



## **STAY CONNECTED**

### **CENTRAL OFFICE NEWSLETTER**



## **Welcome to Volume 10 of Stay Connected**

**In this volume I'm starting off with some exciting news –**

### **SYDNEY U3A NOW HAS A FACEBOOK PAGE!**

Sydney U3A has moved into the world of social media! Thanks to Laurie our new Facebook editor. Our page will reinforce that we excel as a lifelong educator, not only to our membership, but to the wider community. We aim to underpin our branding and more effectively connect, stay connected and communicate with our members. We want to grow our contacts and direct traffic to our website. We've only just started but be assured we'll progress as we go along. Don't forget to "like us" and "share" Check out the link –

**<https://www.facebook.com/sydneyu3a>**

### **Courses**

Although Sydney U3A has opened some courses others are, for a variety of reasons, still not up and running. Unfortunately, in this strange time, our world is very much a "moving picture". We ask that you continue to be patient, check out the on-line and face-to-face courses under the region tabs on the web. We are governed by venue owners and NSW Health.

Zoom continues to dominate our Covid-19 universe - In this volume we have two new articles from members. One sharing with us what Zoom meant to him during lockdown, his hospitalisation and convalescence and the other from a member who has been teaching using Zoom for over five years and who is now sharing some "professional tips".

It means a great deal to many of our members to stay connected and it also means a lot to Sydney U3A to be able to continue providing educational programs during this crazy time. The social side is also alive and well, not quite the same, but happening - several sessions open around 30 minutes prior to advertised start so members may "chat".

Ian Thompson who is running a series of Zoom courses, reports that one lady renewed her membership after a four-year lapse specifically so that she could join in the Zoom sessions. Another lady joined U3A for the first time as she had heard from a friend about the great Zoom talks. Another member connects from New Zealand where she is staying with her daughter, and another lady stuck in South Australia in a motel while waiting for permission to enter NSW via NT also regularly connects. Looks like we'll continue to Zoom!

Cheers

Dianne Ekert

VP Public Relations

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### **FROM MAX RICHARDSON - HARBOURSIDE NORTH MEMBER**



Congratulations U3A on your answer to COVID 19 - Zoom sessions.

As a long standing U3A member who has recently been in hospital and then in recovery I have enjoyed (as one of 60 or more participants) Zoom talks across an amazing range of topics presented by wonderful speakers. They have researched their topics, produced Power Point graphics and videos to enhance our understanding. They have been fearless in using alternative and sometimes unfamiliar technology.

Zoom has given me the opportunity- during such an unprecedented lock down period as well as ill health - of going back to what U3A does so well- enhancing my awareness of a wide range of topics and stimulating me to think beyond the subject.

It has also been great to see on the computer screen -some of the U3A friends I have met in the past as well as new friends - from across all seven regions - from SA, NZ and people marooned in caravans in various states. My wife, Anne and I have enjoyed being in the audience of many talks in many regions - now we Zoom to all of U3A Sydney - sometimes two sessions in one day.

**Being a member of Sydney U3A - means you need never stop learning**

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### **VALE- Paul Barclay**

Paul enhanced the experience of any U3A member who had the pleasure of attending one of his 40 or more talks that he gave over his 16 years as a speaker. Paul's presentations reflected his love of research as well as his amazing capacity to inform and entertain his audiences across an enormous range of topics. Paul's talk on ' The History of the Modern Calendar' was given over 100 times. You can see more if you go to the link <https://youtube.com/Kn4Fa6aswSk>

Paul was lovingly farewelled in a celebration of his life on Wednesday June 17 by many U3A members, in particular Annika Tults, Lesley Duffill, John Flint and Nora Hinchin who recalled Paul's wonderful contribution to all our lives and especially to U3A. Paul will be much missed.





### **A VERY SPECIAL VOLUNTEER**

Dorothy Dalyell joined Sydney U3A in 1997 and has been one of our volunteers for the past 20 years. Dorothy did her last stint as a volunteer in the office on July 10. She shared cake and coffee with her team and was presented with a small gift in appreciation of her services.

**On behalf of all members a big big thank you to Dorothy for her incredible contribution to Sydney U3A over a 20-year period.**

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### **LONG TERM SYDNEY U3A MEMBERS - INTERESTING STATISTICS**

One member having joined in 1988 has been a member for 32 years

Four members have 31 years of membership each joining in 1989

Another four have 30 years each joining in 1990

Eight have each been members for 29 years joining in 1991

Five have each accrued 28 years joining in 1992

Collectively they have accrued 788 years of membership

Membership numbers range from 86 through to 1983

54.5% percent have email

We'll be contacting one or two of these members to ask if they will write a small article about being a member of Sydney U3A for such a long period. We are sure that you will enjoy hearing about their Sydney U3A journey.

