

Also in this issue ...

- ❖ **President's Column**
- ❖ **U3A Network Conference 2017 information**
- ❖ **Network News**
- ❖ **Regional News**
- ❖ **A Note about Tenants Fixtures**
- ❖ **Tax and NFP associations**
- ❖ **About good governance**

And more ...



The Power of Song

It's cheaper than therapy, healthier than drink or drugs, and more fun than working out. It brings feelings of elation and causes the brain to release those magic hormones of pleasure, endorphins, as well as the love hormone, oxytocin. If you do it in a group, better still.

- Catherine Armitage, Sun-Herald, 9 August 2015

Sounds like the ultimate feel-good activity – singing with a choir.

In fact, there are several research studies which show that singing in a choir can boost your psychological wellbeing. In part it's the increase in oxygen levels in the blood that increases those hormones and lowers stress levels; in part, it's the sense of belonging to a meaningful and cohesive social group. There is also growing evidence that singing in a choir could alleviate symptoms of Parkinson's, depression and lung disease, and improve immunity in cancer patients.

There are several U3As which have choirs. Many of them take their well-rehearsed and dulcet notes along to Retirement Villages and Nursing Homes to share the joy. Some are sufficiently developed to participate in choral festivals. Others, like the Silver Tones of Manning Valley U3A, have held concerts to raise funds for charitable causes: in the past three years, the Silver Tones have raised over \$8,000 for community medical services including the Children's Oncology Ward at Manning Valley Hospital and for the Manning Valley 'Push for Palliative'. That feeling of altruism must also be a big bonus for choir members.



Above: The Silver Tones Choir, under the baton of Pam Archer OAM, perform at Bishop Tyrell Place, Taree (Photo from the Manning Valley U3A Newsletter, Term 4, 2016)

President's Column

What is 'ageing'? I've been invited to deliver a talk at a conference in Sydney in July on the subject. My take is that ageing is a process that begins when we are born, and while it goes through several stages of life, it's not confined to older age.



The negative implications of ageing, which appear to underpin the approach of modern governments, focus on the increased cost to society and the public purse of medical services for older people, aged care and social welfare payments. Some attention is given to retention of older workers in the work force, and belatedly, to issues such as age discrimination and elder abuse. But these issues, while expensive, are not typical of all retired or semi-retired citizens. Stereotyping of age has led to a perception that ageing is a burden, undermining the sense of self worth.

The reality is that the extension of average (non-indigenous) life expectancy in Australia over the past 100 years from mid-60s to post-80s, due to medical advances and healthier lifestyles, means that the vast majority of those over 65 (the original point of qualification for the aged pension) can and do live active and productive lives for another 20 or more years. Older age is the Third Age, not "Old Age".

Older retired Australians are also a major component of volunteerism in Australia. The 2011 census, found that 36.2% of Australians over the age of 18 participated in formal volunteering. Of these, 31% gave their occupation as 'Retired'. Co-incidentally, 31% in the age group 65+, participated in volunteering activities. This was more than younger groups (other than the 45-54 cohort at 44%) but the figures reflect the point that while older people are more likely to have time available to undertake voluntary activity, they are also highly motivated to do so. The average number of hours contributed annually by older people is significant: the 65-75 age group contributed 104 hours, and the 75-84 age group also 104 hours.

The economic value of volunteer time is incalculable in the absence of a benchmark for value, although some estimates suggest the value may be as much as A\$200 billion per annum. Of equal, if not more, importance than the economic value, is the value of volunteering to the volunteer and community spirit. Volunteering is highly associated with health and happiness as positive traits in volunteers: the experience of helping others provides meaning, a sense of self-worth, a social role and health enhancement. And I haven't even touched on grandparenting duties!

I've entitled my address in July "An Insider's Guide to Positive Ageing": you can see I've got a lot of positive facts to work on

The past few months have seen the whole gamut of extreme weather across Australia. Wherever you live in our State, you won't have escaped either extreme heat, wild rainstorms, floods or threatening bushfires. I hope your members have not been adversely affected. It does suggest however, that the issue of Climate Change will be a hot topic in many U3As.

Best wishes for the remainder of this term and a happy Easter break in April.

Ainslie

Apologies for the late arrival of the February 2017 edition of *Newslink*, but we needed to wait for complete information about the 2017 State Conference - Ed.



