



Sydney U3A Incorporated
SYDNEY U3A
Origin and Organisation

Introduction

The idea of the University of the Third Age was born in Toulouse, France in February 1973, in association with the local university, as a means of providing educational opportunities for retired people. The idea spread to England in 1981, where it was first established in association with Cambridge University and soon spread, with the formation of independent U3As in towns throughout the UK, based on the needs of the local communities.

The first U3A in Australia was founded in Melbourne in 1984, Adelaide, ACT and Perth in 1986, Brisbane in 1987 and finally in Sydney, in the Great Hall of Sydney University, in 1988.

Sydney U3A was soon subdivided into seven regions to serve local interests. Each region selects its own committee and sends representatives to the Central Management Committee, which meets regularly at Head Office (36 Carrington Street, Sydney). Here volunteers handle enquiries and applications and provide clerical services to the Executive and to the Regions. At present there are over 6000 members in Sydney U3A and all may attend as many courses as they wish in any of the regions.

Objectives and Principles

U3A recognises the immense resources, skills, experience and enthusiasm possessed by older people who are no longer in full-time employment. Course Leaders draw on their personal experience in setting up courses and individual members can be both learners and teachers, giving their services freely. The word 'university' is used in its original sense, that of a group of people coming together to pursue learning for its own sake. No qualifications are required, none are awarded and there are no examinations.

Courses

All courses are run during the day, mostly in two hour sessions. They are held mainly in Community or Senior Citizen Centres, Retirement Villages or private homes. Courses cover a wide range of subjects, such as art, history, languages, literature, music, personal development, philosophy, science and technology, theatre, travel and writing. Course Books containing details of all courses on offer are issued twice a year in mid January and June.