

## Lots new at Orange conference

More than 140 delegates representing some 34 U3As or associated organisations said they learnt a lot at the very successful U3A Network-NSW annual conference in Orange in late March.

The event also marked the 20<sup>th</sup> birthday of Orange U3A and the 25<sup>th</sup> year of the U3A movement in Australia.

The 2009 conference, theme “Inspiration to achieve,” incorporated the Network’s AGM at which **Pat MacLaren-Smith** was re-elected President.

(A list of all committee members and regional advisers and their contact details appears on the back page of this issue.)

Featured speakers discussed



*Network VP Bev Holland enjoys a laugh with Jean Penrose (Orange)*

the challenge of climate change and the rewards of late-life learning. Workshops allowed delegates to learn more about such topics as establishing their own U3A Web site or using the Network library.

A spokesperson for the Office of Fair Trading outlined how the new Associations Incorporation Bill could affect NSW U3As and committee members.

Two Q&A sessions saw people exchanging solutions of common problems.

Conference delegates came from all over NSW, from **Kiama** in the south to **Tweed Coast** in the far North. The ACT and Victoria were also represented.

Delegates included at least two – rumour said more – local “seniors of the year” i.e. **Colin Munns** from **Mudgee**

**U3A and Pat Spilsbury** from **Goulburn-Mulwarree**.

The AGM saw three people retire from the Network managing committee – **Rhonda Byrne (Eastlakes U3A)**, **Colin Munns** and **Ian Tayler**.

New committee members for 2009/10 are **Lorraine Green (Tamworth)**, **Geoff Hatch (Hawkesbury)**, **Pat Spilsbury (Goulburn-Mulwarree)** and **Mel Davies (Lake Macquarie)**.

The official dinner drew some 150 people to share 19 festive tables in the ballroom of the Orange Ex-services club.

Reports of all major speeches are in this issue. For the full text plus **more than 30 full colour photos of delegates**, go to the Network Web site at [www.nsw.u3anet.org.au/](http://www.nsw.u3anet.org.au/).

Click on the “Echoes from Orange” link on the RHS.

### IN THIS ISSUE

**Tips on attracting  
office bearers**

**Survey challenges  
some U3A ideas**

**New NSW Act  
likely to affect  
U3As**



# Congratulations everyone

*Hullo everyone*

*Writing a report on behalf of the Network NSW Inc. committee is always a privilege and a pleasure.*

*I'm pleased to say that the committee considered 2008 to have been a very good year and in this report I will reflect briefly on some of the highlights.*

*Treasurer John Green procured a Copyright licence at a very competitive cost and most U3As have taken up this licence.*

*John is still investigating the possibility of a DGR status (Deductible Gift Recipient) but it would seem that U3A is not eligible for this. However he will continue to explore the possibilities.*

*John is looking at other forms of insurance that U3As may need and will advise when these details become available.*

*During 2008 six new U3A's were welcomed as members of Network; namely Watonga, Bankstown, Gloucester, City U3A, Goulburn and Tamworth.*

*This year Dorrigo will be welcomed as well as another U3A on the South Coast.*

*In January I led a delegation from Network to confer with two senior ministerial advisers to discuss possible forms of Government support for U3A in NSW.*

*The meeting was relaxed and informative with well over an hour of discussion. The result of this meeting was the invitation to forward a*

*submission - work on this is in progress.*

*Seniors week 2009 was celebrated by most U3As, not all who received grants this year. Network supplied for the first time a small amount of promotional material it is hoped that in future years this gesture can be continued if funds are available for this purpose.*

*Congratulations to the organisers of this year's very successful Network Conference held in Orange. It was the perfect opportunity for Orange U3A to celebrate their 20<sup>th</sup> birthday with the many visitors from NSW, ACT and Victoria.*

*To read more about and see colour photographs of delegates at the Orange Conference go to the Network web-site: [www.nsw.u3anet.org.au](http://www.nsw.u3anet.org.au)*

*I would like to thank the U3A Network-NSW Inc out-going committee and Network sub-committee members 2008/9 for the valuable time and energy they have given over the past year.*

*I also extend a warm welcome to new Network committee members and appointed regional advisers.*

*Thanks must also go to our many U3A members who continue to contribute time and skills - your participation makes U3A one of the fastest growing retirement organisations in Australia.*

*Best wishes to everyone for a successful U3A year.*

*— Pat MacLaren-Smith*

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INFORMATION that cannot be published in *NewsLink* for space reasons is being progressively made available on the Network Web site where it can be read or downloaded and printed out for later reference.

## WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

Go to [www.nsw.u3anet.org.au](http://www.nsw.u3anet.org.au) and you will find details of the Network resource library, current insurance and copyright issues, plus text of major speeches, re-

ports and resolutions to the annual general meeting held in Orange in March this year.

Just click on the links on the RHS of the opening page, such as 'Echoes from Orange.'