U3A Network NSW Conference 2017

hosted by Sydney U3A Thursday 29th June, at the Sydney Lower Town Hall.

The Third Age – Creative and Healthy Living – A Fusion of Education & Creativity

Speakers include:

- Professor David Christian, Big History Institute Macquarie University;
- Professor Toni Robertson, Interaction Design & Human Practice Laboratory;
- Margret Meagher, Australian Centre for Arts & Health; and
- Chris Mead Arts Health Agency, Tasmania.

The Conference Dinner will be held on Wednesday 28th June, at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, 169 Castlereagh Street Sydney. The dinner commences at 6:00 pm.

Registrations Conference Registration opened on 1st March 2017.
Bookings are essential for all conference events.

Conference fees:

Full Conference fee – including refreshments, lunch and Conference dinner - \$174.
Conference only, including refreshments and lunch - \$99
Conference dinner only - \$75

Owing to catering requirements, bookings for the Full Package and Dinner Only options close on Friday 16th June 2017. The dinner is limited to 120 guests.

For full and further information, including registration and accommodation options, go to <http://u3answconference.org>

Associated events, conducted by the U3A Network NSW , 28 -30 June

Wednesday, 28th June, at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, 169 Castlereagh Street Sydney, 1.30 – 4.30pm – Small and Large U3As group meetings.

Friday 30th June, at the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts, Pitt Street Sydney, Annual General Meeting and Members Forum, 9am to 12noon.

Formal notice of these meetings will be provided by the Network Secretary in late April and early May.

Network News

Congratulations to Jim Tiberi (Nepean-Blue Mountains U3A) and **Doug Crocker** (Armidale U3A), who were both awarded Medals of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Australia Day Honours List, for their contributions to their respective communities, including U3A.

Congratulations also to **Pat MacLaren-Smith** who was placed on the NSW Government 'Hidden Treasures' Honour Roll celebrating women volunteers.

Welcome to new member U3As
Hilltops (Young) and Penguin (Tasmania).

U3A Alliance Australia

The NSW Network is the current Chair of the national Alliance of U3A Networks. Currently our President Ainslie Lamb is the Chairperson, and Allan Haggerty is the Secretary. The Alliance representatives will be meeting in Melbourne on 28th March, to discuss a range of issues of mutual interest.

The Alliance produces a quarterly Bulletin which provides regular updates of news and information about U3A in each State or Territory, and other information of mutual interest. These can be accessed at www.u3aaa.org

Resources Library

Recently two new presentations have been added to the site. They are

- *16th Century Art* by Carol Armstrong of Forster/Tuncurry U3A, a comprehensive resource which includes art information – especially painting – leading up to and including the 16th Century; and
- *Hatchepsut* by Michael Shannon of Shellharbour U3A. Hatchepsut was the first female Pharaoh of significance.

To find the Library site, and full catalogue, go to www.courses.u3anet.org.au

Jan Bennett, Manager

Insurance certificates

From time to time, U3As request the Network Treasurer or Secretary to send them a copy of the Public Liability Insurance certificate. This can be obtained from the Network website at www.nsw.u3anet.org.au. Go to the 'Network Services' menu, scroll down to 'Insurance', towards the end of the text open the hyperlink 'Liability Certificate of Currency', and print the certificate.

You can also find the terms of the policy document CUW GL 0616 on the Community Insurance website

www.communityunderwriting.com.au
under 'Products' - General Liability.

Balance 'n' Bones DVD

The DVD continues to receive a positive response from U3As as an easy-to-use and useful addition to their class offerings, and from individual members who want to keep up their exercises during term breaks. The exercise program was devised and is presented by Beth Denny, an experienced and qualified fitness instructor, especially for older people, to strengthen bones and balance.

Additional copies of the DVD are available for sale at \$20 each, plus postage (\$5 for single copies, postage free for batches of 5 copies or more).

For copies, contact Ainslie Lamb, 12 Station Street, Corrimal NSW 2518, enclosing a cheque or money order *payable to the U3A Network NSW Inc*, for the relevant amount.

Changes to U3A Committee Office-bearers and contact details

If your U3A has changes in the President, Treasurer and/or Secretary at your AGM, please don't forget to advise the Network Secretary and Treasurer and your Regional Representative of the changes and their contact details. If your email addresses are eg. president@..., "secretary@..." don't forget to change the relay email address to the new incumbent.

