

Annual Report U3A Brisbane for 2023

Prepared for the 2024 AGM

The past twelve months have once again been a very successful time for U3A Brisbane. The very positive aspects of U3A are the social interaction that occurs, the learning that is experienced in classes and the friendships that develop. It is always great to hear all the chatter between members that occurs in the foyers before and after classes. During 2023 there were certainly many more members around than we had noticed during the past three Covid years. It is great to see members out and about again and enjoying F2F classes. The major activities held during 2023 are presented below.

April 2023 AGM MC

April 2023 was a significant month for U3A with the AGM being held on April 12 via Zoom. At that meeting there was a change in the composition of the Management Committee as is standard practice for most committees. The President, Deslyn Taylor, had completed 3 years as President, which under the Constitution, is the maximum length of time a President can remain in that role. Des was responsible for guiding U3A through the very difficult 3 years of Covid and the challenges that had to be managed over those three years. Thank you to Des for her guidance and leadership during Covid. The Management Committee elected at the 2023 AGM was as follows:

President	Gabrielle Power West	Member	Deslyn Taylor
Vice President	John Galligan	Member	Mary-Anne Scott
Secretary	Mary Denver	Member	Janet McKeon
Treasurer	Joan Mackay	Member	Suzanne Raymond

Marketing Sub Committee - Open Day

At the May 2023 meeting of the Management Committee, it was decided to establish a Marketing Sub-Committee. A major focus for 2023 was to increase the number of members to pre-Covid membership numbers, and hence the establishment of the Marketing Sub-Committee.

Two members of the Management Committee agreed to represent the Management Committee on the new Sub-Committee together with other U3A members. The Sub Committee was comprised of the following members:

- Janet McKeon, Chairperson Sub-Committee
- Deslyn Taylor
- Jean Smith
- Frank Alpert
- Greg Doolan

From the first meeting in early June, the Sub Committee was very busy with planning and organizing the U3A Open Day which was held in the U3A Adelaide Street premises in September. This special event provided the opportunity for attendees to:

- Explore the diverse range of courses U3A offers
- Find out about the benefits of participating in U3A
- Connect with U3As friendly Tutors who are keen to share their knowledge in an inclusive and enjoyable learning environment
- Discover the camaraderie that makes U3A Brisbane a thriving community of lifelong learners.

The Adelaide Street premises of U3A were quite crowded with enthusiastic Tutors, Volunteers and Management Committee members as well as many current and prospective members.

Attendees found it very interesting to be able to attend and listen to a 15-minute presentation where 16 of our U3A Tutors offered an overview of the classes they generously offer each week for members. There was also the opportunity for attendees to chat with Tutors and ask the questions that would help them to better understand what U3A is all about and how they may be able to fit in as a member. Static and Dynamic Displays, together with Rolling PowerPoint Presentations, were an informative feature of the Open Day program.

A positive outcome of this important event was the number of visitors who took the opportunity to join U3A while attending Open Day. There were 16 new members who joined on September 9 and approximately 61 new members following that date. As U3A is totally based on members being prepared to volunteer their time, knowledge, and expertise, it was very positive that a number of the new members volunteered to work in the U3A

Office while others volunteered to become Tutors and share their knowledge, expertise and interests with other U3A Members.

This important inaugural event was organized by the recently formed Marketing Sub Committee. They worked within a limited timeframe to organise and present a very enjoyable, informative, and professional Open Day.

Recently Janet McKeon, who proposed and coordinated the very successful Open Day, and a valued member of the U3A Management Committee, resigned from the Management Committee. I recognise and thank Janet for the very important contribution she has made to U3A during the 9 months she was a valued member of the Management Committee.

Financial Position

The U3A finances have been competently and efficiently managed by Joan Mackay, Treasurer. The U3A finances are in a very sound position as you will note when Joan delivers the Financial Report. Joan will also deliver the Auditor's Report which highlights U3A's strong financial position.

Social Events

During 2023 the Social Activities program for U3A was once again offered after an absence of 3 years because of Covid. There has been a great range of activities for members.

Heather Dowling volunteered for the role of Social Activity organiser, and put together a great variety of Social Activities for members covering the 12 months from May 2023 through to March 2024.

These events are an important part of the opportunities that U3A offers for members to be involved socially, as well as enjoying the various experiences at the Theatre, Historical visits, Dining events, Bus Trips and the Arts. It is important that we take the opportunity to be involved in events such as these which encourage social interaction outside of classes. The events organised were as follows.

- Visit to Old Government House located at the QUT complex in George Street
- Christmas in July event at Bestbrook Mountain Retreat
- Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers Coach Trip
- Bribie Island Day Cruise on MV Lady Brisbane
- The Spirit of Christmas 2023, Concert Hall QPAC
- Full day coach trip to Pohlman's Nursery at Gatton

All activities have proved very popular and we look forward to the 2024 social events program.

Tutors and Volunteers

U3A Tutors make an enormous contribution to U3A and to the ongoing learning experiences of our members, by providing a great service to all through sharing their knowledge and expertise in classes on an honorary and voluntary basis.

Celebration and Thank You Drinks were held in December 2023 for U3A Tutors and Volunteers in appreciation of their voluntary contribution and commitment to U3A. This event enabled Tutors and Volunteers to meet with other Tutors and Volunteers together with the Management Committee Members.

The outcomes of this level of volunteering are amazing. I am sure you will agree with me that U3A is an outstanding organisation offering amazing opportunities for members. Thank you to all our volunteers and to the members for supporting U3A through your attendance at the many classes and events offered.

