



CITY AND INNER WEST REGION NEWSLETTER MARCH 2025

Sydney U3A Incorporated ABN: 32252 810896
Suite 10.2, 31 Market Street, Sydney 2000
Phone: 02 9267 9056

Email: mail@sydneyu3a.org Web: www.sydneyu3a.org Facebook: [Sydney u3a City and Inner West Region](https://www.facebook.com/Sydneyu3aCityandInnerWestRegion)

We welcome newsletter articles from Sydney u3a members.

Please submit your articles to the editor, Catherine Watson: catwat629@gmail.com

President's Message



Welcome everyone! For those of you unaware, I was appointed as the new City and Inner West President at our Annual General Meeting on 12 March 2025. For members who've been in u3a for a while, you'll know that I previously held this position before becoming Sydney u3a President three years ago and I'm absolutely thrilled to be back.

The Constitution of Sydney u3a only provides for three year executive appointments so we'll be seeing some new faces after the Sydney AGM on Wednesday 26 March 2025. Please try and make the meeting at our Sydney Office at 280 Pitt Street at 10.30am. We have a wonderful guest speaker John Cameron who will be sharing his knowledge of ChatGTP and other Artificial Intelligence (AI) which is rapidly changing virtually every facet of our daily lives.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Vicki Moss, the outgoing President, for all her fantastic work over the last three years. Fortunately, Vicki is staying on as a member of our Executive Committee so City and Inner West region will still have access to her knowledge and talents and I look forward to be able to continue working with her as a colleague.

Sadly, last month we lost one of our most long serving and beloved leaders Neville Bendall, who ran our drawing class for over 30 years. Vale Neville! His dedication and camaraderie was so much appreciated and won't be forgotten. You can read more about Neville in a tribute later in the newsletter.

Jennifer Waldron, *President, City & Inner West*

Annual General Meeting and Election of Office Bearers

As you would have been notified our AGM was held on Wednesday 12 March and was a great afternoon. We had a good attendance from members and the guest speaker, Ron Ringer, regaled us with an entertaining story on the humble brick, its origins, and continuing impact on our towns and cities.

The talk was particularly relevant as Inner West has an amazing history of brickmaking and so many of our now major parks were former brick pits run by a multitude of small local brickmaking firms.

I am happy to report that seven of the current Committee were re-elected and looking forward to working hard in the new year. Our President, Vicki Moss, did not stand for re-election as President. The silver lining is that she is staying on as a committee member and will continue to work tirelessly for our region. Unfortunately, committee member, Patricia Thornton, reluctantly stepped down for family reasons. Anyone who knows Patricia and her incredible work ethic will appreciate how much she will be missed by all.



But all is not lost as we were fortunate enough to get Jennifer Waldron to put her hand up to be our new President. Her huge experience will be a great asset to the committee and our region.

A big thank you to Vicki, Patricia and Jennifer from all of us!

Dianne Bierhuizen, Vice President for City & Inner West

Vale Neville Bendall



On the 26th of February 2025 City & Inner West u3a lost one of its longest serving and most beloved members and leaders, Neville Bendall. Neville had lead our drawing group for over 30 years and had only recently stepped down as a leader at the age of 93 due to ill health.

As with all our members, Neville joined u3a after a long and fascinating career. After being dux every year during high school (though he claimed never to have studied) he gained a degree in both mathematics and physics and as an examiner in the Australian Patent Office worked on the introduction of the Black Box Flight Recorder. Neville also was later instrumental in implementing the first computer system into the NSW TAFE system.

Neville's lifelong passion for art fortunately lead him to City & Inner West u3a where he nurtured the talents of many a budding artist as a leader - most recently every second Thursday at Glebe Old Town Hall. He was a very talented artist and this is a piece of his work.

Volunteer leaders like Neville are the backbone of our organisation and we cannot thank them enough for all the time and effort they put in. Condolences to both Neville's family and all who knew and loved Neville.



COURSE NEWS

Building a Freeway Across Sydney's Early Industrial & Transport Hub



I can see why not everyone would be interested in a walking tour about a Freeway that was never built.

