



STAY CONNECTED CENTRAL OFFICE NEWSLETTER



Welcome back to Volume 12 of Stay Connected

More exciting publicity news!

Last month we told you of the launch of our Facebook page and this month we've launched a new advertising video! A professional video that was generously donated and which will be used to promote and publicise our great organisation. Check it out on our Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/sydneyu3a> or on our web <https://www.sydneyu3a.org> or YouTube. This amazing donation has provided the opportunity of alerting a huge audience to Sydney U3A.

Patrick Harris (President, Judy Harris' son) cinematographer and owner of Coppertop Picture Co <https://www.coppertoppictureco.com> made and donated the video. A tremendous gift to Sydney U3A as the project would have cost around \$6,000 - an amount that we could never afford. So, a BIG BIG thank you to Patrick. Thanks also to Rosemarie Einstein, Nora Hinchin (Harbourside North) and Harvey Broadbent (Northern Beaches) who "star" in the video.

In addition to our website, Facebook, YouTube and Patrick's company website, the video has been distributed to regions to use at their showcases and welcomes to new members.

Dianne Ekert
Vice President, Public Relations
Sydney U3A Inc

MESSAGE FROM JUDY HARRIS, PRESIDENT SYDNEY U3A INC

To the many members who supported U3A and sent a donation it is truly appreciated. The Board of Management and myself are working hard to ensure your donation will be wisely used. Plans for 2021 are in place but of course with this virus who knows.

I am starting Face to Face meetings in Mosman from Monday 7 September simply because Mosman Council have always been generous and provided the Art Gallery venue for free.

We have to be very careful with finances because rentals are our main expenditure, both in head office and our 7 regions.

Sydney U3A made the decision about 10 years ago to have our HO in the city to enable our wonderful volunteers to come into HO on public transport. Currently HO has a 5 year lease, we have negotiated rental relief from the landlord, that contract is still in place for about 3 years. HO is now being used for classes, thus saving some money. The coursebook for 2021 is being prepared subject to the virus but certainly cost cutting will be in place, no fancy cover and less pages. Our saviour has been zoom classes, thank you to the many people involved in their preparation, these courses will only be on your website, I know they have become part of many people's lives, but it is the social aspect we are missing, having that morning tea with our friends.

One good news story, please go to U3A website or our Facebook page and view a wonderful video which went on our site last week, my son Patrick is a video cameraman and spent many hours of his time and expertise freely filming three of our lecturers and talking about their views on what U3A can do for you and me. It is so important to keep an eye on U3A website and your region to find out what is going on.

Again thank you for your support to U3A we all can't wait to get back to some sort of normality, possibly with social distancing and a facemask

Regards

Judy Harris, President Sydney U3A

MEASURES TAKEN TO SAVE MONEY

As mentioned in Judy Harris' message every effort is being made to retain costs. Central Office has been reconfigured to accommodate courses and to save on venue rentals. Currently City & Inner West has three courses running in central office. Accommodation can be made available to other smallish groups. Contact Lynda, Administration Manager - phone officemgr.sydneyu3a@gmail.com

We are also actively chasing grants. Sadly, we have been ineligible to apply in several instances. Many require a specific project outside core business activities. Printing the course book, software management, licensing etc is core business. In other cases, our status renders us ineligible. We were not even eligible for *Job Keeper* as we are all volunteers!

Approaches have been made to NSW parliamentarians. To this end the Independent Member for Sydney has written on our behalf to the relevant minister. Unfortunately to date no response has been received.

We have also sought and received some rental assistance from the owners of our central office building.

FACE TO FACE COURSES

The health and well-being of our members is of paramount importance. The resumption of face-to-face activities is dependant upon venue owners and NSW Health regulations. Nevertheless, resumption is happening, albeit slowly. In the interim thank you to all members for their continuing support during these difficult times. We are taking the optimistic view that 2021 will be a much brighter year for all of us and the monster that is COVID-19 has been somewhat tamed and we can again deliver the programs that our members love together with the socialisation and interaction that is important to us all.

ELECTRONIC COURSES (on-line)

Electronic courses and talks were initially offered to members when the COVID-19 pandemic forced the cessation of activities. They quickly emerged as a new way for Sydney U3A to deliver online education especially to members who are unable to attend face-to-face activities.

On-line is now perceived as an additional forum into 2021 to attract new members and to facilitate lifelong learning. Currently there are 70 e-learning courses available to members. Details on regional webpages.

COURSE BOOK

We have received a considerable number of requests to discontinue publishing hard copies of the course book as many members, in this electronic age, prefer to access their course book on-line.

This option was discussed at a Board of Management Meeting where a motion was passed that, because ten percent of our members did not have access to the internet and because others preferred to receive the hard copy, members would be given a choice. The course book as mentioned in Judy Harris' report will still be produced but will be a "less glamorous" version to contain costs to members.

Members who elected to access the course book online will receive the book free of charge; those who prefer a hard copy will be charged \$10 (2 books @ \$5 each) per annum payable on membership renewal date. The course book currently costs around \$50,000 per annum to produce.

By imposing a charge for the course book, we have been able to keep membership at the low rate of \$75 per annum and to fulfil our ethos of providing low cost continuing education. The low fee allows members to attend as many courses, talks and events as they like provided there is space. If a member attends only one class per week for 40 weeks of the year the cost is less than \$2. It is impossible to obtain continuing educational anywhere else in Sydney for that cost. Central Office is in the process of contacting all members to determine their course book preference.

URGENT ASSISTANCE NEEDED - ACCEPT THIS EXCITING OPPORTUNITY

My U3A is our computer system that many of us use each year to renew our membership. It is also used for booking courses, and many of you have been booking into Harbourside North Zoom sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays and finding the system easy to use.

My U3A is maintained for us by Stuart Cumming who does an excellent job. However, he is under pressure and needs an enthusiastic assistant. The system is written in the "C" programming language which is easy to learn. Don't worry if you have never used this language before. Stuart will give you every assistance to get up to speed. He assures me that it is not difficult.

If you have even a rudimentary knowledge of computer programming or want to learn and would like to assist in any way, please contact:

Stuart Cumming stuartcumming09@gmail.com or

Michael Suckling mwsing@tpg.com.au

We look forward to receiving many responses!

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Earlier this year membership subscriptions were suspended for 100 days. That 100 days expired at end of June 2020. Renewals are now being sent out. Please pay your subscription as and when it falls due.

MEET PAMELA OUR CENTRAL OFFICE SECRETARY

Hi I'm Pamela.

I took over the role as Secretary of Sydney U3A in May this year. I'm a member of the Northern Beaches region. Over the years I have enjoyed listening to many interesting talks, chatting over coffee, attending yoga, philosophy and language classes presented by U3A.

I have lived over 45 years on the northern beaches, I enjoy swimming, reading and music (mainly classical) and sing in a local classical choir.

I love to travel (not just now) but when I can't then I read about many places, including their history, instead. Even now it is not unusual for me to, besides U3A, enrol in a free online university course. Always learning!

Before I retired, I mainly worked in offices both here and in Europe. Met many wonderful people who I am still in touch with. Have always been computer literate and find it fascinating.

I do enjoy the quiet of staying home & pottering in my small garden.



Pamela enjoying the Northern Beaches Lifestyle

Sydney U3A Inc

ABN 32 251 810 797

Suite 10.2, St Martin's Tower, 31 Market Street Sydney NSW 2000

mail@sydneyu3a.org sydneyu3a.org 9267 9056

facebook.com/sydneyu3a

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Feedback welcome to vppr.sydneyu3a@gmail.com

SHARING GROWING SOCIALISING PASSION