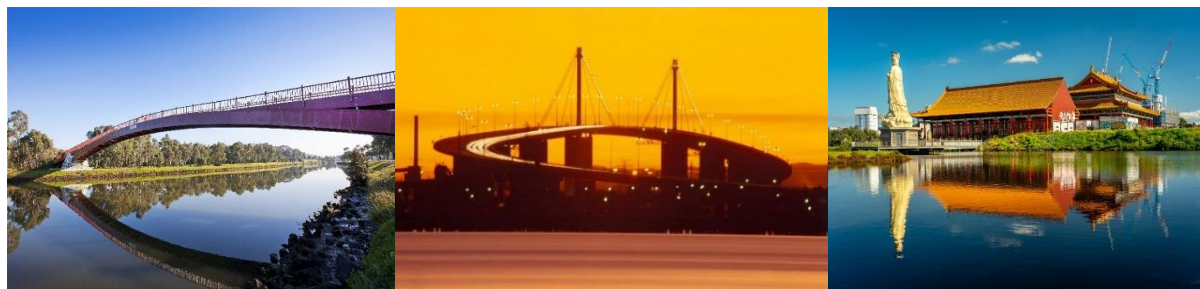


Community Connector

Maribyrnong U3A Inc. A0117566U Established 2022 December 2024 Number 3



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Welcome to the third edition of the U3A Maribyrnong (U3A M) newsletter. A big thank you to the Committee of Management and all our members for their support. The organization is in very good shape, going into the new year 2025 with a steadily growing membership with 115 paid up members for 2024. It is a thriving community with an expanded activities schedule, a website moving to a new system, and a string of community connections. 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 Looking forward to your wonderful contributions.

Please fill out the survey that was sent out to you so the committee can implement your suggestions in 2025. We value all your ideas/ suggestions!!

President Martina Ryan's Report

It's hard to believe 2024 is almost over!

U3A Maribyrnong is going from strength to strength as our name becomes known in the community. Our membership is now at around 115, and we have 14 facilitators leading our activities; and we have continued to build our network of supportive local community organisations, and we have even come to the attention of our Federal and State MPs who both attended our last Members and Friends event at Maidstone Community Centre!! It's hard to believe we are just two years old!

Thank you!!

So many people to thank for a successful 2024.

To Maribyrnong City Council, Yarraville Community Centre, Maidstone Community Centre, Chestnut Bookshop and Footscray Park Bowling Club for allowing us to use their wonderful venues for our activities. Without their in-kind support, we simply could not operate.

To the fabulous U3A Maribyrnong committee – an amazing, enthusiastic bunch of people - as unstoppable as Duracell bunnies.

And to our members – for your support and input during the year. You are champs! Please keep making suggestions for ways for us to improve, activities etc. Consider getting involved in a working group, leading an activity, organising a U3A event – whatever you can do!

End of Year Celebration

The committee has organised a members' end of year celebration on Saturday 14 December from 1-4pm at the Charles and Gamon Bar and Kitchen at the corner of Charles and Gamon Streets in Seddon. The cost is \$10 per person, that covers some gorgeous finger food, drinks will be at your own cost. Places are limited, so please enrol as soon as possible so we can advise numbers for catering purposes.

Members' Survey

While U3A Maribyrnong is going well, we know we could be better. What do you think U3A Maribyrnong could be doing to make our organisation stronger? What activities would you like to see running? What prompted you to join? We would be so grateful if you could complete this survey to help us shape U3A Maribyrnong in 2025. It should only take 10 minutes (if that): <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LW229NT>

Complete the survey before 31 December 2024 and you will go into a draw for one of two \$50 Sun Theatre vouchers!

Grants

We were successful in getting a grant from Community Bank in Seddon for \$1000. The grant will be used to develop activities in 2025.

Volunteers needed!!

We have a fantastic, dedicated committee with diverse skills and backgrounds, all wanting to see U3A Maribyrnong become the 'go to' organisation for community members seeking social

connection, trying something new and having fun. However, we need support from our members if we want our U3A to continue to flourish, attract new members and offer more activities.

Everyone can contribute! All help is appreciated. It doesn't have to be a huge time commitment – but it can make such a huge difference to the committee by spreading the work across more people, lessening the load for all! Volunteering can be as simple as:

- Being a 'co-facilitator' for an activity you are already attending. This role is light touch – generally supporting the facilitator: it could be checking off the names of people attending the activity each session and letting the venue know numbers; being a contact person for the activity if people are unable to attend at the last minute etc.
- Joining an 'ad hoc' working group e.g. helping to organise our 'Members and Friends' events, suggesting/contacting venues, suggesting activities during the event.
- Reviewing our policies and procedures – about 4 hours per year!! A critical eye to identify if they are all appropriate, updating where needed to present to the committee for sign-off
- Joining the committee – we meet for a couple of hours each month (except January), help the committee make U3A Maribyrnong vibrant and welcoming, and help us grow our membership and the activities on offer. *All positions in the committee are up for grabs each year at the Annual General Meeting.* It's a great opportunity to shape the future of the organisation.