— The editor



*Dubbo's Colin Jones leading a Q&A session at the 2009 Network conference*

## How to get new committee people

HOW do we deal with members' lack of enthusiasm for committee positions? How to train people to be confident to take on committee roles?

These were two of the most discussed questions raised by **Dubbo U3A** President **Colin Jones** when he chaired two Q&A sessions at the annual conference.

All delegates agreed that U3As are finding it harder to get people to stand for management committees.

A representative of **Sydney U3A**, for example, said with 5,000 members they have trouble getting people to go on committee, as each of Sydney's seven regions have their own chairperson, secretary and treasurer.

"We persuade people to help as assistant secretary, etc so they then feel confident of moving into the position if necessary," he said.

Other suggestions included:

TAP people on the shoulder – you can't wait for them to volunteer

SOME otherwise willing members imagine the job of treasurer, secretary or whatever may be beyond them and

don't want to appear to fail or look stupid. The remedy is not to be too hard on them and give them lots of support.

▶ **PRAISE** newcomers' achievements so they will stand for re-election.

▶ **ESTABLISH** a "shadow" for each committee member. You assume the shadow will take over the job if the incumbent retires or falls ill.

▶ **EMPHASISE** that every committee member is part of a team – a team that is not only willing to pitch in to help one another, but is pulling together for the benefit of the membership as a whole.

▶ **ENSURE** that everyone on the committee has a specific job, well described so they know exactly what they have to do and when. For example, **Kiama U3A** produces a manual on committee positions. They also combine the outgoing and incoming committee members at a special lunch.

▶ **MAKE** sure work is shared and delegated where necessary

▶ **NEW** members can be a fertile recruiting ground. Tell them the best way to get to know an organisation and meet people is through service.

▶ **START** looking for committee members at least three months before your AGM.

Delegates had varying views on whether or not people should hold a particular executive post for a fixed term with the idea of preventing any perception growing that the organisation was run as someone's fiefdom.

Fixed terms of two or three years are fine but what happens if no-one new volunteers for that job at the AGM?

Answer, according to some delegates, is simple – if your U3A's constitution allows it. Just declare a casual vacancy and re-appoint the previous office holder.

One well-beloved U3A Treasurer has been working on the books, casually, for the past 15 years!

A **Goulburn-Mulwarree U3A** delegate suggested changing your U3A's constitution so there was no set time for holding any position. "Then you stand up each year and, if you're eligible, the members can make a decision," she said.

An allied discussion was on how to get more members to attend AGMs.

Continued overleaf

Q&As from previous page

When Sydney U3A had trouble getting a quorum recently they had to re-schedule the AGM, informing all members, at a cost of between \$4000 and \$5000.

Again, delegates had a host of suggestions based on their own U3A's experiences.

For example:

**MAKE** the AGM a feature of enrolment day for the next year. Advertise that class enrolments will be on a first-come, first-served basis

**COMBINE** the AGM with free morning/afternoon tea and/or a showcase of members' craft and other creative works.

**TUGGERAH Lakes U3A** scheduled their Christmas lunch at the same time as the AGM and three-quarters of their members turned up.

**LAKE Macquarie** turned their AGM into a celebration with a guest speaker so people were not afraid to attend.

Do you have any different ideas? Just email *NewsLink* editor, **Graeme Eggins**, at [geggins@bigpond.net.au](mailto:geggins@bigpond.net.au) or write to PO Box 363, Alstonville 2477.

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## We need to use very tool to deal with climate change

**W**E will have to adopt renewable energy sources AND non-renewable energy sources AND make technical advances if we are to successfully confront the host of challenges facing the world.

So said the President of **Dubbo U3A, Colin Jones**, in the keynote speech to the U3A Network's 2009 conference.

Colin, who teaches and broadcasts on science subjects, said it was not hard to understand why governments around the world were treading softly on climate change. This was because of the complexity of the arguments and the associated political implications and ramifications.

He added: "Here in Australia of course we have the genesis of a carbon pollution reduction scheme whose precise definition has yet to be established, and while the much publicised Garnaut Draft Report and a host of other documents are aimed at assisting the policy making process, the work goes on and I for one will be happy when the dust settles and we can examine the final submission.

"... the finest words in the world ARE only sounds. Those words need to be followed by ACTIONS – and quickly.

"Make no mistake; there will be pain from the changes that need to be made, and while governments must labour to ensure that the disadvantaged in their communities do not

suffer unduly, they are equally charged with the responsibility of stewardship for those generations yet to come.

"In the final analysis I don't believe the real issue is whether global warming exists or not.

"Ultimately, we must look at factors such as pollution, increasing population growth world wide, food and water resources and the expectation of peoples around the world that the standard of living to which they have become accustomed should continue into the future.

"It will not be possible to address these, or a host of other problems confronting us, unless we adopt renewables, non-renewables and technological advances – not one or the other, but all of them."

### The challenge of carbon levels

WHAT can we do about the levels of carbon in the atmosphere? This was just one of the questions posed by scientist **Don Saville** when he spoke on "Carbon and climate change" at the NSW Network's 2009 conference.

