

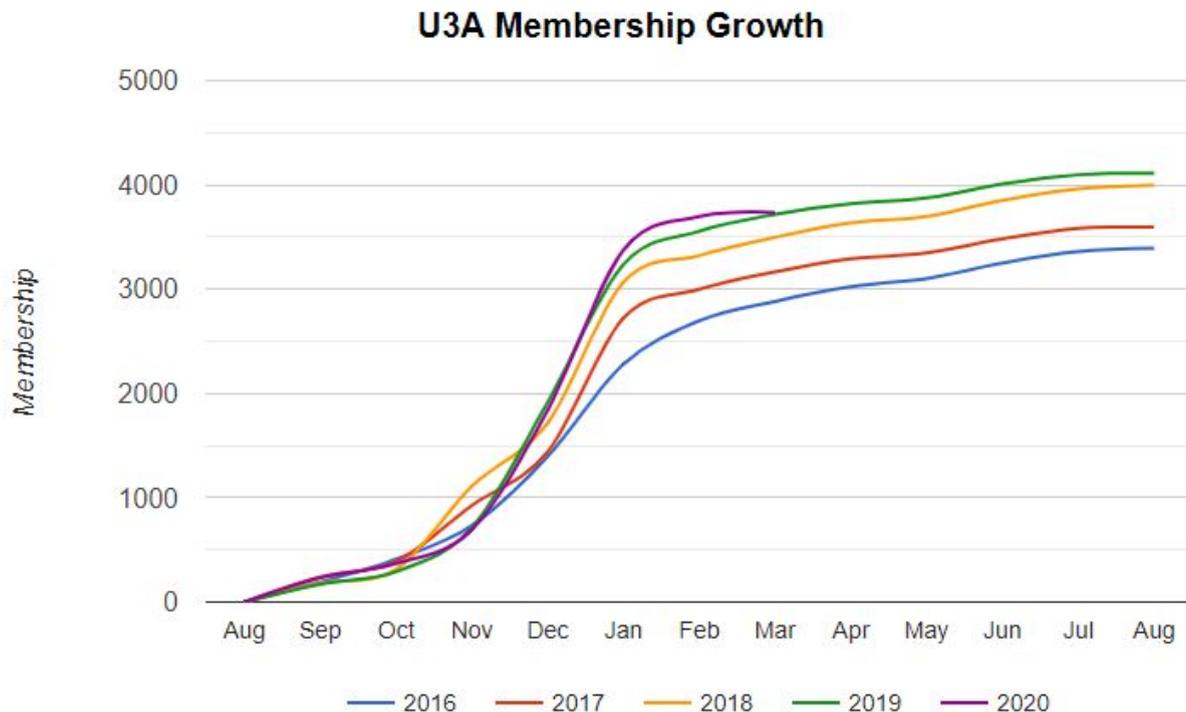
U3A Brisbane Annual report 2020

(Greg Doolan, who has been our President for the past 3 years is now stepping down as he has completed his allowed term of three years. This is his final report as President and he has asked me to present it as he is unable to attend today - DeslynTaylor)

The 2019 year has been one of steady growth in membership, classes and attendances and our finances are in good shape. This is fortunate as we now face the ongoing challenge of operating without face-to-face classes for some considerable time.

Membership

Our paid membership for 2019 was 4113, an increase of 3.4% over the previous year. This graph illustrates the growth trends that we have experienced in recent years. Note that our membership year commences on 1st September.



The advent of COVID19 has deterred new members from joining. We are endeavouring to continue classes online where possible and the creative, positive attitude of our tutors is gratefully recognised as they take up the challenge of moving to a different way of teaching.

