



Coffs Harbour U3A Inc.
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NEWSLETTER

October 2015

President's Report

Greetings to all Members as the last term of the calendar year begins.

The Annual General Meeting was held in August. The AGM date follows the requirements of the fiscal year and is also the time of the election of committee for the following year. Including the committee there was an attendance of only 35 plus 12 apologies. Thank you to those who attended and acknowledged the meeting. The committee dedicate many hours and your encouragement is much appreciated.

Nine of the previous committee re-nominated. Please join me in a warm thank you to both Henry Lange and Jan Temple who have been on committee but did not re-nominate this year.

The current committee is as follows:-

President:	Helen Squires
Vice President:	Geoff Donnan
Treasurer:	Carol Lindsay
Secretary:	Ruth Baker
Membership Secretary:	Rob Chapman
Course Co-ordinator:	John Clingan
Publicity Officer:	Lesley Meredith
Webmaster:	Ray Wilson
General Committee:	Di Chapman, Jenni Benson, Elva Dow.

Jenni Benson and Elva Dow joined the committee for the first time and again I hope you all join me in wishing them both well.

The committee has its full compliment of 11 and whilst it is great that all positions are filled it is disappointing that from a membership of 530 there were just enough applications to complete the committee. We are still growing in membership – the August number was 530 and, as I write now, I understand it is 540.

The several months after the AGM present a busy time for committee members. The last term in 2015 is about to begin and we are well under way in planning for the 2016 student year. In June/July of any year your Course Co-ordinator is required to advise room bookings for the following calendar year. It is a tricky job because 6 months ahead of next year's classes, there is no certainty of the total facilities required. Because all of the rented premises are shared with other entities it becomes one great jigsaw puzzle! Accommodation bookings are no longer word of mouth arrangements but involve extensive form completion and attendance to formal agreements and John Clingan's hours of work in this regard are appreciated.

Do remember to check out our website at coffs.u3anet.org.au. Ray Wilson does a great job as web master and in the coming weeks plans to update 2016 detail. If in doubt as to how to access the site just Google Coffs Harbour U3A.

I recently read the adage that "Youth is a gift of nature but older age is a work of art". Let us show the world what great artists of life we are!!!!

Helen Squires. President, Coffs Harbour U3A Inc.

[MYU3A](#)

COMPUTERISED ENROLMENT & MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Does the word "management" sound like a term alien to our U3A where we meet to learn and communicate in congenial groups? For the committee "management" is entirely valid because management is the engine that underlines our existence as an organisation.

Your committee has been using a collection of computer systems to administer your U3A. With increased membership this has become a cumbersome exercise so we are making an upgrade which will roll all of our necessary programs into one system and will make redundant much of the repetitive volume of paper work which has been required to service a membership in excess of 500, involving approx. fifty courses and forty tutors.

The system adopted is called MyU3A. It has been developed by a U3A member in Geelong Victoria for the use by any U3A wishing to adopt it. The design incorporates all aspects required to administer any U3A and is adaptable. The system has a high level of security and your records can only be accessed by password.

For class facilitators there is a need to become familiar with aspects of MyU3A which refer to class enrolments and recording practices and their introduction to the system is under way. Some have already attended explanatory sessions. If any facilitator reading this has a concern about the procedures please contact either John Clingan or Ray Wilson. Just as groups have “tea persons” so a class may nominate someone to assist with the online clerical aspect if the facilitator so wishes.

For general members MyU3A gives positive answers to a number of suggestions and/or questions that members have raised in the past.

When this system is “ready to go” it will enable us to:

1. Retain the same membership number for our whole period of membership.
2. Enrol as a new member and pay the membership fee on line.
3. Renew or continue a membership and pay the membership fee on line.
4. View all available courses including the venue and date of classes conducted.
5. Enrol in courses on line.
6. Enrol at enrolment time no matter where we are, provided there is a computer or other electronic device availability.
7. See if a particular course is fully booked and choose to go on a waiting list, or not. (Remember the drop out rate of many classes gives opportunity to enrol later.)
8. Notate your own class record on line if you will be absent from class – very helpful if you are unwell or travelling etc.

There will be “how to do it” information provided to general members.

Do not be concerned if you are hesitant to adopt electronic enrolment, or do not have computer or other electronic device access. You will receive, in a timely manner, any assistance you need to renew membership and enrol in courses for the year 2016. Please read the article in this newsletter “Dates to Remember” for registering membership and course enrolment.”

Many members are saying welcome to a plan that suits the era in which we live, yet others may be nervous of change. Does that mean that 2016 is a great time to recall the “buddy system” among our class mates where those with IT skills to share may take time to assist associates who may like a hand?

The fact is that for a general member the process of joining, paying fees and course enrolment will have expanded options on a familiar process.

