

Newsletter



YARRA CITY
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

April 2026

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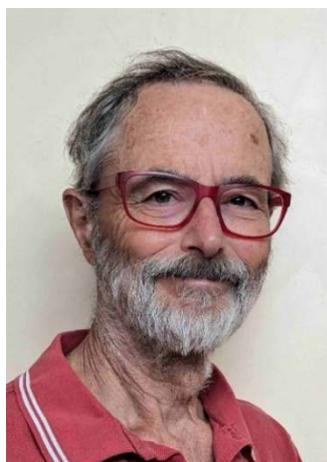
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(Closed public holidays & school holidays)

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President Peter Moore

President's Report

Welcome, or welcome back! The 2026 U3A Yarra City year is well under way.

Our membership stands at around 550, another record level for this time of year. A growing group indicates that our members are getting what they want – classes that resonate with what people want to do, and social contact with others in their 'Tribe'. This is what we do as a U3A.

We have several new classes this year, as detailed in the Program and Forums section of this Newsletter. I do want to highlight one only partially new class. Our most popular class in each of our recent years has been 'Lunch Around the World' led monthly on Tuesdays by Jan Lawson. So popular that many eager members miss out. Jan has agreed to offer an additional 'Lunch Around the World – Friday' and this has also been popular. At the time of writing there are still a few places available.

We've also increased the frequency of one-off Events, with a wine appreciation session and a ferry trip to Portarlington already undertaken. We have a small sub-committee lining up events so there will be more to come throughout the year.

All this shows the importance to our members of social gatherings, and it also highlights the ever-present need for tutors to enable all of our classes and events. If you have a good idea for a class or event, and especially if you are willing and able to make it happen, please do contact any member of your committee – we'd love to help you put it into action!

In February a highly successful Tutors' Meeting was conducted by Barry Giddings (Committee member and Tutor Support). The 34 Tutors in attendance discussed their issues of concern and shared solutions. Our MWiz system was discussed and general agreement that it is making it easier for our Tutors to contact their class members, record attendances and if necessary, get in touch with a member's emergency contact person.

Our Forums program is going from strength to strength. A couple of fine presentations have been conducted already, including one followed by our annual Welcome Lunch. This

excellent event was absolutely a full house and reminds us that with our expanding membership we need to seek larger premises for popular events; you can expect to see us increasingly using larger venues.

A terrific start to every Forum is the welcoming tea and coffee. I'm pleased to report that we now have a roster of volunteers to make sure this happens. When next you go to a Forum, make sure to have a cuppa, and do thank the volunteer who hands it to you.

As most members know, U3A Yarra City is an incorporated not-for-profit entity. As such we have our Rules of Association, and we also have Policies that describe how we go about our activities. Please have a look at these on our website. Your committee is currently reviewing all of these Rules and Policies; there will be announcements of proposed changes to the Rules later in the year, with the intention that these will be endorsed by our AGM in August.

The first Policy to be revised is the Health and Safety Policy. An outcome from this review is the provision of First Aid kits to all of our more risky classes such as cycling and walking. Look out for the bright red bum bags.

I hope to see you at a U3A Yarra City activity this year.

Very best wishes,
Peter Moore



Mary and Mink serve lunch



Mary Annie and Susannah chat over lunch



Peter and Lynell with guest presenter Jordan Crook

Program and Forums Reports

Thank you to the tutors who have returned for 2026. We value the work that they do. Many put in hours of preparation for their classes. Remember they are volunteers.

The year started with 52 classes with most tutors continuing their classes for 2026. Due to the popularity of Lunch Around the World on Tuesday Jan Lawson offered to run a second Lunch Around the World on Friday to accommodate those who are on the waiting list. The first lunch around the world will be on the Friday after Easter. We thank Jan for her generosity in offering the second session. Lawn Bowls at Fitzroy Bowling Club is a new addition to our outdoor activities. Christine Butera added Card and Board games as a relaxation activity, as well as her Morning Walk from Fitzroy. Thank you to Cathy Hutton for organising our one-off event to Portarlington. A very pleasant trip on the ferry and an enjoyable lunch at the Portarlington Hotel. Famed for its mussels but not selected by most.

Further trips planned as one-off events in the coming months are:

- Tour of the new Metro Tunnel stations - Cathy Hutton
- Cranbourne Gardens - Mary Walker
- Heidi Art Galley - Gina De Francesca

Look for further details on the website. Further activities are in the pipeline, but some negotiations are required before they become a reality.