Financial position

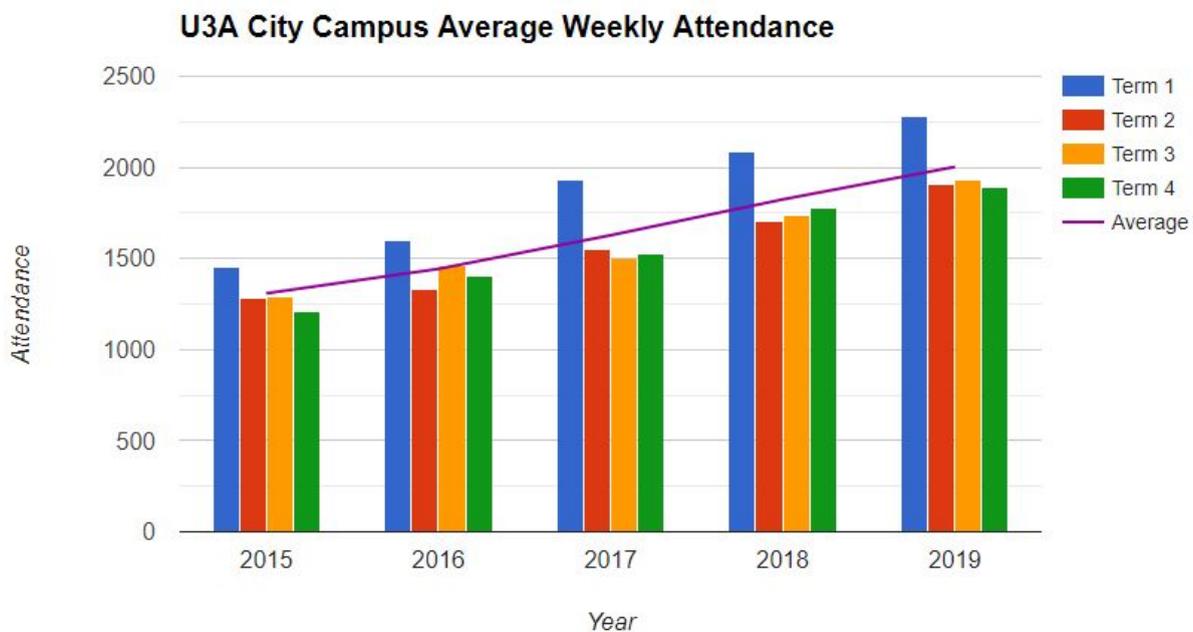
Our Treasurer Lyndall Beattie will shortly be giving an overview of our financial position which shows we achieved an excellent surplus for the 2019 calendar year and also explains the plans to meet the ongoing challenge of the current shutdown. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Lyndall for all her hard work in achieving the excellent outcome in the

Note Holders redemption last year and the preparation of the forward projections to help meet the challenges of the current crisis.

Classes and Tutors

The core business of U3A is to provide mental stimulus and learning opportunities for our members, and the successful conduct of our classes is therefore the focus of almost all that we do. A glance through the index of the Class Schedule makes one appreciate the quite astounding range of subjects on offer. We are most fortunate to have so many well-qualified tutors who have stepped forward to offer their services and the benefits of their experience and qualifications. We thank you all.

Class attendances during 2019 averaged just over 2000 per week in our City Campus venues, an increase of 10% over the previous year. In addition, we recorded an average of 650 members attending classes each week across our 40 district venues.



Other Educational Activities

Special Events: Throughout the year, one-off events were organised by science tutor Marty Gellender, namely Science Week films and two talks on the *Climate Change Emergency*, and by Marilyn Wagland entitled *Ordinary People, Extraordinary Acts*. These proved extremely popular with full houses at each event. Greg Taylor, Chris Hobbs and Des Taylor ran several *NBN Information* sessions. A regular event is the Saturday IT Group presentations held monthly. These are organised by Diane Arapovic and presenters included Greg and Des Taylor along with Chris (Nobby) Hobbs and Keith Catts. Online presentation is being considered for the remainder of 2020.

Winter School: This event just keeps going from strength to strength, both in the quality of presentations and attendances. Winter school was organised by a committee chaired by Marilyn Wagland, assisted by Kate O'Loughlin as Secretary and a committee of eight others

who did a great job of recruiting expert speakers from very diverse fields. The 2019 Winter School was the best yet with keynote speaker Alan MacSporran QC plus another 55 speakers, and total attendance of over 2200. Unfortunately the 2020 Winter School has been cancelled because of COVID-19.

Summer Pop-up Workshops: Art Tutor Carol Owens came up with an innovative idea of running summer pop-up art workshops during the long end of year break and the first one was conducted in January of this year. It was a great success with the school attracting over 156 registrations for the 10 sessions held throughout the week.

