

U3A DUNEDIN CHARITABLE TRUST

Annual Report 2015 - 2016

U3A Dunedin continues to grow and expand, both in its course offerings and in its popularity. In spite of increasing its membership to over 700, the waiting list has also increased to over 150 people. We are rightly known to offer exciting, interesting and thought-provoking courses which obviously appeals to many people. We always need more help with courses and look for members to assist. Doug Holborow and his team on the Programme Committee work tirelessly and always produce excellent courses for us and we thank them very much indeed.

So that we can accommodate more members to attend courses of their choice we have hired the Otago Golf Club premises - giving us more space and easy parking! So now we have OGC (150 places), Leith Bowling Club (110 places) and Salmond College (50 places). This gives us room for all members wishing to take part. Very few members are not accepted for their first choice. Our crystal-ball gazing is tested each term, to determine which course should be placed in which venue! Currently we have a balance between supply and demand! The 'Encore' project - monthly lectures offering a chance to hear again lecturers from earlier series - was not well patronised and is now on hold. A lot more planning is being undertaken before this excellent idea is again offered to members.

Our audio-visual equipment is under review, to enable the best possible way of delivering the lectures at the three venues. Impressions Audiovisual have supported us so well, allowing us to hear and see with few problems in spite of the varying systems that the lecturers produce! Equipment requires replacing often so that we continue to have first class systems.

The Small Groups which were set up last year (Art Galleries, Otago Museum, Current Affairs, Peace Education and Poetry Appreciation) are continuing to fill a very specific niche - that of a more interactive environment with fewer participants. Each group sets its own way of working and timetable, allowing members to participate according to their own circumstances.

We have had a year of changes! Everyone will know that our administration has gone from paper-base to electronic-based, with all it entails. This time last year we were still using an entirely paper-based system! We did have the inevitable hiccups to start with and these have been worked through. The size of the group means that perhaps it is time to consider employing someone to look after the administration, rather than relying on a purely voluntary group. Firstly and foremost I need to thank those who have worked and worked to put various processes in place - Doug Holborow, John Shanks, Alan and Lynda Jackson and Evan Taylor, together with others supporting and encouraging. Thank you. Without these people we would not have moved forward in this century! We are always mindful that some of us do not use computers and therefore we have made every effort to accommodate their needs by continuing to post out material to those that request it.

The Board has made two grants during the year. \$1,000.00 to the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Otago and \$1,000.00 to the Otago Museum. Both grants were made in recognition of the help given by the organisations in planning and enabling courses held by U3A.

Our Website is full of information, course information, news and coming events and our newsletter - U3A Dunedin Forum - not to mention contact details, a brief history and enrolment details. Everyone can access this and we use it, both to renew our membership and enrol on courses, thus doing away with a lot of paper and postage costs. We are able to alert members to variations in courses such as a change of venue and cancellations. Indeed, the website is well worth visiting! Our thanks to Alan Jackson and John Shanks for all the work they have put in to make it so successful. We are now exploring the possibility of being able to pay for subscriptions and enrolments through the website.

Geoff Adams continues to edit 'Forum' - our newsletter. This is an excellent publication, full of humour and advice and together with the website is one of the main methods of communication to members. Our thanks to Geoff for his unfailing high standard and gentle reminders to get copy to him on time!

With the new ways of communication the Board is now looking at itself to see if it can become more efficient and streamlined. Under consideration are ways that the Board functions, its size and meeting structure. The relevance of the Rules and subsequent 'policies' will be examined to make sure that they are current and fit-for-purpose.

This year we have four people 'retiring' from the Board and they have each made a positive difference to our work during the year. We are extremely grateful to them for their support and thank them sincerely for their hard work and unfailing contribution to the organisation.

Brian Robinson resigned earlier this year, due to ill health. His Chairmanship of the Board was busy, efficient and thorough.

Assoc. Prof. Barrie Peak has been the University's nomination on the Board and he has been replaced by Dr. Elaine Webster - the nominee of the University. We welcome her back to the Board.

Judith Cowley was instrumental in setting up the Small Groups and continues to encourage and support their existence!

Noel Carroll has kept us on track with legal issues. He will be missed.

Chairing the Board has been challenging this year, with all the new processes put in place. I am grateful to Marion Potter, Secretary to the Board, for all her help and hard work and to all Board members for their support. We look forward to another year - a year of consolidation and development.

Jane M. Higham
Board Chairman

21 June 2016