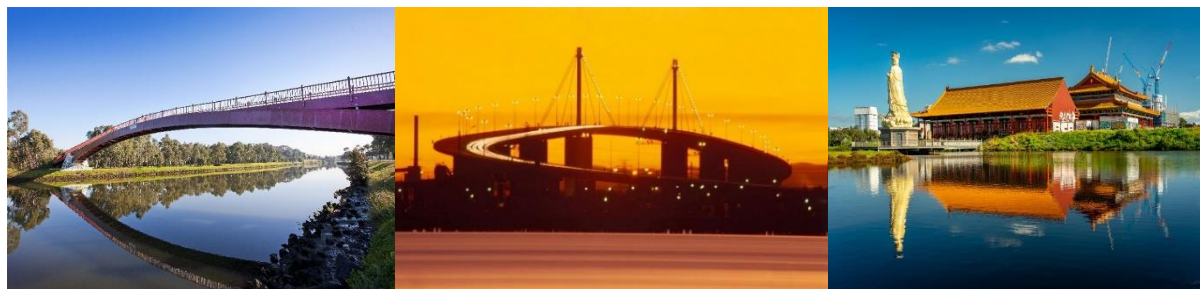


Community Connector

Maribyrnong U3A Inc. A0117566U Established 2023 April 2024 Number 1



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Welcome to the first edition of the U3A Maribyrnong (U3A M) newsletter. A big thank you to the Committee of Management and all our members for contributing to its foundation. The organization has been remarkable from its inception with grand plans. But unlike Don Quixote the windmills have been used to U3A M's collective advantage. One year down the track it is a thriving community with activities galore, a communications system, a well-coordinated well-oiled machine with a beating heart. This newsletter belongs to its members so please do not hesitate to send your contributions to the editor via the U3A M website: members@u3amaribyrnong.org.au . Love to hear from all of you.

President Martina Ryan's Report

As we come to the end of U3A Maribyrnong's first year of operation, we can reflect on some of our achievements.

In just 12 months we have incorporated our Association and registered an ABN and Tax File Number. Established a Committee of Management. Grown our membership from 8 to 124, as people took advantage of our introductory membership fee of just \$10 for Full and Associate membership for the calendar year. Increased the number of facilitators and the list of

community venues in which we operate allowing us to offer a good spread of engaging activities across Maribyrnong.

In 2023 U3A M received \$1240 in membership fees. Obtained an EFTPOS machine to enable members to pay their Membership Fees via EFTPOS if they don't have access to Internet Banking. Received a \$2,000 startup Grant from U3A Network which assisted with payment for items such as printing, licensing fees and a banner. Received \$1,500 from our successful grant application for a Volunteers Grant which enabled us to provide a workshop on preventing and dealing with challenging situations.

We have offered members many opportunities for social interaction and engagement – vital to a sense of well-being in the community. Built strong collaborative relationships with community centres and some local businesses across the municipality, who have provided venues for our activities without charge. Built a strong, dedicated and incredibly hard-working committee, committed to good governance. Set our fees at \$25 for Full and Associate membership reflecting the increased program offerings available in 2024.

Volunteers are the beating heart of U3A Maribyrnong. We depend on the willingness of our members to contribute to the running and management of U3A Maribyrnong. A huge thank you to all those who have volunteered their time and expertise to facilitate activities over the last year:

Alma Obedoza	Sue De Witts	Martina Ryan
Nadia Vigianti	Doug Palmer	Valerie Zito
Kerrie Forber	Francisca Pandi	Glenda Cipolato
Julie McQueen	Mike Collin	Lesley Macleod
Matt Coleman	Rosanna Morales	Susie Minchinton

Our Committee of Management (CoM) are to be thanked for their commitment, teamwork, hard work, ideas and initiatives. While some have 'official' CoM roles, the work was done by all:

Martina Ryan (President)	Kevin Gray
Lesley MacLeod (Secretary)	Alma Obedoza (September 2022 – September 2023)
Nadia Viglianti (Vice-President, September 2022 – September 2023)	Evie Trimmis
Kerrie Forber (Treasurer)	Robert Mackenzie
Julie McQueen	

It should also be noted that all the activities we launched with were run or co-facilitated by CoM members!

Community Partnerships with several organisations have played a significant part in supporting the launch of U3A Maribyrnong and enabling it to grow in its first year. We are incredibly grateful for their help and ongoing support including:

- U3A Network Victoria
- Hot House Project and the Community Connectors Program
- Maidstone Community Centre
- Braybrook Community Centre
- The Chestnut Tree Bookshop

- Maribyrnong Council
- Yarraville Community Centre
- Footscray Park Bowling Club

Yarraville Community Centre's generous provision of catering for our Members and Friends sessions, as well as funding for several activities has been much appreciated.

We look forward to working with all our community partners over the next 12 months.

Looking forward - Our U3A Maribyrnong operates a different model to other U3As in Victoria. Membership of U3A Maribyrnong is open to adults of any age, not just people who are nearing, or who have already retired.

Our vision is to develop a culture that is welcoming, vibrant, and inclusive, with a thriving, active membership that spans different generations. Our activities will run across the municipality at different days and times – unconstrained by term dates and including evenings and weekends.