Maria Hudson (Program)



The first two U3A Yarra City Forums were well attended with interesting exchanges with the speakers. Jordan Crook (from the Victorian National Parks Association) outlined the history of the acquisition and on-going care of the many Victorian National Parks, some very large and distant, some small and local. Many members have their favourites.

Yarra River Riverkeeper, Emma Barnett, introduced the concept that a river (for example, the Yarra Birrarung), may be deemed a legal living being, with rights similar to those of humans. The Whanganui River (in New Zealand) now has this status. Discussions continued after Emma's presentation, about the possible 'personhood' of rivers - and also how to visit the beautiful Whanganui River!

The easiest way to register for Forums is to join the Forums List which enables you to sign up (with only two clicks) to Forums you want to attend. The Collingwood Library meeting room has a limit on the number it can accommodate, so if you find you cannot attend after registering, please email Lynell at forums.u3ayarracity@gmail.com to make way for another person.

Lynell McCluggage (Forums)

Portarlington trip

We all met at the Ferry Terminal at Docklands and ordered a coffee or beverage of choice and chatted about our upcoming trip to Portarlington.

As we boarded the Geelong Flyer at 9:30am we all decided the best view was from the top deck and proceeded to our window seats. The Captain advised that there were strong winds so it may be bumpy when we hit the heads. Bumpy you say! We were rocking and rolling and for those brave enough or who had no choice (toilets) to venture downstairs, it was not an easy task! But we arrived safe and sound 72 minutes later and disembarked on Portarlington Pier.



Geelong Flyer at Docklands

We all gathered for a photo then left in groups to explore before our next schedule stop; 12:30pm at The Grand Hotel. Some strolled to the historic Old Mill (now a private facility) whilst others browsed the many gift shops.

Lunch was in the Atrium at the Grand Hotel. We had a nice long table but were disappointed that the Thursday specials did not carry over to Friday. Mussels \$20 - bargain! But not on Friday! We all had our chosen meal washed down with a glass or two of our favourite drop. 'Afters' were either a visit to the Portarlington Ice Creamery, coffee and cake at the Bakery, or a wander around the amazing sculpture playground.

Back to the pier at 3:45pm for our ferry home, but this time it was definitely smooth sailing. We glided back into the ferry terminal where we all went our separate ways home, to put our feet up on the couch and reminisce on a fine day out.

Special shout out to Cathy Hutton for organizing the outing.



Arriving at Portarlington

Elizabeth Way

World Dancing

A couple of years ago I returned to folk dancing after a break of nearly two decades. The joy of moving to uplifting music reminded me immediately of what I'd been missing. As time went on, I found - as many people do - that dancing lifted my mood and brought a renewed sense of confidence and positivity into everyday life.

Even if you've been told you have 'two left feet', you'll be warmly welcomed in World Dancing. I was often told I couldn't dance, but like many people, I discovered that with patient teaching I could indeed learn - at my own pace. Our class is all about enjoying uplifting music, simple steps, the fun of moving together, and - at your own pace - challenging yourself.

Each week we travel the world through easy, folk-inspired circle dances - from Greece and Russia to the Balkans, Poland, Yemen and more. The dances are taught step by step, with clear instructions and plenty of repetition, so beginners can join in confidently and feel the reward of learning quickly.

My professional background is as a music teacher, and those skills are carried across into dance teaching. Each dance is explained clearly and concisely, and a structured approach is provided that makes learning easy and rewarding. I'm also a patient teacher, ensuring that everyone feels included, supported, and able to make progress in learning to dance.

My own experience includes three years of intensive participation in the classes of a world-class folk dance teacher, whose example continues to inspire me.

For over two years I've led a successful, enjoyable class at U3A Darebin, and more recently I've taken on the Yarra City group - a joy to share with new members.

World Dancing is great for fitness and stamina, and it's also wonderful for your mind. Learning new patterns keeps your brain active, and the music lifts your spirits. Best of all, you'll be part of a welcoming group with a relaxed, friendly atmosphere.

No experience is needed - just come along, give it a try, and discover how much fun dancing can be.

Katrina Breen



Folk dancing in action (Public Domain image)

Wednesday Table Tennis

'Table Tennis for Fun' is offered at 2:00-3:30 pm on Wednesdays and Fridays during school terms. The Wednesday group started some years ago, possibly 2012.

The invitation is to come along and have a hit and, almost as often, a giggle. Most of us have played table tennis as youngsters, but a few have joined to learn how to hit that little table tennis ball onto the table.