Current volunteering opportunities:

Newsletter Working Group (1-2 people needed) – Quarterly newsletter publication

- 60 minutes per week approx.
- Reporting to the Editor
- Contacting activity leaders/facilitators for newsletter contributions

Website Working Group (2)

- 60 minutes per week approx.
- Updating website with articles (sourced from newsletter); images; documents (training available)

Programming working group (2)

- Follow up with people who have expressed interest in running an activity
- Source and confirm a venue
- Add the activity to the program

If you are interested in finding out more about the Newsletter and/or Website working groups, please contact info@u3amaribynong.org.au. Wishing you all a peaceful, happy and healthy 2025, and we look forward to seeing you next year.

Secretary Lesley Macleod's report



U3A Maribyrnong 2025 Program

Your committee is working hard behind the scenes to prepare for 2025. The 2025 program is shaping up with most of the regular groups continuing into the new year. We are pleased to see that the Bicycle Group, Book Group, Movies at the Sun, Dining Out, Beginner Italian, Pickleball, Mahjong, Line Dancing, Gallery Drawing, National Theatre Live, Brain Teasers, Curiosity Crew and En Plein Air are all set to continue.

There will be a return of Law and the Layman, and Beginner Mahjong short courses and the addition of an Advanced Line Dancing activity and Advanced Beginners Italian. We plan to add some additional day trips and walks and are working on a series of activities on the theme of the environment and sustainability.

Maribyrnong Council

We are very lucky and grateful to have support from our local Council and receive free or subsidized access to many of the local community and other centres we use for activities. As such it is sometimes necessary to change venue, time or dates for activities (although we will try to keep this minimal) so please check the program when you enrol in 2025. Also, some 2024 activities will continue during the festive season break so again please check dates with your class facilitator.

Training for Facilitators

There is still time to volunteer to run or share an activity- we will be running a training session for facilitators so you will get support – if you have a skill or hobby or interest to share, please contact Lesley on info@u3amaribyrnong.org.au

Membership

You will need to join for 2025 before you can enrol in activities for 2025. The joining fee is \$25 for the year 1 Jan 2025 – 31 Dec 2025 and this covers you to enrol in all activities in the program. Occasionally there will be a small additional charge for some activities, but we do aim to keep this minimal.

The 2025 program and joining for 2025 is due to open mid December 2024 so please check your email boxes and the website for information. Your membership number and password does not change from year to year so once it opens you can join up and pay membership for 2025 and enrol in courses online. If you think you would like help, further information or want to pay by card or cash why not come along to our End of Year celebration 14th December 1-4pm at Charles and Gammon Bar in Seddon – (Enrol on the website www.u3amaribyrnong.org.au) and we can try and help you in person.

We hope everyone has enjoyed our 2024 program and look forward to seeing you all again at events in 2025 in the meantime we hope you enjoy any of the end of year break that you choose to celebrate.

Member feedback

National theatre Live

National Theatre Live met 5 times this year. There were usually 8-12 U3A members present to watch the screening of a live play from London. We met at the Sun Theatre in Yarraville at 10.30 am on a Wednesday. Afterwards we had coffee and/ or lunch together at a local venue and usually discussed our views of the play and its characters. Although not scheduled each month as hoped, the plays we did see were excellent- all sell out hit productions made possible to view in Melbourne as films.

We often discussed how well thought out camera angles e.g. close-up camera work at precise moments and the thoughtfully directed filming of the play added extra insight to the overall experience of a play when viewed as a film.

Hopefully the Sun Theatre will return to more regular/ monthly screenings of National Theatre Live productions throughout 2025. (Joanne Roberts)



Curiosity Crew

Curiosity crew detectives investigate their neighbourhood e.g. sustainability in the local area. Recycling everything as 'Green Collect' do. Organic food and gardening sources. Permaculture Out West (creating natural and social eco systems) and their impact e.g. produce swap and 'Fermenting Friday' involving inter alia making a Mango pickle.

The program is determined by participants interests and curiosities. The program is a mixture of walks, visits and discussion over tea and coffee. (Kevin Gray)

Book Group

Our Book Group has been meeting regularly once a month on a Wednesday morning over the last year. We meet in the delightful Chestnut Tree Bookshop where we can enjoy a chat, coffee and peruse a huge selection of books.