Don is a former Director of Sustainable Agriculture and has represented NSW on national task forces for sustainable agriculture and fisheries.

He told delegates there will be a considerable lag time before we see the full effects of car-

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bon dioxide levels on global warming. Therefore temperatures will continue to rise even when we start reducing carbon dioxide.

At this stage carbon dioxide levels are still rising, if we don't want serious consequences then levels in the atmosphere should not go over 450 parts per million (ppm).

Scientists anticipated that even if emission levels are held at 2007 levels carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will still reach about 525ppm by 2050.

Coal-fired power stations are a significant source of greenhouse gases; their impact is increasing with greater demands for electricity and heating.

Carbon capture and storage, nuclear power and geothermal power are potential developments but none of these will have a significant impact within the next 20 years, Don said.

Wind turbines and large solar generators may meet a small portion of Australia's needs.

"The greatest impact on carbon emissions in the short term will have to rely on people like you and I to change the way we live," he said.

"We should adopt building designs that reduce the need for heating and cooling, and should install solar hot water systems and solar panels for electricity. We should also change our behaviour to re-

duce the amount of electricity we use.

"Products from oil are also a very large source of greenhouse gas emissions. We must reduce our reliance on these products by purchasing smaller fuel efficient cars and embracing the hybrid and electric car technologies."

Don said agriculture also has a significant impact on greenhouse gas emissions. Cattle and sheep account for 16% of the world's methane emissions. Also clearing and cultivating land releases the carbon stored in the vegetation and soil.

Having an emissions trading scheme or a tax on carbon will force more efficient technologies by making industries who release more carbon dioxide or methane into the atmosphere to pay more.

Asked if many of the predictions issued by climate change proponents were no more than guesses, Don said the overwhelming numbers of researchers around the world supported the hypothesis that global warming was caused by man.

But, he added, even if that theory proved wrong, wasn't it to mankind's benefit to make more efficient use of the world's limited natural resources.

**For the full text of these talks go to the Network website at [www.nsw.u3anet.org.au/](http://www.nsw.u3anet.org.au/) and click "Echoes from Orange"**

## Keep on learning no matter your age

YOU are never too old to learn – and it's good for you when you do. So said Orange U3A course leader **Peter McFarland** addressing delegates to the U3A Network NSW conference in Orange recently.

And he should know - Peter graduated with Distinction from Armidale University with a Master of Educational Administration in 2006, 16 years after retiring from teaching.

He said brain health may be powerfully influenced by how we use the mind, feed and stimulate it — or abuse it.

Research is teaching us that the brain is much more modifiable than was once believed. After childhood ends, it can retrieve losses, build new strengths and, in quite awesome ways, repair itself. Growing older does not mean slowly closing down.

The last 60 years can understandably be called the computer age.

But, Peter told his audience, "each of you possess the greatest computer ever designed — your brain

"The average female brain is 1300g — the average male brain 1400g.

"Lest men say therefore they are the more intelligent sex it is worthy of note that the average elephant brain weighs 4000/5000g and one doesn't meet many elephants on cam-

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**NewsLink** needs your ideas on how U3As can be better. Email the Editor, Graeme Eggins, on [geggins@bigpond.net.au](mailto:geggins@bigpond.net.au) or write to PO Box 363, Alstonville 2477. And please ensure Newslink gets a copy of your newsletter, by post or email.

## Network now offers wider insurance cover

from previous page

pus.” Peter said learning does not automatically cease with age.

His strategy for the mature aged is to ...

ADOPT a sensible balanced diet - overeating makes one sluggish

MAINTAIN an appropriate level of fitness - seek medical advice

OCCUPY your mind with meaningful activity - accept office in groups like U3A

READ seriously

CREATE – garden, build, create artworks

SOLVE crosswords, preferably cryptic

PLAY music

Also set a time for daily practice following the theory “A little done often done well”

“It is to be hoped we all understand the intensive learning of something stimulating and difficult does much more than give extra skills; it also stimulates thinking and brain health more generally, driving healthy ‘plastic change.’

“This optimistic view creates an irresistible imperative: use the mind to grow the brain, taking it not only to the old limits but to the dazzling frontiers of the new.

Finally, Peter pointed out the importance of U3A in members’ life. It enables us to take part in new fields, enlightens the mind and spirit and allows us to enjoy learning in a social, friendly atmosphere.

For notes on Peter’s talk, go to [www.nsw.u3anet.org.au/](http://www.nsw.u3anet.org.au/) and click “Echoes from Orange”.

**T**HE NSW Network is now able to offer all member U3As insurance cover against fire, peril and theft of their property

Network Treasurer **John Green** announced the extra cover at the 2009 conference.

He said members will soon receive a policy attachment outlining protection available on items such as office furniture and computers.

Details and application forms for all forms of insurance will be available on the Network Web site as well.

“Committees will need to forward to me details such as your U3A’s name, location of the goods, the type of building, locks on the premises etc – in other words all the normal information that an insurance company would require,” John said.

