



## University of the Third Age - PORT PHILLIP

*Registered Incorporated Association: A0045047P*

*ABN: 36 675 645 384*

### **President's Report to the 15th - AGM, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2018**

It is a great pleasure to report that your U3APP has had yet another busy and very successful year. There have been numerous milestones and successful initiatives. This could not have been achieved without the enormous effort of our many wonderful volunteers and the extraordinary cooperation and effort that goes on throughout the organisation!

In 2018 our membership increased from around 500 to about 609 a very impressive increase. In addition, there are 12 Life Members, 24 Honorary members (Tutors).

#### **Volunteers**

Over 120 members have been actively working on the many different aspects of the organisation. Our statistics tell us that volunteers worked over 3,000 hours during the year. Our volunteers bring many varied and valuable skills, a very professional and practical group of individuals without whom U3APP could not be the dynamic and interesting place it is. Every activity you see and hear is done by one of them. It is well worth remembering that these individuals are also fellow members and they do their job out of good will and enjoyment. Their reward is the camaraderie, learning, sharing and stimulation.

The sheer scale of activities undertaken during the year is enormous and deserves a special mention and credit to the individuals involved.

#### **Specific Thanks and Special Achievements during 2018**

##### **Committee of Management**

The COM have worked well together – credits are deserved by all members and the individuals responsible for specific portfolio areas. The COM have been able to strengthen internal cohesion and improve the links with U3A Network Victoria, and our regional U3A groups. Our relationship with the City of Port Phillip is functioning very well.

##### **Network and Region**

The 109 U3A's in Victoria are linked by the State-wide Network Members Council and individual U3A's are grouped into regions. During the year the Southern Metro group which includes U3APP, initiated a plan that was aimed at increasing awareness of the U3A movement amongst politicians and other key decision makers with a view to generating more government support for our activities. This initiative was subsequently picked up by Network who, with the help of people from this U3A, devised a strategy which is currently being implemented.

Being part of U3A Network, we were able to participate in several regional events supported by Network. A tutor training workshop was highly regarded and there are currently plans to build on this initiative next year. This is an excellent opportunity for U3A volunteers to learn from each other and support joint initiatives.

##### **City of Port Phillip**

We continue to appreciate the support we receive. This year, the Mary Kehoe Centre has been redecorated inside. We were grateful that the work was carried out in a manner which minimally disrupted our office, as it was painted over a weekend and the rest of the building during the Semester break. During that time CoPP installed the picture rail system in the Hall, which has been welcomed by our artists for displaying their works.

Our Lease arrangement with the CoPP means that MKC is shared between users, our programme and need for rooms gets communicated to the CoPP and rooms and venues are reserved for us. This system works well – we owe a debt of gratitude to CoPP and the officers concerned. We are particularly grateful to Jacek Przybylski who is consistently ensuring that good solutions are found, repairs done, frequently doing it himself and in his own time. Special thanks also to Sherridan Green, Emma Blackford and all of our contacts.

### **Course Coordination**

As is obvious, without courses, tutors, facilitators there would be no U3A. We have again been fortunate to have our strong group of tutors and team of course co-ordinators, who have worked well together and ensured that there are stimulating and varied courses and activities, to cater for the wide range of interests of our Community. And - really essential - they have ensured that there are professional and supportive relationships between all.

During the year, the CCT consisted of Mark Denniston, Ann Gibson, Geoff Levy and Sunny Acreman. Heartfelt thanks to all, and to the tutors and facilitators.

Other key members for successful delivery of the programme again have been Margaret Byron who creates the informative and attractive course guides. David Robinson who has provided an interesting and enlightening range of 28 documentaries and 22 films and led the follow-up discussions.

In 2018 we offered 65 courses in Semester 1 and 68 courses in Semester 2. These were presented by 58 tutors, seven of whom delivered more than one course. Many have been with us for years.

With this growth we have required and successfully accessed facilities outside MKC and are pursuing more of those options for our future growth.

It was pleasing to note that the attendances at the Saturday Seminars increased noticeably as did Out'n>About participations.

For Seniors Week in October, we again produced our popular "Seniors Week Showcase", a joint event by our artists and musicians. Our artists demonstrated their paintings and drawings and through the co-operation with CoPP we again displayed the works of a small number of artists from aged care and special needs group from within the city. All of this proved a big hit with members and visitors and we plan to continue this joint initiative in future.

The grand finale for the Seniors Week Showcase was a musical performance by our in-house choir and the instrumental group "Allsorts" followed by a sumptuous afternoon tea, attended by close to 50 people. This year Allsorts spun off a new jazz group which played a concert at CASPA Seniors Home in Term

The Seniors Festival Saturday Seminar presentation by Dr Kay Patterson AO was well attended and one of the topics covered was that of Elder Abuse - we picked up much interesting and relevant information which has been publicized in our Newsletter and which we hope you have accessed.

During the year U3APP hosted:

- New members event in March with 60 new members attending
- Tutors and volunteers' event in June with about 80 attending

### **IT**

Has made a big difference to our organisation. Our U3APP IT team has performed it's magic again, under the leadership of Helen Vorrath, capably supported by Karen English, Kate Richards and Diane Boyle. Their work involved a continuation of development and upgrading the system, including a major redesign of the website to make it look more modern and make it easier to use. Our payment gateway has been changed from PayPal to the cheaper and easier to use Stripe.

Everyone in the U3APP ITEM team is focussed on finding tools and databases to support the record keeping for course coordination and documentation. New team members Hugh Sarjeant and Branko Colavizza have developed a

tool to partially automate what the ITEM does, aimed at reducing workload for themselves and the other hardworking members: Karen English, Jan Mulder, Meredith Mancini and Lyn Place.