We have 6 regular members (and are always keen to welcome more!) and we have read a varied catalogue of books chosen by group members each month. We usually choose two books for the month to accommodate our faster readers and members read both or just the one they prefer. We choose books that can be sourced from the library as well as purchased and we share books around the group to reduce the costs of purchasing a new book every month. This year we have read books such as *Wifedom* by Anna Funder, *Lola In The Mirror* by Trent Dalton, *Restless Dolly Maunday* by Kate Grenville, *The Surgeon of Crowthorne* by Simon Winchester, *The Desert Knows Her Name* by Lia Hill, *Intermezzo* by Sally Rooney, *The Cartographers Secret* by Tea Cooper and many more. We were lucky enough to read *The Dictionary of Lost Words*

by Pip Williams early in the year and the group took a trip to the city to see the MTC play of the same name a fun evening out!

We have a no pressure approach if you don't like a book, we suggest read something else and share it with the group at the next meeting. Life is too short to read books you don't like.

I'm looking forward to reading the books suggested for over Christmas at our next meeting in December and meeting with the group next year. If you would like to join us enrol on the website. (Lesley Macleod)

Mahjong

Mahjong has gone from strength to strength this year with the dedicated tuition and guidance from our facilitator Sue De Witts. We now have a group of 10 regular players and play 2-3 tables depending on member availability. We all enjoy testing our skills and encouraging each other in a continuous learning and friendly, social environment.

We have welcomed new members during the year who have started with no previous experience at all thanks to several Beginner Mahjong short courses (4 weeks) run by Sue in conjunction with the main group. Learning the game at the same time and in the same venue as the main group means new players integrate quickly as they graduate to playing regularly.

We play using the rules according to "The Game of Mahjong Illustrated" by Patricia A Thompson and Betty Maloney. It is useful to have a copy of this book or to have a look at a copy to familiarise yourself with the game and it is essential to have your own copy of the book "The Mahjong Player's Companion" by Patricia Thompson and Betty Maloney as until you can memorise the games you will need this with you while playing.

We meet on a Friday afternoon 1-3pm at Braybrook Community Hub in Braybrook and the sessions run through most holiday periods so we are not limited by term dates. I look forward to playing with current and future members in 2025. Enrol on the website for 2025, look out for our next Beginner Mahjong Course early in 2025 or just come along and watch to see if it is an activity for you! (Lesley Macleod)

Gallery Drawing



The idea behind this activity is to take just a couple of hours a month to do indulge our creative skills surrounded by beautiful works of art. It really is a perfect way to spend a couple of hours on a hot or cold day and the time just flies by!

Our warm, welcoming group meets at the information desk in the National Gallery of Victoria on the first Saturday of most months at 1pm. It is an untutored session for all skill levels with members bringing their own drawing equipment (paper and pencils). The information desk loans us fold up seats to bring to our 'usual' spot - the 15th – 17th Century British and European Collection and each of us find an artwork that appeals, and we then attempt to draw it.

I'm a beginner and drawing 'in public' is way out of my comfort zone, but once I start my self-consciousness disappears. I found some people are curious and want to find out what group we are part of as they want to do something similar. It's nice to think our group may have motivated someone to give something new a go!

After a couple of hours, we usually make our way to the Members Lounge (where NGV members can bring a guest or two) for a coffee. We share our drawings and have a chat before making our way home.

I would really encourage anyone to give this a go – even if it is just to see what we do and have a coffee with us afterwards! (Martina Ryan)

Announcements:

2024 U3A Maribyrnong Member Survey

U3A Maribyrnong has now been running for almost 2 years. We have over 100 members in 2024 and 14 facilitators and tutors so a big thank-you to you all for joining, sharing and supporting each other!

We have shared a Survey with all members by email so please check you in box. We are asking for your input (either as a current member or someone who has previously been a member) to gauge how we are performing, and to gain ideas for future activities which will help us strengthen and improve our U3A for the enjoyment of current and future members.

Please invest a few minutes of your time (estimated 10minutes for the 20 questions) to complete the survey!

FILL IN THE SURVEY BEFORE DEC 31 AND GO INTO THE DRAW FOR ONE OF TWO \$50 SUN MOVIE THEATRE GIFT VOUCHERS

Are you interested in running a course? If so, use the form below to register interest

U3A Expression of interest - running an activity form

To propose an Activity Idea please provide as much of the information below as possible:

1. Summary of activity - Include any prerequisites, materials, costs
2. Day of the week
3. Time of day
4. Length of session

5. Frequency of session/s
6. Preferred venue
7. Venue type- Room, Hall, Outdoor
8. Venue requirements – Laptop, Projector, WiFi
9. Max or Min Number of participants

The Program Coordinator will contact you to discuss and finalise program time and venue availability.

If you just want to discuss an idea, please email courses@u3amaribyrnong.org.au or call Lesley on 0420921737