Class Scheduling

The recruitment of new tutors and the allocation of classes to our classrooms and venues is the responsibility of the district coordinators. Gail Hawkins manages these tasks for general classes in the two city campus venues, and does a magnificent job wrangling classes into increasingly scarce timeslots, while Gwenn Ball continues to skillfully manage computer classes in our busy computer lab. We recognise that not all tutors were able to obtain their preferred time slot or classroom, because unfortunately, demand outstrips supply at certain times of the day. In the districts, our appreciation is owed to the district coordinators, capably overseen by Mary Calder, for the great job they do in allocating tutors to the various suburban venues, namely Martin Bridgstock (Logan), Robyn Bunting (City Precinct), Anna Blake (Westside), Rod McLary (Northside), Allan Wishart (Southside) and Chris Hobbs (Wynnum). I would also like to thank Marg and Jim Ancliffe for their tireless support in the very active district of Logan.

Accommodation

There was increasing demand for classroom space in the city campus rooms and capacity reached close to 90% during Term 1 in 2020. There was a severe shortage of space before 2pm each day and some classes are uncomfortably large. The advent of online classes may help with this in the future.

Administration and IT

In an expanding organisation, more growth means more administrative work, and I must congratulate Yvonne McGann and her office team on coping with another busy year with patience and calmness. Yvonne is well-supported by day leaders Mary Calder, Helen Davis, Lyndall Beattie and Eve McCormack, as well as about 50 other volunteers who ensure that both Creek St and Adelaide St are adequately and competently staffed.

Our efficient and user-friendly IT systems help to keep the administrative work to a manageable level. It is pleasing that 81% of new members and 66% of renewing members now pay their subscriptions online, thus greatly reducing the office workload. Greg Taylor manages our database systems, website and mailing lists and continues to improve our systems each year so that we can take advantage of the efficiencies enabled by the digital revolution. He was also instrumental in having the tap-and-go terminals installed in 2019 which have proved popular, with 35% of members availing themselves of this facility.

Social Committee

Our Social Committee Chaired by Marianne Jones and supported by Elizabeth Eichmann, Alannah Gaffney and Angela Butler organised some fantastic and popular events in 2019 such as: Visit to the Margaret Olley Centre; Christmas in July at Tamborine Mountain; The Mary Valley Rattler train ride; A Brisbane River Cruise and various visits to QPAC Theatre. Because of COVAD19 there will be no further events in 2020 until the danger has passed.

Communications and Publicity

The increasing cost of postage means that we rely mainly on electronic methods of communication with members.

The ever popular eNews is edited by Jean Smith. Our thanks to Jean, Kay Herrington and Greg Taylor who manage the formatting and distribution. Unfortunately, David Gemmell, who was part of this team, sadly passed away last year. This publication will become an even more important communication tool in the months to come to keep members informed of how we are progressing through the current crisis.

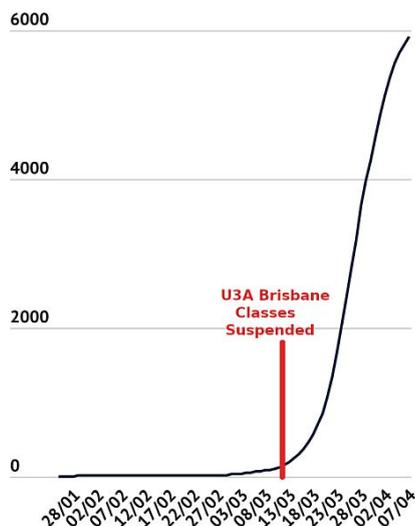
Our other main vehicle is the quarterly Class Schedule. We recognise that many members prefer to have this printed and mailed to them, but it is also available for download from the website. The decision was taken to suspend printing of the schedule for Term 2 2020 because of the office closure. An online version is available on the website.

The website particularly is a valuable information source and members should check this site regularly for important announcements, especially in the current circumstances. Detailed information and instructions for using the current technology is available [here](#).

Another avenue for public relations is the opportunity provided by expos and speaker invitations. I thank Martin Bridgstock, Anne Hetherington, Rod McLary, Robyn Bunting and Chris Hobbs for representing U3A at such events over the past year.