We have six tables at the front of the Stanton Street Hall behind the Collingwood Town Hall. As players arrive, they form into singles or doubles, grab a table and start hitting the ball, warming up to have a game. These days a game is won when the first side reaches 11 points. Typically, people have three games before changing partners. Singles, where two players are playing one another, tend to be more serious, whereas doubles, in which teams of two people play each other, tend to be more chaotic, but still fun. During the session, players can play singles and doubles.

The tutor's role involves going to the Collingwood Library to check out the key to the Hall, unlocking the Stanton Street Hall, turning on the lights, and putting out the box of table tennis paddles and the balls. When 3:30 comes around, the tutor returns the box of paddles and the balls to their cubby in the U3A office at the front of the building, turns off the lights, locks the hall, and returns the key to the Library; oh, and keeps attendance.



An enthusiastic Wednesday Table Tennis group

From memory, our first tutor was Wendy Hall. This was before COVID when we had cups of tea after playing for an hour. Then Susannah Dax took on the role. Cecelia Winkelman joined her and they shared it while one or the other went overseas. While Susannah is currently on a break, recovering from knee surgery, Anne Thorogood has stepped in to shoulder the responsibility. We have a list of Convenors - players who will back up the tutors when both are unable to come and open up for a session.

Cecelia Winkelman and Anne Thorogood

Friday Table Tennis

Ah, table tennis, the very name seems – genteel, refined, proper – the kind of game many of us played at home on the laminex table with cork bats on a Sunday evening after the dishes were done.

But here we now are in the TT stadium (shed) with championship tables, spongy coloured bats and a choice of yellow or white balls.

After a contest for the ‘best’ bat in the box, random games start up.

Spinning roof ventilators cast their disco shadows on the tables. Spinning balls skim the nets.

Doubles players alternate, pirouette and spin in pursuit of them.

Was that ball really IN?

C’mon, did you truly mean the ball to do that?

Hey, keep the serve speed down, I am a bit tired.

What is the score again? We can’t be that far behind.

Whose serve is it now?

Who served that last ball?

Hey watch the spin, I can’t be expected to get that back.

Can I change hands with my bat?

Are you allowed to have two bats?

Did anyone notice all that dust under the table, it’s putting me off my usual quality game.

Has anybody seen that movie about Marty the table tennis guy? Well it’s not giving you any tips for playing here. May as well watch a re-run of Forest Gump.

Jeez the pace is hot here today.

What was the score again?

Did we really win? OK then, I am keeping this partner for the next game.

Contd...

Gordon Flynn



Michael follows through from a crushing smash



Jape makes space for a sliced backhand from Denise



David hammers a topspin winner



Anne imparts her trademark spin and Graham prepares for the return

New tutors needed – can you help?

U3A Yarra City offer a wide range of classes that aim to cover a broad area of interests. Subjects include creative writing, languages, music and film appreciation, mosaics and bonsai, technology, exercise and fitness, reading, books, plays and poetry. There are also gallery and museum visits and curated walking groups.



Historic Walks tutor Chris Friday

In addition to classes and excursions, fortnightly Forums are held on current topics such as Transport, Population Growth and Electrifying Yarra.

For further details on upcoming events, keep an eye on Classes and Events on our website.

In order to meet the demand for additional classes in some areas, and to broaden our range of subjects offered, inquiries from suitably qualified tutors are welcome.

If you are interested in volunteering as a tutor or conducting a forum, we would love to hear from you.

Please contact any member of the Committee or email u3ayarracity@gmail.com

Digital help

Need help with your phone or device?

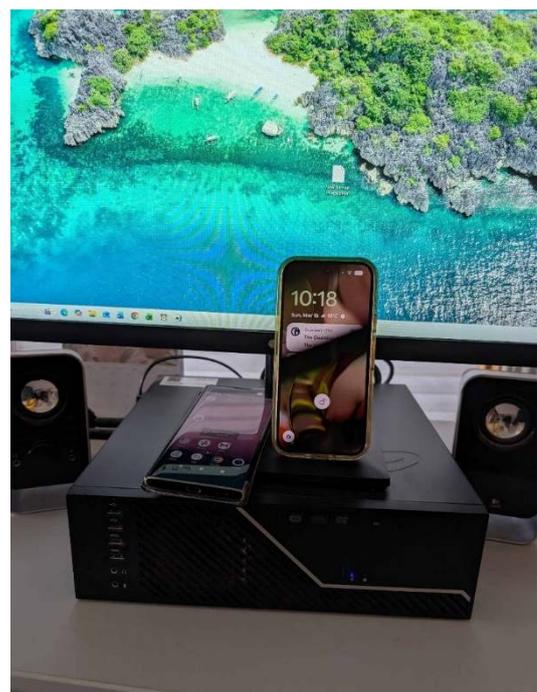
Yarra Libraries is offering free one-on-one digital help sessions to assist members gain confidence using technology, navigating your device or troubleshooting minor technology issues.

