was a front-runner, as it offered the opportunity to learn with like-minded people, and to give back, using his IT skills. U3A is fortunate to have Peter Lawson looking after its IT health, and hopefully, he will do so for many years to come.

Chapter 4

Course coordination and tutor recruitment

On the eve of Melbourne's first year of severe lockdowns as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 was looking optimistic for U3A MC. Jen Holling, president at the time, reported that in the 2018–19 financial year, the total membership was 1,441, and that 103 tutors had delivered over 130 classes.⁶⁵ Clicking on the link '2020 yearlong/semester course guide' provided in the *U3A City News Update* of 6 November revealed a cornucopia of possibilities.⁶⁶ Spread over 28 pages, 81 year-long courses were listed, each with its summary written by the teacher or convenor. In addition, the 15 January 2020 issue offered 22 short courses for the first term.⁶⁷ Courses covered all levels of French and German, Italian, Spanish language, current affairs, philosophy, gerontological topics, hatha yoga, belly dancing, and guitar for beginners, to name just a few.

Course coordinators from 1985 to the present

The realisation that courses offered are 'our bread and butter', to quote current president Russell Huntington, was forefront from the beginning of U3A MC's existence. Two of the 15 people on the foundation steering committee in 1985, Ken Bradshaw (assisted by Shirley Leembrugen) and Yvonne Hopkins, had been allocated to course coordination and tutor liaison, roles identified as key and most immediate. While it is not possible to name every participant on every Course Coordination team from Ken Bradshaw up to the present, the line of succession includes:

- **Nan Wingfield**, who took up the role after stepping down from the president's chair in 1990 – for her prodigious contributions to both these roles, John Besley remembers her as 'a towering figure';⁶⁸
- **Don Graves**, who similarly was both president from 1992 to 1998, and course coordinator extraordinaire up until 2000;
- **John Besley**, with Jill Clark and John Norton designated to coordinating classrooms;
- **Jeanette Bosisto**, who stepped into the breach as course coordinator when Don Graves died in 2003, and continuing in this role for three years, during which she also convened computer courses when the teacher became ill;
- **Jill Clark** and **Eva Meredith**, who had to meet the challenge of fielding classes in new venues whose suitability had not yet been ascertained;
- **Jill Thompson** who, after the move from RMIT University until 2009, held the role of course coordinator and developed the course program through the Tutors Working Group before becoming president in 2010;
- **Jill Thompson**, **Helena Ling**, **Anne Riddell** and **Eva Meredith**, who earned specific thanks in the June 2008 newsletter from President Barry Fenton, for managing to get the new courses for 2009 out before Christmas for the first time;

- **Julie Nankervis**, who headed up the Course Coordination team from 2010 to 2016, assisted by Diane Noel as her deputy;
- **Elizabeth Way, Jan Anderson, Ann Johns** and others who were thanked for keeping the process ticking over by President Jen Holling in the June 2019 newsletter;
- **Julienne Wight**, who took over in 2019, managed course coordination during the upheavals of the pandemic, and was replaced by a team of 10 from 2023.

It could be argued that Julienne and her team had inherited a solid legacy from the earlier seven-year convenorship of Julie Nankervis and her team of volunteers, usually numbering around six. For example, quality control of courses offered is taken seriously by management, and periodic surveys of members are conducted. Establishing student feedback surveys was a milestone introduced in 2011, due to the efforts of the Course Coordination team under Julie Nankervis. The idea of eliciting student feedback had been first discussed by Jill Thompson, but was then enacted by the team under Julie, who writes:⁶⁹

This enabled members to anonymously comment on their course experience, be it the quality and content of the course, the facilities and associated administration, and ideas for future courses. Summary feedback to individual tutors enabled them to revise or plan future courses, while overall data enabled the team to plan workshops and future course topics.

In the March 2014 newsletter, the following headline appeared: ‘Ticks for Short Courses ... Results of Your Survey Responses’. Conducted the previous year, the survey covered 32 courses, with 264 students responding. The results, collated by Julie Nankervis and Ann Johns, rated content, delivery, support, social contact and mental stimulation highly. Results of a similar survey reported in the June 2016 newsletter under the heading ‘New Courses Hit the Mark – Again’, match those of the 2013 survey, with atmosphere fostered by the tutor also mentioned. By March 2019, as identified by a SWOT review, the first of U3A MC’s 19 strengths discussed in the ensuing workshop was an ‘extensive class/activity offering’. Specifically mentioned as a strength was the fact that offerings were a mix of educational and lifestyle courses, with some available to the public.⁷⁰

Julienne Wight was the most recent incumbent at the time of writing and has only just been replaced by a team of ten. She held the position from mid-2019 to the end of 2022, assisted by Lorraine Jacob and Bea Williams. Profiling Julienne in the U3A MC 2020 mid-June ebulletin, Marilyn Harris described Julienne’s introduction to the role after joining U3A to learn languages: ‘Reading an appeal for a Course Coordinator in an ebulletin and, thinking the position was just for a single course, Julienne volunteered. Our U3A has benefitted enormously from Julienne’s original misapprehension as, once she was enlightened about the nature of the task, she didn’t flinch. Being entirely new to the organisation she has had to learn about our ways on the job. In a very short time, she has become invaluable’. Under the leadership of Julienne and the Course Coordination team, the dazzling variety and quality of courses on offer were soon restored to pre-pandemic levels.

Julienne was also an essential member of the COVID Working Group set up soon after the pandemic descended upon Melbourne. The other members were Russell Huntington, Kai Simpson, Ann Johns and Eng Chong Chua. This was a strategic group that throughout the COVID period defined U3A MC’s policies for U3A operations, regarding essential matters such as face-to-face classes or not, office open or closed, procedures for cleaning and notification of illness, and so on. The

group needed to change U3A MC's rules and operating procedures based on the various government announcements. As well as shouldering the task of managing all functions of the organisations during the pandemic, including how to continue offering courses, the team were forward-thinking, later installing a Planning for Return Project Team to plan for the eventual re-opening of the office.

Tutor recruitment

As mentioned, six months after foundation in 1985, 40 of the initial cohort of volunteers were tutoring classes. Acknowledgement of their value also began early, with the first Tutors' Luncheon given in July, and the second in August. The September newsletter reported: 'It was agreed that these informal luncheons do play an important part in strengthening the U3A organisation by providing a place for discussing issues which affect tutors and their classes.'⁷¹ Naturally, the tradition of expressing appreciation and providing a collegiate atmosphere for tutors has been central to the Course Coordination brief. For example, the team headed up by Julie Nankervis mentioned above formalised the Tutor Liaison group, whose volunteers were charged with keeping in touch with tutors, supporting them in running and developing their courses, and fielding problems and inquiries from them. Regular meetings of tutors were instated, allowing for two-way communication between tutors and the Committee of Management regarding emerging issues. Professional development events were organised, as well as social events aimed at bringing tutors from various disciplines together, a tradition that continues today.

Recruitment issues can be somewhat the same for tutors as for office volunteers, with strengths and talents being recognised by committee members, or boxes ticked on an enrolment form, but with a difference. From the identity of tutors, courses emerge, and the content and quality of courses informs in an important way the ethos of the whole organisation. U3A City of Melbourne, in its early years, earned itself a reputation for being more academically oriented than other groups. The most likely explanation for this is the fact that several universities served as 'feeder' groups for Melbourne City, because of founding members such as Jack McDonnell from Monash University, and geographical proximity to the University of Melbourne, and Swinburne. But the following examples demonstrate how courses, and hence the reputation of an organisation, emerge from the character, skills and knowledge of members themselves, contingent in some way to where they have lived or worked, in or near the inner city.

In the first newsletter in May 1985, a notice from a member appeared canvassing for fellow members interested in three courses already being offered at Monash: 'The Psychology of Mathematics', 'Rational Thinking', and 'Lateral Thinking and the Metaphor'. Then a year later in May 1986, eighteen months after foundation, the newsletter reported: 'A new self-help Philosophy group has started and, with the assistance of Tom Timpson and the members of the other existing philosophy class, is studying Bertrand Russell's *The History of Western Philosophy*. The group would be very glad to hear from anyone who would like to lead them – someone with a knowledge of philosophy generally, or of a particular aspect. Please contact ...'⁷² The trend continued into October, when an existing tutor, Dr Jacki Lang OBE, renowned scientist, called for a biologist 'out there', who might wish to collaborate in a new course, 'The History of Science and Society'. This call was answered by Mary Waters, a medical biologist, and the course was offered in Jan 1987.⁷³ Jacki, who passed away in February 1989, was an advocate of renewable energy, also teaching 'The Story of Electricity and Energy: Soft Option', and with Maurice Callow, 'The Physics of Colour in the Eye of the Artist'. Such

serendipitous connections still occur of course, but over the decades up until the present, more targeted calls for tutors have appeared regularly in newsletters.

At the beginning of 2022, the Committee of Management voted to instate 'The Year of the Tutor' in a concerted effort to recoup the vitality of pre-pandemic U3A MC. This initiative aimed to find and recruit new tutors from the membership and from outside, to mentor existing tutors more effectively, and to celebrate tutors. The Course Coordination team would continue to plan and implement the initiative throughout the year. Nene Macwhirter would work on recruiting additional language tutors. In the March 2022 issue of the newsletter, the following call for tutors appeared:

Love your U3A classes and ever wondered:

Could I be a U3A tutor? Yes, you could!

Would I already need to be a teacher?

No, you don't!

Do I need to have more than just my passion for my subject area? That's a no as well.

Do I have to arrange my own venue?

No, we will do that for you.

Would I have someone to guide me, especially at the beginning? Yes, you will have lots of support!

Do I need to be well organised and committed? Just like your current tutor, yes you do.

If you have ever wondered about becoming a tutor, now is your chance to find out if tutoring really is for you.

If you have a friend or colleague who you think would make a great tutor, bring them along ...⁷⁴

Back in January 1985, it appeared that there would be no shortage of tutors, and therefore, of courses offered. Only one year after foundation, there were over 50 courses on offer at the beginning of the year. Dr Jacki Lang, mentioned above, did a rough survey to ascertain the popularity of courses. At the top of the list was history, followed closely by literature, psychology, philosophy, and languages. She went on to say that 'members respond positively to mental challenge and welcome it'.⁷⁵ But by the end of 1986, the number of tutors and courses had grown even more. From statistics collated by the CAE, Jill Thompson extracted some that were relevant to U3A MC; in 1986, tutors had taught over 2,000 hours, over 85 classes, attended by approximately 1,200 members. Membership was around 600, and each member was attending an average of two classes.⁷⁶ Among new courses offered that year were: 'An Introduction to the Thoughts of Sigmund Freud', 'An Introduction to American History', 'Roman Civilisation', 'Microscopy', 'Tolstoy', 'Comparative Religions', 'Economics', 'Writers' Workshops', 'Broadway Musicals', 'Intermediate Italian', 'Literary Criticism' and 'Mediaeval Heroes and Heroines'. Perusal of the handbook given out at the first U3A conference in 1986 shows that U3A MC did not have a monopoly on academic subjects; in the back of the handbook, lists of courses offered by Monash and Hawthorn U3As were similarly skewed towards academic subjects (see Appendix C). U3A MC, however, has gone on to establish itself as offering the highest number of academically oriented courses.

The 'language' U3A

As suggested by anecdotal evidence, U3A MC has become known as 'the language U3A', and there are reasons to suggest that it is true. By 1987, ongoing courses offered included five French classes of various levels, one of which was 'French Book Club', three German classes and two Italian. Other language classes have been offered from time to time as tutors for them have emerged through the membership. In 1989, Spanish for Beginners was added, along with Latin and Attic Greek. During 1992, linguist Charles Russell provided the following course description: 'Composite group course, reading the OT in Latin, reading the OT in Hebrew, reading and writing in Japanese/Chinese, learn to read books in French, read Asian folk tales in Indo-Malaysian'. Continuing the course into 1993, he added the comment: 'When I say "read" I mean "read and understand of course"'.⁷⁷ By June of that year, he had added Sanskrit and Polish, and held a one-day seminar entitled 'A New Way to Read Books in Foreign Languages'. Later, in 1998, he called, through the newsletter, for anyone interested in joining him to compile 'a polyglot language of Indo-European origin'.⁷⁸ Over the following years, Croatian, Esperanto, Mandarin, and English as a second language were added, prompting the newsletter to boast: 'U3A offers programmes in several languages and is fortunate to have a competent and enthusiastic body of tutors in these languages'.⁷⁹

From 2001, early in the presidency of John Besley, who had taken on the editorship of the newsletter himself, language courses were listed under their own heading, as opposed to appearing under the heading of 'general courses'. This tended to reinforce the idea of them as being 'special' in the eyes of the casual observer, it could be argued. By 2004, language courses were listed among the rest of the courses on offer, but the trend returned to give languages their own list in 2014, when Pam Davies, to become president herself in 2016, invited members to 'join the language program', mentioning French, Italian, German and Spanish in that order.⁸⁰

In reality, this focus on languages is part of the permanent legacy of Julie Nankervis and her Course Coordination team. In 2011, a dedicated Foreign Languages Working Group, comprised of members from the Course Coordination team as well as the foreign language tutors had been formed. A major achievement of the group was the development of the 2012 *Foreign Languages Policy* for the delivery of language courses, which is still in place today. This addressed inequities such as students re-enrolling because they had become attached to a teacher, for example, while others on the waiting list missed out. It also addressed solid pedagogical realities, so that students of a particular language could progress through levels. In a meeting over coffee, Julie explained that two streams for French, for example, were organised, one consisting of graded levels from beginners to advanced, and the other comprising more cultural subjects associated with that language. Applicants could select only one from each stream, which allowed for more fairness for members, and for more language proficiency to be achieved. It also served to attract third agers to enrol in U3A MC if they were interested in serious language studies.

A cryptic crossword class was introduced into U3A MC's array of courses in 1990 to satisfy aficionados of the English language, and has persisted up to the present. The class is currently grouped on the U3A MC website with bridge, chess, and Pitman shorthand, under the heading 'Brain Training & Games'. Dr Kelvin Edwards, 'crossword tutor of the first degree'⁸¹ according to David Astle, the setter of the puzzle the group solves, began introductory classes for U3A MC in the 1990s. These soon evolved into classes for more advanced puzzlers. After Kelvin's illness and death in 2016, the group was convened for a time by his friends and skilled puzzlers John and Isabelle Mentha

until handing over to Robert Allison, as they had their own health problems and lived some distance away. Jean Shaik, still a member of the group, took over from Robert after a year, and ran the group until 2018, when she identified Mike Jackson as a likely successor and passed the baton to him. To the good fortune of the members, Mike accepted, and the group continues to enjoy mental and social benefits every fortnight at Ross House.

Although a few other U3A groups across the state have cryptic crossword groups, U3A MC's class rates a mention by Astle, famous for setting puzzles in Australia for thirty years, including for *The Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Having known of the class run by his friend and colleague Kelvin Edwards, Astle formally observed it as part of his research into brain health and cryptic crossword puzzling in 2018. In his book, *Rewording the Brain*, he cites Felicity James, still a current member of the group: "Prune!" hollers Felicity, a meteorologist in her late 60s. The room is hers. "Twenty-one down: Shorten jog in gym".⁸² He describes the room as it 'murmurs in agreement, elated by the progress, as pencils inscribe the letters, the crossword steadily yielding to the collective will'.⁸³ He mentions Dementia Australia's checklist for mental health, which includes reading, learning, music and puzzle play, all ranked as highly as good nutrition and exercise.

Computer courses

As the 1990s progressed, members began to express the need to come to grips with computer skills, not only for their personal use, but to streamline processes while volunteering in the office. In response, Roy and Silvia Armstrong offered to take two or three members at a time for two-hour sessions to introduce word-processing and spreadsheet capabilities. Take-up of the offer made in the May 1998 newsletter was slow, but a year later, there was a waiting list.⁸⁴ At the same time, Roy Armstrong expressed thanks to the manager of the CAE library, who had been so generous in orienting U3A members to the use of the library's computers, but began to consider the possibility that U3A could have its own website. This idea was communicated to the membership under the heading: 'Computers Here to Stay!' in the same newsletter.