“The cost of the extra cover will be very competitive, in the order of \$120-\$150 for \$10,000 worth of goods, but each U3A will be assessed on the information you provide.

“Please forward a list of the items you want covered with as much detail as you can and a value of each item. I will then obtain a quote from CRISP (the Network insurers) for you, invoice your U3A and arrange for this to be added to the policy.

“Meanwhile, our Public Liability insurance policy continues to give our U3A branches and its members a high level of protection at very competitive rates; I will be meeting with the insurance

company in May so that the new rates can be sent out soon after.”

### Officers’ liability

The Treasurer said Network is also working on offering members who want it Association Liability. This includes Directors’ and Officers’ Liability and Professional Indemnity.

The Association Liability Insurance is a package designed to protect an association or organisation and its directors, officers and voluntary workers for liabilities that arise out of the work of the association or organisation.

Some of its many automatic features include libel and slander cover, tax audit cover, fidelity cover up to \$50,000, professional indemnity cover and occupational health and safety defence costs

The Treasurer stressed that cover offered to your U3A may vary from that described.

For quotes and full details of terms, conditions and exclusions of each policy contact the Network Treasurer and he will tailor a package to meet your U3A’s needs.

### Men’s sheds’ cover

At the time of writing, activities associated with men’s sheds were **not** covered by the Network insurance scheme. However the Network Treasurer expects them to be covered as of July 1.

Email all insurance inquiries to:

[johngreen52@bigpond.com](mailto:johngreen52@bigpond.com).



*ABOVE: Delegates Barbara Scott (left) and Fay Long (ACT); L to R: Geoff Hatch (Hawkesbury) and Reg Grace (Nepean Blue Mtns); Forster Tuncurry members (L to R) Colleen McGregor, Tony Knight and Jan Bennett.*



*LEFT: L to R: Judie Pedersen (Bathurst) with Network publicity officer and Dubbo President Colin Jones and Graham West (also Dubbo).*

*BELOW: Network President Pat MacLaren-Smith (holding sign) with Far North Coast region members at the regional advisers meeting.*



*LEFT: Alan Haggerty (centre) with fellow Griffith delegates. RIGHT: Southern Highlands President, Ian Bowie (on right) with members of his U3A's delegation during a tea break at the Orange conference.*



*ABOVE: L to R: Ron Browne (Nth Illawarra), Colin Munns (Mudgee) John Mitchell (Melbourne) RIGHT: L to R: Edith Weininger (Nepean Blue Mountains), Jan Pye (Sth H'lands), Diana Delchau (U3A Online), Judith Harrington (Sth H'lands)*

# Leaders confer on plans for national U3A entity

Leaders of the majority of “peak” Australian U3A organisations have provisionally agreed on the objectives of any national U3A entity.

These are:

- To foster close co-operation between U3As in Australia
- To provide an entity capable of speaking for U3As at the national level
- To maintain a register of all U3As in Australia

A draft strategic operational plan will be presented for discussion by July 2009.

These developments are a result of work by members of a subcommittee set up last year after the NSW Network AGM endorsed the concept of a national U3A network.

The subcommittee consists of **Ron Browne** (Convenor), **Pat MacLaren-Smith** (Ex Officio), **Dot Andrews**, **Colin Munns** and **Ian Tayler**. Recently **Tony Sayer** was co-opted as a member.

“The subcommittee have been actively promoting the idea and one of the early suggestions, subsequently adopted by our management committee, was that the initial discussions with out-of State U3A groups should be with ‘peak’ U3A organisations, namely the Victorian U3A Network, the South Australian U3A Alliance, the Australian Capital Territory U3A and U3A Online - the embryonic Queensland U3A Network

was also included,” Ron told the Network AGM in Orange last month.

“The response in all cases has been positive ...

“Overall, these developments are a significant step forward in the development of the U3A movement in Australia.”



*Jean McDowell (left) of Shellharbour U3A and Noelle White (Tuncurry) were dancing fit.*

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## WANT LIST FOR NETWORK LIBRARY

Mel Davies reports

A workshop on the Resource Library was a feature of the recent Network NSW conference in Orange.

Those attending were asked to nominate a particular area of interest they would like to see addressed in the Library.

Here are the areas requested:

Australian literature in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; Mythology; Family history/ genealogy; Geology/ geography; History of architecture; Music (composers, old musicals, singing for pleasure); Australian history (early colonial); Language and communication; Climate change and global warming; how to set up a PowerPoint presentation; Travel and Ma-jong.

There was strong interest in the area of indigenous affairs-history, education, successful people etc.

(Book groups seeking books for hire should contact the Library Manager for details of a service which offers books in sets up to 10 at very reasonable rates.)

Does your U3A have a course or material in the above areas which you would be willing to contribute to the Library? Is there an interest area you would like to see added to the list?

If so, the librarians love to hear from you.

Please email the Library Manager, **Mel Davies**, on [www.mel.d@westnet.com.au](mailto:www.mel.d@westnet.com.au) or write to her at 31/154 Brighton Avenue, Toronto 2283.

