



## Harbourside North

September 2020

Welcome to the inaugural U3A two monthly Harbourside North Bulletin. We encourage members to give us suggestions for topics and send us contributions for inclusion in future editions. [paulacastileu3a@gmail.com](mailto:paulacastileu3a@gmail.com)

### The Editors

Paula Castile and Ursula Schappi

I first met Ursula in about 1987. I was working for the NSW Ethnic Communities Council (ECC) and Ursula was on one its committees. We met again in 1990 when I started working for WorkCover Authority. We worked in the Conciliation Branch and there we decided to undertake a Master of Dispute Resolution (MDR) in the Law School at UTS. We moved on to different parts of the Public Service in 1994, however, by then our friendship was firmly established. In 2019 Ursula suggested I join U3A and this year she suggested we volunteer to write the newsletter for U3A Harbourside North.

Ursula and I have undertaken many volunteer roles while continuing in our paid positions. We worked on not-for-profit (NFP) voluntary boards and committees and with various NFPs including the Australian Dispute Resolution Association, Council on the Ageing, Carer's Association, NSW Council for Intellectual

Disability and Disabled Peoples International.

It is partially our combined volunteering experience that led us to choose *volunteering* as the topic for this first newsletter.



### What would we do without volunteers?

Volunteers freely give their time, skills, knowledge and experience to the benefit of the greater good!

Indeed, U3A is an organisation made up of volunteers. It would not exist if it was not for the goodwill and dedication of many people, including those who carry responsibilities in the organisation's management and administration, those in the Central Office, in the regions, convening centres, bringing together speakers and listeners, booking attendance and, more generally, coordinating the smooth running of U3A – for the enjoyment of all members.

A special 'thank you' goes to the amazing team that enables us to enjoy the many U3A presentations online. At the time when all face-to-face gatherings stopped due to the Covid19 outbreak, they piloted alternatives in the form of video conferencing. This enables up to one hundred participants to view these presentations in the comfort of their own

homes. The team found speakers who braved this new form of presentation, with great success. Many U3A members regularly book themselves in to listen to these zoom sessions.

**Rosemarie Einstein will continue to work on the Harbourside North program of Zoom sessions and you will receive separate updates at the end of each month.**

Of course, there are other not-for-profit organisations that use the internet to reach out to their members. These zoom sessions may never replace face-to-face meetings but they do allow individuals to share ideas in this difficult time of the pandemic.

*The General Social Survey* conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in 2014 showed that volunteering in Australia peaked in 2010 when 36% of 18 years and older claimed they were involved in a organisation.

*The 2016 Census* showed that 3.6 million people had volunteered in the community in the previous year, or 19.0% of the population, up from 17.8% in 2011, an extra 530,000 volunteers over 5 years.

The question was quite broad – to answer ‘Yes’ you only needed to have volunteered once in the past 12 months. There has been considerable debate about the definition of ‘volunteer’ which accounts for variations on the data collected from surveys and the census.

*Here are a few key facts about Australia’s volunteers (2016):*

- *Females are more likely to volunteer than males (21% of females to 17% of males).*
- *The age at which people volunteer has three distinct peaks. Females in their 40s (but much less so for males), and*

*both sexes in their late teens and again in senior years from 60-75 for both sexes (but again more for females).*

*The peak among people in their 40s is interesting and likely corresponds with volunteering around school and children’s activities, hence the higher peak for females. For older populations, at retirement age, the peak is closer between the sexes ... as many people volunteer after leaving the workforce.*

*Among the older population the gender balance reverses, and more men over the age of 80 volunteer than women, as a percentage of the population (male life expectancy is lower, so while there are fewer men in these age groups, a higher percentage of men volunteer, but there are still more female volunteers over 80, even though the rate of female volunteers over 80 is generally low).*

<https://blog.id.com.au/2019/population/demographic-trends/who-are-australias-volunteers-the-2019-update/>



Volunteering has become more complex in recent years.

It is not that volunteering has gone out of fashion – rather people have less time. Gone are the regular nine to five jobs! Technological advances have made the workplace more competitive, and more is demanded of people and we have become time poor and with less appetite for voluntary work.

Retired people have always made up a significant proportion of volunteers.

However, they too have changes to their demands and responsibilities.

Grandparents often contribute to childcare. Many older people have caring responsibilities for spouses with age related medical conditions or for much older and frail parents.

The attraction is still there, however, it has become more complex to apply for volunteer work that allows us to use our skills or find work that is of interest to us.

More demand is placed on organisations to demonstrate that the volunteers they engage are appropriate for the work they undertake. For example, Working with Children and police checks are often standard requirements and can often be the volunteer's responsibility to acquire and pay for these. These can be a financial disincentive to volunteering, particularly for those on restricted incomes. Some NFPs and charities do not take on volunteers aged over 70.

Share your experiences of volunteering or give us suggestions for future topics. Our next bulletin will explore issues of keeping up with technology and we welcome your input into the November edition. We look forward to many responses!

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### **Volunteer information, web sites and contacts:**

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/volunteers>

<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/lookup/4159.0.55.005Media%20Release1March%202018>

<https://www.volunteering.nsw.gov.au/home>

<https://makeadifference.volunteering.nsw.gov.au>

E: [Insvolunteer@willoughby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Insvolunteer@willoughby.nsw.gov.au)

T: 02 9777 7815

Volunteers Program Coordinator  
Lane Cove and North Side Community Services

T: 02 9427 6425

W: <https://www.sydneycs.org/>

E: [general@sydneycs.org](mailto:general@sydneycs.org)



## **Assistance Needed**

Our "Get to know your iPad/iPhone" session at McMahons Point has been popular in the past. Unfortunately, our great volunteer who ran this session is no longer available. So, we are looking for a replacement for first semester 2021. Could that be you? If so, please contact Rosemarie - [einstein@starmer.net.au](mailto:einstein@starmer.net.au). If you would like to know more about what is involved, please contact Fay - [indios4@ozemail.com.au](mailto:indios4@ozemail.com.au)