In 1999, the CAE received a grant of \$10,000 for a 'Skillsnet' project to provide training in IT. Free training would be provided for CAE, AEA and U3A members who were over 50. The response was overwhelming, with only half the applicants able to be placed. Nevertheless, around 1,000 members distributed across the three organisations received training in vital computer skills.⁸⁵ Peter Fraser continued to offer sessions in the CAE library in a special lounge set up as part of the Skillsnet project, but U3A MC began to offer its own computer courses. Bernard Grynberg taught short courses up until August 2003, when he became ill and stepped down. The brief was picked up by others, notably Brian Dobbin, who ran courses for beginners in internet and emailing skills up until 2006, overlapping with Chris Kelly in 2005 and 2006. In December 2007 Peter Salmon offered 'Introduction to Macros', for making repetitive tasks such as formatting Word documents or Excel spreadsheets more efficient. George Boag, a Life Member profiled in Chapter 7, had also been running short courses in word processing and using the internet from 2003. In 2005, he introduced Photoshop in answer to a demand from members. During U3A's time at RMIT University, George continued to run introductory short courses, repeating the short eight-week course four times in 2008, after U3A's departure from RMIT. His short course description in 2009 promised: 'We will discuss laptops and desktops, and peripherals such as printers, scanners, cameras and external

memories. The Vista operating system and its accessories will be explained, including Movie Maker, pictures and Internet Explorer.⁸⁶

In 2010, U3A members were invited to attend a workshop at the Multicultural Hub in Swanston Street, called SANITY (Seniors and New Information Technology), with the promise of an extended course for U3A members later in the year. Other contributors to the suite of computer courses offered by U3A MC itself have been George Papafotiou and Harris Schneiderman, who ran a short course in October–November 2013 entitled ‘Computer Security: Buying & Banking Online with Confidence’, and another in the next term entitled ‘Computer Security, Adapting to the Changing Needs of Members’. Courses in computer skills have all but disappeared from the course line-up each year or semester over the last decade. One likely explanation is the paucity of available computers and software needed to run a class successfully. It has also been suggested that computer courses have become less interesting than so-called lifestyle courses, such as art and music.

Writing groups

Among the list of new courses announced at the beginning of 1987 was ‘Writing – How to Start.’⁸⁷ By 1994, the happy confluence of talent and the expert tutelage of Betty Nunn resulted in a compilation of 51 stories entitled *From Footprints to Fantasy: A Collection of Works*, which can be accessed at the State Library of Victoria.⁸⁸ The stories are mostly memoirs, covering a time span from the opening of the Royal Exhibition Building in 1880, through the Second World War years, and into the post-war era. The authors write from raw experience of war in their European countries of origin, displacement, immigration, adaptation and resilience. A few are whimsical, most are deeply moving, and all are beautifully written and edited. In the year following the production of this collection, Will Semler offered a long course, ‘Writers’ Workshop’, which was to become the Monday Writers group. For his 16 years of service as convenor of that group, Will was awarded life membership. In Chapter 7, Will’s motivations and contributions are introduced in more detail, but suffice to say, Monday Writers is still alive and well, convened at the time of writing by Liz Mullins, who took over leadership of the group in 2018.

Meanwhile, another group, the Wednesday Writers, had been started under the auspice of the AEA, soon to migrate over to U3A MC when the two organisations merged in 2004. Betty Caldwell joined the group just before the transition, and took over convenorship when the existing leader withdrew in 2005. The Wednesday Writers have produced two un-themed anthologies, in 2009 and 2021. Like Will Semler, Betty has been given the award of Life Membership for her formidable contribution in convening such a productive, well-attended and appreciative group of creative writers from 2005 up to the present. Betty’s pathway from being addicted to writing since she was a teenager, to providing such a fulfilling course and activity, not only for herself, but for members of U3A MC, is further detailed in Chapter 7. She also presided over members’ efforts, through the writing process, to come to terms with and express life experiences that were often traumatic or challenging.

Another group of writers, scarcely mentioned, is the Script Writers group. Rising to the occasion when the Seniors Festival Reimagined 2021 was created, as Australia was learning to navigate somewhat normal life despite the ongoing pandemic, the group wrote and produced four episodes of sketches for radio, which were broadcast on 90 community radio stations throughout Victoria.

U3A Orchestra

A call for members interested in forming an instrumental ensemble appeared soon after foundation, in the newsletters of 1985 and 1986. Players of any instrument and of any standard were most welcome. By 1989, having performed a successful concert of works by Beethoven, Bach, Stokowski and Scott Joplin, the ensemble performed its first Christmas concert, in combination with the newly formed U3A Choir under the direction of Margaret Shilton. Regular performances by what was to be named the U3A Orchestra on its own, or in combination with the choir over the next decades became a feature at public events such as Seniors Week, or on special occasions. One such highlight was a concert of light classics in October 1997 under the baton of Kurt Jensen, a professional musician who had migrated from Denmark in 1989.

The orchestra entered another era when Juliette Zeelander took over the direction of the ensemble in 2002, at the suggestion of the previous director, Madeleine Dietrich. Juliette fulfilled this role for the next 20 years. She inherited a depleted troupe of nine musicians, with six recorders, a guitar, a flute and a violin. Juliette had been a violinist with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra for fifteen years, but had never learned the art of conducting. She transformed the ensemble, and herself, by using her analytical skills and knowledge of the mechanics of various instruments to teach players to produce notes in such a way as to simulate other instruments, and teaching herself how to communicate the music with face and body, as she had seen professional conductors do in her time as an orchestral member.

Besides the unconventional combination of instruments, the wide variation in the music-reading skills of the participants was particularly challenging. As well as educating the members of the ensemble regarding the stylistic background of various pieces learned and performed, Juliette was able to teach the basic skills for reading a music score; something, as suggested by anecdotes, that was deeply appreciated and enjoyed. For her contribution, Juliette was awarded Life Membership of U3A MC, as discussed in Chapter 7.

U3A Choir

Margaret Shilton founded the U3A Choir in 1989 soon after joining U3A MC, and directed it for nearly 30 years. Born in Derbyshire, Margaret had joined the Derby Choral Union during her teacher training, singing with its 80-voice choir for five years. After migrating to Melbourne in 1955, Margaret taught at Firbank in the bayside Melbourne suburb of Brighton, and Mentone Girls' Grammar, taking long service leave to study for a Graduate Diploma in Music Education. She also relates that she had fun in pro-am theatre companies, singing and helping with making props, experiences that developed her talent for creating music programs. She also earned an Associate in Music Australia (AMusA) Singing (Performer) diploma.

From the foundation of the U3A Choir, men were outnumbered by women, who had to be put on a waiting list to keep the number at 50. Margaret devised ways of swapping parts so that some higher men's parts could be sung by women, to achieve some sort of balance. Like Juliette Zeelander, Margaret had to manage the limitations of the singers, not just with respect to their musicianship skills and teaching them note values and the historic and stylistic background of the music, but also choosing a suitable repertoire. Her efforts in this regard were deeply appreciated, not just by the

choir members, who greatly enjoyed acquiring music knowledge, but by audiences at public performances, in nursing homes and retirement villages. The limits on repertoire were eased in 2012 when, supported by U3A Network Victoria, Margaret successfully applied for a license to perform works still under copyright. Previously, while the choir had been able to sing anything from ‘See the Conqu’ring Hero Comes’ from Handel’s *Judas Maccabeus* to ‘The Impossible Dream’ from *The Man of La Mancha*, she could now include songs from works by contemporary composers such as Andrew Lloyd Webber.

Some highlights remembered by Margaret in an interview with Jeanette Bosisto in 2012 were themed concerts with the U3A Orchestra incorporating poetry. One such concert was ‘Australia Remembers’, with World War II songs, and poems read by Al Irvine. For another with a Shakespearean theme, Margaret employed some recorder players to render Elizabethan music, and Myra Roper read some sonnets. For concerts with folksongs from different cultures, she would co-opt people from the language classes to coach the singers in the correct pronunciation. Margaret was also known for devoting her time and skills in transcribing scores into braille for the Institute for the Blind.

As Margaret said, keeping good accompanists was always a challenge. She was fortunate to have Lorraine Green for the first ten years. Then Goldie Orbach, an alto from the choir filled in, until Iris Chen, the mother of an RMIT student, provided piano accompaniment until her son graduated and they returned to Singapore.

Summer courses

In the November 1985 newsletter, the steering committee announced the ‘summer samples’ to be run in January ‘when (so everybody tells us) NOTHING HAPPENS!’.⁸⁹ Whereas in Toulouse, the first UTA students had attended a summer school, then demanded that it be extended to a yearlong course program, the first U3A students in Melbourne City did the reverse, wanting the enjoyment of the yearlong courses to be repeated in the summer. Already the next issue in December announced the prospect of a program planned for the following summer as well, setting a precedent that has continued to the present. While the first summer program offered several lighter subjects, the second one in 1986–87 included ‘A Taste of Proust’, run by Ken Bradshaw. By December 1989, an impressive variety of courses for the summer was offered on the front page of the issue:

Consumer Affairs; Turkey for the Independent Traveller; The Language of Literature; Sculpture Class; Poetry Reading; Traders and Travellers of Asia; Language and Dreams; Collecting Antiques; An Illustrated Dictionary for Illiterates; Europe Revisited; Painting of Wildflowers; The Weiss Report; African Affairs; Introducing Calculus; Life in the Ministry; A Shakespearean Summer; The Soviet Union.

The summer program took a new turn at the end of the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020–21), with a suite of sessions affording the registrant a virtual travel experience, in place of face-to-face courses. The offerings, prepared by President Russell Huntington with the assistance of Sharon Carter, filled a similar function to that of forums, traditionally managed under the activities and events portfolio described in the next chapter. Similarly, for the 2021–22 summer, the following enticement appeared on the U3A MC website: ⁹⁰

The Wonders of Australia

There's never been a better time to explore your own backyard. Learn about the wonders of Australia with a program of history, art, travel and cultural sessions.

Buckle up your armchair for this staycation.

Topics include First Nations History, The Spectacular Kimberley, Country Houses and Gardens of Victoria, Australian Landscape Painters and the Tasmanian Wilderness.

This kind of offering is just another example of the responsive skills of the individuals who comprise U3A MC. While freedom to travel returned in 2022 as the world adapted to COVID-19, members who were vulnerable to exposure during the lockdown years could indulge their wish to travel to some extent. And while travel subjects such as 'Turkey for Independent Travellers' (1989) or 'Travels on the Silk Road', or from 'Afghanistan to Nepal' (1990) have provided enjoyable and highly appreciated experiences for members in years past, the latest technology now makes a 'virtual' travel experience possible.

Chapter 5

Activities and events

Special events

It is a rainy Friday 8 July 2022 in Melbourne, and 45 members of U3A MC are gathered in the Blue Room at the Multicultural Hub opposite the Victoria Market. The spirit of the event, however, is far from gloomy. As well as being a profiler extraordinaire, Marilyn Harris, current member of the Committee of Management, and former program producer for the BBC in her native England, had organised an event to celebrate NAIDOC (National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee) Week in the spirit of that year's catchcry – 'Get up! Stand up! Show up!'. In 2022, NAIDOC had arguably the biggest presence yet in the hearts and minds of non-Indigenous Australians and in mainstream media, and U3A responded. The Events team organised the 'First Nations Program' to take place over the third term, introducing it thus in the June 2022 newsletter: 'With a new Federal Government and Victoria currently hearing evidence at its Yoorrook Justice Commission, your U3A is attempting to play a small part in change.'⁹¹ The program for the term included a short course on 'Representation of Indigenous Songlines' given by Frances Devlin-Glass, a Zoom session on Aboriginal artist and activist Lin Onus, a visit to a Koori Heritage Trust's exhibition at the NGV, and a Scar Tree Walk through Birrarung Marr, an inner-city park with indigenous public artworks.

For that Friday, the Events team, currently a moving feast of Committee of Management members besides Marilyn, had lined up three eminent speakers and First Nations singer-songwriter performer, Pirritu Yulii. His website offers a description of his songs as 'gentle, honest and melodic, enticing you into the depths of his personal journey, to sing you a story of sadness, love and hope.'⁹² And like the speakers on the program, his credentials in regard to working towards reconciliation with Australia's First Peoples are impressive. He volunteers with the Ngiyampaa language project, and sits on the board of Songlines, a not-for-profit organisation which has supported Aboriginal musicians since 1996. He has also worked with the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency as an art project officer.

As a prerequisite for the event, registrants were strongly encouraged to watch *First Australians: The Untold Story of Australia*, a seven-part series from Rachel Perkins and Blackfella Films tracing the trajectory of negotiations between the first English settlers and the First Peoples; a truthful account of the brutalities and injustices visited upon them. So, it was heartening to listen to the first speaker of the day, Professor Richard Broome, emeritus professor at La Trobe University and president of the Royal Victorian Historical Society. He showed how Aboriginal peoples adapted to a 'demographic takeover', how they expressed their strength and resilience, exemplified by their flourishing in the cattle industry – women as well as men. Attendees were able to examine the excellent four-volume textbook, *Analysing Australian History*, telling the story of Australia from 60,000 years ago up until 1992. Co-edited by Professor Broome and Ashley Keith Pratt, these texts are now part of the curriculum for Victorian high school students.

Philip Cooper followed with an account of the development of the Aboriginal Advancement League, of which he is currently president. He stressed that education and employment are the key to

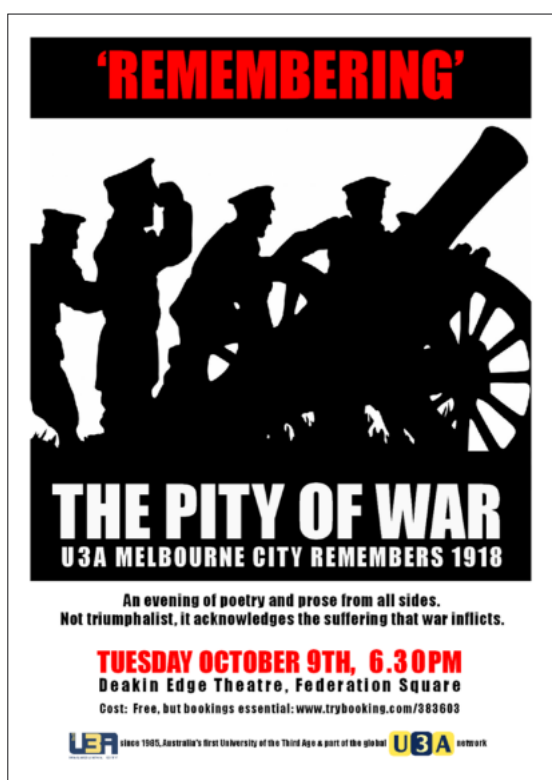
breaking down old power structures. The third speaker, Charles Pakana, travels Victoria in a van called Violet, which doubles as his home and his studio. He advocates particularly for mental health awareness on his own radio station, Connection Matters Radio, and in the programs he hosts on radio 3KND.

This expression of the will of older Australians to engage with Australia's First Peoples and our shared history is threaded through the ethos that has defined U3A MC since its foundation. As early as 1989, engagement by U3A City of Melbourne members with Australia's First Peoples in the community took the form of two short courses, thanks to the initiative of Vera Scherer. Vera ran the first – a series of six discussions with films – alongside Dr Edna Gault, renowned medical missionary, who had made a study of the women's rights and roles in India. Edna had gone on to interview Aboriginal women and men in Victoria, again focusing on women's roles in Aboriginal society, and had been interviewed on radio about her findings.⁹³ Then in 2001, Gary Presland, noted historian, author and curator at Museum Victoria, delivered a set of six lectures entitled 'Aboriginal Melbourne' as a short course. In the same newsletter advertising the course was the usual invitation to attend a walk in the Botanic Gardens, but this time, with an Aboriginal guide who would provide members with an understanding of the gardens as ancestral lands.