However, when I joined Max Underhill's walking tour on 13 February, I experienced a wealth of information about all sorts of engineering marvels. We started underneath the remnant of the North Western Expressway, with an explanation of the events that lead to its abandonment.

We saw many historical sights around Darling Harbour, including a cabinet full of artefacts that had been dug up during the building of the freeway. There were many remnants along the way, revealing information about the original finger wharves at Darling Harbour. The history continued as we entered the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Sussex Street, which still includes many of the walls of the original market buildings.

The tour included part of Yananurala, a harbour walk marking the original shoreline of Cockle Bay and finished at the Pumphouse, which was formerly the Hydraulic Power Station. The Pumphouse contains the largest extant set of hydraulic accumulators and the largest cast iron water tank in Sydney.

Lunch was next door at the Exchange, a fine piece of modern architecture housing the Darling Square Library. Believe it or not, in this photo we are standing directly underneath a piece of working roadway, that has been beautifully decorated. If you would like to find out where this innovative artwork is, you will need to register for Max's next walk on Thursday 22 May. See Page 10 of the course book.

Vicki Moss

Classic Movies

As always, Hugh Watson has selected some cracking good old black and white classics for Wednesday 26 March and Wednesday 9 April at Burwood RSL. The first is a film noir with a surprising leading lady and the second a much lighter musical with the perennial favorites Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

All movies are generally followed by a casual lunch in the bistro if you'd like to kick on afterwards so why not spend every second Wednesday transported back to another time? There is no need to book for Classic Movies just show up to the ones you are interested in or when you have the morning free.

Here's a summary of the coming attractions:

The Dark Corner (1946)



Lucille Ball shows off her dramatic chops in this film noir about a private investigator who has moved from San Francisco to New York to escape a troubled past.

After he arrives he is hounded by both a New York Police Lieutenant and a mysterious thug in a white suit employed by his former business partner who he suspects is trying to frame him for a murder.

While the film received mixed reviews on its release it has gained a reputation as an underappreciated classic of the film noir genre.

Definitely not one to miss if you are an old crime movie lover!

Top Hat (1935)



Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers with music by Irving Berlin. What more is there to say? You know you are in for an enjoyable morning.

This screwball musical comedy in which Fred Astaire plays an American tap dancer who arrives in London to star in a show sees him attempting to impress Ginger's character to win her affection.

The film has been voted one of the 25 greatest film musicals of all time by the American Film Institute and "Cheek to Cheek" one of the 100 greatest songs of the American cinema.

Sounds like a lot of fun!

Trains, Tunnels and Tombstones



Beatrice Scheepers and her group had a lovely surprise recently on a tour of the Central Station precinct - they were able to have rare look inside the old Mortuary Station, designed in the late 1860s by Colonial Architect James Barnet.

The Mortuary Station was built to convey mourners and caskets to Rookwood Cemetery, the largest necropolis in the southern hemisphere.

The deceased travelled free of charge, but mourners had to buy a one-shilling ticket on the platform.

Heavyweights from State Rail were doing a site visit on the day, spotted our group outside the gates, and invited us inside.

They were also kind enough to take photos of us.

The first photo shows some of the nine open bays fronting onto the rail line.

The second photo shows off the beautiful tile work and masterful stone masonry: angels, stars and butterflies.



Research For People Who Are Experiencing Memory Changes

Did you know that Step Up for Ageing Research supports researchers across the spectrum of ageing and aged care related studies? Also, Step up for Dementia supports researchers across the spectrum of dementia studies. Their research assists to improve the quality of life and provide the best care. Anyone aged over 18 can be volunteer for the research. You could be involved in surveys that inform policy making; longitudinal follow-up studies that provide information about risk factors, biomarkers or drug targets; intervention studies that research whether certain changes in lifestyle improve outcomes; or drug and clinical trials. For more information or if you would like to register phone 1800 7837 123; or

For ageing research contact www.stepupforageingresearch.org.au

For dementia research contact www.stepupfordementiaresearch.org.au

The Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing at the University of NSW is developing a new tool to help GPs and clinicians understand how memory problems affect everyday tasks like shopping or managing finances. This tool will help clinicians to detect early cognitive changes in dementia; and offer more tailored care and support, helping people maintain their independence.