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### New writing comp this year

The U3A Sunshine Coast is running a new writing competition for this year including the challenge “Write something which makes us laugh.”

You can choose from four categories: Short Story (1000 to 1500 words), Rhyming Poetry (20 to 40 lines), Free Verse (up to 40 lines) and Challenge- Make Me Laugh (prose 1000 to 1500 words.)

For more information email Jenny at [jenny-bill@westnet.com.au](mailto:jenny-bill@westnet.com.au)

## New NSW Act likely to impact on U3A leaders

U3A committee members don't necessarily need to take out director insurance as a result of the passing of the Associations Incorporation Bill 2009. However, they might be wise to seriously consider it.

This Bill, now before the NSW State parliament, is not expected to come into law until sometime next year.

It will replace the current Associations Incorporation Act 1984 whose model rules form the basis of the constitutions of NSW U3As.

**Robyne Lunney**, Community Liaison Coordinator for the West Region of the Office of Fair Trading, outlined the 2009 Bill's scope at the Network's recent Orange conference.

She said the Bill creates several responsibilities in relation to committee members.

These relate to disclosure of any conflict of interest and a duty to act honestly and not use their position or information acquired as a committee member improperly.

"These responsibilities/duties are no more than would be expected of people in a position of trust and are not expected to be utilised by Fair Trading except in the most serious of situations," Ms Lunney said.

"Other States have not prosecuted anyone under similar provisions.

"As to insurance, since the abolition of requirement that incorporated associations must have and maintain public liability insurance to remain incorporated, the decision to have such insurance is a matter for individual associations.

"Such decisions are like any other matter relating to insurance - whether property insurance is re-

quired or whether committee insurance is required will depend upon the individual association's circumstances.

"It is recommended that the association through its committee obtain appropriate professional advice about their individual risk in relation to insurance matters.

"Committee insurance [director insurance] is commonly needed where the decisions of a committee/incorporated association may be controversial.

"The committee to which I belong was of the view such insurance is necessary - but again it is a matter for the individual organisation and its advice to make such a decision."

The proposed Act, unlike the current Act, requires at least three of its committee members to be resident in Australia.

The responsibilities and duties of an association's committee members include the requirement that they disclose their pecuniary interests in any matters to be discussed at a committee meeting.

The proposed Act also creates a number of offences with respect to fraudulent behaviour and misuse of confidential information by committee members. Another proposed change enables an association like a U3A to allow postal voting by its members.

For reasons of space, *NewsLink* cannot publish a complete summary of the proposed act, which could still be amended or even rejected in the Upper House of the NSW Parliament. Explanatory notes are at [www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/bill\\_en/aib2009317/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/bill_en/aib2009317/)

Alternatively, to read it in full, go to :

<http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/nswbills.nsf/0/D158BE900DDC0D65CA25756E00202858>

Select FIRST PRINT version. See also page 61.

### Sliding fees tried

Treasurers may be interested in adopting something similar to **Mudgee District U3A's** new fee structure.

The annual fee for a new member is now on a sliding

scale, depending on when a person joins, for example:

- Joining at term 1: \$25
- Joining at term 2: \$20
- Joining at term 3: \$15
- Joining at term 4: \$10.
- Renewing a previous

membership costs \$25.

No foam at home

If your U3A offers tea and coffee in foam cups, ask members to bring along their own cup and help the environment. This suggestion comes from **Hunter U3A** in NSW.

## How does your U3A fare?

**U3A ACT** co-ordinators recently did a survey which revealed 29% of their courses had a waiting list, 27% had about the maximum number of students and 44% of classes had some vacancies.

Responses from tutors covered 127 of the 210 courses (excluding computer courses) offered. Only a few of the continuing courses – i.e. those continuing from year to year – were able to take new students.

Overall, the latest results were similar to a survey taken in 2005 except that then 48% of courses were not filled to capacity.

Other U3As may like to replicate the ACT survey by asking their tutors for feedback.

## Names make news – and friends

We all like to be noticed and retirees are no exception.

**Moncrieff U3A** on Queensland's North Gold Coast has a policy of welcoming new members by publishing their names in bold type in the newsletter.

This policy not only makes new members feel important but also ensures that that particular copy will be seen by many other people, including prospective members.

One small town US newspaper increased its circulation by publishing a list of the names of everybody who passed a reporter who stood for an hour on a busy corner of a shopping precinct every Friday.

## Older men research project

Some male members of **U3A Northern Rivers**, based in Lismore, are taking part in an Australia-wide research project about learning by older men.

The University of Ballarat is undertaking the research, with Lismore and Blacktown the only two centres in NSW to be surveyed.

When **Associate Prof Barry Golding** visited Lismore, he met with **U3A Northern Rivers** president **Jennifer Somerville**, as well as other organisations ranging from the SES to a wood-

working group. He will return at the end of April to interview four members of each organisation. At that time he will distribute questionnaires to be completed by another 12 members of U3A NR.