The first of such fully produced themed events as the 2022 NAIDOC week event was created by Merylyn Harris and her team for the Seniors Festival of 2018, three years after her enrolment in U3A MC in 2015. That production marked the centenary of the end of the Great War in 1918. Its title, 'Remembering – The Pity of War', echoed a phrase made famous by Wilfred Owen, English soldier and war poet, killed by a sniper's bullet days before the armistice. As well as poems from other iconic

war poets such as Rupert Brooke and Siegfried Sassoon, poems by Australians Banjo Paterson, CJ Dennis and Leon Gellert were read. Items from Turkish and German writers were included on the program. Two U3A MC members also contributed; Barbara Charge shared a recording of her grandfather's experience on the Western Front, and Barbara Ladd shared excerpts from the diary of her aunt who had been a nurse at the front. Readers were Darrell Reid, Brian Jensen, Max Nankervis, Peter Newbury and Janet Strahan.

Held at the same venue four years later was a presentation by 15 U3A MC members, called 'Who Do We Think We Are?', again produced by Merylyn and her team. Originally intended for Seniors Week in 2019, it was finally fielded in October 2022. The speakers – each with their personal stories, accompanied by plenty of photographs, of First People's ancestry, white settlement, war, migration, and experiences both tragic and quirky – celebrated the multicultural face of Melbourne City.



The venue for the event was the prestigious Edge Theatre at Federation Square, the 'jewel in Fed Square's crown. Refined, stately, professional and yet creatively inspired'.⁹⁴

Anniversaries

U3A MC has also marked anniversaries of its foundation with celebrations. For the 10th anniversary in 1994, held in the conference centre of the CAE building, the guest speaker before lunch was Paul Williams, bassoonist with the Melbourne Symphony orchestra and former rock musician. His speech, entitled 'Tales from the Melbourne Woods,' gave an account of life as an itinerant musician. For the 15th anniversary, on 29 July 1999 and held in the same venue, the speakers were:

- U3A MC's founding members who had comprised the Steering Committee before the 1985 appointment of Nan Wingfield as president;
- Jill Thompson, who was still an executive officer of the AEA, and policy officer for the Council on the Ageing (COTA) in 1999;
- Jack McDonell, who had retired from his position as Director of Continuing Education at Monash;
- Ken Bradshaw, a founding member and tutor; and
- Yvonne Hopkins, historian and early tutor coordinator.

A 20th anniversary event was held on 22 July 2004 in the Melbourne Town Hall supper room, and included a walking tour of Melbourne Town Hall and the Scots Church, and St Michael's Church after lunch. Jill Thompson and Jack McDonell were again guest speakers, along with Cliff Picton, now Assistant Dean (International) at La Trobe University, and founder of the COTA Victoria; Anne Badenhorst from RMIT University; and Kate Redwood from Melbourne City Council.

For the 25th anniversary in 2010, Dr Rick Swindell, renowned researcher and writer in lifelong learning and positive ageing was the speaker. Based in Brisbane, Rick received an AM for services to education, including the development of the U3A movement. He founded Brisbane U3A in 1986, was a Founding Director of U3A Online in 1998, was a past president of the same, and was still actively involved in 2010. This time, Jack McDonell and Cliff Picton were guests. This Silver Jubilee Anniversary, attended by one hundred guests, was organised by Jill Thompson, president at the time, along with Helena Ling and Tony Miles. It began with a champagne reception, and included a door prize and a three-course lunch.

In the year of the 30th anniversary, 2014, events were spread out over the year. In March, a fashion show was organised and mounted by Shirley Mason and assisted and promoted by Tony Miles, ad man extraordinaire. Shirley was soon to take over the role of events coordinator and to establish the Let's Do portfolio of activities (introduced below). A weekend film festival in April was organised by John Waldie, who was running the Movies of Merit yearlong course. In June a winter lunch took



The full cast of this production was: Joan Hammond, Mardie Whitla, Anne Askew, Colleen Wood, Darrell Reid, Georgina Fitzpatrick, Peter Newbury, Norman Morris, Frances Devlin-Glass, Rosie Hersch, Fleur Rubens, Bruno Zielke, Nick Theophilou, Maureen Fastenau, and Ken Chan.

place, and in August there was a photographic and botanical art exhibition, compiled from former photographic exhibitions.

Let's Do activities

From U3A MC's foundation, despite early efforts to prioritise learning over social activities as mentioned in Chapter 1, the explicit demand for social connection from the membership has been equally and consistently met. The importance to U3A MC's current identity and ethos of what has become a well-developed activities program cannot be over-stated.

From the beginning, excursions to such places as Hepburn Springs, city walks, concerts, cinema and theatre outings, and dinners have been enjoyed. In August 1989, the smorgasbord of activities made it onto the front page of the newsletter, with a list of seven activities, including film and theatre outings, but also a tour of the Bank of New Zealand, a tour of St Paul's Cathedral, and a trip to the goldfields at Castlemaine.⁹⁵ Besides activities such as these, an unadorned invitation to connect socially by dropping in at monthly coffee and catch-up sessions was regularly sent out from October 1986.⁹⁶ On occasion, such invitations as the 'Members All' coffee morning at Ross House (mentioned in Chapter 2) served to ground the organisation and its membership after the upheaval of changing the location of its administrative and social hub. But generally, including to the present, opportunities for social engagement have revolved around activities.

A key figure in organising social outings from 2000 to 2010 was Val Pincus. Designated as social coordinator, Val virtually single-handedly organised not only the events themselves, but all catering and connected logistic preparations. She also organised the annual event for celebrating the contributions of volunteers. But the activities portfolio developed into the form it now takes when Shirley Mason took it over in 2011. Shirley had a background in the fashion industry in East Anglia and London, not only becoming the youngest manager of a fashion department in the up-market John Lewis Partnership group of stores at the age of 23, but running a modelling agency with her husband, among other ventures. After her husband passed away in 2008, Shirley settled in Melbourne to be near her son, and joined U3A MC. Shirley was thus well-placed to take over the role of social events coordinator, and established the program under the name 'Let's Do'.

Almost immediately, Shirley initiated her mission to expand the brief by issuing the following invitation:⁹⁷

On Friday 20 April at 3 o'clock at Ross House the Events Team is holding an Open Meeting in Ross House (room to be advised). The team members will be happy to explain to any members who would like to come what exactly they do and why they chose certain events. In return we would like members, especially new members, to tell us what they want and also what they can contribute to the social side of our U3A.

Bring your ideas and we'll talk them through but please put your name down on a list in the office so that we book the right size space. We'll bring tea and coffee and if someone would like to bring biscuits that would be GREAT.

Shirley Mason, Events Dogsboddy – sorry, Coordinator

President Jill Thompson wrote later that year, ‘I want to thank Shirley Mason and her ever-growing team for the great job they are doing. The “Let’s Do” concept has exploded, with Music, Lunch and Movies, and now Galleries!’⁹⁸ By the time Shirley stepped down as full-time social events coordinator in 2014, there were 401 members belonging to seven Let’s Do groups: Sundays, movies, lunch, music, galleries, books, and walks. Some of the promotional logos for Let’s Do activities developed over the years can be seen in Appendix F.

Even after stepping back, Shirley still had a hand in some events. Diana Andrews took over the role in 2015, but in November 2019, a team consisting of Shirley Mason, Jean Fahey and Jill Carr were again calling for suggestions and input from members, in order to plan for the following year. Of course, they were not to know that the COVID-19 pandemic was about to descend. President Jen Holling wrote in the annual report at that time, ‘We have eleven Let’s Do activities which include Lunches, Theatre, Gallery and Museum visits, Opera on Screen, Music, Concerts and Movies. This year another activity, Let’s Do Theatre Live was introduced and has proved to be equally as popular with our members. We also provide for the members to stay physically active, by participating in the regular activities of Walking and Cycling’⁹⁹

Shirley passed away in 2021, prompting a moving eulogy to be written by Tony Miles, honouring her not only for her immense contribution to the organisation, but as a friend.¹⁰⁰ Her legacy was immeasurable. Despite most activities having to shut down during the pandemic, at the first opportunity the activities she had helped to establish for U3A MC recommenced. Let’s Do Cycling and Movies returned in November 2020 after a series of lockdowns and Let’s Do Lunch returned in January 2021.

Paul Wilkinson, keen cyclist himself, was the convenor of the Let’s Do program at the time of writing. The 17 Let’s Do groups currently promoted on the U3A MC website are: Let’s Do Cycling (four groups); Let’s Do Walks (two groups, 5–7 km around Melbourne); Let’s Do Long Walks (over 10 km, usually outside Melbourne); Let’s Do Drawing; Let’s Do Lunch; Let’s Do Movies (two groups); Let’s Do Museums, Galleries and Cultural Events; Let’s Do Music; Let’s Do National Theatre Live (from the UK); Let’s Do Opera on Screen; Let’s Do Theatre (live local performances); and Let’s Do Weekends (activities suggested by members). A new activity group, Let’s Do Lawn Bowls, was offered for 2023, convened by Tony Brotherton. President Russell Huntington directed Paul to approach Tony Brotherton after receiving an email from Jacob Seear from the Fitzroy Victoria Bowling & Sports Club. Initially, the club had been looking for new ways to encourage patronage, especially during the winter, their off-season. A member of the club’s publicity team suggested reaching out to U3A MC, as a mutually beneficial exercise.

The diversity of the requirements for running each of the Let’s Do groups means that there is no one rule for policies and procedures to ensure smooth running. But to keep lines of communication open and healthy, a meeting of Let’s Do group convenors was held in August 2022.¹⁰¹ An ongoing challenge to be addressed was the management of waiting lists. Some groups are frequently over-subscribed, and others are under-subscribed. Then there are matters such as attendance policies for ensuring fairness for all those on a waiting list, and practical matters such as the need to limit numbers for safety reasons in certain groups, such as cycling. Promotion is never far from the awareness of management, and to that end, the Members Get Member initiative (started in 2022) applies during September and October, during the early bird enrolment period each year. Existing members of a group are encouraged to invite friends to attend, hoping to entice them to join U3A MC. Succession of leadership of groups was another important matter discussed at the meeting. May

van Olphen, convenor of the Tuesday walking group, shared with the group her practice of asking group members to take turns in designing and managing some walks, as a kind of training experience.

International connections

The first overseas travel adventure organised by U3A MC was a three-week trip to China and Hong Kong in 1989. Consistent with the early emphasis on learning as the *raison d'être* of U3A, rather than recreation for its own sake, the trip revolved around a two-week course run by professors at Jingjing Seniors' University in Hong Kong. As well as topics around health and ageing, the guests were treated to cultural subjects such as language, traditional art, cuisine, handcrafts, calligraphy, geography and history. In the same year, a 50-day trip was undertaken to 'Medieval Europe'.

The educational connection continued from 1991 to 1998 with visits to U3A City of Melbourne by members from its sister organisation in Nagoya, Japan. The delegates spent a day attending some classes, performing songs and dances, and exchanging gifts. In the middle of the same decade, in 1996, a group from Melbourne City visited Japan. Then in 1998, to coincide with a U3A conference organised by the City Campus of the University of Auckland, a group from U3A in Melbourne travelled to New Zealand. As president and afterwards, John Besley organised several overseas trips for members, including two visits to Italy in 2001 and 2007, not with any explicit educational aims, but insofar as the travelling itself is a voyage of discovery, broadening the mind and forming new connections.

In 2002, Nan Wingfield, Jeanette Bosisto and Alan Liubinas made arrangements for a Chinese delegation from Beijing to visit U3A MC to exchange information and share experiences. The visitors were concerned with developing aspects of their profession at home, which was to devise and manage activities for the aged. Exchange with fellow U3A members abroad was also part of the agenda for a 21-day excursion to the United Kingdom, staying in accommodation at a provincial university, and visiting with local U3A members. Turkey and the Greek Islands have been visited, among other destinations. Such adventures are further examples of activities springing from the identity and experience of the members, as a way of sharing and contributing to the richness of the experience of others. For example, Pascal and Claire Pichon organised a 20-day French Impressionists tour of Paris, Normandy and other towns and villages. Then in 2016, members could sign up to a tour of universities of Britain.

Forums and webinars

Five Saturday forums per year on average were offered to members from 1989, often being promoted on the front page of the newsletter. Topics over these early years were predominantly gerontological or health oriented, such as 'Trusting Genetic Research', or 'Research on Bone Disease'. Because these popular Saturday forums were often booked out, a second mid-week series was introduced. Promotion of the mid-week series included specific mention of the social benefit of attending the mid-week series, allowing attendees to socialise with members whom they otherwise would not see. Topics over the next years expanded to themes such as ageism in the community, and special vulnerability of older community members with respect to medications or civil liberties.

From his enrolment in 1996, John Besley was centrally involved in organising forums, and continued to do so throughout his presidency from 1999 to 2004, and then during 2009 when he stepped in again as president. Following him as president, Jill Thompson took on the role, and in 2011, due to a successful application for a grant of \$3,000 from the City of Melbourne, forums were opened to the public. A succession of volunteers have contributed to the high quality and popularity of forums, among them Gerri McDonald in 2014, and Viv Ellard, who was singled out for thanks in 2016 by President Pam Davies, for her work in engaging speakers, ensuring the smooth running of the forums, and managing the publicity and catering.¹⁰² The convenor of the Forums and Events Team, Anne Patterson, rated special mention and thanks in the annual report at the end of 2019 for her leadership over the previous five years. Six forums, with diverse topics such as ‘The Titanic’, ‘The Solar System’, and ‘The Last Tim Tam’ by comedian Rod Quintock, were fielded in 2019, continuing the tradition of educational and entertaining forums, popular with members and the public alike.¹⁰³

Optimistically, the January 2020 City News Update advertised four forums for the coming year, among them ‘The Uluru Statement From the Heart’, scheduled for 12 March. It was delivered by Jason Mifsud, Executive Director for Aboriginal Victoria, Chairman of the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, board member of Telstra and the National Australia Bank, and former AFL player, coach and executive.¹⁰⁴ Then, in the May 2020 bulletin, as the pandemic spread, President Jen Holling announced a lecture series to begin online, and ‘webinars’ were born. Webinars for April and June were announced: Nicky Barry from COTA would conduct an online forum on how to restructure life upon retirement, concerned with health and lifestyle decisions, and Associate Professor Orla McNally and Dr David Wrede from the Royal Women’s Hospital would speak on cancer prevention and survivorship of gyno-oncological patients.

Such high-quality, interesting webinars would continue throughout 2020 with such topics as: ‘Global Politics in the Age of COVID-19’; ‘Current Perspectives on China–Australia Relations’, John Brumby AO, former Victorian premier and National President of the Australia China Business Council; ‘The Swiss and their Country’; ‘Television in 2020: A Look at Television Today and How It Has Changed’, by Debi Enker, columnist from *The Age* interviewed by Tom Ryan, journalist from *The Age*; ‘A “Most Dangerous Book”’: James Joyce’s *Ulysses*’; and ‘Aspects of Ancient Egypt: An Interrogation of the Exodus’. Throughout 2021, well-known politicians such as Adam Bandt and Fiona Patten conducted webinars, and our own Sharon Carter delivered a webinar entitled ‘Art in the Plague Years: The Black Death to Current Times’.¹⁰⁵

The Florey Institute

One particularly significant contribution made by Julie Nankervis in 2015 during her time as course coordinator, was to forge a relationship with the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health, perhaps the greatest brain research facility in the southern hemisphere. Consolidation of the relationship between U3A Melbourne City and The Florey continued under the presidencies of Pam Davies and Jen Holling. Lectures were open to the public, but U3A members were given priority bookings. Members were treated to seven lectures in 2016, introducing them to the world of neuroscience research. In 2017, the series began with four lectures on stroke research and treatment, motor neuron disease, the role of the brain in heart and kidney disease, and Alzheimers. These were followed by another series covering addiction and the obesity epidemic, the healthy brain, genetics

and future health, and brain imaging. Brain plasticity, nutrition for the brain and autism were subjects to follow in 2018.

The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic forced a migration of the live Florey lectures from the remit of the course coordination brief to the events/webinars brief, as lectures moved onto the Zoom platform. The first online webinars in 2020 were given by Assistant Professor Laura Jacobson on the relationship between sleep and neurological and psychiatric disorders, by Professor Trevor Kilpatrick on multiple sclerosis research and management, and again, research on brain plasticity was presented by Professor Anthony Hannan. Like the rest of the country, a brief respite was enjoyed as 2020 progressed, and a face-to-face lecture was delivered on rehabilitation after stroke, but very quickly Zoom was adopted once again as infection rates soared. On-site lecturers were replaced by Zoom presentations, and the opportunity to specifically engage rural U3As via the U3A Network Victoria was seized. U3A MC President Russell Huntington took on the responsibility for promoting the webinars, and liaising regarding the topics of most interest to U3A members, which were determined by means of surveys conducted by The Florey. At the time of writing, however, The Florey has struggled to get the series up. U3A still takes pains to mention information concerning The Florey offerings so that members can book independently via the Eventbrite booking service.