We aim to challenge ageism. Celebrate ageing as a lifelong process that doesn't start when you reach a particular age, and having fun does not stop when you reach a particular age. Make our activities fun and accessible for all adults regardless of age, background, or work status. Strengthen community through making connections. Encourage members to try something new, to challenge themselves.

To help achieve our aims and vision, in 2024 we will focus on:

- a newsletter (hopefully we will have the first issue in March!)
- our website (updating and maintenance- starting in February)
- recruiting volunteers for working groups:
 - Communications (newsletter, website, social media support),
 - Activities program working group (venue booking, facilitator support, program planning)
- encouraging more members to share their interests and expertise by becoming activity facilitators.
- attracting new members
- sourcing new venues

Our year ahead looks bright and exciting.

U3A Maribyrnong Committee

The U3A Maribyrnong (U3A M) committee reflects the diversity of the organisation's membership. The committee comprises the executive with four members each holding a specific position. All four officials bring a wealth of experience from their professional careers and life skills to bear on their very capable administration of your organisation.

As president Martina Ryan is responsible for the broad sweep of duties and roles that keeps the organisation going. Vice-president Julie McQueen shares some of these duties so the load is lightened. Treasurer Kerrie Forber attends to the money side making sure the organisation

remains solvent. Secretary Lesley Macleod ensures that the communications and courses side of the organisation are constantly evolving.

The committee also has four ordinary members who are called upon to attend to specific tasks assigned to them by the management team for example website maintenance, newsletter editing and publication. All four members George Tsitiridis, Evie Trimmis, Kevin Gray and Robert Mackenzie bring their professional and life experiences to the tasks they are assigned.

Course Coordinator Lesley Macleod's report



2024 has courses for everybody including the hyperactive with line dancing, pickleball and bicycle group. The not so active with movies @the Sun, Italian language, National theatre live, Mahjong, cards club, dining out, book group and Gallery drawing.

Upcoming activities include:

Walk Talk and Snap -Mondays 6, 13 and 20th May 10.30 am start

Meet at three different locations over 3 weeks with facilitator Amanda Neville giving us tips on how to make the most of our "snaps". There will be an opportunity to stop for coffee or stay for lunch (own expense).

Astronomy

Wednesdays 8 May -26th June, 8 Zoom sessions 10.00 am -12.00 noon (courtesy of Melbourne U3A) you will be sent a link so you can enjoy the course from the comfort of your own home facilitated by John Carr (from U3A Melbourne) and will review the development and current state of astronomy.

Law and the Layman

Fridays 5th July- 30 August 9 sessions 10.00-12.00 Yarraville Community Centre. The sessions will cover personal - wills, property, rights; commercial - business structures, intellectual property; public interest – constitution, climate change, courts.

Geelong Gallery Visit 20th September 9.25 am start. Travel by train, visit the gallery, enjoy lunch and be home by mid-afternoon. There are two free, special exhibitions: Double Vision— Mapping Dürer in a Time of Crisis: Etchings by Raymond Arnold and Ian Westacott. Also, the Make Award - a national award celebrating innovation in contemporary craft and design.

Member feedback



Pod(cast) Heads

The 'Podcast Heads' discussed the 'what', 'why' and 'who' of podcasting. We met fortnightly to share information about finding podcasts and how to download and store them. We analysed the podcasts we h discussed the 'how' of podcasting and visited a sound studio to look at the technology.



Bendigo art Gallery trip

On a glorious autumn day, a small group from U3A M visited the Bendigo Art Gallery to see the *Paris: Impressions of Life 1880 – 1925* exhibition. Instead of seeing the life of the upper classes as we expected, we saw marvellous 3 dimensional street signs representing the products and services of hair dressers, wine stores, snail suppliers and restaurants. In addition, women's elegant dresses, gloves and shoes and various other memorabilia. The paintings depicted street life in Montmartre and surrounds – shops and markets, people going to restaurants and theatres, walking in the gardens and parks, sheltering in the rain.... We had a real sense of the times.

Introduction to Mosaics

During March several U3A Maribyrnong members took part in an introduction to Mosaics course run at Yarraville Community Centre (YCC) and sponsored by them. Over 5 weeks we were expertly tutored by Amanda Neville in how to design, construct and complete our mosaic projects. This was a fun activity where we learned all the basic skills to complete a mosaic project while chatting and catching up with other U3A members.



Memoir Writing and Creative Writing



Saraswati goddess for the creative arts

In 2023 several U3A Maribyrnong members attended a memoir writing class conducted by Rosanna Morales a gifted author, poet, publisher, editor. She was entertaining, inspiring and with an infectious gaiety led the group through the basics of writing short pieces, eventually over weeks leading to the planning of a memoir to be written in their own time. The group all have plans to script this memoir, some still in the throes of research to flesh out necessary details other well on the way.

In 2024 some of the memoir writing group joined by other members of U3A Maribyrnong were treated to a six-week creative writing class by the very talented author and editor Marilyn Burt. Marilyn took the group through a carefully orchestrated series of writing exercises providing the tools, enthusing us with anecdotes, excerpts from published works and respect. Each of the members of the group produced a short story that was assessed by the group and a winner chosen. A very fulfilling experience. Hopefully in time these short stories will be published.