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### **FROM ROSS BELL ENDEAVOUR REGION**

#### **Why is ZOOM® Push to Talk so Important?**

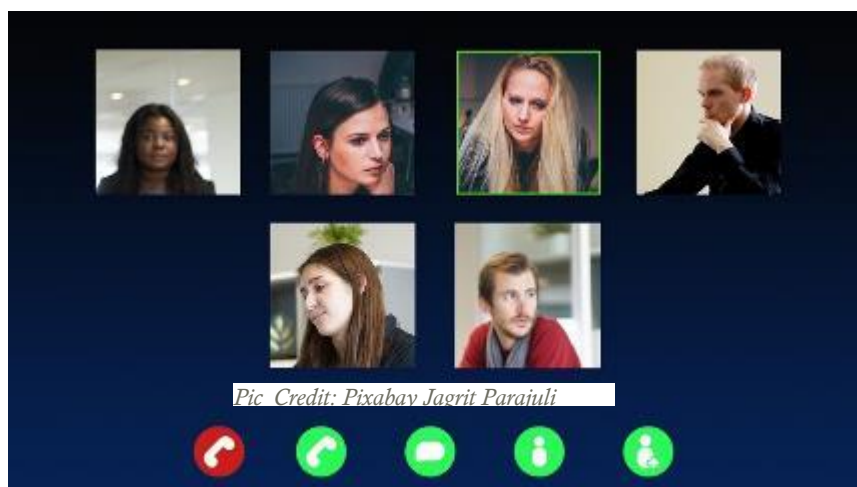
*(especially if you didn't even know it was there...)*

Five years ago, I started teaching using Zoom® for a class of older people in New York, and I found it took a lot to master. I still use Zoom® not only for my New York group (average age of participants is 89) I use a similar app with an innovative aged care group on the Gold Coast and I'll use different application for new online day care centre in Southern Sydney when it opens a month or so. So, I have watched with interest as U3A Sydney adopted Zoom® during the pandemic.

When I started in New York, I was lucky to receive a lot of instruction about how Zoom® worked. I sat in on several classes. For my first solo session, one of the staff "sat in" so to

speak. I regularly submit a session recording to the agency. We talk about what is going well, what might need development. Hosts meet and talk about what's working for them. At the end of each session, every Participant is invited to comment. The feedback comes back to each of the presenters after every session. Of course, I understand the urgency of the challenge Sydney U3A was facing, and I was surprised how well the ZOOM® thing went in Sydney U3A.

The stars in the Sydney U3A adventure into virtual meeting must be the Participants. It's my impression that only a few had had much previous experience in the online learning field. Even so, the participants bravely signed up. They followed their links, and they had their sessions. While it was a massive change for our members, they did so with little fuss. More than a few Participants in the courses I have seen appeared a bit surprised that it all worked. After a few sessions, many Participants seemed more comfortable with the process



But there is a long way to go before our members can reap the full power of what Zoom® can do for Sydney U3A members. If you are running a session, it **MUST** be interactive. Allowing a person to speak who talks non-stop for 20 minutes (or more) simply means that your Participants are unlikely to listen. It's fundamental psychology that Participants certainly won't remember much of what has been said if they are not involved and engaged.

Here are some things that I have learned with teaching with ZOOM® that course leaders might find helpful:

- Try to have Participants log on **BEFORE** the start of your session. You can do this by opening your room and being there at least 10-15 minutes before the meeting is due to start.
- Put time aside for the greetings and teething issues. This is best to happen in the 10-15 minutes before the hour. Because of the way that many Zoom sessions start on the hour, participants who log in early will find it much simpler. It prevents Participants entering the room right on time and distracting others. However, it's vital though that you provide lots of time to socialise. See later.
- It's a great idea to have an assistant. Make them a co-host and they can handle the waiting room, identify who has the TV on, support someone with their log on issues and they can manage the chat window.
- Manage your Participants so that everyone is engaged and involved. The course leader(s) and Participants are equal partners: that is the spirit of U3A. In all groups, both live and virtual, the first words that Participants say are the key to their participation. Ask each Participants an open question about themselves; you will have far more session participation. Don't believe me? Try it and find out!
- Use hand signals. Teach Participants some hand signals. They might wave both hands as applause; they could raise one hand for a question. If they need to leave



early, they should be able to do this without interrupting the learning of other Participants.

- If you plan a 2-hour session (which is a very, very LONG time in Zoom®), there must be a break at or before the end of the first hour. Allow say, 10 minutes for people to do what they need to do. Please don't get them to log off as you will have the same log on dramas as you had at the start of the session. When we have a break, everyone stays online, and I share a Coffee time photo.
- How about SMOKO? Social connections are a vital part of U3A, just as they are in all aspects of Education. It's essential to set time aside for this. If you are presenting, **don't** log off and close the room when the formal session is over. Invite Participants stay on and chat. Maybe you can show a SMOKO PowerPoint® slide to signal the change? As a presenter, you should stay on and encourage this chat. Of course, many people will leave. Just as they often so in U3A face-to-face sessions. I see that chat time as at least as important as the day's topic



### **Finally: What on Earth is Push to Talk?**

So finally, we come to Push to Talk. What is it? The default setting in Zoom® is that if a person presses the SPACE bar, you are temporarily unmuted. When you have said what they need to, press the SPACE bar: you are muted again. They do not need to find the MUTE/UNMUTE button. The idea is to allow all Participants to participate easily and simply.

### **Summing Up**

Zoom® is a straightforward program. That's why it is so successful. However, there is a danger in this apparent simplicity. If presenters don't use all of the Zoom® features (polls, breakout rooms, feedback) as well as their energy and love of a topic to make sessions exciting, they won't deliver Participants their best work.

I carefully prepare my sessions: no activities in my meetings last for more 10-15 minutes. At the end of my sessions, I am tired. If you are presenting and don't feel tired, or you look honestly at your audience and see boredom - it's time to think carefully about what you are doing.



*Pic Credit : Flickr user "Johan Larsson"*

Our members deserve the very best. Let's give them the very best we can.

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**STAY CONNECTED** Volume 10 Issued July 18 2020  
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