Chapter 6

Communication and budget management

Essential to the life and health of U3A MC is the marketing and communications brief, which has evolved naturally into two main components: interface with the public, and internal communications between management, administration and the membership via the newsletter. This bifurcation was not always so clear, however; records show that Lloyd Saltmarsh had been designated publicity officer in 1996, but in 1999, the role of publications editor was instated by the Committee of Management. The designated editor was to be 'responsible for content, format, production and despatch of the newsletter and any other U3A City publications.'¹⁰⁶ The then newly appointed president, John Besley, took on the role, with Owen McKenna as sub-editor of the newsletter.

The public face of U3A MC

The City News of January/February 2010 sported for the first time Tony Miles' 'strap-baseline' design for U3A MC's logo.



Under the presidency of Jill Thompson, the Committee of Management invested in U3A MC's uniqueness in this regard, rather than conforming with U3A Network Victoria, who had accepted the so-called 'three-cell' logo and colours disseminated worldwide in 1988 by the Third Age Trust, the representative body of U3A in the United Kingdom.



In May 2021, however, the U3A Network Victoria decided to encourage all its U3As to conform by adopting the three-cell device and colours. U3A Network Victoria's administrative and operations manager, Tracey Swadling, explained that this was a policy decision, not a directive, but U3A MC replaced the strap-baseline design for the first time with the three-cell design on the front page of the May 2021 newsletter, and continues its use on all U3A MC correspondence and promotional materials to the present.¹⁰⁷

Promotion of U3A MC in the public sphere has taken various forms. A special event on the calendar for Melburnians is Seniors Week, held annually in October in Federation Square in the heart of Melbourne, kicking off the month-long Victorian Seniors Festival. Since 1982, Seniors Week has provided the opportunity for organisations devoted to the life and health of older community

members to participate in the celebrations, and to show off what they can offer to enrich the lives of seniors. U3A MC, naturally, has participated regularly since its own foundation. Participation has taken the form of the distribution of flyers designed by Tony Miles, and performance events and exhibitions. In April 2004, members distributed 1,600 leaflets at the festival and at Flinders Street station.¹⁰⁸ This campaign augmented the increase of members that had ensued from amalgamation with the AEA in that year, rating a special note of thanks in the minutes of the AGM. The efforts of publicity officers Jack Turner and Pat Thomas in managing this and other events – so important for U3A MC’s public profile – were also acknowledged by President Barry Fenton in the December 2005 bulletin to the membership. The flyer distributed at Federation Square in 2015 can be perused in Appendix E. As for exhibitions, one notable example was U3A MC’s first photographic exhibition in 2014, attended by over a hundred people. Another photographic exhibition was fielded in 2017. A performance by the U3A Choir has regularly performed at Seniors Week, and the Circle Dancing group has regularly performed on the grassy strip between Federation Square and the Yarra River.

Special efforts aimed at the membership for increasing U3A’s public profile were made in 2012 when Tony Miles took over the brief. He sent out the following call to members via the newsletter:¹⁰⁹

Could you write an article about us?

To attract more members from the City of Melbourne municipality we’d like to try getting more articles into local papers and magazines, such as the Melbourne Leader and the Docklands and Southbank newspapers. You may know of others.

We’re hoping that some members in these localities would be willing and able to write enthusiastically about their U3A Melbourne City experiences – about the learning they enjoy, the friends they’ve made and how it enhances their life as seniors in the city.

An accompanying photograph would definitely improve chances of publication.

If you’re interested, please email or send a note to the office with ‘FOR TONY MILES – ARTICLE WRITING’ in the subject line and Tony will be pleased to advise.

A few months later, Helena Ling, dedicated projects officer at the time, oversaw the making of a promotional video of U3A MC by a team of RMIT final year film students. This was the fifth of such projects produced in collaboration with RMIT. Members were prepared for the eventuality that students might arrive in their class to film it in action. As Helena wrote, ‘These projects give final year students experience in working with real clients on real projects. In return we get vital work done that we can’t do ourselves or pay to have done.’¹¹⁰

The game changer, however, was to be the U3A Melbourne City Facebook page, which had been launched in 2012, and announced to the membership in an August ebulletin:¹¹¹

As part of our promotions strategy, we now have a Facebook page so that we become wider known around the community particularly amongst the more IT literate baby-boomer retirees. So if you have a Facebook page, please “Like” us so that the word spreads about our great organisation. And if any of you are interested in helping us keep it lively and up-to-date, just come and talk to us.

Anne Riddell, editor of the newsletter at the time, went on in the next newsletter to mention the demographic changes that accelerated the relevance of social media involvement as the numbers of younger retirees increased. It was time to capitalise on circumstances, and put U3A MC 'out there'. She concluded her introduction of the Facebook page to the membership with the following:¹¹²

Managing our U3A page has made me realise Facebook's potential for creating a sense of community amongst a group of strangers who never meet but who share common interests – which, if you think about it, pretty much describes our large and disparate City U3A. For those who choose, I think our Facebook page can be a sort of gathering place for conversation, information and debate.

Despite this enthusiastic promotion of the Facebook page in 2012, initial uptake was slow. But as Sharon Carter, its current administrator explained, U3A MC's Facebook page now has 770 followers, 300 of whom signed on in the last year. Two-thirds of the 500 registrants for 'The Wonders of Australia' webinar series previously mentioned had responded to its promotion on the Facebook page. A further push to use the platform to build awareness of the U3A brand resulted in 200 subscribers to the newsletter, and this is just the beginning. Besides running the Facebook page, Sharon carries out an astonishing number of roles to keep U3A MC vibrant and growing. Among other roles, she is the vice-president (from 2023), co-runs the Let's Do Tuesday Movie group with Jan Norman, leads the monthly Let's Do Galleries group, runs the social media and communications brief for the Committee of Management, tutored Art History in Term 4, 2022, and still finds time to be involved with the marketing sub-committee of U3A Network Victoria.

In 2020, the face of U3A MC became very public, with the U3A Melbourne City Yarra Trams advertising campaign, whose slogan was 'Connect, Learn and Socialise'. The image of the advertisement was transported around Melbourne and its suburbs on 53 trams until the end of September that year. Jen Holling expressed special thanks to Bernard Peasley, the designer of the image, for producing the video which won for U3A MC the Yarra Trams Community Partnership Program Competition, along with a written submission. Committee of Management members Helga Kuhse, Ann Johns and Michael Hoyer also rated special thanks from the president in successfully steering the venture to completion.

Participation in research

In 2009, members of U3A MC read the following in their June–July newsletter:¹¹³

Beyond Blue needs inspiring stories. Are you over 80 and keeping mentally and/or physically fit and healthy? If so, then Beyond Blue, the national depression initiative, is keen to hear first-hand accounts of what you think helps you to prevent depression and anxiety and what you do to enjoy life. They want to publish personal stories on their website to dispel some of the myths about ageing and help inspire people to live active and healthy lives into their 80s and beyond. If you are interested and think you can inspire others, write a short account of what keeps you mentally and physically healthy in 100 words or less and send it, together with your address and phone number, to ...

While debates at early U3A conferences concerning U3A's potential for philanthropic endeavours in the community came down on the side of caution, invitations to participate in research such as that described in the above invitation have been frequent, various and unproblematic.¹¹⁴ The list of institutions that have turned to U3A for research project participants is impressive, including the University of Melbourne, Monash University, Sydney University, RMIT University, Deakin University, Australian Catholic University, Swinburne University, The Royal Melbourne Hospital, La Trobe University, Austin Health, Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute, and the Nossal Institute for Global Health. Research has targeted bone health, sleep and breathing disorders, exercise and diet, mental health, including dementia studies, ethnic and gender diversity, and social interaction.

At least one invitation to participate in such mutually beneficial research activities still appears in almost every newsletter. For example, invitations to join the University of Melbourne's study of eye occlusion and age, and the Bionics Institute's study of tinnitus appeared together in the July 2021 issue. A month later, three invitations were listed: doctoral research at the Australian National University into the health and personal psychological resources of couple in retirement; the University of Melbourne's study of the impact of an exercise program on the cognitive health of couples in retirement; and a study of back pain at Sydney University. In the same year, U3A members participated in doctoral research at Deakin University into park design for older people; a study of lifestyle and brain health at the Australian Catholic University; Better Brains, a study of dementia at Monash University; and a study of music and reading interventions for dementia at the University of Melbourne.

The newsletter and ebulletins

U3A MC's regular communication to the membership has had two different formats and four different names, somewhat of a challenge to a researcher of U3A MC's archives. To clarify, from foundation until 1989, the printed publication was called *U3A CITY: Campus News*. After the decision made at the mentioned meeting of U3A Network Victoria to scrap the term 'campus', the newsletter's name was changed to *U3A City News*.

As the printed newsletter was only produced quarterly, the office began, from October 2011, to produce email-based bulletins (ebulletins) entitled *U3A Melbourne City News Update* to keep the membership updated on events that happened in between. Throughout 2019, U3A MC started to move away from producing a printed newsletter (due to the high cost of sending them out to a small number of members) and by August 2020 dispensed completely with a separate quarterly newsletter. The Committee of Management decided that with the vast majority of members having access to email it was possible to only communicate via ebulletins, which were then retitled *U3A Melbourne City News*.

When Owen McKenna stepped down from editing the newsletter in 2001, the previously mentioned new editorial committee comprised John Besley, John Mercer, Nan Wingfield (who had had a hand in it from foundation) and Ailsa Miles. As well as having managed membership and tutor lists, and class folders and rolls since joining U3A MC in 1999, Ailsa took on the task of typing up copy for the newsletter and managing its distribution as part of the role of secretary which she accepted in 2003. For these prodigious contributions, Ailsa was awarded Life Membership in 2010. Then Anne Riddell held the fort until the end of 2012, when Helena Ling took it over, continuing in

this demanding role until 2018. During this period Graham Oliver and a team of office volunteers assisted Helena by undertaking the production and distribution of the quarterly newsletter.

Helena systematically scanned and collated hard copies of the earliest newsletters (up to 2019) that had been deposited in the State Library of Victoria archives but which were missing from U3A MC's own archive. In March 2018, Lan Wang took over the production of the ebulletin from Helena, continuing to the end of 2022 when Margaret Styles stepped in. Whereas Helena had created all the content as well as producing the ebulletin, Lan put the onus for creating the content back onto those responsible for activities (since she was not privy to what was being planned, not being on the Committee of Management), but continued to oversee the ebulletin production and meticulous archiving begun by Helena.

A profile of Lan written by Merilyn Harris explains how Lan's future careers were foreshadowed by her early life and family experiences.¹¹⁵ Born in London of Chinese–Malaysian parents with multiple degrees themselves, Lan grew up in Canberra after the family migrated, her siblings and her being the only Asian children at her school. She followed her degree in anthropology and prehistory at the Australian National University with qualifications in librarianship, which enabled her to secure a job at the Parliamentary Library. After stints in Europe and Thailand, a move to Melbourne and a succession of jobs with the University of Melbourne, Curriculum Corporation, and the Australian Institute for Family Studies, Lan became a freelance editor and publisher.¹¹⁶

Armed with these skills, Lan helped to redesign the ebulletin and the website, and ensured the reliable archiving of all newsletters with the National Library of Australia, employing Mailchimp¹¹⁷ in order to deposit them automatically. These can be easily accessed by researchers or interested individuals using Trove.¹¹⁸

Members owe a debt of gratitude to all those who have been involved in producing the newsletters and ebulletins (all those mentioned above, as well as Sharon Carter, and office volunteers such as Kai Simpson, Paul O'Brien and Dawn Gibson) for being able to stay in touch with the organisation and all it has to offer them.

Budget management

Managing the budget presents a constant challenge for U3A MC. Management have given out information, thanks and appeals such as the following example from 2007 when bulk paper mailouts had to be managed and financed before the world went online:

Why we need your SSAEs

It's tedious always having to provide that stamped self-addressed envelope. But if you don't, it adds to U3A's costs – not to mention extra work for office volunteers in writing out an envelope. At \$30, our U3A membership fee is one of the lowest around, and we want to keep it that way. We have around 800 members. Without those SSAEs, we would be spending \$400 each time for a posting to all members. Our combined membership fees have to cover rental of the office and all the various course and event venues, plus phone and internet connections, plus office stationery and postage, equipment and consumables, plus printing and mailing costs of six newsletters ... So

thanks to everyone for being so good about the SSAEs and if you come in to enrol and forget to bring one, forgive the office volunteers for asking you to pay for a stamp!¹¹⁹

In the August–September 2008 newsletter, President Barry Fenton announced that rentals across all locations for 2008 had been \$30,000. Hiring office and classroom space has always been the biggest cost by far for keeping U3A MC functioning. Classroom hire alone constitutes the biggest rental cost, ranging from approximately 61–64 per cent over the period 2016–19.¹²⁰

Classroom hire

	2018–19	2017–18	2016–17
Rent	16.35%	14.77%	16.07%
Classroom hire	64.11%	61.27%	61.53%
Other	19.54%	23.96%	22.41%
Totals	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

While the cost of classroom hire dropped to 19 per cent of expenditure during 2020–21 due to the pandemic, classroom hire returned to 42 per cent of total costs for the 2021–22 financial year.¹²¹

During the 25th Anniversary of U3A MC in 2010, under the presidency of Jill Thompson, a push was made to solicit corporate sponsorship. Aimed at raising awareness of U3A MC within the local community and gaining financial support, the *Sponsorship Prospectus 2010* guaranteed exposure of the brand of a sponsor in the U3A MC newsletter, with the number of exposures pegged to the amount pledged. The agreement guaranteed inclusion of a link to the sponsor corporation on the U3A MC website. Similarly, a Patrons Program for the membership was proposed by David Hunt, a member with experience in fundraising. Under his direction, a pilot scheme for the Patrons Program involving 26 members was conducted. Instructions for how to sign up to the scheme would be circulated with enrolment confirmations at the beginning of 2011. From time to time, the proceeds of the scheme were reported via the newsletter. In 2014, \$6,000 was raised via the Patrons Program, and allocated to keeping membership fees down. Two years later, the scheme had only raised \$13,500 to date, but it was still being promoted throughout the year. The annual report at the end of 2017 announced that individual donations from supporters and patrons had ranged between \$20 and \$10,000.¹²² The program offered options to members to encourage a regular, but not too onerous commitment, as follows:

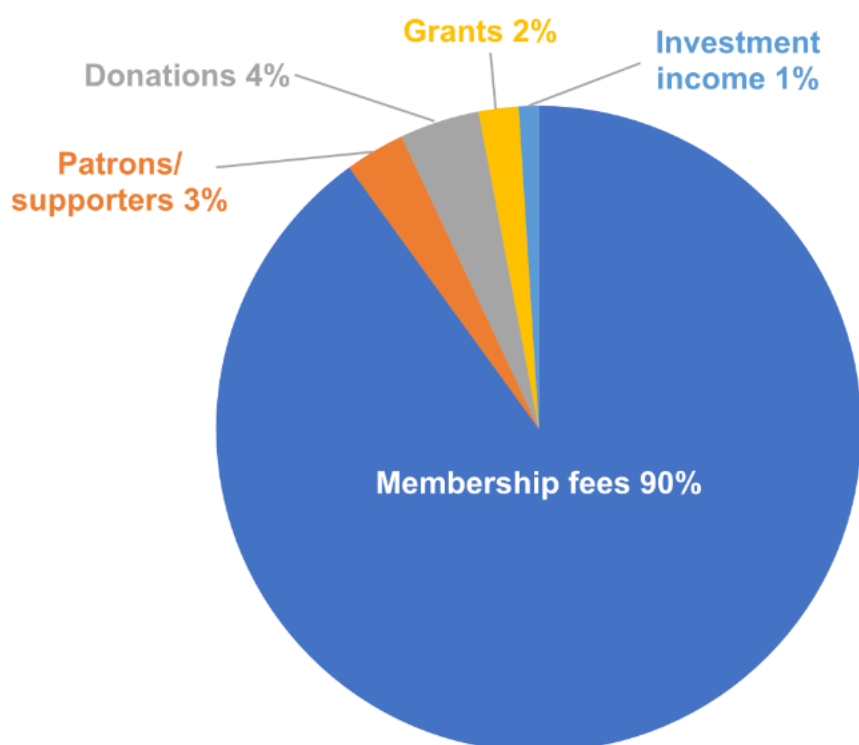
- Supporter – annual pledge of \$50;
- Patron – annual pledge of \$100; and
- Benefactor – annual pledge of \$500.

