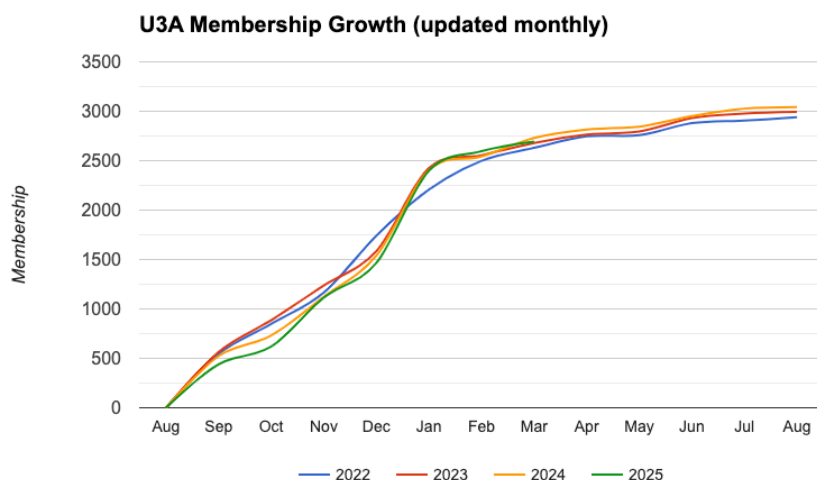


U3A Brisbane Annual report 2024

2024 was the first year since the COVID panic of 2020 where our classes have really started to return to normal. Membership increased and we finally reached the 3000 mark. A number of classes returned to Face to Face and members enrolled in these classes with more confidence.

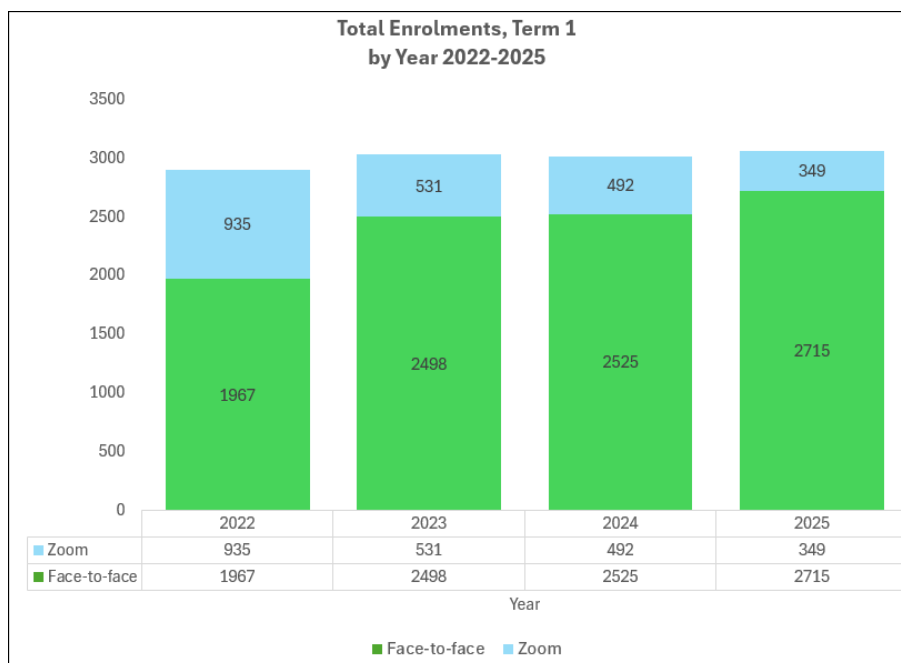
Membership

Our paid membership for 2024 was 3042. This was an increase in Membership and, as can be seen from the graph, our Membership has been continuing to increase. The trajectory is positive. It is also pleasing to note that our renewal rate is 74% as of 13 April 2025.



