

Each year at recent AGMs I have reported that our membership has increased. This year I can continue the same story – our active membership stands at 590 as at the end of July. The trends of recent years have also continued; our average age is around 75 and slowly increasing, and 74% of our members identify as female. These stats are fairly typical of other U3A groups. It seems to be difficult to get as many men involved as women and we could ponder why that is. For what it's worth our proportion of males has slowly increased over the past ten years from 22% to 26%.

Last year I reported on the then very recent transition to Member Wizard as our membership management system. This new system has now become a solid part of our U3A; it enabled easy enrolments last November and registration for classes has been very easy. A particular feature is the ready handling of one-off events. We use this for our regular Forums program and for an increasing series of special events.

Your Committee of Management has continued to come up with the goods. Barry Giddings (Deputy President, Tutor Liaison, Member Liaison and Website admin), Mary Whelan (Secretary), Frank Moore (IT, Membership Management System Coordinator), Richard Laing (Treasurer), Maria Hudson (Program Coordinator), Cathy Hutton (Health & Safety, Policy Development and Events), Elizabeth Way (Office Manager and Bulletin Editor). Each has been very willing to contribute across all matters of concern to our group. Without the tireless efforts of these volunteers we wouldn't have our vibrant U3A. Please do thank a committee member whenever you can.

Two of our hard-working committee members are retiring this year. Frank Moore has been a member of committee and specifically looking after our membership database since 2017. Over that time he's shepherded our U3A through three database systems; he's renowned for producing detailed documents covering how the system is managed and how lesser mortals need to go about the required tasks. Although retiring from committee Frank has offered to be available for continued advice, for which I thank him. Richard Laing is retiring after a year as our treasurer. It's been quite a year; we decided last July to move onto the Member Wizard finance module and this has required unprecedented attention to detail and discipline. Thanks to Richard's eagle eye and assiduous work we are now on top of our finances and fully understand the task ahead. Richard is convinced that all significant problems have been dealt with so he's passing on the treasurer's mantle. I can't thank either Frank or Richard enough for their contributions.

We have 59 regular Tutors and a further 26 Convenors; this latter title is perhaps unfamiliar, but it's our members who assist Tutors in running classes. Our organisation relies on people helping each other by sharing their knowledge and their passions. Whenever somebody suggests a new class the instant question is – who will be the Tutor? ... the indispensable requirement for every class. My sincere thanks go to all our Tutors and Convenors. My special thanks go to our Pickleball Tutor Barry Giddings. Barry has taken this class from inception to become our highest number enrolled in just two years. Even more pleasing is the very positive report from participants for Barry's care and attention to members' welfare. I was pleased to be able to nominate Barry for a U3A Victoria "Tutor Recognition Award", which he has been awarded. Congratulations Barry!

This year has seen a stabilisation of our Forums program. The Forums committee headed by Lynell McCluggage with support by Richard Laing has delivered an exceptional program of talks on a wide range of topics. The average attendance has been nearly 40. Socialising before and after each presentation epitomizes the U3A concept – the opportunity to meet and make friends while learning.

Our Newsletter committee, led by Tina Hocking, have continued to produce excellent records of the life of our U3A. Back-copies are available on our website and Tina has hunted down editions going back to the start of our U3A in 2005; these will be scanned and available soon.

Elizabeth Way is our Office Manager; she ensures that we have volunteers to look after the U3A office two half-days each week. The office volunteers are a particular benefit to those of our members who prefer face-to-face contact, and they also provide great service by phone or email to members who just need a little assistance to deal with our U3A. We are very grateful to Elizabeth and her team. Elizabeth has also taken on editing our Bulletins. She has ensured that Bulletins are now emailed regularly each fortnight, with what's on at U3A Yarra City and beyond. Her format is slick and the tone inviting; a really useful read.

Last October we enjoyed a highly successful 20th birthday celebration, with invited guests from Yarra Council, U3A Victoria and several of the people who were active in setting up and initially running our group.

One outcome from our 20th birthday event was the collection of many documents and photographs from across the last two decades. This has prompted a group to begin work on a history of U3A Yarra City.

Our policies and Rules of Association aren't the most riveting of subjects, but they are essential guides for a body such as ours. Cathy Hutton has led the review process and in particular the update to our Rules which need approval from members at our AGM. A huge amount of work and the outcome is a Rules of Association that reflects both the legislated requirements and what we actually do.

I want to acknowledge the support provided to our U3A by Yarra Council and Yarra Libraries. Council and Libraries are our main venue providers, but also work with our U3A to provide our services to the community. They are always willing to help. Discussions are currently under way aimed at formalising a funding agreement which holds promise of a stable long-term financial basis for our U3A.

U3A Yarra City's representative nominated to the Yarra Council Active Ageing Advisory Committee is Jonno Morris. The AAAC advises council on the needs of the elderly and is able to represent the views of our U3A. Coincidentally two other community representatives on the AAAC are also U3A members.

Your U3A doesn't happen automatically! We need volunteers to fill all U3A roles ... please consider how you can help.

We can celebrate another year of members enjoying and benefiting from a variety of activities that have kept our minds and bodies healthy, and most importantly have encouraged our community-focused socialising. I thank all members for your continued support of U3A Yarra City. It's your U3A, and as is the way of such groups, you get out of it what you put in.

Live Learn Enjoy

Peter Moore

President, U3A Yarra City