Other sources of revenue have included grant funding from state and local government bodies, but many of these opportunities have declined in recent years. U3A MC is also at a disadvantage because it has not been successful in achieving Deductible Gift Recipient status; although registered as a charity, U3A does not meet the Australian Tax Office’s education criteria, and is therefore unable to receive tax-deductible donations.

Then, other prospective funding sources have had their own conditions, presenting a further challenge for fundraisers. For example, individual U3As' applications to the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD), established in 2007 by the Victorian Labor government, had to be mediated by Network Victoria. The DPCD also allocated annual funding for the establishment of new U3As. Another Victorian Government body established in 2006, the Adult, Community and Further Education Board, allowed grants for a monthly public speaker to an organisation like U3A, provided the speaker was engaged for a whole year. VicHealth, established by the Victorian Parliament as part of the *Tobacco Act 1987*, would provide assistance for such classes as strength training. The Community Support Fund, established in 1991 as an initiative of the Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance, offered one-off grants for such things as upgrading equipment or paying for incorporation fees.

As the digital age has progressed, audiovisual and other classroom equipment has had to be purchased. To this end, Helena Ling alone raised \$3,300 from the Volunteer Grants Scheme, offered by the Commonwealth Department of Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs in 2009.¹²³ Helena and another stalwart, Carolyne Cohn, were active in raising funds for small pieces of equipment for specialised courses up to and throughout 2012. A funding working party set up in 2009 comprising Helena Ling (convenor), David Hunt, Tony Miles, Peter Morgan, Jim Norton, John Shilliday and Jill Thompson was successful in raising \$33,149 between 2009 and 2012.¹²⁴ Such instances were communicated to the membership, bringing to their attention the challenges of funding their organisation, and the efforts of these volunteers.

By far the main source of funding for U3A MC is membership fees, illustrated as follows:¹²⁵



A breakdown of revenue from 2017–18 to the present confirms that this effect has been increasing.¹²⁶

	2021–22	2020–21	2019–20	2018–19	2017–18
Membership and joining fees	91%	90.92%	85.80%	88.71%	79.88%
Patrons/supporters	3.69%	3.50%	2.72%	3.35%	3.80%
Donations	4.48%	3.99%	6.03%	4.02%	11.84%
Grants	0.60%	0.93%	4.40%	2.01%	2.09%
Interest received	0.23%	0.66%	1.05%	1.91%	2.39%
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Revenue breakdown

The regular annual membership fee for 2023 stands at \$95 per year per member, and the early bird fee is \$70 for full members, and \$55 for associate members, with no joining fee. As suggested anecdotally, the take-up of Zoom classes during the COVID-19 pandemic by U3A MC members outstripped that of any other U3A. Part of the explanation offered by the current officeholders is that U3A has a large number of enrollees from outside Greater Melbourne who were no longer comfortable taking public transport to attend face-to-face classes in the CBD, preferring the safety of Zoom classes, so the membership held to some extent, and at the same time, the pressure of rental costs was temporarily eased. Then, while acknowledging that promotion by Sharon Carter on the Facebook page has had a significant impact, Management introduced for the first time a mid-year intake in 2022 at a cost of \$50 with no joining fee, further shoring up membership numbers, and augmenting revenue.

Pauline Lomas, current treasurer and incumbent for the funding brief has had considerable experience in accounting and finance management in both the corporate and non-profit sectors. Assisted by Ann Johns, a member of the Committee of Management and former treasurer, Pauline streamlined accounting systems for managing funding and financial administration. Both Pauline and Ann are Certified Practising Accountants (CPAs). They have been able to build on previous efforts of Ann and another former treasurer, Lesley Bright. Besides being CPA certified, Ann lectured in accountancy at Swinburne University for 12 years, and Lesley has extensive experience in accounting, including at the University of Melbourne for 14 years. All three women agree that the main focus in keeping the organisation's finances healthy is to keep finding ways to increase the membership, which affects the number of courses and activities that can be offered, in a sort of circular relationship. As such, the development part of the funding and development portfolio concerns all members of the Committee of Management, but the onus for managing the finances specifically, without which there would be no organisation, falls on the shoulders of skilled and generous volunteers such as these.

Chapter 7

The Life Membership program

In 2006, under the presidency of Barry Fenton, the U3A MC Committee of Management enacted the Honorary Life Membership program as a means to honour a member's outstanding service to the organisation over a minimum of ten years.¹²⁷ A Life Member herself since 2018, Julie Nankervis made a recommendation to the CoM in 2021 that a Life Member liaison role be created. Her report was based on the findings of a small group of office volunteers during the pandemic in 2020, when 200 members aged over 80 had been followed up to see how they were faring. Julie was the perfect liaison person, since she knew so many key contributors as a result of her involvement in and development of so many operational areas over 15 years, including course coordination from 2010–16 as mentioned in Chapter 4. She and another Life Member, Fran Sciaretta, currently make six-monthly calls to the existing Life Members, focusing on their ongoing involvement with U3A MC and its activities, as well as how they are managing generally. In her own words, the Life Members 'are all very pleased to hear from us. It has been inspiring to see their resilience despite the pandemic and various health challenges, and rewarding to foster their continued contact with our U3A'.¹²⁸ A complete list of former and current Life Members is provided in Appendix G.

The following cameos of nine current Life Members who have generously shared their thoughts and experiences with U3A Melbourne City, do not provide all details of their contributions. A record of those achievements, along with those of all Life Members of U3A MC past and present can be found on the website.¹²⁹ Rather, the thumbnail sketches of this group of nine seek to portray to the reader the vitality and resilience referred to by Julie, and to convey the inspiration they have given back to U3A Melbourne City. They are introduced in order according to the year of their award.

John Besley (2009)

Looking back over his involvement with U3A MC, which began in 1996, John offered the following comment: 'Geography defined what we did'. In this, he is evoking not just the demographic aspects of U3A MC's membership from the outset, but also alluding to the challenges of accommodation faced by any U3A group, but especially by U3A MC. The move from the CAE to Ross House, then to RMIT University, then back to Ross House, which affected the identity of U3A MC so fundamentally, took place during the years immediately following his enrolment. By the time the relationship with RMIT University foundered, John was serving as president, and teaching a course, which he continued at Ross House. Here, like so many other volunteers, tutors and members, John felt at home, and requested that he be able to continue to teach his class there.

John had been invited to join the Committee of Management a year after enrolment, under the presidency of Don Graves, who must surely have noted his leadership qualities. He served as vice-president for two years under Don Graves, taking over as president for six years, then returning for a seventh year to fill the breach after the resignation of his successor. He is acknowledged as being able to 'run a good meeting', and indeed, his leadership skills, as well as his teaching experience, have served him well in contributing to U3A MC.

Soon after John's enrolment in 1996, Don Graves suggested he teach a course based on his academic background in economics, and having taught economics at Melbourne Grammar. John began tutoring 'Understanding Economics' for U3A MC, and continued to do so for the next 22 years. Being a scholar at heart as well as a leader and teacher, John qualified as a counsellor with the Australian College of Applied Psychology in his retirement, going on to teach a course in 'Positive Psychology'.

If there was one parting piece of advice from John, it would be the admonition to 'keep it relevant'. He explains that he does not mean that future office-bearers and volunteers should re-invent the wheel in negotiating the challenges of keeping the organisation alive and well, but that new, adaptive approaches should be always considered.

Will Semler (2011)

Will was awarded life membership in 2011 to honour his 17 years of service to U3A Melbourne City. For 16 of those years, he offered a yearlong Writers Workshop course, later to become the Monday Writers group. He also contributed to the Summer Program in 2003, with his 'Collins Street and Nearby Treasures' (later to become a short course), and in 2004 offered another short course, 'Back to the Czech Republic'.

At 98 years of age, Will comes across as a keen observer of places and people, with a well-developed sense of irony and of the ridiculous. His humour strikes me as distinctively 'Czech' in this regard, somewhat like the Czech film director Miloš Forman. Will was born and raised in Plzen, in the former Czechoslovakia. Just as war was brewing in the region in early 1939, Will made his escape, and with the blessing of his family, ended up in Australia the following year. His parents followed some months later.

In 2013, Will wrote two books which can be accessed from the archives of the State Library of Victoria: *State Secrets*, and *The Family Paperweight*. Mastery of the English language had been part of Will's arsenal since being sent to England to learn English in his early teens. He remembers being able to 'think in English' after a few weeks. In the books, written more than 75 years later, he chronicles the journey from Plzen with his brother, then his incarceration in, and later rescue from, a German prison near the Dutch border. This fortuitous event resulted from an order from the British Commissioner, who had been petitioned via letters from Will and the rest of the group of young men being held. After some months in London, Will chose Australia as his destination because it started with 'A' (he says this with a twinkle in his eye...).

Besides being chronicles of an extraordinary migrant journey, Will's books are also a compilation of pieces which define him. They are sometimes beautifully written travelogues, and sometimes moving pieces paying tribute to a loved person. For Will, the great benefit of belonging to U3A MC has been the opportunity to travel and engage in stimulating activities, but for these benefits, Will has given back in spades.

George Boag (2012)

The first course George enrolled in when he joined U3A MC in November 2000, was John Besley's course in economics. By 2002, his potential to contribute significantly to the management of this volunteer organisation had been noticed, and he was invited to join the Committee of Management, where he remained a dedicated member until 2011. His service to U3A MC includes his representation of U3A MC to U3A Network Victoria, particularly in regard to negotiating the changes necessary following the introduction into Australia's economic system of the GST, and managing policy concerning copyright matters.

But perhaps George's most noticeable contribution was in offering an astonishing variety of courses. George migrated to Australia from England at the age of 24, imagining a country as portrayed in films such as *The Shiralee*, and *A Town like Alice*, full of unlimited opportunity for a young man as enterprising as himself. His own interests and skills have been eclectic – from building a house, to running a scuba-diving business at Airlie Beach, to taking himself back to school as an adult to gain the HSC, studying liberal arts at the CAE in Melbourne, and history and anthropology at Latrobe University from 1989 to 1992.

The variety of skills and interests manifested in George's intrepid life journey is reflected in the courses he has tutored. As well as loving learning for itself, his philosophy includes the maxim that in order to learn something, you should teach it. In March 2003, he tutored his first course, 'The French Revolution', followed in the same year by 'The Crusades', 'Word Processing' and 'The Media and Current Affairs'. From then, his usual pattern was to offer a minimum of four courses per year, more than any other tutor in the history of U3A MC, a record which makes him feel 'fine'. Countless students in his courses have benefited from his intellectual curiosity, bravery and energy.

Juliette Zeelander (2013)

From the end of 2002 up until the recent past, a total of almost 20 years, Juliette has kept U3A MC's Music Ensemble running. Evidence of her sustained and conspicuous contributions have been, of course, noticed – participation in Seniors Week activities, concerts for members, performances at nursing homes and retirement villages, and a video produced by RMIT University students, among others.

But the story of Juliette's formidable contribution only starts there. At the time when the former director of the ensemble, Madeleine Dietrich, had suggested to Juliette that she take over the ensemble, she had played violin with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra for 15 years. As any trained musician will know, she would need to develop a whole new skill set to add to what she already had as a performer. She responded with courage, ready to solve the problems as they arose, despite having had no training as a conductor.

The first challenge was the size and composition of the group. The nine-member group she inherited comprised a violin, a flute, a guitar, and recorders. The choice of repertoire was difficult, but she managed to devise – based on her expert knowledge of different music genres and the mechanics of each instrument – a way to play as an ensemble, with such an unlikely mix. This adaptability and her analytical bent enabled Juliette to provide musical direction to the satisfaction and joy of participants and audiences, and to contribute to the music education of the players.

Perhaps the greatest satisfaction gained from this task, identified by Juliette herself, is what the participants of the ensemble taught her. In order to communicate what the music required, and therefore what was required of them individually and as a collective, she had to challenge her own limitations, to be brave enough to explore ways to communicate physically as a conductor, without words. Their response showed her the way to go, and that is how they taught her how to direct an ensemble, and how to learn on the job.

Juliette's expert music knowledge and experience not only enabled her to give so much to U3A MC, but also showed her bravery in challenging her own boundaries. For this, countless participants and audience members should be deeply grateful. She says, 'It's been fun'.

Betty Caldwell (2015)

Aged 93 at the time of writing, Betty has tutored U3A MC's Wednesday Writers group from 2005 up to the present, a formidable track record. As with the other outstanding individuals introduced in this chapter, her contribution was an extension of who she is. Trained as a stenographer, Betty describes being invited to join the board of directors of the Transport Regulation Board credit union. As the first and only woman on the board, she was able to inject some 'humanness' into administrative policies, and in her own words, she 'loved it'. In 2015, when Betty was nominated for life membership, the group members mentioned her compassionate side, her warmth and caring nature, as well as her expert writing mentorship.

From her youth, Betty had always wanted to write, to express the stories that formed in her imagination. She liked to write fictional stories about places she had never been, sometimes based on a historical event, and sometimes on a complete fantasy. Her first publication, however, was a collection of short stories entitled *Scotters Lane*, stories set within the development of what were then outer suburbs of Melbourne. By 2002, in the course of searching for the Victorian Society of Women Writers, she stumbled across an early group established at Ross House by the University of Melbourne, entitled 'Stories on Ageing' in May 2002. She stayed with this group for around six months, but by November she was noticed, and invited to join the Victorian Society of Women Writers. In December, a month later, she discovered the Wednesday Writers group under the auspices of the AEA. About this final destination of her six-month search, she says, 'I found my niche!' The amalgamation of the AEA with U3A MC, and the demise of the former tutor of the group followed in quick succession in 2005. Betty stepped into the breach as tutor of the group, and the rest is history.

Publication of the group members' writings has never been the ultimate goal for Betty, although the Wednesday Writers published two unthemed anthologies in 2009 and 2021. Rather, Betty has always seen the primary value of a writing group as being an opportunity for self-expression, sometimes a kind of catharsis. This was particularly true when she first took over the group, when several members were Holocaust survivors, or had been through other traumatic events, migrating from war-torn countries to Australia. When asked to reflect on her motivation for her longstanding, prodigious contribution to U3A MC, Betty said, thoughtfully, 'Well, you never know how far the ripples will go'. She also considers that she has gained much, not just the opportunity to share the joy of writing, but several ongoing friendships along the way.

Helena Ling (2016)

Helena was honoured with life membership for her extensive contributions across many of U3A MC's operational areas. She worked as an office volunteer at every level, and was a member of the Committee of Management for a total of four years. She was a key member of the Finances Working Group and the Volunteering Working Party, and worked with Tony Miles and Peter Salmon on promoting various projects, including the development of a new logo and banners. She was central to the transition from manual to online management of memberships and enrolments.

But Helena's unique contribution inevitably grew from her professional experience in policy planning and development alongside the pro vice-chancellor of RMIT University. She had first heard U3A mentioned at a Community Services Conference run by the university, and joined U3A MC upon retirement in 2005. Within a couple of years, along with Anne Riddell, editor of the newsletter at the time, she had identified what was needed to inject a higher level of efficiency and professionalism into its operations. When she joined the CoM in 2009, she was able to put into practice her assertion that 'established practice is different from published policy'. As a result, many of the ongoing pillars of U3A MC's operations have been able to flourish. For example, her insistence on the importance of written records has enabled the Life Membership program to exist, as members' participation and contributions are now on record. She was able to coach volunteers on committees in how to build on what was established, rather than reinventing the administrative wheel.