The success of U3A depends very much on the expertise and generosity of our volunteer Tutors, who contribute a great deal of time and effort to develop and present the incredible variety of learning opportunities for members. Based on recent statistics, there are 171 F2F classes and 36 Zoom classes and 2 other classes for a total of 209 classes for Term 1, 2024. This number includes **25 new classes**. A special "Thank You" to the Tutors for making U3A Term programs possible.

The efficient organisation of the classes depends very much on the volunteer members responsible for timetabling. Gail Hawkins prepares the Timetable for each term's class held in the two premises in the city and we all benefit from her commitment to this significant task. Thank you also to the volunteers for being available at the city venues, coordinating the signing-in members before classes together with the other organisational activities.

The District Coordinators also play an important role in ensuring that U3A classes and opportunities are available to as many members as possible. During 2023 these roles were filled by Bernadette Ketter Logan; Rod McLary City Precinct, Westside and Northside; Pat Collins Southside; Chris Hobbs Wynnum. Rod McLary also fills the role of District Manager. Thank you to each of these volunteers for the expertise and commitment they bring to these roles.

U3A is very fortunate in having the IT expertise of Greg Taylor together with the valued contribution of Yvonne McGann coordinating the U3A Office, Jane Elliott Editor of eNews and the members of the Management Committee.

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Special Events

During the past twelve months, Mary Denver has once again been responsible for organising presenters for the monthly Zoom Presentations for members. These have been popular with members, as Mary has been able to source some excellent presenters. Large numbers of members have taken advantage of these online presentations. Mary has also filled the important role of Secretary, a role she has undertaken with significant competence and expertise.

Administration & IT

The Administration Team under the impressive leadership of Yvonne McGann has continued to operate on a weekly basis in both the Creek Street and Adelaide Street premises. Yvonne has been effectively supported during 2023 by day leaders Mary Calder, Mary-Anne Scott, Rod McLary, Eve McCormack together with many other daily volunteers. U3A classes would not function effectively without the commitment and competence of this group of Volunteers.

Computer Lab Planning

Recently the Management Committee met with Greg Taylor, who is the very committed and experienced IT Manager/Coordinator for U3A. As you would be aware the computer system at U3A is of a high standard and provides an excellent service and experience for our members. The discussions centered around Computer Lab Planning, Hardware Replacement and Future Directions for IT at U3A. Greg provided two Discussion Papers to cover these topics:

- Classroom Hardware Requirements and Computer Lab Future
- IT Future Planning

The papers provided a very useful basis for the meetings and was a most useful and informative experience for Management Committee Members. The outcome of the Future Planning discussions was to approach the issue from a three stage perspective as follows:

- Stage 1: initial support now with Hardware and Software issues – Boost I/T engaged
- Stage 2: I/T infrastructure handover – while this is currently ready NO timeframe was decided
- Stage 3: Full transfer of responsibility for management of the online systems

Thank you to Greg for the commitment and expertise he brings to this important role.

Membership

During 2023 there was a particular focus on increasing the number of U3A members and one of the strategies used to achieve an increase in membership was introducing the Open Day in September 2023. The membership figures for 2023 were 2992 compared with 2939 in 2022. A small increase of 1.8%. As the risk of Covid continues to decline it is likely the membership numbers will return to the excellent numbers prior to Covid.

Special Events

Carol Owens – ABC Bradley Art Competition

Congratulations to our talented art tutor, Carol Owens, who recently won first prize for her portrait of Jenny Woodward in the ABC Bradley Art Competition. Carol's portrait of Jenny is an excellent likeness and I am sure that Jenny Woodward was thrilled with the outcome. Carol is the tutor for the U3A class A83, Art – Creative Portraiture, which is held in New Farm Park on a Friday twice per month with email catch-ups throughout the term.

Anne Collins 100 Years

On March 1 there was an important event for one of U3As long term members Anne Collins, who turned 100 years of age on that date. Anne has been a member of U3A for many years and holds the honour of being one of our earliest members. To recognise this amazing milestone of 100 years, Chris Deeming, Anne's Tutor in the Photography class, organised a print featuring Anne, and this has been hung in the foyer of the Adelaide Street premises. It was featured in the February eNews article.

Two special events were organised to celebrate Anne's important milestone. The first event involved the Photography Class Anne attends and was organised by class members under the leadership of class Tutor Chris Deeming. This event was held on her birthday and included many of Anne's relatives, some travelling from

overseas to be present. Given there are many others connected to U3A who wanted to recognise Anne's special birthday,

Chris Deeming organised a gathering on 21 March at Marco Polo Coffee shop, which is next to the Adelaide Street premises.

The two special events held to recognise Anne Collin's 100 years were both very successful. It was obvious that Anne really enjoyed both celebrations on reaching 100 years. Thank you to Chris Deeming for organising these two events.

Editor eNews

I would like to make special mention of appreciation from U3A Members for the great work that Jane Elliott has done as Editor of eNews for the past 20 months. Thank you, Jane, we all appreciate your contribution during your time as Editor. eNews is an important publication as it keeps members up-to-date with what is happening across the U3A community. Best wishes for your future directions.

Future Directions

I will complete my involvement on the U3A Management Committee at the end of this meeting. During the four years I have been involved with the Management Committee, three as Vice President and one as President, I have found my involvement to be a worthwhile experience. The very competent and committed Secretary, Mary Denver, is also completing her involvement with the Management Committee. I found Mary to be a very supportive and competent Secretary and wish her well in her many future areas of involvement across community organisations.

I also make mention of Mary-Ann Scott who is leaving the Management Committee as well. Mary-Ann also fulfils the important role of day leader in the U3A Brisbane office on Wednesday of each week.

I thank all the members of the Management Committee for their commitment to their Management Committee role and for their support during the past twelve months particularly. Best wished for future directions at U3A.

Gabrielle Power West
President
U3A Brisbane