The system, as many of you know has been completely developed in-house at minimal cost to us. On-line membership was first set up in 2015 to pay for one-off events, on-line enrolments commenced in 2016. Now in 2018 most members are using the website for reading the e-Bulletin, paying membership, enrolling in courses and events, having their transaction confirmed immediately. Office Volunteers provide support if this is required.

Fortnightly e-Bulletins are sent to over 1000 people, of whom 54% open it regularly. The Website gets 25+ visits a day, often peaking at around 150 when the fortnightly bulletin arrives. Our members are kept abreast of U3APP activities, news, courses, opportunities and special notices. The member to free subscribers' ratio was about 600/500 at the end of the year.

The e-roll Lenovo system is now used to record attendances for all courses, this enables active management of enrolments, keeping courses full and reducing waitlists. This has been a major achievement during the year and well accepted by members and tutors.

All this work requires strong commitment and dedication by the team and many hours of their time. The statistics for the IT volunteer hours are impressive – during last year the ITEM team dealt with a bit under 3,000 emails, this year the total was 6,402 by October and has now probably reached close to 7,000. We have no statistics for the phone calls, but this is a staggering amount of work for a volunteer organisation.

### **Office Management**

Our office volunteers, all 35 of them, experienced a year of intense learning and change. Many have received group and one-on-one training and coaching in how to work with the changes in our systems and doing away with paper. As new members become volunteers, we find that their more recently acquired skills are proving a great asset to the organisation. Coaching, mentoring and mutual support are part of how we work, and desk operations owe much to the patience and forbearance of the ITEM team with whom they liaise closely.

Office volunteers need to be well equipped to respond to queries of all kinds. At some point volunteers interact with every single member / tutor, visitor, and with every activity. They need to know the processes and requirements and maintain a friendly face at the office desk and be our public face. Group meetings of office volunteers aim to ensure a common understanding of matters and a consistent approach.

The management of all of this has been capably overseen by Bev Fryer. Margo Anderson stepped down from sharing the office coordination during second term and Meredith Mancini brought energy and diligence to the role, she has worked in collaboration with Bev for the balance of the year. We are glad to have had Helen Doyle's help in faithfully clearing the PO Box in South Melbourne.

Desleigh Kent has done an admirable job in rostering the volunteers. Having shouldered this responsibility reliably for five years, she will hand over the list and calendar to someone else in 2019. Our heartfelt thanks and gratitude go to Desleigh, who always managed to combine efficiency with friendly persuasion!

### **Finances**

Our finances remain in a strong position; Ian will provide you with the details in the Treasurer's Report.

In 2018 we have acquired several major items of additional equipment, to stay up to date with technology and better serve our members:

- additional microphones for our Juno system (used in language classes, seminars, and large meetings);
- a LISTEN system that provides neck loops which link to T-coil hearing aids (or can be used with headsets) to assist our hearing-impaired members;

- a significant contribution is the new hanging system in our hall, purchased with significant financial help from our great supporters, the City of Port Phillip;
- miscellaneous IT items including a computer and e-roll tablet;
- various audio-visual items including new DVD players.

We recognise that as we grow, we may need to access other venues apart from Mary Kehoe Centre, for which we may be required to pay rent, so we are working hard to ensure we are prepared for that.

For another year we have again kept our membership fees at a modest \$40.00 per annum, which is lower than other comparable U3A's, reflecting our sound financial position and the ongoing support of the City of Port Phillip.

### **General credits**

A big, special thank you to John Craven our Deputy President for his wisdom, his steady sensible approach and great support to everyone on the COM. John has always been happy to jump in when I was unavailable, and I greatly appreciate his sound decision making and advice. Thank you to Geoff Levy, helped by Graham Gosling who have put a lot of energy into ensuring our Association Rules & policies meet the organisations requirements.

Special thanks to Ian Shaw for having done a double job, Treasurer and Statutory Secretary. Ian also prepares Grant applications and his creative and practical ideas have enhanced our operation. Also, thanks to Richard Edwards for his attention to the repair and maintenance needs of our furniture and setup and for his role in liaising with Jacek.

We also thank Jill Hearman who continues to welcome all new members and contacts anyone who is not well or is bereaved. Jill is now supported by Robyn Foy and Diana Stock from next year. Thank you to Margaret Smith for taking on the Minute Secretary role. Claire Keech and helpers deserve recognition for catering at special functions. Di Gameson who has done managed the catering until this year and has organised today's Christmas lunch, because Claire is overseas, to ensure that we can enjoy a lovely spread of refreshments. In recent weeks Claire and team undertook a thorough cleaning job of the main kitchen. All this has contributed to a nicer environment for classes and the office. Thank you to Kate Anderson for organising the annual Event Calendar and Special Events & to Barry McIntosh for capturing every event and opportunity on his camera for our records.

A special thank you to all the tutors, your willingness to share knowledge, your generosity in giving your time makes this a great place for our members and is appreciated by every single one of us. Thank you to every single volunteer and helper. It is impossible to mention each person by name, but you all need to know that your contribution has been much appreciated. Our reputation is built on the input of many people.

Finally, according to our Association Rules, the tenure of several of the COM members is up with this meeting - John Craven, Kate Anderson, Karen English, Mark Denniston and myself. Geoff Levy is retiring from the COM to pursue his other interests. We trust that we leave a strong foundation for the future and look forward to welcoming the new COM and we will be happy to assist when required.

It has been a privilege to be part of the COM for U3APP and to work together with such a dedicated and capable group of individuals. Our time has seen many significant changes in how U3APP operates and on behalf of all of us, thank you for your trust and support.

Renate Mattiske  
President  
1<sup>st</sup> December 2018