If you or someone you know is interested in helping make a difference in dementia research by participating in research, you can email c-stam@unsw.edu.au or call 9348 1031 or 9348 1905.

The researchers are looking for participants who are experiencing difficulties with thinking, memory or problem solving. They need to be aged over 60; living in Sydney; can communicate in English; can use a keyboard and mouse; and have a family member, friend or carer who sees them at least once a week. Both the participant and the family member/friend/carers will be asked to complete a questionnaire. Participants will receive a \$50 gift voucher for participating in the study and reimbursed for any travel or parking expenses.

One of our members in the Inner West recently took part in dementia diagnostic tool research with Sydney University. She said was asked to undergo a range of basic tasks and it was painless. She said the research is useful for all of us in our age group. She even said that the studies were a bit of fun too –

parking is available, or reimbursement for travel and participants in the research are often rewarded with gift cards.

Patricia's Pen



How Did We Survive In Quarantine Together?

The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges, compelling us to adapt to a new way of life under quarantine. Despite the physical separation from extended family and friends, many families discovered resilience and unity (mostly), transforming this period into one of unity and strengthening bonds. For other families sadly, it was a prison-like existence where discomfort, hurt, and sadly increased abuse.

With schools, universities, and workplaces shifting to virtual platforms, families had to become creative, and homes became multifunctional spaces. We set up designated areas for work and study, keeping a semblance of routine amidst growing alarm and uncertainty. This provided stability and fostered a deeper appreciation for each other's roles, collaborating on household chores and supporting one another's virtual endeavours integral to our daily lives.

Despite some children reporting positive experiences with homeschooling. It stayed challenging for many parents and their children, managing the work-life-school balance, and the challenge of schooling when parents are not teachers. Perceived impacts on children included quieter and safer learning at home, and negatives of managing school, workload, and social isolation. Parents had concerns about the increased screen time of many children and their deteriorating mental well-being. Parents and caregivers of school children found they experienced higher levels of distress and work, and social impairments compared to parents who were not home-schooling and people with no dependent children. Not surprisingly, these challenges inspired increased appreciation for teachers.

To counter the monotony of isolation we embarked on collective projects and hobbies. From experimenting with new and challenging recipes, making sourdough bread reached epidemic proportions. To online book clubs and Zoom discussion meetings, my own family started watching a regular TV artist and his online class. Using zoom each followed the artist in real-time, to complete their painted canvas. From my isolation, I became the official judge in these undertakings. Much needed fun and these activities enriched the time spent together. Neighbourhood walks suddenly became immensely popular, dogs never had it so good, an excuse to undertake more than one daily walk. This outdoor experience promoted physical well-being, offered valuable reflection time, and alleviated stress.

Open communication played a pivotal role in navigating the emotional complexities of quarantine. Families needed to confront their concerns and feelings, being fed regular updates from the media that were often disappointing. Many families found they could discuss their emotional distress and issues with one another, gain mutual support for continued survival, emerging as a more cohesive and resilient family unit.

For some the pandemic response to save lives came at a significant cost, and some Australians felt overlooked. Others believe their human rights were inadequately protected. Stories of economic hardship, families unable to say goodbye to loved ones, and women trapped in violent households. Communities were left isolated due to blanket policies. The human impact of international and domestic border closures, even healthcare restrictions.

The public experience of quarantine was marked by isolation, uncertainty, and adaptation. It is no surprise many struggled with loneliness, mental health issues, and economic hardship. Others found new absorbing activities or deepened personal relationships. Dedicated essential workers faced high risks,

healthcare systems were strained. Public attitudes ranged from optimism, solidarity, and resilience to frustration, anger, and protest. Over time people adapted to quarantine and restrictions, but the period left lasting social and psychological impacts.

Despite the enduring hangover as above, positive outcomes have appeared that we can identify:

Rapid developments of vaccines. The introduction of telemedicine changing GP contact for the better. Mental health gained more visibility and even increased resources. Improved hygiene awareness and better sanitation habits. Virtual communication is more sophisticated, making remote learning and online collaboration more accessible. Many more will become clear as time passes. While the pandemic was tough these shifts will have lasting benefits in many areas of our lives.

Patricia Thornton, *Leader, City Writing Club*