Helena's professional experience also fuelled her initiatives around fundraising. She was the first member to identify the City of Melbourne and the State of Victoria, for example, as sources for grants to community organisations, and to undertake the application process. She was responsible for garnering at least \$90,000 for various projects and equipment purchases, including promotional materials, room hire, health and fitness equipment and laptops. Perusal of the website reveals more of the specifics of Helena's contributions, but perhaps the common factor in her various involvements was recognising the need for developing the infrastructure necessary for the organisation to survive and grow.

Helena explains that her primary motivation for contributing so much to the policy and operations of U3A MC was the satisfaction of using existing skills, and having the opportunity to develop new ones. It was not all work and no play, however. Helena also reminisces about how she and her fellow volunteers would try out new bars around the CBD after hours in the office, and how she valued the social connections with fellow volunteers.

Jill Thompson (2016)

Jill's contribution to U3A MC is unique in that she is one of the four entrepreneurial spirits who met over coffee in 1984 to ponder the question of whether the idea of U3A would take root in Australia. Her professional commitment to adult education with the CAE and the subsidiary body, the AEA, was co-opted directly by U3A MC after its amalgamation with the AEA at the beginning of 2004. Between 2007 and 2009 she held the role of course coordinator and developed the course program through the Tutors Working Group. By 2008 she had been elected to the Committee of

Management of the group she had co-founded 24 years previously. A year later Jill was appointed vice-president.

During her two terms as president of U3A MC (2010–12 and 2014–15), she was tireless in shaping the future of the organisation, not only by developing organisational policies and programs, but by keeping abreast of demographic changes around the first decade of the 21st century, including undertaking Baby Boomer focus groups in 2012. Besides her natural organisational and entrepreneurial skills, and passion for photography, Jill is an accomplished communicator. No doubt drawing on her tertiary education in psychology and sociology, she has liaised widely with community and international organisations on behalf of U3A, and has been a frequent speaker at conferences and public events.

When Jill was asked why she had given so much, the essence of her answer was that she found satisfaction in seeing her efforts put into practice and bearing fruit. She mentions enjoyment, mental stimulation, involvement with other adults, agency and respect. Her parting words of wisdom were concerned with the future. No organisation, she said, can assume it will necessarily go on forever, unless it is prepared to take into account new conditions, the different levels of education and various professional experiences of new generations of members as compared with those of the past. It is difficult to imagine what U3A MC would be if not for the contribution of Jill Thompson.

Tony Miles (2020)

Tony meets me for hot chocolate after his 'Behind the News' class at the Multicultural Hub. At 82, like the other life members profiled here, he seems ageless, his vitality still fuelling his drive to make a contribution.

At 18, and after dozens of rejected applications, he got a break as a trainee advertising copywriter, moving from a small village near Stonehenge to a tiny ad agency in Westminster. From there a procession of agencies, some huge, some smaller, introduced him to a variety of clients and products: airlines, fashion, cars, cosmetics, household appliances. Even garden sheds.

The offer of a three-year contract as a creative director with Australia's biggest ad agency brought Tony to Melbourne in 1977. He stayed. Eventually he was granted Australian citizenship. He tells me he joined U3A in 2008 'to brush up on my shaky French'. A year later he was co-opted onto the Committee of Management to help develop a promotional program for Australia's first U3A and its myriad activities. Staying on the committee until 2013, he remained a contributor to the Promotions and Publicity Working Group for some years. Spurred on by Jill Thompson who, incidentally, shares his interest in photography, Tony has been involved in promoting – among other things – three photography exhibitions, the annual Seniors Week presentations, the 25th and 30th U3A MC anniversary celebrations, the film festival and the NGV Fashion Show in 2015, the 2016 writers' presentations at Melbourne Town Hall, and ongoing public forums, volunteer BBQs, annual winter lunches, and a multitude of Let's Do activities. Some examples of his Let's Do logos can be seen in Appendix F.

Tony's legacy to U3A is immeasurable, but he is also working on what he calls his 'Life Story', to give something of himself to family members from whom he has been separated by life's complicated circumstances. A natural philosopher, Tony's parting words are, 'It's interesting how things emerge...'

Margaret Rees (2020)

Well before joining U3A MC in 2006, Margaret had observed first-hand the value of U3A membership through her mother's experience, which fuelled her extraordinary commitment for the next 18 years. In the 1990s, Margaret's mother had suffered a brain tumour, which had destroyed her ability to read and write. Subsequently, she joined 'Shakespeare for You,' a course run by Doris Fitton at the time. The tutor supported her efforts to memorise and recite, for a video of the class's performances, her favourite soliloquy, 'The Seven Ages of Man' from *As You Like It*. Through the effort required in this difficult process, Margaret's mother was able to take steps towards regaining her reading and writing skills.

Serving on the Committee of Management from 2007 to 2009, Margaret's natural organisational ability – she calls herself a 'connector of dots' – was useful in streamlining some of the micro-processes of running a meeting and running an office, such as co-opting volunteers to organise mass mailouts, including the newsletter, before computerisation. But her most interesting contribution could be said to be her involvement with the Latin Poetry class.

A former high school English teacher and lover of poetry, Margaret joined Michael Fox's 'Australian Poetry' class. In 2016, he suggested she join Michael Baker's 'Latin Poetry' class, although she had no knowledge of Latin, and she found that she was able to appreciate some of the great classics of Latin poetry under Michael Baker's expert tutelage. Upon his retirement, the class reconvened as a collective, and in due course, Margaret acted as convenor, keeping the course afloat for two years until Margaret Hoobin, another Latin enthusiast, stepped into the role, which she holds to the present.

Other notable manifestations of Margaret's initiative and entrepreneurial spirit were her involvement in putting on events. One such was a concertised performance of Macbeth in the Supper Room at Melbourne Town Hall as part of the 25th anniversary of U3A MC in November 2008. The performance was organised by the members of the 'Shakespeare Revisited' class under the direction of Sandra Joicey, who still tutors the course today. Michael Fox played Macbeth, Flora Anderson played Lady Macbeth, and Margaret played the dual roles of the Porter in the play, and stage manager for the entire production. Cameos from this had been performed at Seniors Week a few weeks earlier. Also as part of the 25th Anniversary, Margaret organised a trip to Canberra to visit 'The Impressionists exhibition' at the National Gallery for about 10 people.

Overall, Margaret sums up her experience with U3A MC as 'eye-opening'. But as with the other life members, her experience with the organisation has been a two-way street, benefiting countless individuals over the decades.

Acknowledgements

First I would like to pay tribute to the staff of the wonderful State Library of Victoria. Their friendly, efficient service and the beautiful building itself made the task of searching their archive a joyful one.

I want to especially thank Jane Tulloch, secretary on the Committee of Management of U3A Melbourne City for the duration of this endeavour, for her steady support, intelligence, and friendly ear, as she liaised between me and the committee. I could not have done this without her.

I want to thank Julie Nankervis for her generosity in accepting Jane's request to further orient me to the task. She walked me through U3A MC's online archive pending my own access being ratified and arranged. A little later, when I had identified life members as a repository of valuable memories of U3A MC's development under their hands, she did the footwork, securing their willingness to meet with me, and providing me with their contact details. I am also grateful for her editing for accuracy of details, especially regarding course coordination, where written records were sketchy or confusing.

I am also grateful to Kai Simpson, manager of office administration, and Paul O'Brien, longstanding member of the team, who had significant input into my account of the office administration portfolio. Similarly, Peter Lawson, head of the IT team, provided necessary guidance for my account of the IT portfolio. Neither of these briefs are within my field of experience. I thank Peter also for his patience with my lack of technical skill when he arranged my own U3A account and set up access to the online archives. Kai also delegated Dawn Gibson, longstanding office volunteer, to provide access to hard copy documents held in filing cabinets, which she did with friendliness and efficiency.

I must also mention John Ogilvie, another office volunteer, who permitted me to use his profile to represent how volunteers are recruited, and their enormous contribution to keeping administrative procedures running smoothly. I am also grateful for the efforts of those office volunteers behind the scenes whom I have not yet met, but without whom we would not have an organisation.

Tribute should be paid to Helena Ling, who organised a team to manually scan the newsletters held in the archive of the State Library of Victoria, and filed hard copies of them in U3A MC's archive, when she discovered that many of them had been unwittingly discarded. An enormous contribution to my efforts was made by Lan Wang, who provided access to newsletters and ebulletins from 2011 to the present at the click of a mouse. She was responsible for their automatic filing at the National Library of Australia, accessible via Trove. Both tranches of newsletters have constituted my most important data source after the memories of key individuals. Lan Wang's generosity also extended to her offer of online editing and publication of this account. If this endeavour could be compared to an emotional roller-coaster at times, as obstacles have been encountered and overcome, Lan Wang's offer would have to be the high point.

I must mention again the enormous help afforded by Marilyn Harris' profiles of volunteers in the newsletters. When key individuals were not able to contribute in person, Marilyn's beautifully written, informative and sometimes amusing portraits of them enabled a lively cameo to be inserted into the history of the organisation regardless.

I would like to mention also the help given by Pauline Lomas, Ann Johns and Lesley Bright, who assisted me in presenting and discussing financial matters, terrain which is unfamiliar to me. They provided the authenticity required for the account of the funding and development portfolio.

The welcoming, generous reception by the nine Life Member interviewees was an inspiration, and one of the most enjoyable phases of this project. Among them, Tony Miles should be singled out for his cooperation in sending me samples of the promotional materials for insertion into this document. Talking things over, buoyed by hot chocolate and pastries after his current affairs class in the city, was a special pleasure.

The generous cooperation of a host of people has fuelled this endeavour, especially those who have provided feedback on countless excerpts when asked. On behalf of not just myself, but all those who will read this account of U3A MC's foundation and development, and who will learn what the volunteering spirit can achieve, I cannot thank you enough. Bless you all.

Di Roy

Endnotes

- 1 [U3A Melbourne City home web page.](#)
- 2 [U3A Melbourne City Courses & Activities web page.](#)
- 3 [U3A Melbourne City Let's Do Groups web page.](#)
- 4 Formosa M (2014) 'Four decades of universities of the third age: Past, present, future', *Ageing and Society*, 34(1):1–25.
- 5 Swindell R and Thompson J (1995) 'An international perspective of the University of the Third Age', *Educational Gerontology*, 21(5):429–447.
- 6 Graves D E (ed) (1991) *Proceedings of the First National Conference: Life long learning*, University of the Third Age, Melbourne, p. iii.
- 7 Golding B (2020) '[Sixty year ALA history, including the broader Australian adult and community education \(ACE\) context: Timeline.](#)' *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 60(3).
- 8 Anderson J (26 November 1985) 'School's in for older people', *Sun News-Pictorial*.
- 9 Wingfield N (2005) *History of the U3A Melbourne City Inc.*
- 10 Van der Pol, C (18–19 October 1986) 'Action for the third age', *Herald*.
- 11 Gibbs, C (14 October 1987) 'Retired, and off to uni', *Herald*.
- 12 U3A Network Victoria (1899) *Bulletin no. 3: A report to the members of U3A*, U3A Network Victoria, Inc.
- 13 Fitzgibbon J et al. (1986) *Universities of the third age in Australia: The first year. A souvenir booklet to commemorate the first U3A conference, February 1986*, U3A.
- 14 U3A City of Melbourne Inc. (1986) *Second annual general meeting*, U3A MC archive.
- 15 Formosa M (2014) 'Four decades of universities of the third age: Past, present, future', *Ageing and Society*, 34(1):43.
- 16 Graves D E (ed) (1991) *Proceedings of the First National Conference: Life long learning*, University of the Third Age.
- 17 Graves D E (ed) (1991) *Proceedings of the First National Conference: Life long learning*, University of the Third Age, p. 17.
- 18 Graves D E (ed) (1991) *Proceedings of the First National Conference: Life long learning*, University of the Third Age, p. 29.
- 19 University of the Third Age (1992) *University of the Third Age September 1992 Conference: Widening horizons, sharing for tomorrow. Conference at Flinders University, Sept 29–Oct 1, 1992*, p. 4.
- 20 Webb C (14 July 2022) '[Senior scholars group's pleas to council: "Give us a place to call home"](#)', *The Age*.
- 21 University of the Third Age (2022) [U3A Hawthorn: Sinclair Campus](#), U3A Hawthorn.
- 22 University of the Third Age Port Phillip (2022) [Where](#), U3A Port Phillip.
- 23 Huntington R (2022) *Overview of offering, membership and accommodation needs: Prepared for Community Relations, Melbourne City Council, May, 2021*. U3A Melbourne City.
- 24 City of Melbourne (2022) [Hubs and bookable spaces](#), City of Melbourne.
- 25 Webb C (14 July 2022) '[Senior scholars group's pleas to council: "Give us a place to call home"](#)', *The Age*.
- 26 Graves D (1987) *Submission to the Adult Education Review Panel, Policy Co-ordination Division, Ministry of Education*, U3A MC archive.
- 27 U3A City of Melbourne Inc. (1999) 'Coping with classroom problems', *U3A City News*, 130:2.
- 28 Besley J (1999) 'Enormous pressure', *U3A City News*, 145.
- 29 Hopkins Y (1992) *Report on Ross House to U3A City of Melbourne, June 1992*, U3A MC archive.
- 30 Graves D (1997) 'Annual report 1 October–30 September 1997', *U3A City News*, 117.
- 31 Graves D (2000) 'U3A teams with RMIT', *U3A City News*, 147.
- 32 Knox Leader (June 2003) 'Legacy to lost colleague', *Knox Leader*, U3A MC archive.
- 33 U3A Melbourne City (2001) *Minutes of the Seventeenth Annual General Meeting held at Legacy House, 29th November, 2001*, U3A MC archive.
- 34 U3A Melbourne City (no date) *Memorandum of understanding between RMIT University and U3A City of Melbourne*, U3A MC archive.
- 35 U3A Melbourne City (2000) 'RMIT welcomes U3A City of Melbourne', *U3A City News*, 150.
- 36 Fenton B (2006) 'We are moving', *U3A City News*, 205.
- 37 Fenton B (2006) 'From the president', *U3A City News*, 203.
- 38 Besley J (2009) *President's annual report for period 1 October 2007 to 30 September 2008*, U3A MC archive; Besley J (2009) 'From the President', *U3A City News*, 222.
- 39 Fenton B (2008) 'From the President', *U3A City News*, 214.
- 40 U3A Melbourne City (2007) 'Members all', *U3A City News*, 209.
- 41 U3A Melbourne City (2004) *Minutes of the twentieth annual general meeting, Legacy House, Thursday, 18 November, 2004*, U3A MC archive.