Helen Squires, on behalf of the Committee.

Dates to Remember for 2016

REGISTRATION OF MEMBERSHIP AND COURSE ENROLMENT

Here we are entering a new and last term for 2015 and this notice may seem an early bird one for next year, but this is the last Newsletter being issued before the end of this term. So please, retain this item and mark your diaries.

Date No. 1 On a December date (yet to be determined) a notice will be sent to each member currently enrolled. The notice will be emailed to those who have advised an email address and posted to those who have only provided a postal address.

The notice will include a password, which will be the recipient's personal password. Please ensure that you keep this correspondence as the password will be needed for you to enter into your record for renewal. If you cannot access the on line service, please remember that you still need to retain that password correspondence because the person registering your application for 2016 membership will need your password to complete your application. Correspondence will also detail the next steps.

Any time after you receive a notice you can enter your renewal of membership and pay your 2016 fees on line. At that time you can also view a course list but enrolment in courses will not activate until 13th January 2016.

If you have changed your email address or postal address since your 2015 membership application was lodged please advise our Membership Secretary, Rob Chapman, to enable the above- mentioned correspondence to be accurately addressed. If you have an email contact available to you and have not previously advised the Membership Secretary of the fact please do so as I am sure you will find such contact useful to yourself.

Date No. 2 Fee Paying Day: Monday 4th January 2016 9.30am to 11.30am

Venue: Room 1 Community Village, Coffs Harbour

This is a day for new or returning members to attend if they have difficulties in accessing membership application or renewal on line. Committee members will be there to process membership applications. This is also a day when people who can access a computer or another electronic device may make inquiries if they are tentative about the process. It is also a day when people who wish to pay fees by cheque or cash can do so whether or not they later wish to book courses on line at home. Course enrolments are not available on this day because enrolments do not open until 13th January 2015.

Date No. 3 Fee Paying Day: Thursday 7th January 2016 9.30am to 11.30am

Venue: Room 1 Community Village, Coffs Harbour

Activity on this day is exactly the same as listed for Date No. 2

This second day is arranged purely to give people an optional day of attendance to complete applications.

Date No. 4 Course Access and Enrolment Day Wednesday 13th January 2016

On this day all courses are officially open for enrolment on line wherever you wish to access the web site.

Between 9.30am to 11.30am at the Cavanbah Centre Coffs Harbour Class facilitators will be invited to be in attendance should members wish to discuss their courses with them. They will not be processing your actual enrolment but for those people who have difficulty accessing the web to enrol in courses there will be committee members on hand to process their course enrolments.

On this day new members can join and current members can pay their annual fees as outlined under Date No. 2. However, to save congestion and wait time, it will be advantageous if fee paying has happened prior to 13th January – that is the purpose of having the two days for fee paying prior to the enrolment date.

On this Wednesday 13th January a similar session will be held at Woolgoolga in the afternoon, exact time and venue to be advised.

Please note: The fee for 2016 is \$60.00.

Courses for 2016

As you will be aware our U3A relies on volunteers to introduce courses for our curriculum. Should you be considering leading a 2016 course in any subject please contact our Course Co-ordinator, John Clingan, to discuss possibilities. For courses commencing in Term 1, 2016, there is a requirement to make arrangements with John prior to the end of November as it is planned to have courses for Term 1, 2016 scheduled by 30th November.

Each year members eager to plan their next study year ask “what courses will be available next year?” Always the answer is similar to “course details are not available until our voluntary course facilitators have declared their intentions for the coming year.”

With the November 30th schedule in mind it is planned to publish a 2016 course list on our website some time during December 2015. Please note that actual enrolment in courses will not be available until Wednesday 13th Jan, 2016 and as always, membership fees will need to be paid before course enrolment.

Annual General Meeting President's Report 28th August 2015

I come to you as a President representing a cohesive and thoughtful Committee and I say a very warm “thank you” to all Committee members who have given their supportive participation in sustaining and administrating Coffs Harbour U3A over the past year. Thank you for the hours of routine work and for innovative ideas, the donated use of home facilities, especially in relation to personal IT equipment, including related costs, and for regular committee meeting venues free of charge. I also commend the teamwork among those holding particular office. Our current Membership Secretary, Henry Lange, has not nominated to continue as a committee member and I take this opportunity to record appreciation of his work in this valuable role. Best wishes and thank you to Henry and to committee member Jan Temple who is not re-nominating. Jan has offered to assist committee as need arises. Such an offer is very welcome but is rarely received.