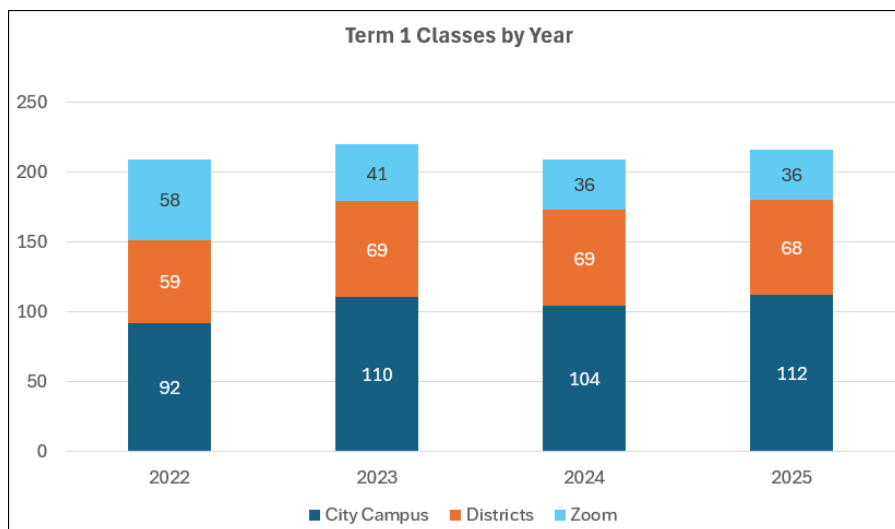
Enrolments

Our enrolments have followed a similar pattern to our Membership as would be expected. Enrolments have been consistent and gradually more and more classes are moving back to Face to Face, but we still have a number of Zoom classes which will continue.



Classes and Tutors

In Term 1 2025 we had 228 classes 36 of which were on Zoom and 179 were Face-to-Face with 155 Tutors. There is a pleasing trend in enrolments in our City Campus with Term 1 2025 showing a marked increase. Much of this success we owe to our amazing tutors. We would not exist without them.



At the time of writing this report there have been 46 new classes added this year and several new Tutors. As an example of the wonderful willingness of our members to participate in Tutoring we have 45 new members who have joined U3A Brisbane in April, and it is now only the 16th. 5 of these members have volunteered for Tutoring so the future looks very promising. I'm quite excited about the many options for classes that we offer and sometimes feel like a child in a Lolly shop. So much to choose from.

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.

In the districts, our appreciation is owed to the district coordinators, capably overseen by Rod McLary, for the great job they do in allocating tutors to the various suburban venues, namely Bernadette Ketter (Logan), Rod McLary (Westside, Northside and City Precinct), Pat Collins (Southside) and Chris Hobbs (Wynnum).

Class Sizes and changes

Class size depends on several factors and classes are marked as closed depending on these factors:

- Type of class e.g. lecture style, use of tables, or interactive etc
- Room Capacity only 3 of our rooms hold more than 30 and less with tables
- Prerequisites required e.g. Continuing from previous term etc
- Rolling classes forward has not been a major factor in marking a class as closed when we have analysed the figures. The impact of rolling on closed classes currently affects only 8% of classes (10/120).

We have looked at possibilities that would ensure that members can find a class they would like to enroll in. An increased number of classes offering more choice is one option but a popular class with a popular tutor will always fill quickly similarly to theatre tickets to a popular show. The solution is not simple.

Our computer room at Creek St has been remodeled to reflect the change in Computer use by members. A member survey done in 2023 demonstrated the move from Desktops to Mobile Devices such as laptops, iPads and Smart Phones. Consequently, we changed the room to facilitate these allowing members to bring their own devices if they wished. U3A also provides 4 Laptops which can be borrowed for a class if members do not bring their own.

Accommodation

We have retained Adelaide Street through the COVID crisis, but the lease will end in 2026. We are currently talking to our landlord about possibilities of either extending our current lease or organizing a new one. We are also looking at other options, so we are familiar with the current market and what is available. We are always aware of our financial position and are looking at both 5 and 10-year projections to ensure that we remain solvent into the future. This project is being led by Sharyn Johns from our Management Committee, and she is doing an amazing job.

We are trying to minimize extra expense for our members but given the options being presented to us we have had to consider raising our Membership Fee to \$50. There will be a vote on this proposal shortly. Our class fees have not changed for 14 years, and we will try to maintain them as long as possible.

Financial position

Our Treasurer Joan Mackay retired in November 2024 and our new Treasurer, Sharon Rothwell, who was a member of the Management Committee throughout 2024 and worked with Joan throughout the year will shortly be giving an overview of our financial position. Sharon is also leaving us this year and I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all her hard work. She has done a wonderful job at a difficult time taking on the role to ensure continuity of our accounting processes. We also thank Joan for her earlier work at the beginning of 2024 and in prior years.

