

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is a U3A?**

U3As provide learning, social and physical activities to retirees. Run by volunteers, we offer a great community to help you get the most out of your retirement.

### **Why is attending a U3A good for my mental and physical health?**

Social connection is vital for mental and physical health and links to our sense of self, group identities, purpose, and quality of life. How we experience and view the world and how we were raised within our family or culture can shape our understanding and perception of being and connecting in the world.

The evidence tells us:

1 in 4 Australians aged 12 - 89 years experience 'problematic' loneliness (approximately 5 million people).

Some research indicates that Australians over 65 years are often less lonely than younger people, experience less depression and social anxiety and are more engaged socially.

A recent survey by the Federation of Nine Councils on the Ageing (COTA) across Australia suggests that 22% of Queenslanders aged 50 years and over were not content with their friendships and relationships, 5% hadn't had contact with anyone in a week, and 8% felt lonely all or most of the time. This is most likely similar to other states.

Older people find support for their well-being (and mental health) through family and friends, exercise, good nutrition, hobbies, connecting with nature, and staying connected with digital technology.

Connecting with friends, family, acquaintances, and even one-off or semi-regular casual interactions can help prevent or alleviate social isolation and feelings of loneliness. Good health adds life to years.

## **What happens at a U3A?**

U3As provide opportunities to try something new, make friends, and share your knowledge and skills with others. Courses range from physical fitness to desk-based classes, language studies, art and craft classes, social activities, and more.

## **Do I need to be a member to attend any courses or activities?**

Yes, only financial members are eligible to attend courses or activities.

## **May I try a class before joining U3A?**

Prospective members may try a class or activity two or three times for free before joining.

## **How much does it cost?**

Membership costs \$30 per year. Becoming a member enables you to enrol in classes and activities with no additional payment unless expressly noted in the information for that activity. There are usually additional fees for excursions and social activities such as luncheons.

## **Where is the Alpine U3A located?**

Mount Beauty is in northeast Victoria, 90 km southeast of Albury/Wodonga and 30 km from the Falls Creek ski resort. The headquarters are in the Senior Citizens Centre, Tawonga Crescent, Mount Beauty.

## **Do I need to study for exams?**

Part of the fun of attending a U3A is that there are no exams or tests but learning for the joy of learning.

## **What educational level do I need to have to go to the U3A?**

The U3A model does not require any prior educational level.

## **Is there a limit to the number of classes I can join?**

Your membership allows you to join an unlimited number of classes and activities, pending availability and subject to class clashes. There could be a waitlist for some classes, but this occurs rarely. There is no fee per class—your membership fee covers all classes. There may be a cost for materials required for a particular class.

## **Terms**

These follow the dates of the Victorian School Terms.

### **Can I join the U3A at any time of the year?**

Membership is open throughout the year – from 1st January to 31st December.

### **How much time will I need to set aside?**

Most classes run for approximately 2 hours. Social activities such as Day Trips or Luncheons will be more leisurely.

### **What if I can't attend a class or wish to drop out?**

Please advise the class/activity **Convenor** if you are unable to attend. Three consecutive unexplained absences from a class will result in a deletion from the class or activity. As some classes have a waiting list, members are requested to advise the Convenor if they no longer wish to attend.