The current membership is 530 and 2015 has seen 53 classes in action. Membership covers a wide area and groups have met at both Woolgoolga and Coffs Harbour under the leadership of 42 voluntary facilitators. On behalf of all members I record a very big thank you to all who conduct classes. These volunteers dedicate time and knowledge to enable this Coffs Harbour U3A. Whilst many of us may decide on the day whether or not we will participate in a group in which we have enrolled, our leaders are regularly present at class having spent considerable time, study and thought in preparation. From time to time I hear from members that U3A involvement has enriched their lives, both socially and in realising their own potential for learning. To all the group leaders I would say, “please be assured that you are deeply appreciated”. And to the many who play supportive roles in class activities, be it tea person, presenter or any other task, thank you for grasping the concept of shared endeavor.

Over successive years each committee has endeavoured to promote and create an awareness of U3A amongst this regional community. This year we “bundled” outreach and publicity in a seniors’ week package including sharing class activities and displaying a members’ art show in the Bunker Cartoon Gallery – the art remained on exhibition for a full gallery term. Part of our community outreach was to include young school children in the art exhibition. Bishop Druitt College took up the invitation to share the event and so provided a generational spectrum on social issues of the day. We do have a need to encourage local political interest and public awareness of our group. Given that our income relies on membership fees we need support to secure accommodation/ facilities and much of our assistance comes, indirectly, from the Coffs Harbour Council. Thank you to all who participated in any way during seniors’ week and congratulations to those who received awards at the culminating members afternoon gathering. Fuller detail of the event was published in our July 2015 newsletter.

On my own recognizance I attended The U3A Asia Pacific Alliance International Conference held in Brisbane at the Brisbane City Hall in May 2015. The theme for the Conference was *Cherish Today- Challenge Tomorrow*. Guest speakers came from many countries in an age range from 19 years old to third age speakers and they presented an amazing range of educational concepts relating to our 3rd age, in our world today. I came away inspired to stand for a president one more year and to be very aware that we need to embrace the communication changes in our world today. We can chose to elect to have little to do with change but our election to do so may encourage communication isolation. Some individuals may be surrounded by others to tend to business and communication requirements but, at the end of the day we are people of this century and have amazing opportunities to connect with the world we live in. Like many other members I do cherish today and my today, like yours, is warmed and shaded by the past. Sometimes I join many in wishing some changes were less frequent but, when I embrace the challenge that change may bring, I join others in enjoying a feeling of achievement.

Of course not all change is positive. One of our challenges for “tomorrow” is the rising costs over which we have little control. Just as our personal budgets are affected so too is our U3A room rent affected. There have been substantial rent increases for this financial year. Long term members will recall that our bank balance had grown and, acting upon the decision of a previous Annual General Meeting, membership fees have been kept at a minimum to be subsidised by money on hand. Those accumulated resources have dwindled and fee subsidy from that source is close to completion.

Committee members Ruth Baker and Ray Wilson attended the Network NSW 2015 State Conference and AGM. Ruth was our delegate and published her report in the July 2015 Newsletter. The strength of such a network conference is the sharing of knowledge with other U3A groups. Ray attended the conference with a particular aim to improve our current systems of membership and class recording, plus other management necessities. We find that many U3A groups are dealing with the same inquiries and, as a result, we are currently trialing a program designed by a U3A member, specifically for U3A, and in practical use by several other U3A groups. It is anticipated that this program will be operational for calendar year 2016. There will be new procedures and the incoming committee will be called upon to ensure that information and guidance is available for all members. The program will simplify membership applications and relieve congestion on enrolment day.

In conclusion I thank everyone who has participated in membership this past 12 months and I wish all members a companionable and stimulating year ahead.

May we ensure a future for Coffs Harbour U3A by keeping the flame to learn alive, and by embracing ever wider concepts of sharing with one another.

Helen M. Squires

President, Coffs Harbour U3A Inc. 28th August 2015

End of Year Party 2015

This is a friendship day for all financial members and, as advertised from January 2015, the date is

Wednesday 9th December 2015 (11.30am to 2.30pm)

Cavanbah Centre Hall, Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour.

All are welcome to enjoy entertainment and light refreshment

2016 Travel News

We have received the latest offering from Sage Travel. You might recall that as in previous years, Melbourne City U3A support this UK University Tour. Both Carol Lindsay and I have been on previous tours. I had a great time on the tour that I went on but Carol was not very happy with her experience the following year. One of the good features of the tour is that you pay no more for a single en-suite bedroom. This year accommodation is at Christ Church College Oxford, University of Wales Bangor, Edinburgh University, York St John University, St Catherine's College Cambridge and Imperial College London -3 nights at each. Breakfasts and dinners are included each day as well as entry fees to the tourist sites. I have 20 brochures detailing the highlights of the trip, which I shall place in our box in the foyer of the Community Village. Please don't take one unless you are really interested in going. The dates are 1st to 21st August 2016.

Ruth Baker Secretary