

## Sydney University of the Third Age Inc.

As all members know, the U3A ethos is to promote and foster the melding of lifelong learning, creativity, exercise and community interaction so that the third age, which occurs immediately after full-time employment, is truly the age of reinvention, rejuvenation, renewal and redirection. There are no course entrance requirements, no exams and no awards given.

Sydney U3A is divided into seven regions, based on postcode, and it covers the greater Sydney metropolitan area. Courses are run at venues across the entire area and members can attend any course, regardless of which particular region is their home base. In reality, of course, only a few members travel out of their own area for courses, as transport makes this a less attractive option.

We have a central office in Sydney CBD where all subscriptions are paid. Each region manages its own social account and makes its own decisions on what courses to organise. Sydney is part of NSW U3A Network which is a voluntary joining of all U3As in NSW and which organises conferences each year. Because of the great distances, this Network is more useful to individual U3As via the internet than by actual meetings. There is no overall network across the country of Australia as, for instance, in the UK.

The Northern Beaches U3A Region has by far the most members (1,600 approximately) and its area stretches from Palm Beach to Manly - 30 km north to south - and 11 km east to west, with a total number of some 76 courses running at any one time. It is home to the Manly Sea Eagles and Kuring-Gai Chase National Park, enviable beaches and a relaxed, carefree lifestyle. We are successful largely because we take chances on less traditional subjects. We have our own web page and we also send out an electronic Newsletter every month. 92% of our members are able to use the internet. We have 9 members on our U3A Committee. There are no monthly meetings – obviously because of numbers – but our four largest regular venues tend to provide social support for the members in their vicinity, including sausage sizzles, barbeques and end of term parties.

As well as our traditional courses such as languages, history, music, opera, art, discussions, walking, science and many others, we also run 4 breakfast groups that have proved popular. Other events that we organise are the day trips to local areas, including boat trips, and we have taken members on many holidays within Australia. In November this year, we shall be embarking on our first overseas trip, to Vietnam and Cambodia.

Our latest success is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Age Rock Orchestra. 3ARO was established by Harvey Broadbent approximately six months ago and has grown to about 30 amateur musicians and singers. At its first concert, the audience was thrilled to be taken back in time by listening, singing along and dancing to popular rock 'n' roll and rock ballad music from that era as well as more modern songs from the 1970s to the present day. The evening was a resounding success and the orchestra received a well-deserved standing ovation at the end of their repertoire.

*Rosemary McCulloch*

President U3A Northern Beaches



*Rosemary McCulloch*



*The 3<sup>rd</sup> Age Rock Orchestra*