- 42 U3A Melbourne City (2015) *Report of the Accommodation Working Group – June 2015*, U3A MC archive.
- 43 U3A Melbourne City (2017) *Minutes of Committee of Management meeting, Wednesday 26 April 2017*, U3A MC archive.
- 44 U3A Melbourne City (2017) *Annual report*, U3A MC archive.
- 45 U3A Melbourne City (2017) ‘U3A Melbourne City office relocation’, *U3A City News*, 269.
- 46 U3A Melbourne City (2017) *Annual report*, U3A MC archive.
- 47 U3A City of Melbourne Inc. (1985) *U3A City: Campus news*, 1:1.
- 48 U3A Melbourne City (2000) ‘HELP PLEASE Office staff needed’, *U3A City News*, 148.
- 49 Volunteering Working Party (2011) *Plan for the systematic recognition/celebration of volunteers and Life Members*, U3A MC archive.
- 50 U3A Melbourne City (2020) *Annual report 2020*, U3A Melbourne City Inc., p. 14.
- 51 Kai Simpson, personal communication, 16 November 2022.
- 52 Harris M (13 October 2021) ‘Kai Simpson’, *U3A Melbourne City News*.
- 53 Paul O’Brien, personal communication, 24 November 2022.
- 54 U3A Melbourne City (early November 2015) *U3A Melbourne City Update*.
- 55 U3A Melbourne City (late November 2015) *U3A Melbourne City Update*.
- 56 Paul O’Brien, personal communication, 24 November 2022.
- 57 U3A Melbourne City (June–July 2007) *U3A City News*, 210.
- 58 U3A Melbourne City (December 2007) *U3A City News*, 213:2.
- 59 U3A Melbourne City (December 2009) *U3A City News*, 225.
- 60 U3A Melbourne City (August–September 2012) ‘Titbits from the database’, *U3A City News Update*, 241:3.
- 61 U3A Melbourne City (June 2016) *U3A Melbourne City News Update*, 263.
- 62 Holling J (2019) ‘President’s report’, [Annual report](#), U3A Melbourne City, pp. 3–6.
- 63 Harris M (26 January 2022) ‘About Peter Lawson’, *U3A Melbourne City News*.
- 64 Peter Lawson, personal communication, 18 November 2022.
- 65 Holling J (2019) ‘President’s report’, [Annual report](#), U3A Melbourne City, pp. 3–6.
- 66 U3A Melbourne City (6 November 2019) ‘2020 course guide and enrolments’, [U3A Melbourne City News Update](#).
- 67 U3A Melbourne City (15 January 2020) ‘Term 1 2020 short courses’, [U3A Melbourne City News Update](#).
- 68 John Besley, personal communication, 11 April 2022.
- 69 Julie Nankervis, personal communication, 15 November 2022.
- 70 U3A Melbourne City (2019) ‘Strengths’, *Strategy Workshop*, U3A City of Melbourne Inc.
- 71 U3A City of Melbourne Inc. (1985), *U3A City: Campus news*, 3:4.
- 72 U3A City of Melbourne Inc. (1986) ‘New philosophy group would like some help!’, *U3A City: Campus news*, 5:6.
- 73 U3A City of Melbourne Inc. (1986) *U3A City: Campus news*, 7.
- 74 U3A Melbourne City (30 March 2022) ‘Reminder: New tutor recruitment session’, *U3A Melbourne City News*.
- 75 Lang J (1985) ‘Popularity survey’, *U3A City: Campus news*, 5:3.
- 76 U3A City of Melbourne Inc. (1986) *U3A City: Campus news*, 7.
- 77 U3A City of Melbourne Inc. (1993) *U3A City News*, 64:3.
- 78 U3A City of Melbourne Inc. (1998) *U3A City News*, 119:6.
- 79 U3A City of Melbourne Inc. (1999), *U3A City News*, 133:4.
- 80 Davies P (2014) ‘Would you like to join our language team?’, *U3A City News*, 253.
- 81 Astle D (2015) *Cluetopia* (2nd ed), Allen & Unwin, p. 306.
- 82 Astle D (2015) *Cluetopia* (2nd ed), Allen & Unwin, p. 306.
- 83 Astle D (2018) *Rewording the brain*, Allen & Unwin, p. 82.
- 84 U3A City of Melbourne Inc. (1998) *U3A City News*, 122.
- 85 U3A Melbourne City (2000) *U3A City News*, 143.
- 86 Boag G (2009) *U3A City News*, 143.
- 87 U3A City of Melbourne Inc. (January 1987) ‘Writing: How to start’, *U3A City: Campus news*, 9:4.
- 88 Nunn B (1994) *From footprints to fantasy: A collection of works*, University of the Third Age, City of Melbourne.
- 89 U3A City of Melbourne Inc. (1985) ‘Courses for 1986’, *U3A City: Campus news*, 4:5.
- 90 U3A Melbourne City (2022) ‘[Summer School 2022](#)’, U3A Melbourne City website
- 91 U3A Melbourne City (15 June 2022) ‘First Nations: Term 3’, *U3A Melbourne City News*.
- 92 Pirritu (2019?) ‘[Pirritu’s story](#)’, Pirritu website.

- ⁹³ A biography of Edna Gault is held by Victorian Collections: McLaughlin B (1993) *A very amazing life: A biography of Edna I. Gault*, John Gault and Louise Joy, Melbourne.
- ⁹⁴ OnlyMelbourne (no date) '[The Edge: Fed Square](#)', OnlyMelbourne website.
- ⁹⁵ U3A City of Melbourne Inc. (1989) *U3A City News*, 27.
- ⁹⁶ U3A City of Melbourne Inc. (1986) *U3A City: Campus news*, 7.
- ⁹⁷ Mason S (2012) 'Come and socialise with the events team: An invitation from Shirley Mason', *U3A Melbourne City News*, 239.
- ⁹⁸ Thompson J (2012) 'President's message', *U3A Melbourne City News*, 241.
- ⁹⁹ Holling J (2019) 'President's report', [Annual report](#), U3A Melbourne City, pp. 3–6.
- ¹⁰⁰ Miles, T. (2021, July) Vale Shirley Mason, *U3A Melbourne City News*.
- ¹⁰¹ Let's Do (2022, August 24) Report to the Committee of Management, U3A MC archive.
- ¹⁰² Davies, P. (2016, January) BBQ lunch to thank volunteers, *U3A Melbourne City News* No.261.
- ¹⁰³ Holling J (2019) 'President's report', [Annual report](#), U3A Melbourne City, pp. 3–6.
- ¹⁰⁴ U3A Melbourne City (29 January 2020) 'March Forum', *U3A Melbourne City News Update*.
- ¹⁰⁵ U3A Melbourne City (2022) '[Summer School 2022](#)', U3A Melbourne City website.
- ¹⁰⁶ U3A City of Melbourne Inc. (1999) 'Publications editor', *U3A City News*, 131:2.
- ¹⁰⁷ Tracey Swadling, personal communication, 5 October 2022.
- ¹⁰⁸ U3A Melbourne City (2004) *U3A City News*, 187.
- ¹⁰⁹ Miles T (2012) 'Could you write an article about us?', *U3A Melbourne City News*, 239:3.
- ¹¹⁰ Ling H (2012) *U3A Melbourne City News*, 241.
- ¹¹¹ U3A Melbourne City (August 2012) 'Find us on Facebook', [U3A Melbourne City News Update](#).
- ¹¹² Riddell A (2012, September) 'Why Facebook: It can be our online community', *U3A Melbourne City News Update*.
- ¹¹³ U3A Melbourne City (2009) *U3A City News*, 222.
- ¹¹⁴ Graves D E (ed) (1991) *Proceedings of the First National Conference: Life long learning*, University of the Third Age.
- ¹¹⁵ U3A Melbourne City (2019) *U3A City News*, 277.
- ¹¹⁶ Harris M (2019) 'Spotlight on our volunteers: Lan Wang', *U3A Melbourne City News*, 277:7.
- ¹¹⁷ Mailchimp is an American marketing automation platform and email marketing service for managing emailing lists.
- ¹¹⁸ The [U3A Melbourne City News Update](#) (2011–20) and the [U3A Melbourne City News](#) (2020 onwards) are available online on Trove.
- ¹¹⁹ U3A Melbourne City (w007) 'Why we need your SSAEs', *U3A Melbourne City News*, 209:7.
- ¹²⁰ Pauline Lomas, personal communication, 2 October 2022.
- ¹²¹ Pauline Lomas, personal communication, 20 November 2022.
- ¹²² U3A Melbourne City (2017) [Annual report](#), U3A Melbourne City.
- ¹²³ U3A Melbourne City (2010) *U3A City News*, 226.
- ¹²⁴ Ling H (2009) *Brief for Funding Working Party*, U3A MC archive.
- ¹²⁵ U3A Melbourne City (2021) [Annual report](#), U3A Melbourne City.
- ¹²⁶ Pauline Lomas, personal communication, 29 September 2022.
- ¹²⁷ U3A Melbourne City (2013) [Rules of association](#), U3A Melbourne City.
- ¹²⁸ Julie Nankervis, personal communication, 17 May 17 2022.
- ¹²⁹ U3A Melbourne City (2022) '[About us: Supporters & Life Members](#)', U3A Melbourne City website.

Appendices

Appendix A

U3A Melbourne City Presidents, 1988 to 2022

1986–91	Nan Wingfield
1992–98	Don Graves
1999–2004	John Besley
2005–08	Barry Fenton
2009	John Besley
2010–12	Jill Thompson
2013	Max Worlond
2014–15	Jill Thompson
2016	Pam Davies
2017–19	Jen Holling
2020–present	Russell Huntington

Appendix B

Submission to Melbourne City Council, May 2021



OVERVIEW OF OFFERING, MEMBERSHIP AND ACCOMMODATION NEEDS Prepared for Community Relations, Melbourne City Council, May, 2021

What we are about

U3A Melbourne City provides accessible, lifelong learning and physical and social activities for the well-being of retired and semi-retired people in inner Melbourne. Our unique offering includes:

- **Lifelong Learning** – courses, webinars & forums, summer schools, face to face and online
- **Physical & Social Activities** – walking/cycling, theatre, film appreciation, lunches
- **Volunteering** – tutoring, committee membership, group leadership, administration

Alignment to Melbourne City Council's Strategic Objectives

We agree with the City's proposition that *Melbourne is a great place to age. The diversity of older people living in, working in and visiting Melbourne adds to the vibrancy of the community and is one of our great strengths.* Our offering, described above and detailed below, focuses on older residents of Melbourne City and inner Melbourne. As well, and now that COVID is less restrictive, we have resumed bringing people from outer Melbourne into the city to attend classes and events thus contributing to foot traffic which has been so reduced by COVID.

Membership

In 2021 we have 1000 members. This is down from the 1300 that we had pre-COVID but we are actively working on recovering membership through such organisations as Residents 3000. Our aim is to reach 1350 by 2023.

Courses/activities/events

Typically, we offer over 100 year-long and short courses. As well, there are weekly Let's Do activities including cycling, walking etc. Some of these have large enrolments especially walking (100+), gallery/museums (110+) and Weekends (80). A full list of the offering for Term 2 is included in the appendix.



OVERVIEW OF OFFERING, MEMBERSHIP AND ACCOMMODATION NEEDS
Prepared for Community Relations, Melbourne City Council, May, 2021

Our Current Accommodation and Costs

We charge our members \$95 per year. 80% of our revenue is spent on rent paid to 13 venues around Melbourne city including several owned by Melbourne City Council. Our fees are much higher than other U3As because of our need to cover central city rental costs. Many other U3As have substantial premises provided by the local government authority for peppercorn rental. Examples include Port Phillip which has its own house provided by the LGA, Hawthorn which has exclusive access to a former bowling green club house and Nunawading which has a wing of a new community centre.

Our Accommodation Needs

As advised, we conduct our classes in 13 different locations across the city. We have an office but no central location for members to meet socially. We appreciate that the City of Melbourne provides multiple bookable spaces that are low cost and of high quality. However, they are scattered between South Yarra and Carlton and access is restricted to a few hours per week.

We would be delighted if the City of Melbourne could provide U3A Melbourne City with the following facilities:

1. A dedicated Community Centre for Seniors within easy public transport that would include:
 - a. A 2-desk office area from which to provide face to face services to members who might number as many as 10 people at any one time. This could be shared any other senior groups besides U3AMC.
 - b. A meeting room or two to allow 10 people to meet.
 - c. An area that members could catch up with other members including hot water supply to allow making of tea/coffee facility
2. At least three classrooms able to accommodate up to 25 members in a class and which might be opened to create a space for large member get togethers.

Russell Huntington
President

OVERVIEW OF OFFERING, MEMBERSHIP AND ACCOMMODATION NEEDS
Prepared for Community Relations, Melbourne City Council, May, 2021

0401 080 762

Appendix - Courses and Activities 2021

Course Title	Course Schedule	Course Title	Course Schedule
Around the World in Thirty Days: Reading books by Writers, Travellers, Explorers	Full Year	Movie Discussion Group	Full Year
Art Pairs	Term 1	Movies of Merit	Full Year
Beginners Guitar	Term 2	Music Ensemble	Full Year
Botanical Art	Full Year	New Economy and Changing Society	Full Year
Chess	Full Year	Novels Group	Full Year
Circle Dancing	Full Year	Off the Beaten Track	Term 2
Craft Group	Full Year	Philosophers' Cave: community of enquiry	Full Year
Creativity for Wellbeing	Term 2	Philosophical Issues and Arguments	Full Year
Cryptic Crosswords	Full Year	Philosophy: The Basics	Full Year
Drama Improvisation and Script	Full Year	Poetry Across the Centuries	Full Year
Drawing	Full Year	James Joyce's Ulysses Read Slowly	Terms 1 and 2
Early Religion: An Alternative History	Full Year	Revise Your Pitman Shorthand as You Train Your Brain	Full Year
Family History--Family Tree & Story	Term 1	Roam from Home - Virtual Gallery Tours	Term 1
French - Beginners to Advanced and Song	Full Year	Rummy Tiles	Full Year
Fulfillment in Isolation/Retirement	Term 1	Script Writing	Full Year
German from Beginners to Advanced	Full Year	Secrets revealed: Masterpieces at the NGV	Term 2
History of Espionage	Full Year	Scottish Dancing	Full Year
History of the World	Full Year	Spanish - Beginners to Advanced	Full Year



OVERVIEW OF OFFERING, MEMBERSHIP AND ACCOMMODATION NEEDS
 Prepared for Community Relations, Melbourne City Council, May, 2021

Course Title	Course Schedule	Course Title	Course Schedule
History of Travel - Highlights	Term 2	Talking about Secrets	Full Year
History of the Universe	Term 2	The Art of Mindfulness	Term 2
Hot Topics in Cosmology	Term 2	Topics Worth Discussing	Term 2
Bridge – improving & supervised	Full Year	Wednesday Writers	Full Year
In The News	Full Year	What's News? (3 classes)	Full Year
Italian - from Beginners to Advanced	Full Year	Wine Appreciation Group 1	Full Year – retur
Japanese Language and Culture	Full Year	Wine Appreciation Group 2 - Virtual	Full Year
Latin Poetry	Full Year	Wisdom of the Ages	Full Year
Literati Lounge	Full Year	Writings of Power, The Law and Justice	Term 2
Mahjong Tuesday	Full Year	Yoga - Hatha	Full Year
Monday Writers	Full Year	Yoga - Kundalini Post-Beginners	Terms 1 and 2
Motivation to refocus your life	Term 2		
Activity	Schedule	Activity	Schedule
Cycling Tuesday	Full Year	Lunch	Full Year
Cycling Thursday	Full Year	Movies Tuesday	Full Year
Walks Tuesday	Full Year	Movies Friday	Full Year
Friday Strolls	Full Year	Opera on Screen	Full Year
Long Walks	Full Year	National Theatre Live	Full Year
Galleries	Full Year	Weekend Outings	Full Year

Appendix C

U3A Melbourne City courses 1986

City Campus

Art Appreciation
Bookbinding
Clear Thinking
Current Affairs: Australia and World Events
Current Affairs: An Economic Approach
History: Europe from the Middle Ages to the French Revolution
History of a Technology: The electric current
French – Beginners, intermediate and advanced
Italian – Intermediate
Making Good Health a Habit
Basic Statistics
Music Making
Philosophy
Philosophy – A Hindu Way of Life
Effective Reading (Voice Production) – Beginners and ongoing
Travels in Asia
History of Watercolour
Celestial Navigation
Communications in Human Relations
Current Affairs: The Weiss Report
History: Irish History
History: The Study of Judaism
Australian History
An Approach to Literature
Literature: Play Readings
German – Beginners (Year 2), intermediate and advanced
Latin – Intermediate/advanced
Mathematics for Fun
Music – The World of Opera
New Testament
Philosophy – ‘Peaceful People’
Self-Confidence and Development through Speaking
Typing
Writers’ Workshop

Hawthorn Campus

Anthropology
Art – Practical
Contract Bridge
Cell Biology – Genetic Engineering
Current Affairs – Australia and the World
Economics
French – Beginners, intermediate and advanced
Italian – Beginners, intermediate and advanced
Latin – Intermediate
Marine Biology
Musical Theory and Appreciation
Nutrition and Health
Philosophy
Psychology
Relaxation and Meditation
Sociology – One Aspect
Art Appreciation
Myths and Facts of Ageing
Car Maintenance and Care
Current Affairs – S.E. Asia
Comparative Religion
An Introduction to Computers
History: Australian
German – Beginners, intermediate and advanced
Japanese – Beginners and intermediate
Literature
Musical Appreciation
Nutrition – What’s it got to do with Health?
Piano Studies
Relaxation through Guided Imagery
Social Issues

Ringwood Campus

Armchair Travel
Craft
Literature/Poetry
Psychology
Musical Appreciation
British History

Creative Writing
Philosophy
Social Studies
Acrylic Painting
Monash Campus
Latin
Public Speaking
Creative Drama
Psychology
Asian Studies
Amateur Radio
Tai Chi
Portrait Painting
Literature (C)
Computers
Wines and Wineries
Social Group
Science
French
Ballroom Dancing
Energy
Jane Austen and the Pursuit of Man
Literature (A)
Australian History
Alternative Medicine/Healthy Living
English for Fun
Literature (B)
Water Colour and Sketching
British History
Creative Writing
Archaeology
Genealogy
Astronomy
German
Anthropology
Maths
Sculpting
Shakespeare after 400 years

Frankston Campus

Pottery
Computers
Painting
French
Sculpting

Source: Fitzgibbon J et al. (1986) *Universities of the third age in Australia: The first year. A souvenir booklet to commemorate the first U3A conference, February 1986*, U3A City of Melbourne Inc..