Regional News

Bateman's Bay U3A celebrated its 20th Anniversary with a festive lunch on 3rd March. Congratulations on maintaining a great program for 20 years.

U3A Northern Rivers (Lismore) has a reciprocal arrangement with **U3A Ballina/Byron**. Members of either U3A may attend classes or events without additional membership fees. Where class places are limited, preference is given to members of the U3A offering the class.

Liverpool U3A

From Rose Nancallas

As you get older you seem to spend more and more time at medical appointments. Recently 35 members of the Liverpool U3A History class ended up at Sydney Hospital. Thankfully they were not all struck down with an illness at the same time, but were there for a Historical Tour of Sydney Hospital & Sydney Eye Hospital.

They found it very interesting to hear that Australia's first hospital dating from the arrival of the First Fleet, was set up in tents. They got to see parts of the hospital that you normally don't see like the Boardroom and the beautiful Chapel of St. Luke the Physician.

Unfortunately I was unable to attend, but that afternoon I received a phone call from the guide to say how pleased she was with the numbers who had attended. The tour guides, are a great group of volunteers who along with the hospital trolleys and the shop they man at the front of the Hospital raised approx. \$90,000 last year.

But what I really appreciated was that the guide phoned me to tell me "what a *charming* group the History class was." I think that Elaine (a former teacher) must keep them in order so much better than I ever do.

If you know of any group who would enjoy a tour of the Hospital please phone Caroline Wilkinson (tour guide), 9363 1471 or email wilkspm@bigpond.com

Wagga Wagga U3A – formed at the end of 2015 has just completed its first year of operations – and what a success this is. President *Michael Dowd* reports:

"Our first 12 months done and excellent progress made. Our numbers now stand at over 250, and in the last 12 months we have run over 70 courses, running through from the physical (Balance and Bones, table tennis, walking, tap dancing ... who can forget the fun and enjoyment both of the performers and the audience at our Christmas party) to the esoteric such as meteorology, Irish history, Cosmology, etc to the practical including embroidery, gardening, use of iPads, and even solving cryptic crosswords or Sudoku puzzles."

Armidale U3A has received a grant of \$50,000 from the Armidale Regional Council's Stronger Communities Fund to undertake repairs and improvements to their U3A premises, ASCA House.

Kiama U3A has received a grant of \$18,000 to upgrade A/V equipment at the community premises in which they meet.

NB. See article next page.

Got something to share? A new course, a district honour, a community event?

Send news or articles to editor@nsw.u3anet.org.au or u3answ@gmail.com

Deadline for the next issue of *Newslink* is **30th April 2017**

Stories for the telling

(from *The Senior*, March 2017)

People with a love of family history and putting pen to paper (or printer) can enter the Yvonne Jenkins Memorial Award essay competition run by the Lithgow & District Family History Society. This year's title is "*An important time in my life was ...*". Write 1000 words about a vibrant memory, a local or national celebration, or whatever. Entries close April 30.

Details at www.lisp.com.au or secretary.ldfhs@gmail.com

A Note about Tenant's Fixtures

While it is pleasing that grants are being obtained to upgrade premises and equipment, U3As need to be aware that if they are not the owners of premises then the ownership of that equipment or other fittings may become the property of the owner of the premises. When the owner is a community owned entity that may not be a problem, but if the U3A changes its premises, or there is a change of landlord, your U3A may no longer have the benefit of the product of the grant.

Allan Haggarty explains further -

Generally an item affixed to another's property ie by any means other than its own weight (called 'a fixture') becomes part of that person's property and there's no right to remove the fixture without the property owner's consent.

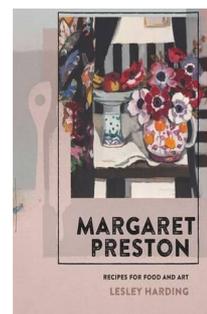
Consequently if your U3A as occupier of another's premises whether by written lease or a less formal arrangement is contemplating installing a fixture to that property the landlord's written consent to the fixture being removed eg. on vacating the premises should be obtained prior to the fixture being installed. Often the consent will be granted on the occupier agreeing to make good any damage caused by the fixture's removal.

