



ATTENDING COURSES TALKS & EVENTS

We have been asked to again set out the policy & process for conducting and attending Sydney U3A courses, talks and events.

Individuals who are not members of Sydney U3A may attend a maximum of two sessions prior to becoming a member.

Members of interstate or overseas U3As visiting Sydney may attend sessions for a maximum period of three months without joining Sydney U3A.

A non-financial member may present a talk or lead a course but he/she is not permitted access to any member personal information. Bookings and class rolls that contain personal member information must be taken and/or marked by a member who is financial and who is acting as a booking secretary.

Any Sydney U3A member's details obtained as part of the booking process cannot be passed onto third parties and/or used for any purpose other than those related to attending the course, talk or event for which they are registered. Bookings are essential unless otherwise noted in the course book.

No booking should be accepted until the course book is posted on the website and hard copies despatched. No rollover bookings

Class attendance sheets must be completed for all courses, talks and events and a Risk Management Form completed for all activities

MARCH 2020 NEWS FROM CENTRAL OFFICE

SYDNEY U3A POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The final draft of this important document was tabled, discussed and approved at the Board of Management Meeting on February 7, 2020.

PDF copies have been sent to Regional Presidents, Secretaries and Course Coordinators. Regions have been requested to retain a copy on file, to table at their committee meetings and to circulate to venue coordinators and any regional member who may require a copy.

The document is in six parts-

- General Policies and Procedures
- Volunteer Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Venue Policy
- Web Guidelines
- Honorary Life Membership Guidelines



WARNING

Scammers are sending emails to members supposedly from our President, Barbara Boston. Members are requested to purchase gift cards on her behalf. **These emails are not from Barbara – A big big scam. Delete the emails without opening or responding.**

OUR COLOUR BAND VALUES

KINGFISHER = SHARING - We share our knowledge

GREEN = GROWING – Together we grow our minds

YELLOW = SOCIALISING – We interact and connect with others

RED = PASSION – Our passion is for education

AGM REMINDER

Our AGM is scheduled for April 1, 2020 at the Mechanics School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street Sydney commencing 10:30 am. The guest speaker is Professor Susan Kurrle from the University of Sydney.

ADVERTISEMENT IN SENIOR'S CARD NEWSLETTER

We were delighted to be able to run a free one-page advertisement in the February edition of the NSW Seniors' Card Newsletter. Let's hope that we attract some new members from this great opportunity.

RADIO INTERVIEW

Last year VP Education Dianne Ekert participated in Series 1 of the *Baby Boomers' Guide to the 21st Century* broadcast on Skid Row Radio. She was invited back to participate in the second series to be broadcast during March 2020. We will let you know the date and time of Dianne's interview so that you are able to listen to the broadcast.

VOLUNTEERS

LESS THAN 5% OF SYDNEY U3A MEMBERSHIP VOLUNTEERS!

This 5% of membership is Sydney U3A lifeblood. This 5% give freely of their skills, knowledge, experience and time so that Sydney U3A is able to continue delivering great courses, talks and events and carry out administrative and other functions at central office and on regional committees.

There are, however, a couple of regional committees (particularly Eastern & Endeavour) that are struggling to attract members to serve in important roles. Please check whether your region has a committee vacancy that you can fill.



MEMBERSHIP VOLUME AS AT DECEMBER 2019 – SOME INTERESTING STATISTICS

As at December 2019 financial members total 5,844 with regions counts at -

Northern Beaches	1556
Upper North	1167
Harbourside North	933
Inner West	704
Endeavour	645
Greater West	427
Eastern	399
Unassigned	13

Total financial membership changed marginally from January 2019 commencing with 5,881 and ending in December with 5,844.

Membership increased progressively through January to May but fell in the second half of the year – Semester 2.

Overall membership change by region over the twelve-month period was:

Region	Start	End	% Change
Eastern	412	399	-3.3%
Endeavour	622	645	-2.6%
Greater West	441	427	-3.3%
Harbourside North	960	933	-2.9%
City & IW	690	704	+2.0%
Northern Beaches	1504	1556	+3.3%
Upper North	1199	1167	-2.7%

Average retention Rates by region:

Region	Retention Rate
Eastern	76%
Endeavour	82%
Greater West	78%
Harbourside North	79%
City & Inner West	83%
Northern Beaches	86%
Upper North	81%

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Newsletter written by Dianne Ekert

Last month we told you of two of our wonderful central office volunteers Ros Daw and Ana Perez who assisted in fighting the catastrophic fires that engulfed our nation and with the subsequent disaster recovery efforts.

Ana Perez, who also volunteers with St Vincent de Paul Society, tracked off to help at the bushfire Recovery Centre in Ulladulla. Ana told us of her experience in a story that she titled **A Journey of Hope and Resilience**. We share this abridged version with you. Ana's feedback demonstrates that volunteering is valuable for the volunteers as well as for the recipients, BUT thank goodness for the volunteers.

"Upon arrival at the Ulladulla Civic Centre we were greeted by Red Cross volunteers and ushered to the Vinnie's booth. The centre comprised government agencies, insurance companies, pastoral and legal advice services and not-for-profit agencies.

With barely 5 minutes briefing, we found ourselves interviewing locals affected by the bushfire and handing out financial assistance by taking their bank details for the transfer that was supposed to take 24 hours but was stretched to 3-5 days due to the sheer volume of requests.

I cannot forget some of the stories and despair. These will be imbedded in my physic forever. Here are a few of the stories.

One couple in their 70s, in between sobs, told us how they fought so hard to save their property. The husband said that, because of the intensity of the fire, it felt like his head was about to explode. They lost most of the property, but they managed to save their house.

One of the volunteer assigned to logistics with the RFS struggled to cope. She was responsible for directing the fire brigade to the fires and at the same time was frantic because her ailing parents were at the farm wherein the fire zone. Her parents survived.

Another elderly gentleman nearly died from the effort of saving his property. At one point he froze from exhaustion. Fortunately in a split second he realised he had to run for his

life. But upon reaching his home he collapsed suffering a hypoglycaemia coma. Although very ill he recovered but had been reluctant to speak since the ordeal. Towards the end of the couple's visit with us he smiled. His wife told us that it was his first smile since the ordeal. Unfortunately, however, this couple did not qualify for the government grant because they were earning more from their superannuation than from their farm and were not therefore considered to be primary producers. They desperately needed cash to enclose their property for the animals that survived the inferno, but they didn't qualify to receive it from the government.

Another lady told us that her entire property was destroyed except for the frogs in the garden her late brother left for her. The frog family included a frog just received from her sister-in-law that was still in bubble wrap - it was amazingly unscathed!

There were many families that were used to being independent and self-sufficient but now had to ask for help.

A couple managed to save their property the first time but not the second time. One man described the raging fire as sounding like a jet engine. He said the roaring sound and the speed of it engulfing everything on the way was horrifying. He couldn't believe he survived.

We were warned that we would require counselling because of the stories we heard. This was so true as unconsciously we were absorbing the anguish, trauma and depression. Ultimately we became emotionally exhausted. The therapy dogs at the centre however were fantastic and a real lift in spirits.

We managed to provide financial assistance to all we spoke to even those rejected by the government and by other organisations. During our stay, we assisted about 90 people and heard their stories.

*I am glad I volunteered, as it was a meaningful experience - something that we will never forget. We can only hope that such devastation does not recur.
--- Anamarie Perez"*