Administration and IT

We have farewelled Yvonne McGann, our long time Office Manager in 2024. Yvonne has been a key part of the Management and Administration of U3A for many years. Fortunately, she is continuing to Tutor her Latin classes so is still part of the Team. We were fortunate that our previous Treasurer Lyndall Beattie was available to replace Yvonne as the new Office Manager. Lyndall has also joined the Management Committee ensuring that the day-to-day activities in the city are not remote from management. Thank you to all our Office Volunteers particularly the Day Leaders. We could not operate our venues in the city without you

The ability to manage the Administration of U3A by volunteers both in our office and remotely is only possible because of our online Management System. Greg Taylor works constantly to ensure that this system adopts state-of-the-art database technology and

security practices. He also manages the website and mailing lists and continues to improve our systems so that we can take advantage of the efficiencies possible by the clever use of Technology.

Communications and Publicity

We rely mainly on electronic methods of communication with members. In the case of emergency, we can send SMS messages to targeted groups through our Administration System.

Our popular eNews is edited by Josephine Brown. Our thanks to Josephine and Greg who manages the formatting and distribution. This is so important to U3A Brisbane as it has allowed us to retain contact with our members and update them on current changes and events each month and includes current Social Committee opportunities and other news.

We also thank Greg Doolan who manages our Facebook page.

Our other main vehicle is the quarterly Class Schedule and our thanks to the tutors and to Class Schedule team (Mary Calder, Gail Hawkins and district coordinators) who help compile and check the data and to our IT Manager, Greg Taylor, who organizes the email distribution. The Class Schedule is available online or for download from the U3A Brisbane website.

The website is a particularly valuable information source, and members should check this site regularly for important announcements. This was demonstrated recently when we had to close for 2 days in the aftermath of cyclone Albert. Detailed information and instructions for using the current technology is also available here. Members can also check if they have paid class fees and obtain a list of their recent transactions. This is done through the Member Dashboard.

Strategic Plan

In 2024 the Management Committee participated in a Strategic Planning Process. This was facilitated by Sharyn Johns supported by other members of the Management Committee who worked together with Mary Calder, Martha Kartanos, Mary-Anne Scott and Bev Phillips to take U3A Brisbane forward with a new Strategic Plan to give us direction through to 2028. There were 3 main areas for consideration: -

- Membership
- Classes and Tutors
- Financial and Operational Sustainability

We thank Sharyn for her organized and encouraging approach. We now have a plan which is [available on our website](#).

To facilitate the section of the Strategic Plan regarding Classes and Tutors a new volunteer position has been created – ‘*Support – Classes and Tutors*’. This was advertised in the eNews and the successful applicant is Na Xiao (Lara) who is currently tutoring a Chinese language class in Mandarin.

Management Committee

Thank you to the 2024/25 Management Committee, consisting of John Galligan (Vice President), Sharon Rothwell (Treasurer), Rod McLary (Secretary), Lyndall Beattie, Cheryl Hayden and Sharyn Johns. We are fortunate to have such willing volunteers to step in when needed.

Collaboration with the University of Queensland

We are organizing a collaborative effort with the University of Queensland as part of our plan to offer more presentations and classes to our members. In 2025 we will launch our first collaborative presentation. Cheryl Hayden and myself have been working on this for some time. It promises to be a very exciting opportunity going forward and information will be available in the eNews when definite plans are in place.

Special Presentations

We have continued to offer online presentations throughout 2024 and, as the fear of COVID recedes, we are now including a mix of both Face-to-Face Presentations as well our current Zoom offerings. These are free to members and are advertised in our eNews each month. I would like to thank the members who have organized these presentations and particularly Greg Taylor who has organized several and our current Management Committee Secretary, Rod McLary who has organized a number of these and particularly the recent Face-to-Face ones.

Social Committee

Our Social Committee Coordinator, Heather Dowling, retired from the role at the end of 2024. We thank Heather, who organised our Social Committee functions single handedly for her enormous effort which brought much happiness to many. This was an enormous task and in previous years was handled by a committee. Our new Social Committee Coordinator is Mark Brannigan, and he will be assisted by Linda Daniels and Christina Chau.

The year in Summary:

- We are in a good financial position and expect that 2025 will see continued improvement
- Membership and Enrolments are increasing
- We have an increased number of classes
- We developed a Strategic Plan to guide us through until 2028
- We are looking at Accommodation plans to take us forward when our current Lease expires in 2026.
- We are working with the University of Queensland to give our members more learning opportunities

The Future

We have started to implement some of the objectives outlined in our Strategic Plan

We are still in a viable financial position.

The decision to retain Adelaide St is dependent on the options proposed by our landlord and our financial projections going forward but the possibilities are promising.

Our members have been amazingly resilient and without their support U3A Brisbane would not have been able to continue.

You are amazing and I'm very proud of you all.

Thank you

Deslyn Taylor
President
U3A Brisbane