The survey wants to find out what men over 50 learn through taking part in those various organisations, and what benefits the men, their families, and communities receive from that participation.

Prof Golding and his team will also survey centres in Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia in the research funded by National Seniors Australia and the WA Department of Education and Training.

## Who do you call in emergencies?

Who do you contact in an emergency if a member suddenly has a stroke or severe accident which prevents them from talking?

Different U3As act differently. Many rely on the fact that, generally speaking, friends of the victim will know who to contact.

Others, such as **Moncrieff U3A**, ask members to provide an emergency contact number on their membership form.

The **U3A Warrani Chorale** has adopted the name tag method, which other U3As do use.

Members are asked to write the following information on the back of their badge:

- \* Name and telephone number of their GP
- \* Blood group
- \* Any special medical problem (i.e. diabetes)
- \* Name and contact number of next of kin

## Medal for Forbes pioneer

Congratulations to **Bob Lytton**, Life Member and former President of the **Forbes (NSW) College of Seniors**. He received the Order of Australia medal (OAM) on Australia Day

Forbes recognised Bob's contribution earlier when the community named him citizen of the year in 2000.

## Watch your training computers

Warn computer students not to order airline tickets – or anything else – while using computers for which your U3A is responsible.

The possible dangers were highlighted recently by the Treasurer of **Liverpool U3A** in NSW, **Lammert Knight**.

He wrote in the *Liverpool U3A Gazette*: “Having the internet on our teaching computers costs U3A \$71.95 a month. So please pay the (student usage fee of) \$1 promptly to help us pay for that service.

“While on the internet, I don’t mind you looking up various website but stay away from dating sites, pornographic sites or sites that you can order tickets on, or E-bay.

“It is good to ask your tutor to explain how to use E-bay or ordering tickets but never hit the OK button or add to your shopping basket/trolley or the Admit button.

“We have been notified by E-bay that someone had placed a bid for a computer that was on offer through E-bay. That is not on. So please refrain from doing so.”

## U3A sponsors uni student

**U3A Sapphire Coast** in Southern NSW is sponsoring a young nursing student at Wollongong University’s Bega annexe this year.

Why? Because, explained Sapphire Coast President **Mary Whitby**, “Our policy is not to accumulate monies and we put some to good use in sponsoring a local person in her nursing studies. The University chose who the sponsorship would go to and it was for the purchase of text books for one year’s study.”

The student, **Uta Conway**, came first in her studies last year.

## Well read shed

We’ve all heard of men’s sheds, community sheds but have you heard of a poets’ shed?

**Sydney U3A** is offering members the opportunity to study and discuss poetry writing.

## Sign in or take the risk

Class leaders at **Lake Macquarie U3A**, like most U3As, are careful to ensure that everyone signs the attendance book.

But not everyone does – and the consequences for individual members can be disastrous.

Lake Macquarie reported in a recent bulletin: “A volunteer organisation in Morrisset (NSW) had a signing in system like we do.

“One of the members broke his ankle during a session. He claimed medical expenses through the organisation’s insurance.

“The insurance company asked to see the attendance sheet ... horror of horrors ... he hadn’t signed and never received a dollar.”

This story underlines why committees and tutors need to ensure that all students sign the attendance book.

Advice is that U3As need to keep attendance books for six years in case of an insurance claim.

## A world of real books

U3A reading groups may be interested in taking up a computerised version of a book exchange highlighted by **Don Howe** of **U3A Dubbo Chapter**.

The idea is that when a reader has finished a book they don’t want to keep, they attach a customised label saying “Please pick me up and take me home.”

If the person who takes the book logs the book’s ID number into the web site [www.bookcrossing.com](http://www.bookcrossing.com) the original owner will be able to see where the book has travelled.

At last report more than 750,000 people round the world were helping make the whole world a library.

For more details visit the website.

**Deadline for contributions for the next edition is June 15**



Dr Lydia Hebestreit

## Survey shows U3A is valued but has problems

AUSTRALIAN members believe U3A makes a significant and positive difference to their lives.

That said, if you want U3A to grow, committees must promote it vigorously because many active retirees know nothing about the movement.

And, if you want more men to join, you could consider appointing more males to roles where they are U3A's public face, such as publicity officers or secretaries.

These are just some of the conclusions U3A leaders can draw from a report published in the *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* late last year.

The report is an edited version of a thesis by **Dr Lydia Hebestreit** AO, for a degree of Doctor of Education in comparative education in December 2006.

Dr Hebestreit, former Head of the School of Nursing at Philip Institute of Technology/RMIT, Melbourne, is a former President of **Box Hill U3A**. She has been a U3A member for 17 years.

For her survey she distributed an 18-question questionnaire to 987 members of two well-established U3As in Victoria (Box Hill and Frankston), of which 627 were returned.

A total of 68 Presidents of Victorian U3As were surveyed separately.

### *U3A must publicise more and appoint men as secretaries*

Respondents were 23% male, 77% female, a similar result to the average gender breakdown of U3A members nationally.

