

Coronavirus (COVID-19) - Coffs Harbour U3A initial response.

Doubtless everyone is aware that the situation with the Coronavirus pandemic has become more serious in recent days, and is likely to continue in that direction. Much is being done at all levels to manage and respond to this situation. There are links at the end of this email to websites which will help to keep you informed of the current situation in NSW and Australia generally.

Our U3A has been constantly reviewing the situation, but we do feel some advice to members is important at this stage. We will keep you informed if/when the situation changes. All members are of course free to make decisions for themselves, but would ask that everyone acts on the following advice:

A. Attendance at classes

1. If you have any upper respiratory symptoms - fever, cough, sore throat – we ask you to avoid classes until the nature of your illness is clear and you no longer have such symptoms. In the circumstances, we would support a tutor who asked a member who exhibited such symptoms, to leave the class.

2. If you have travelled recently overseas (to countries with infection outbreaks), you should self-isolate at home for two weeks.

3. If you decide that it is not in your (or the class') interest to attend class, **please ensure you inform your tutor** of your decision beforehand. If low numbers warrant it, the tutor may decide to cancel the class, and (s)he will need some advance notice to allow time for that to be done.

4. In some cases, the tutor may have cause to cancel a class. If so, they will inform us, and we will contact the class members by email (or by phone, in the case of members without emails, as best we can) . As far as possible we will do this in time for members to be able to alter their plans. To this end it is probably a good idea to include a check of your emails prior to heading off to class.

5. There has been strong advice given to the public about maintaining good hygiene – regular hand washing and drying, not touching your face, avoiding direct contact with others, and/ or the use of hand sanitisers. We will assume that members coming to class will be so prepared. Coffs U3A is not in a position to provide hand sanitisers to each class, and generally nor do our venue managers have that option. Provision of such extras is left to each individual member. Do let the managers of any venue know (in a pleasant way) if their facilities lack soap, drying apparatus etc. They will be only too keen to maintain a high standard for their guests.

This is our initial response to this COVID-19 outbreak. We will maintain this position until there is an indication that more active intervention is necessary. If any situation develops, you will make your own decisions. Ensure, as far as possible, that your decisions are in your best interest, and do not jeopardise the interests of other members, or other people in general. But do not base your decision on the possibility that by not attending, the class may not operate, and others may miss out. If that needs to happen it must happen. No-one is to blame.

As a cautionary note: it is our age group (apologies to younger members!) which is most susceptible to this virus, particularly those of us with respiratory and heart conditions. Avoid unnecessary risks.

The following website is updated on a regular basis (daily, or more often) by the Australian government:

<https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

The NSW government maintains this website which has relevant information

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au>

There is much you can “google” on this subject, but be very cautious- there are a number of sites which carry bogus information, even dangerously incorrect information. Be prepared to not believe some of what you might find.

Wishing you all good health, for you and your family,

Kitch Morris, on behalf of the Coffs Harbour U3A committee

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