Appendix D

Handbook for office volunteers

Table of Contents

Opening the office/Missing door key	4
Keeping things secure	4
Signing on and catching up/Daybook etiquette	4
Assisting tutors	5
Checking voice-mail messages/Volume control.....	5
Providing contact details of other U3As.....	5
Marking apologies on class rolls.....	5
Dealing with bookings and RSVPs.....	5
Enrolling students in courses.....	6
Processing mail	6
Checking emails/Cancelled classes	6
Answering emails	6
Sending a standard reply.....	7
Providing membership information/Enquiry packs	7
Admitting new members.....	7
Banking/Banking tips	7
Entering data in Canopus.....	8
Closing the office/Leaving after-hours	8

Other advice

Helping maintain the roster	8
Managing clients tactfully/Confidentiality.....	8
Buying milk and other supplies.....	9
Keeping things tidy/Take tea towel with you!.....	9
Taking on more responsibility.....	9
Well being and safety issues	
Accidents/medical emergencies.....	9
Incident Reports	10
Insurance cover	10
Ross House Emergency Response procedure	10
Grievance procedure	10

Source: U3A Melbourne City (2016) *Working in the office: A handbook for office volunteers*, U3A Melbourne City.

Appendix E

Federation Square Flyer 2015

WHAT ARE YOU DOING AFTER WORK?

Introducing U3A Melbourne City. It's just the job now you don't go to work.

You're over 50. No longer working. Or maybe working part-time.

Life's good, but something's missing. Is it the familiar faces? The challenges? The routine? We know the feeling.

So how about finding new familiar faces? Tackling something different?

Like doing a course in a subject you think you'd enjoy. Or brushing up on one you already know.

Chances are that U3A in the City has what you're looking for.

As the saying goes, you're never too old to learn.

OUR COURSES: We have year-long, semester and short courses. On subjects as diverse as architecture and politics. Arts and science. Writing and

psychology. Literature and belly-dancing. Not to mention 20 or more language classes. (Overleaf you'll find a whole page of study choices.)

Plus **Seminars** and **Forums** on a broad spectrum of fascinating topics.

COST? How does \$60 annual membership* sound? (And since, generally, there are no course fees, you may very well wonder how so much can cost so little.)

Exams? No exams. But exercising our minds and making new friends is definitely on the U3A Melbourne City curriculum. And there's more:

OUR SOCIAL SIDE: We have a social program that includes the **Let's Do** groups. It started with Let's Do Lunch.

And grew and grew until now there's a list as long as ... Music and Books and Movies and Galleries. Then Cycling, Walks and Theatre. In fact, there's a Let's Do group for almost every taste and interest.

(There's even one called Sunday!)

At Australia's first University of the Third Age we've just celebrated our 30th birthday. And we've no plans to stop any time soon.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU? To find out, we suggest a tour through the U3A Melbourne City website. Or give us a call. Or drop by the office.

One way or another, we're sure you'll find something that works for you.

*\$50 for members of another U3A

**OVERLEAF: dozens of year-long, semester & short courses.
And a full social program, including the popular Let's Do groups BELOW**



Learn more about U3A Melbourne City at www.u3amelbcity.org.au
or pop in and see us at Level 4, Ross House, 247-251 Flinders Lane
Open 10am - 3pm, Monday - Friday. Or call 03 9639 5209





SO MANY COURSES # TO CHOOSE FROM

Over 150 short, year-long or semester courses and activity groups are offered each year, with new short courses being advertised every two months in our newsletter *City News* and on our website. There are generally no course fees. Typical courses are listed below with yearlong courses indicated by an asterisk (*). Classes usually last from one to two hours. Some break in school holidays, most do not. The majority of courses are held in the meeting rooms at Ross House in Flinders Lane, although a few take place in other CBD venues.

ARCHITECTURE

ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE WALKS

ART AND CRAFT

ART HISTORY: ROMANTICISM
BOTANICAL ART*
CONTEMPORARY ART APPRECIATION
CRAFT GROUP*
PAINTING: WATERCOLOUR*
WHAT'S NEW ABOUT COLONIAL ART

BRAIN GAMES

BRIDGE
CHESS*
CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS*
MAHJONG*
RUMMY TILES*

COMPUTERS & TECHNOLOGY

NBN FOR THE NON-TECHNICAL
THINKING ABOUT IPAD/ IPHONE
USING AN IPAD/ IPHONE

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE

ECONOMICS*
MANAGING YOUR FINANCES IN RETIREMENT

FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY
MOVIE DISCUSSION GROUP*
MOVIES OF MERIT*

FOOD AND WINE

BUYING WINE
COOKING & SHOPPING FOR 1-2
WINE APPRECIATION*

HEALTH AND FITNESS

COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE
FRENCH RELAXATION TECHNIQUES
HEALTH CARE INTERVENTIONS: CHOOSING WISELY
HEALTH & WELLBEING: THE HOLY GRAIL
HEALTHY HABITS: THE FUN WAY
MEDITATION*
MIDDLE EASTERN BELLY DANCING*
NEIGHBOURHOOD STROLLS*
YOGA

HISTORY

AUSTRALIA HAS A BLACK HISTORY
CHINESE REVOLUTION, PART 1
FRONTIER WARS
HISTORY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION
HISTORY OF THE WORLD*

INTERNMENT IN AUSTRALIA DURING WW2

SEAFARING: A SERVANT TO THE WORLD
TIPPING POINTS IN HISTORY

LANGUAGES

FRENCH CONVERSATION AND CULTURE
FRENCH FOR TRAVELLERS
FRENCH GRAMMAR FOR BEGINNERS*
FRENCH GRAMMAR FOR POST-BEGINNERS*
FRENCH 1, BASIC FOR BEGINNERS*
FRENCH 3, INTERMEDIATE*
FRENCH 4, POST-INTERMEDIATE*
FRENCH 5, ADVANCED*
FRENCH 5, ADVANCED READING & WRITING*
FRENCH 5, ADVANCED STUDY & CONVERSATION*
FRENCH MATTERS*
FRENCH RE-CONNECTION*
FRENCH THROUGH SONG
GERMAN CONVERSATION ADVANCED*
GERMAN 1, BEGINNERS*
GERMAN 2: POST BEGINNERS*
GERMAN 3: INTERMEDIATE*
GUIDED SELF STUDY OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
ITALIAN CONVERSATION, BEGINNERS
ITALIAN CONVERSATION, INTERMEDIATE
ITALIAN CONVERSATION, ADVANCED
ITALIAN 2: POST BEGINNERS*
ITALIAN 3, INTERMEDIATE*
ITALIAN 4: POST INTERMEDIATE*
ITALIAN 5: POST INTERMEDIATE STUDY & CONVERSATION
JAPANESE LANGUAGE & CULTURE*
MIEVEAL FRENCH STUDY
SPANISH 1: BEGINNERS CONSOLIDATION*
SPANISH 4: POST-INTERMEDIATE*
SPANISH 5: ADV. STUDY & CONVERSATION*

MUSIC

AMERICAN CLASSICAL MUSIC
BEETHOVEN STRING QUARTETS
CHOIR*
GREAT COMPOSERS: THEIR LIVES & MUSIC
MUSIC ENSEMBLE*
STRING QUARTETS UNPACKED

OTHER

ANCESTRY: INTRO. & ADVANCED
CRIMINAL LAW: INTRODUCTION
KNOWLEDGE BIG AND SMALL
NUMEROLOGY

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

GET THE MOST OUT OF AGEING
MOTIVATION TO RE-FOCUS YOUR LIFE

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES & ARGUMENTS*
PHILOSOPHY, THE BASICS*
PHILOSOPHERS' CAVE*
WESTERN INTELLECTUAL TRADITION*
WISDOM OF THE AGES*

POLITICS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

CONTEST OF IDEAS
CURRENT AFFAIRS*
DEMOCRACY: WHAT'S IT GOOD FOR?
IN THE NEWS*
INTERNATIONAL AID: ARE WE HELPING?

SCIENCE and PSYCHOLOGY

CLIMATE CHANGE & GREEN ENERGY
GENETICS – AN INTRODUCTION
PHYSICS OF EVERYDAY THINGS
POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY
PSYCHOLOGY AND BIOLOGY OF THE BRAIN

TRAVEL

BE A BETTER TRAVELLER
BUDGET TRAVEL IN JAPAN
INDEPENDENT TRAVELLERS
INTERNET FOR TRAVEL
TRAVELLING WITH AN IPAD

WRITING AND LITERATURE

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP*
CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP
DYLAN THOMAS: UNDER MILK WOOD
GREAT WORKS OF LITERATURE*
INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN WRITING Intro.
LIFE REFLECTIONS
MENTORING YOUR MEMOIR
MONDAY WRITERS*
POETRY ACROSS THE CENTURIES
SCRIPT WRITING & DIALOGUE
SHAKESPEARE: READING THE SCENE
SHAKESPEARE REVISITED*
TALKING ABOUT SECRETS*
TRAVEL WRITING: AN INTRODUCTION
TRISTAN & ISEULT
ULYSSES FOR DEVOTEES 2 & 3
WEDNESDAY WRITERS*
WRITING & SELF PUBLISHING AS
A THIRD AGE AUTHOR

Please check our website - www.u3amelbcity.org.au - in mid-November for details of our 2016 course program
U3A Melbourne City thanks **Ellen Sandell, MP**, State Member for Melbourne and her electoral office staff for printing this leaflet.



LIKE TO LEARN MORE?
Level 4, Ross House, 247-251 Flinders Lane
www.u3amelbcity.org.au 03 9639 5209

U3A Melbourne City: since 1985, Australia's first University of the Third Age
and part of the global network

Appendix F

U3A designs over time

Let's Do logos
(c. 2015–19)

Designed by Tony Miles



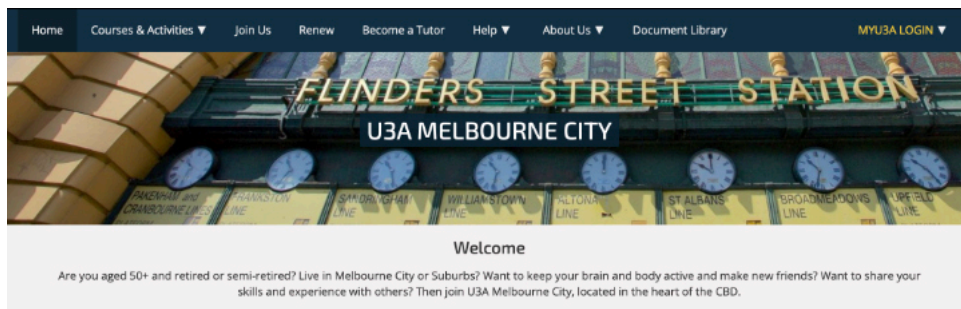
Website home page (mid-2018)

The screenshot shows the website for U3A Melbourne City. At the top left is the U3A logo with 'MELBOURNE CITY' underneath. To the right is the text 'A University of the Third Age Melbourne City' and a search bar. Below this is a banner image of a city skyline and a group of people. A 'Menu' sidebar on the left lists various sections like 'Home', 'About Us', 'Videos', 'Noticeboard', 'Membership', 'Policies', 'Courses & Enrolments', 'Choir & Music', 'Forums', 'Let's Do Groups', 'News', 'Tutors & Tutoring', 'Volunteering', 'Links', 'Contact Us', and 'Media'. The main content area has a 'Home' heading and a paragraph: 'Are you aged 50+ and are retired or semi-retired from the workforce? Want to keep your brain – and body – active and develop new social networks? Want to share your skills and experience with others? Then come and join U3A Melbourne City, located in vibrant Flinders Lane in the heart of Melbourne CBD.' Below this is another paragraph about volunteer tutors and course leaders. A 'Text size' control is visible. Further down, there is a section titled 'MyU3A Membership & Enrolment System now available!' with a list of actions: 'View/search courses and events', 'Join up as a new Member or renew your membership', and 'Enrol in courses/events'. A 'MyU3A Portal' button is present. At the bottom, there are logos for 'WE ARE A MEMBER OF U3A NETWORK VICTORIA', 'Watch us on YouTube', and 'Like us on Facebook'. The footer contains links for 'Sitemap', 'Disclaimer', 'Privacy', and 'Accessibility', along with the copyright notice '© U3A City of Melbourne Inc.'

Let's Do logos (2019–present)



Website (2022–present)



Courses

Life Long Learning ...

Courses include languages, philosophy, music, art, literature, exercise and much more, held at venues across Melbourne CBD. Revive an old interest or learn something new! [Learn more here](#)



Social Activities

Keep active and make new friends in retirement

Can't commit to a weekly class? Perhaps you prefer to go for a walk, cycle, see a movie, concert or play, visit a gallery, or head out for an excursion with one of our friendly "Let's Do" groups.



Membership

Join Us!

Membership is great value and is open to anyone over 50 and retired or semi-retired. One annual fee provides access to all our seniors' courses and activities. [Learn more](#)



Volunteer

Looking for volunteering opportunities?

U3A Melbourne City is run entirely by volunteers. If you are passionate about a hobby or interest, we can help you get started as a tutor or group leader. Alternatively, you can **help out behind the scenes**.

Appendix G

U3A Melbourne City Life Members (to 2022)

Current life members

Name	Position	Awarded
John Besley	Tutor, President, Committee	2009
Marguerite Grynberg	Tutor	2011
Margaret Ledley	Tutor	2011
Ann Hewett	Tutor	2011
George Boag	Tutor, Committee	2012
Blair Cramer	Tutor	2012
Judy Eldred	Tutor	2012
Christina Hill	Tutor	2012
Juliette Zeelander	Tutor	2013
Alma Kristensen	Tutor	2014
Betty Caldwell	Tutor	2015
Hilary Adair	Tutor	2016
Helena Ling	Office, Committee	2016
Peter Salmon	Tutor, Committee	2016
Jill Thompson	Tutor, President, Founding Member	2016
John Waldie	Tutor	2017
Rom Jagielski	Tutor	2017
Julie Nankervis	Course Coordinator, Committee	2018
Rhonda Favalaro	Tutor, Committee	2018
Fran Sciaretta	Office, Committee	2018
Jack Foks	Tutor, Committee	2020
Tony Miles	Promotions Working Group, Committee	2020
Margaret Rees	Tutor, Office, Committee	2020
Pat Collins	Tutor, Office	2021
Margaret Smith	Tutor, Office, Committee	2021
Max Worlond	Tutor, President, Committee	2021
Angela Moodie	Tutor, Group Facilitator, Office	2022
Ray Matters	Tutor	2022
Darrell Reid	Tutor	2022

Former life members

Name	Position	Awarded
Nan Wingfield	President, Office Manager, Committee	2006
John Cramp	Tutor	2007
Marie Einoder	Tutor	2007
Lillian Emmanuel	Tutor	2008
Alan Liubinas	Treasurer, Committee	2008
Margaret Shilton	Tutor	2008
Joyce Bromage	Secretary, Office, Committee	2008
Eva Meredith	Tutor, Office, Room Bookings, Committee	2009
Ailsa Miles	Secretary, Office, Committee	2009
Val Pincus	Social Secretary, Office, Committee	2010
Dorothy Davis	Tutor	2013
Shirley Mason	Social Coordinator, Office, Committee	2020

© 2023 U3A Melbourne City Inc.

Level 5, 168 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, VIC, 3000 | u3amelbcity.org.au

Phone: (03) 9639 5209 | Email: office@u3amelbcity.org.au