While the survey was limited to Victoria and organised some three years ago, its findings are still of great interest.

Dr Hebestreit found that 96% of members surveyed felt U3A had benefited them in some way. She noted that members saw many advantages in being a U3A member – membership was affordable for retirees, people were supportive and friendly, students were in the same age group and U3A gave structure to their lives.

Said one member: "Monday morning class gets me going for the week." Another said: "An incentive not to stay in my unit and feed the birds."

Dr Hebestreit commented: "Interestingly, women respondents mentioned the U3A gave them the opportunity to compensate for educational opportunities missed during their youth or while raising children,"

"Unlike men, women also mentioned a sense of power, a sense of achievement and confidence, as a benefit of U3A."

Students said they didn't have any particular preference for how their learning was organ-

ised. "Small informal groups" scored 37% but "It does not matter" was almost as popular with a 35% vote. Traditional classroom settings were preferred by 28% of U3A students.

Most respondents (70%) joined "to gain knowledge." Only 17% indicated that they had joined "for personal satisfaction" and 9% to "mix with stimulating people."

Significantly, the largest group of respondents had not joined earlier (32%) because they had been unaware of U3A.

"This high rate suggests that the community is not well informed about U3A's existence and its activities even though 78.2% of participating U3As indicated that they advertise in order to attract members," Dr Hebestreit wrote.

Males and females also differed in their view of why they joined U3A; while both groups became U3A members mainly for gaining knowledge, women had higher scores than men for "personal satisfaction", "making friends", and "escape routines".

The same aspects were mentioned in the responses to the open-ended questions, where socialising and meeting people from other nationalities ap-

Continued overleaf

SURVEY continued

peared to be important for women but less so for men.

The data indicating life enhancement in the categories of "social inclusion", "independence", and "health" all showed significant differences between men and women.

Commented Dr Hebestreit: "There were statistically significant differences shown in "reasons for not joining U3A at an earlier date", with men scoring 14.3% in the category "negative experiences in previous educational circumstances", while women had scores of only 6.9%.

"This could also be seen as a psychosocial barrier. This has been well described by (Professor Ian) **Stuart-Hamilton** who stated, "We are what we are because of what we were" - negative experiences in childhood still influence participation in education in later life.

Some 13% of people had been reluctant to join U3A earlier as they felt they were too old to learn. Others had hung back because they had negative perceptions about the learning environment (9.3%) or prior negative educational experiences (8.6%).

Another factor which might be inhibiting membership growth is the fact that in U3As surveyed more than 70% of the secretaries and publicity officers were women. Commented Dr Hebestreit: "More of a gender mix might help in attracting membership of both genders."

Overall, Dr Hebestreit's sur-

## ARE YOU IN THE MAGIC 8% ?

A LITTLE over eight per cent of members serve on U3A committees, according to **Dr Lydia Hebestreit's** research.

Men, who represent about 26% of total U3A members, are slightly over-represented on committees whose members are 38% male.

Women make up almost 75% of members but management committees are only 62% female.

The largest proportion of committee members - 39% - has an un-

dergraduate degree. Dr Hebestreit's research also showed that men were slightly more likely to be Presidents than women but when it came to Vice Presidents a majority - 63% - were men.

The post of treasurer was evenly split between women and men.

But for other lead roles such as class coordinators, publicity officers and secretaries, women held at least 70% of the posts.

vey shows that U3A committees appear to be doing an excellent job in providing for their members' psychological needs.

### So how can U3As improve?

Respondents were asked to where U3A could be improved.

The category with the highest responses was improvement in "types of courses offered" (39%) followed by "classroom availability" (30%), "quality of tutors" (16%) and "scheduling of courses" (14%). Women and men broadly agreed on these choices.

Dr Hebestreit suggested U3A marketing could be improved, asking "Are (U3A) advertisements not effectively designed or are they not in the right places for their target audiences to see them?"

"Advertising should depict the variety of courses U3A provides, not only academic, but arts and craft categories and some 'male-specific' courses."

She added that focussed ads should help potential members

overcome psychological and other barriers while also explaining the term "university" in the U3A context.

She added: "The media could play a larger part in informing the public about U3A through announcement and possibly interviews with members and management committee members.

"The fact that U3A participation offers many benefits to members should be highlighted.

"The media frequently uses stereotypical images to portray older people as being a burden to society; this should be challenged.

"It would be refreshing to see programmes depicting older adults who enjoy learning."

For fuller information, go to the complete text of Dr Hebestreit's thesis at:

<http://etd.unisa.ac.za/ETD-db/theses/available/etd-06042007-115106/unrestricted/thesis.pdf>

Alternatively type "Dr Lydia Hebestreit" into Google.



*Cecily Butcher briefing delegates on the Network Regional advisers for 2009/10. (See the full list of RAs on the back page of this issue)*

## U3A Online expanding course choice

U3A Online has 18 new courses under development. They will be added to the 24 currently online and another 12 available through a UK partnership.