Help sessions are 30 – 45 minutes in length and will focus on a single issue of concern to participants.

Before booking, check the [FAQ](#) section to see what they can and cannot help with.

To book a session:

call 1300 695 427 or register via Eventbrite.



Member profile: Mary Whelan, Secretary

What did you do in your professional life and what brought you to U3A?

My background is in Food Services, predominantly in health and aged care facilities. One of my early highlights was introducing an à la carte food service at Peter MacCallum Hospital in the 1980s - a first in Australia at the time. I later helped design and manage a large kitchen in the aged care sector, growing production from 100 to approximately 6,500 meals per week.

In 2021, I established my business, *Mary Whelan, Food Services Advisor*, specialising in evaluating food service departments within health and aged care. I have worked as a Food Safety Supervisor for major food events such as the *Good Food and Wine Show*, liaising with organisers, exhibitors, and health officers to ensure all food is handled and served in line with Australian food safety guidelines.



Following COVID, I began thinking about retirement and new interests. I was aware of U3A and decided to join U3A Yarra City, starting with the walking and music groups, and expanding into other activities. Meeting people and enjoying shared activities were the main drivers.

Tell us about your role at U3A as Secretary. What does it involve, and does it take much time?

The Secretary is responsible for recording committee meetings and keeping relevant government bodies informed about committee membership, policies, and financial status. The role includes that of Public Officer, as well as liaising with and assisting committee members as needed. I've discovered I need to brush up on some computer skills, but while the role does take time, sharing tasks helps keep the workload manageable. It's a great opportunity for anyone with administrative skills to get involved - don't be shy about stepping forward.

What classes do you take part in?

I participate in the Tuesday walking group, which has helped me discover parts of my local area I hadn't known about. The walking group tutors are well aware that if it's raining, I don't walk! I also attend Monthly Movies, Galleries and the recently established Board Game group.

Do you have hobbies or activities outside U3A?

I'm making time to attend live musicals, gallery visits (including the NGV, Bendigo, and Ballarat), theatre performances, and MSO concerts - all of which I've thoroughly enjoyed.

What do you enjoy most about being a U3A member?

Staying mentally engaged, meeting new people, and sharing activities both within and beyond U3A are very rewarding. Being part of a supportive community is reassuring.

What advice would you give someone wanting to join?

Sign up for something that genuinely interests you, and don't hesitate to introduce yourself or ask questions.

Do you have a special place in Yarra?

I love the Carlton Gardens, along with Fitzroy and the Botanic Gardens. Living close to the city while still having easy access to green spaces allows me to stay connected to cultural activities such as musicals and exhibitions.

Healing Ourselves and the Planet

We should be living in a time of unprecedented good health. Instead, we have switched from the infections of the 19th century to our current, mostly non-infectious, chronic, disabling diseases. In addition, we are overshooting the boundaries that protect our precious planet. Let's investigate what constitutes personal and planetary good health, re-engage with nature, and regenerate what we have lost. Expect me to challenge current dogma and expose myths. No prior knowledge is required, but do bring an open, enquiring mind and a sense of humour.

My current series of 37 talks, Healing Ourselves and the Planet, has developed from just 6 talks at my home U3A Mornington in 2015. Research in retirement after nearly 50 years as a medical GP, has caused me to rethink much of what I taught my patients throughout my career.

The talks are divided into 19 modules, delivered via Zoom. Each class is presented live, twice a week at 9.30am. The Friday class repeats the contents of the Tuesday class. You can attend either class, or even both.

I cover a wide range of issues concerned with how some food damages our personal health and how industrial agriculture is damaging the planet, turning the land into desert, and contributing to climate change.

You are welcome to choose any or all of the modules. The Zoom link will arrive prior to the first meeting.

Dr John Beaney



Navigating Aged Care Services

As you get older it may be difficult to manage everyday tasks. Aged care is the support provided to older people who need help in their own home or can no longer live at home.

