

History of U3A

A Brief History of the “University of the Third Age”

The seeds of “Lifelong Learning for older people” were sown at “l'Universite du Troisieme”, in Toulouse in France in 1972. Other universities subsequently began to provide educational opportunities for older adults and improved their quality of life by bringing them into contact with academic programmes run by the University.

The idea spread rapidly through France with many Universities absorbing older people into existing academic programs, or, setting up courses especially for older people. The success of the French experience led to the setting up of U3As in other countries.

In 1981, the concept was introduced into Britain by the late Dr. Peter Laslett (Cambridge University), who saw a need for community-based groups, rather than those affiliated with a University. In Britain it was adapted by a group of Cambridge enthusiasts so that, instead of being dependent on universities as was the French model, it became a movement based on self-help and mutual aid, a kind of 'intellectual democracy' in which there would be no distinction between teachers and students, thus harking back to the medieval concept of a University as a community of scholars where learning is an end in itself. Both concepts share the same aim - that of encouraging older people to remain active in their retirement and to continue lifelong learning.



These new style U3As consisted of members who would all participate by teaching or by learning. A member can be a course leader one day, and a student the next. In Australia, U3A had its beginnings in Melbourne in 1985, when Dr Jack McDonnell offered the first program. It has experienced a rapid growth throughout the continent from that time. As of March 2018, there were over 240 registered groups from all States and Territories.

A Brief History of “U3A Pine Rivers Inc”



On the 23 March 1993, a Public Meeting was called by Councillor Lorraine Monkhouse of the Pine Rivers Shire Council in the Pine Rivers Community Centre. The aim was for expressions of interest in forming a University of the Third Age (U3A) in the Pine Rivers area. On 3 September 1993, a new Committee of Management was formed with Joe Pyke as President. There were now forty-five members.

Incorporation became effective on 21 June, 1994, and the title of the organisation became “U3A Pine Rivers Campus Inc”. In June 1994 the operation

moved away from the Council Offices and “Tea & Talks” were held in an upstairs room at the Country Club Hotel, Strathpine. By August 1994 there were 60 members, and by March, 1995, the bank account reached \$1,000.

In January 1997, the U3A Pine Rivers was successful in an application to the Gaming Benefit Fund receiving \$5,007.00. By adding \$708 of U3A funds, two computers, a printer, a desk, a chair and software were purchased. Arrangements were then made for U3A to use the upstairs rooms of Bunya House, Arana Hills.

At the AGM held in March 1999, a special resolution was passed to amend the constitution: making the format of U3A members "Ordinary", "Affiliated" and "Life".

The word "*Campus*" in the title had always caused confusion, and it was never fully understood why the Department of Consumer Affairs had included it in the name of the organisation. It seemed that, at the time of Incorporation, the Department thought U3A Pine Rivers was a "Campus" of U3A Brisbane. In November 1999, at a meeting of members, a resolution was passed to remove the word "Campus" from the title. It was now to be known as "***U3A Pine Rivers Incorporated***".

By the year 2000 the U3A Pine Rivers had become a well-established and successful organisation. The desire of the then President was achieved – **200 members**. The newsletter of January 2000 showed a total of 30 classes and activities being conducted during the term, six of them were computer classes. A Computer Club was formed using the facilities at Bunya House.

By the year 2001, unlike other U3As in Queensland, the U3A Pine Rivers did not have its own premises. Classes were held in a variety of venues, most of them made available by the Pine Rivers Shire Council for either no cost or a suitable rent. All of the venues have continued to be used.

In 2003 the highlight of the year was the celebration of our 10th year of successful and continued operation. This was celebrated with a special AGM and luncheon held at the Pine Rivers Memorial Bowls Club.

Over 2004 and 2005, the membership of the U3A continued to grow, reaching a total of 354 members at the end of 2005.



The growth of the U3A Pine Rivers Inc. continued to expand during 2006 to 2007. At the end of 2007 there were:

- 475 members;
- 33 different classes and activities held on a regular basis. Most of these classes are ongoing.
- 13 computer courses (many courses being either 4 or 6 weeks) and
- 6 social activities and excursions were held each year.

The Pine Rivers Shire Council granted the U3A Pine Rivers a lease on Kings Cottage at Petrie. As a consequence, we were able to set up an office and better storage area as well as improving the number of classes and the facilities available.

2008 marked the 15th anniversary of U3A Pine Rivers. A booklet called ***The First 15 Years*** was produced and made available to members and many dignitaries in the area.

2011 the Open Day that was going to be held in January at the Strathpine Community Centre was unfortunately cancelled due to the severe flood situation.

2015 marked a real turning point in the history of U3A Pine Rivers.

Thanks to the efforts of Andy Doogan and with extreme cooperation of the Moreton Bay Regional Council, in September we were given a lease on the premises at 1480 Anzac Avenue, Kallangur that had previously been occupied by the Kallangur Library but had been empty for some time.

This lease was for a term of 5 years initially with a rental of \$1 per year which was a tremendous boost to our finances. The venue was named the "**U3A Pine Rivers Centre**". The Official Opening of the new U3A Pine Rivers Centre by Moreton Bay Regional Council, Mayor Alan Sutherland in

October 2015 was a great success and a true indication of what having our own "home" meant to our members.

Membership at the end of 2017 had reached the very significant milestone of 1,000 members. The new facilities and layout at U3A Centre at Kallangur allowed us to cater for more members and a number of new classes conducted by tutors expert in their fields.

The following is a summary written by Mr John Tendero, for the 15-year history:

Over the fifteen years of operation, many members have joined the organisation and have remained active members. Many other members have also had continuous membership for many years. However, many other people join the organisation for a time and then for a variety of reasons do not continue as members. Others cease membership for a time and then renew membership. In all respects all members can be proud of the fact that the U3A Pine Rivers Inc. can be considered to be a successful organisation.



Ten years further on has not changed those views. We still have a small number of the original members of U3A and a very large number of newer members. U3A Pine Rivers Inc. has continued to be a very successful organisation.

Sincere thanks go to Mr John Tendero who researched and produced a paper titled **“U3A Pine Rivers Inc. Twenty-five years – 1993 to 2018”**