Online's Administrator, **Di Delchau**, told the Network's annual conference all these courses can be used by U3As for face to face teaching within their U3A.

To enable this to happen a U3A will need to become a member of U3A Online which costs \$15 a year. Then, for a fee of \$20 per course, they can apply for the site licence to any of the courses.

Each site licence is valid for 12 months from when it is granted. This allows for more than one class, in that course, to be taken as a face-to-face class in one year.

Di quoted favourable com-

ments from U3As including **U3A Namoi**.

It reported that since 2004 it has successfully accessed online courses including Astronomy, Botany, Genealogy Online, Writing family history and Western philosophy, all courses they wouldn't have been able to do otherwise.

"We download the course notes, give each participant a copy and keep one copy with the Site Licence for its duration. A participant is responsible for leading everyone else through the course.

"We have found that this works extremely well for us, and creates much discussion, and the opportunity for further exploration."

For more information contact Online's Secretary, **Anthony Baker**, or Di Delchau on [enquiries@u3aonline.org.au](mailto:enquiries@u3aonline.org.au)

### "BRING A FRIEND' CAMPAIGN

**Ron Mills**, the President of **Orange U3A**, is encouraging members to boost membership by doing some "missionary work."

This means encouraging friends to enjoy the companionship and good company of U3A.

"Might I suggest that we each bring along a friend to a class we attend," Ron wrote in a recent Orange newsletter.

"I believe that you only get out of an organisation what you put into it so maybe show them how good it is – as well as being instructive."

## Sydney, Melbourne conferences coming

**U3A Network-Victoria** conference in Melbourne on May 5-8 will include 12 workshops.

It will be held at the Centre for Adult Education, 253 Flinders Lane, with the theme "U3A – Going from strength to strength."

Cost of registering for two days of conference on May 6/7 is \$80 or \$40 for a single day.

For more information phone 03 9670 3659 or email [u3aconf@vicnet.net.au](mailto:u3aconf@vicnet.net.au)

Melbourne will be followed by the conference **Sydney U3A** is staging to celebrate its 21 years of successful continuing education. The theme is "Cherish the past, nurture the future."

The Sydney conference, from 10am to 4pm on Saturday, **July 11**, will be held in the Eastern Ave Auditorium at Sydney University.

Guest speakers include historians **Dr Shirley Fitzgerald** and **Gregory Blaxell**, opera diva **Lauris Elms** and actor **Henri Szeps**.

The cost of \$25 for members, \$35 for non-members includes morning tea and lunch.

For more details phone (02) 9252 2033 or email [www.sydneyu3a.org](http://www.sydneyu3a.org)

Next year's Network NSW conference is being hosted by the **Nepean-Blue Mountains Chifley Chapter of U3A** on March 9 and 10, 2010. Details next issue.

# U3A principles

*(As proposed by the U3A Network (NSW) - then known as the NSW Council of U3A Inc. - in November, 2001).*

- The provision of affordable learning opportunities for older people, using the skills and abilities of the members themselves.
- Those who learn shall teach and those who teach shall learn and there shall be no distinction between the two.
- There shall be no qualifications for membership and no awards, degrees or diplomas shall be given.
- The emphasis shall be on learning for the love of it and shall include an emphasis on the values of making things and on improving skills of all kinds.
- Learning shall take place in a friendly, supportive social environment.
- Those joining U3A shall pay for its upkeep.
- There shall be no payment to any person (member or non-member) for teaching or providing a service to members except in the case of reimbursement for such expenses as travel, photocopying etc.
- The curriculum of a U3A shall be determined by the needs/preferences of members and according to the resources available to it.

## Aims and objectives of the U3A Network (NSW)

*(As adopted by the U3A Network (NSW) - then known as the NSW Council of U3A Inc. - in November, 2001)*

- To promote and facilitate the exchange of information, interaction and networking among member U3As and, as far as practicable, between other U3As both nationally and internationally.
- To provide an advisory and consultative service for its members.
- To provide a coordinated interface, as appropriate, with government bodies and other bodies outside the U3A movement.
- To promote and assist with the formation of U3As.
- To be at all times non-sectarian and non-political.

## Membership eligibility

To be eligible for membership of U3A Network-NSW, an association seeking recognition as a U3A must:

- have been formed at a public meeting and as a result of a positive vote for the establishment of a U3A. It is expected that the public meeting will have been advertised well in advance and that it be held, open to all and in an easily accessed location;
- have a democratically elected executive and steering committee which has emerged from a vote at the public meeting. Anyone at the meeting is eligible for nomination and subsequent election;
- have adopted a constitution, or be able to show that a constitution is currently in the process of being created;
- be incorporated or have taken steps towards incorporation. This provision indicates that a U3A must be autonomous and not part of a previously existing group. A previous group may, of course, sponsor an association seeking recognition as a U3A - this is not an uncommon procedure - but must sever all ties, financially, organisationally and administratively when the U3A is founded

# If you ever need impartial advice, ask these people

## Management committee



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