It can include:

- personal care and health care
- help with everyday living such as shopping, housework and food preparation
- assistive equipment and home modifications
- accommodation.

Aged care services can help you stay connected to your community, take care of your health and safety and remain independent.

There are two key pathways for aged care in Australia: **government funded** or **self-funded private** (fee-for-service).

Government-funded aged care services

My Aged Care is the starting point to finding and accessing Australian Government-funded aged care services. You can connect with My Aged Care by phone on **1800 200 422**, via the **website** or **in person** at some Services Australia centres.

You can have a family member or support person act as your representative.

Check their website for information and resources on starting your research journey.

Yarra City Council has a range of home and support services for older people. For more information please contact 9205 5285 or check Home and support services for older adults. However, those not already a client of Yarra City Council, will first need to register with My Aged Care.

Private self-funded home care services

Many companies and organisations offer fee-for-service home care. You don't need an assessment and can contact organisations directly to find out what care they provide. You choose which services you want to purchase and you're responsible for paying the full costs.

This option is ideal if you:

- need home care services immediately
- are looking to specifically tailor your care to meet the exact services you need
- are waiting for government funding, but need care services while you wait
- are under the age of 65 and not eligible for government funding through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) or the Queensland Community Support Scheme (QCSS).

Help navigating aged care services

My Aged Care have an easy to use [list of resources](#) including brochures, forms, checklists and other documents to help you navigate the aged care system.

A comprehensive range of information about aged care services is available from [COTA Australia](#) while [OPAN](#) (Older Persons Advocacy Network) has resources to help people and their families know their rights and make choices. Dementia Australia is similar.

The free service [Aged Care Decisions](#) helps people find available aged care places.
Phone 1300 096200.



Christine Gibbs

Photo Gallery



Portarlington Old Mill



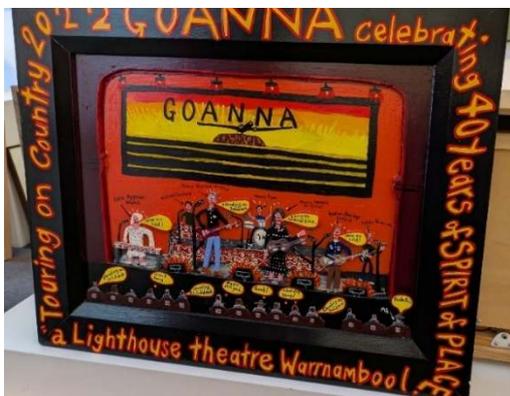
Lunch in the Atrium, Portarlington



Historic Walks - City West



Sculpture Park Portarlington



Australian Galleries, Collingwood



Australian Galleries, Collingwood

Dates & Committee 2026

3 Apr – 19 Apr: Easter & Term 1 holidays

27 Jun – 12 Jul: Term 2 holidays

18 Aug: AGM, Jack Dyer Centre

19 Sep – 4 Oct: Term 3 holidays

Committee 2026

President: Peter Moore

Deputy President: Barry Giddings

Secretary: Mary Whelan

Treasurer: Richard Laing

Program Coordinator: Maria Hudson

Membership Support: Barry Giddings

Database Team: Frank Moore

Tutor Support: Barry Giddings

Health and Safety Officer: Cathy Hutton

Convenor, Publicity & Communications: Peter Moore

Semester dates 2026

Term 1: 27 Jan - 2 Apr

Term 2: 20 Apr - 26 Jun

Term 3: 13 Jul - 18 Sep

Term 4: 5 Oct - 18 Dec

Committee 2026 cont...

Event Coordinators: Cathy Hutton and Maria Hudson

Office Manager & Bulletin editor: Elizabeth Way

Ex Officio

Active Ageing Advisory: Jonno Morris

Other Office Bearers

Newsletter Coordinators: Tina Hocking & Helen Hargreaves

Forums Coordinantor: Lynell McCluggage

Connect with U3A Yarra City

FaceBook: Send photos and articles to our email address u3ayarracity@gmail.com with FaceBook in the Subject line or go directly via FaceBook.



Web: www.u3ayarracity.org.au

On yer bike: <https://onyerbike-u3a.org.au>

News & Events Bulletin: Latest news communication via email

Newsletter: Published April, July and November.
Email u3ayarracity@gmail.com with Newsletter in the Subject line, or post to:
Newsletter Coordinator, U3A Yarra City, 17 Stanton St, Abbotsford 3067

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We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We also pay our respects to Elders from all nations.