The challenge ahead

Australian COVID-19 Cases 7-Apr-20



As we are all aware, U3A Brisbane ceased face-to-face classes on 13th March for the foreseeable future. The Management Committee started planning for the looming crisis in late January and initially introduced hygiene procedures in the city premises. We also appointed a Health Advisory Committee coordinated by Dr John Price to assist us with professional advice. We thank them for their assistance. Greg and Des Taylor have also been instrumental in guiding us through the rapid transition to online classes in recent weeks.

The suspension of classes will cause significant inroads into our reserves as online classes do not attract a fee but we have financial commitments with our city

premises. However, we are in a good financial position and our Treasurer will report on the financial plan to combat this shortly. The focus for the future is to seek new ideas to keep our members engaged and occupied during this lengthy period of self-isolation and this makes U3A even more important to members. Regular communication is important to show we still care, even if we are unable to meet in person, so this is where technology comes to the rescue. A number of classes have now embraced the *Zoom* teleconferencing program and this has been a godsend for the classes involved as not only can they see each other, they are also learning about this form of communication as well as their class subject. Indications are that more classes will join shortly and continue their interaction online, so, I would encourage every tutor or member to at least try *Zoom* as it is not only easy to operate, it is also a lot of fun. I would also encourage members to ring and email classmates, especially those who live on their own, just to say hello, it just might make their day. We also have arranged an Interactive Discussion Group system which is popular with some classes.

Committee Changes

As I have previously indicated, this is my final report as President. A number of other committee members have also decided to retire, and these are: Simon Wood, Mary Calder, Anne Hetherington, Greg Taylor and Rod McLary. I thank them for their contributions over the many years they have served our U3A as Committee members. They will of course continue to play other roles within U3A Brisbane. New members are Neil Brown, Jim Ancliffe, Mary Denver, Peter O'Loughlin and Gabrielle Power-West. The returning members of the committee are Deslyn Taylor, Marilyn Wagland, Lyndall Beattie and Martin Bridgstock. I wish the incoming committee every success as they steer U3A Brisbane through the biggest crisis in our history.

In closing, the last 3 years have been a great experience and I have had the privilege of working with some exceptional people over that time. I would even venture to say that this group were among the most efficient and professional I have ever had the pleasure of working with and I thank them sincerely for their support and friendship over that period. The new committee now face challenges as never before but, with the talent and experience that will be available from old and new members alike, I know the future of U3A Brisbane is in good hands and will emerge from this current crisis even better and stronger than before.

Greg Doolan
April 2020

See Addendum next page

Addendum from New President Deslyn Taylor

Thank you everyone for attending this AGM. Now we look to our future. With the advent of COVAD19 this has changed dramatically in the short term.

As you are aware we no longer are able to offer face-to-face classes and the government is enforcing social distancing which affects other types of classes and activities. However we are lucky to live in an age of technology and our creative tutors have found other ways of running their classes - *Zoom*, email, discussion groups etc. We expect that we will need to continue with *Remote Learning* until we are given clearance by the government to cease social distancing measures for our age demographic. At present we are hoping for the best and would expect to resume normal classes sometime in 2021.

We encourage all of our tutors and students to embrace *Remote Learning*. Even when we resume, we may still offer this in some classes in addition to our normal face-to-face mode. It would open our classes to a wider audience who are not geographically constrained and also make them available to others who are unable to travel. We hope current tutors will continue on and perhaps others may be willing to join them and we hope our current students are enjoying the opportunity of learning and retaining social contact even when living in forced isolation and will encourage their friends to join us. A chance for a chat and a coffee and a smiling face eases the isolation.

We are in negotiations about retaining our Adelaide St premises for as long as possible with the expectation that we can return to normal classes very quickly as soon as this becomes feasible. Our Creek St premises are also dormant but can be put back into use at short notice.

Our financial position is constantly under review and we are confident that our position going in to 2021 is sound.

We will update our website regularly and keep our members informed as changes occur.

We hope you will support us at this time as we try to retain our current programme now and into the future.

Deslyn Taylor
President
U3A Brisbane