Ideally in seeking the landlord's consent your U3A should specify in writing, in duplicate, the nature of the fixture, how and where it's intended to be affixed and how it's intended to be subsequently removed and agreeing to rectify any consequent damage. The landlord's consent should be endorsed thereon, with one copy of the signed document given to the landlord and the other retained by your U3A.

This should minimise any disagreement should the fixture have to be removed, whether on termination of occupation or beforehand, and whether or not the landlord disposes of the property in the meantime.

Book notes

Margaret Preston :
Recipes for Food and Art,
Lesley Harding,
Miegunyah Press, p'back
\$45 Ebook \$22.99



A new look at one of Australia's most renowned artists through her art, cooking and groundbreaking approach to creative life — fully illustrated and packed with recipes from Preston's personal collection. Celebrated for her vibrant and distinctive pictures of indigenous flowers, artist Margaret Preston was an equally colourful and outspoken personality.

She was passionate about the need for a modern national culture that reflected everyday life. For Preston, the building blocks of such a culture were not to be found in the Australian pastoral landscape tradition, but in the home and garden. Maintaining that art should be within everyone's reach, she published widely on the methods and techniques of a host of creative pursuits - from pottery, printmaking and basket weaving, to the gentle art of flower arranging.

Drawing on recipes from handwritten books found in the National Gallery of Australia and richly illustrated with Preston's paintings, prints and photographs, this book sheds new light on the fascinating private life of a much-loved Australian artist.

Mayo Clinic researchers have found that engaging in mentally stimulating activities, even late in life, may protect against new-onset mild cognitive impairment, which is the intermediate stage between normal cognitive aging and dementia. The study found that cognitively normal people 70 or older who engaged in computer use, craft activities, social activities and playing games had a decreased risk of developing mild cognitive impairment.

The results are published in the Jan. 30 edition of *JAMA Neurology*.

Tax and Not-for Profit associations

Recently a U3A contacted the Network for assistance with applying for a grant. The application required the group's ABN or if not, to provide a "statement of supplier". That baffled the U3A: what did it mean? It took a frustrating time to find out. So the application could proceed. But the exercise illustrated why it is a good idea for U3A to apply for an ABN.

Even though a U3A is incorporated as a not-for-profit (NFP) association, it will attract various taxes (income tax, GST etc) unless it is exempted from payment. The two taxes most likely to be incurred by a NFP are income tax and Goods and Services Tax (GST).

[For further information, see The Blue Book at pp. 39-41 about Not Profit and Taxation]

However, a NFP can be exempted if it is accepted by the Australian Tax Office (ATO) as a "charitable organisation".

It is therefore advisable for each U3A to obtain an Australian Business Number (ABN). Otherwise, there is an obligation to obtain a tax file number and pay tax on any profit. Application can be made online at www.ato.gov.au. Once the ABN is obtained, the U3A can apply for exemption from income tax and GST on the basis that as an educational organisation, is also a charitable organisation.

About Good Governance

adapted from Sydney U3A Gazette

Governance. I can hear you groaning already. Boring! Some people even say the mere mention of the term 'governance' makes them want to immediately roll over and fall asleep,

Instead of thinking of 'governance' as a dry, boring subject, consider: Governance is about people, communities, values, power, happiness, frustration, fairness, conflict, creativity, and making the world a better place.

Sydney U3A is a not-for-profit (NFP) organisation. NFPs play a vital role in society, in many cases directly impacting on the quality of people's lives. They exist in many different forms and sizes and operate for many different purposes or to achieve various objectives. They deliver vital services and support across many facets of community life, including health, aged care, social services, education and research, the environment, community support and leadership, religion, and culture, recreation and sports.

So, just what is governance? There is 'good governance' when NFPs have practices and procedures in place that help them to do their work effectively and openly, and when the roles and responsibilities of people in the organisation are clearly understood. This includes the particular roles of committee members and the roles of staff, volunteers and members.



Of course, good governance is more than rules and the individual behaviours of committee members. It involves strong relationships and is much more about working as a collective than individual responsibilities.

However, NFPs can do none of this without their committee members. These members have the ultimate responsibility for running the organisation, its property, finances, staff and volunteers. The dictionary defines these tasks as **Governance**, referring to the processes, activities and relationships that ensure your NFP operates effectively.

Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young - Henry Ford

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