

Report to AGM 2019 from the Chair

It is a pleasure to submit this Annual Report from the Chair for 2018-2019.

A special greeting to those who are new to U3A Dunedin and who are reading our AGM report for the first time.

A moment at the start, remembering friends who were with us this time last year but who are not with us now and that includes those who have been active in the past but who have had to acknowledge the vicissitudes of ageing and retire from this company.

At time of writing we have **885 members** of whom 75 prefer not to use internet. Although there is a difference in cost in looking after those members, the Board has decided that there be **no difference in subscription** between the two groups.

We do wish to focus on **communicating with members** via the web site, as there is so much there that simply cannot be mailed through the post. We have added a **Pay on Line** system to our Course Enrolments in response to requests from members. Our system is the same one used by Air New Zealand, The New Zealand Land Transport Authority and The Warehouse so we hope that gives confidence in its use.

We plan to add a **Course Feedback option** to our on-line services at the end of Series 1. People will still be able to give opinions and suggestions in the usual way on paper if they prefer. Using the internet will enable processing of those forms to be done by computer and reduce work for Course Organisers who are thus able to spend time on other aspects of running courses for the benefit of our members. You can read Lester Flockton's summary of the course feedbacks on the web site. We have introduced a **new laser pointer** in response to member feedback.

We are able to add many of the **course notes from presenters** so that they can be referred to later. Members need to use their login details to access these. Last year probably broke records in the amount of material we placed on our site to help members.

Using our **member login on the home page** (details on your membership badge), members can remind themselves whether they have paid their annual subscription, which courses they have enrolled for, and **update their address details** – this is most important to avoid missing notifications.

We did have to use our **Cancellations Procedure** once last year, due to the illness of a presenter, but the weather was kind and we had no “snow days”. If needed, those details are placed at the top of the home page and can't easily be missed.

We have added an **Honours Board** (on the *Board and Assistants* page of our site) to acknowledge the contribution of past Chairs, Secretaries and Treasurers. When you look at that record, take a moment to mentally thank those stalwarts who have been towers of strength for U3A Dunedin.

The Programme Committee is at the heart of U3A and is guided by feedback from members as well as those who volunteer to develop new courses. The team is being enlarged and is ably led by Barrie Peake with continuing strong support from Doug Holborow. We have revised our **safety**

procedures so that people using walkers, crutches and sticks can enjoy sessions as much as anyone else and be safe. Our two venues do get stretched with popular courses and we are mindful of limits to enrolment. If a person doesn't get into a course due to oversubscription, they get a **priority booking** for the next Series.

We introduced a **Ride Share scheme** partly over issues of sustainability and partly to enable those of reduced mobility to attend our courses and we encourage more use of that as we know that participation and friendships are important ways to maximise wellbeing in the Third Age. To that end we have introduced **lanyards** as an option to enable the wearing of name badges. Being able to address someone by name is an important part of relationships and memories are assisted in this way.

We have slightly **modified our calendar** for Series 2 and 3 to avoid school holidays as far as possible, as we know that many members have grand-parenting duties at those times and thus miss later lectures. There is no school holiday clash in either Series 1 or 2 and only the last week of Series 3 clashes. There is a golf tournament which precludes moving Series 3 any earlier.

If you wish to see detail of **courses we have run** since the beginning, you can look at the complete set of course brochures on the web site – and spare a kind thought for Lloyd Smith who scanned them.

Discussion Groups run independently from the three main lecture series and these can wax and wane depending on interest of our members. This year is the centenary of Renoir's death and so a suggestion from Rob Lawson for a group based around his life and works is being explored. Last year we ran four courses on the Apple Mac operating and filing system and Ngaire Bates and Bill Stanford conducted an internet survey to see just what groups might serve members best. Some U3As only have discussion groups, and the possibilities for new groups are truly enormous.

Communication with members has traditionally been via our **Newsletter or FORUM** and Geoff Adams continues to produce that. A colour version is on the web site and a monochrome paper version is sent to those not using internet. Geoff has also scanned all previous editions and placed them on the web site. The Board decided that there would also be a **Letter from the Chair** after each Board meeting and that is e-mailed to all members as well as being placed on the web site. There are links on the web for members to **contact all our key personnel**. Jill Geary has suggested an **e-zine** which would enable, amongst other things, a discussion forum about courses.

The financial report is presented separately but just to acknowledge at this point Evan Taylor and Alistair Wright who keep things in good order. They have turned the finances of our organisation completely into the black and enabled the significant surplus.

Our surplus operating funds was mentioned at the last AGM and we commissioned a group to investigate and advise the Board. Past Board members Dame Norma Restieaux, Sue Cathro, John Burton and Gil Barbezat were led by Steve Baird and produced a valuable report (published on the web site) which the Board has used to decide to disburse \$70 000. Gretchen Kivell led a group that was tasked with investing \$50 000 to set up a **U3A Dunedin scholarship of \$3000** in perpetuity for a mature student. The terms and details are being worked out by us and the University Scholarships Office. This scholarship will be our **contribution to the 150th anniversary of the University**. The

other \$20 000 will possibly go to a community project in acknowledgement of the contribution of all the other groups in our community to our lecture series. The Board will continue to work on the detail of that. At present the funds are in a term deposit and we will wait until it matures.

In addition we will continue to make **donations to departments and organisations** in respect of contribution to courses which members tell us have been especially well received.

We were invited last year to become more closely **involved with research at the University** and so Elaine Webster is helping us to draw up a new Memorandum of Understanding which will guide all parties in those requests. We will not commit any members to becoming involved in anything against their wishes.

U3A is a significant organisation in the city and its records form part of its history. To that end we have had an **Archive Working Party**, led by Jane Higham, sort the considerable number of records prior to placing them in the care of The Hocken. Material will be available for members to consult, as required, once placed there. We now need to consider the digital records, what to keep and how to arrange them – no small task, but we are lucky to have the expertise of Stuart Strachan (formerly at The Hocken) who delivered the archives to The Hocken on Tuesday of this week.

The Team that serves U3A Dunedin numbers about 30 and includes Board members, Programme Committee and “Valued Assistants”. Three of the Board from last year are retiring; Bill McKinlay retired during the year, Gretchen Kivell and Jane Higham (both having served as Chair) retire now although Jane, who has been chair for two terms, will continue with many of the teams involved with running the organisation. We are delighted to welcome Rob Lawson and Jane Johnson to the Board. I shall nominate Jeanette Leigh as the 14th member of the board when we come to that item.

Thanks to all Board Members, especially Secretary Marion Potter who organises the AGM and the birthday celebration for Alan Horsman and has been my eyes and ears since the last AGM. Thanks to the Programme Committee, chaired by Barrie Peake – we have extended the membership of that team. Clare Robertson produces the Course Brochures with help from Phyll Esplin (who also manages course enrolments). Lynda Jackson manages the membership renewals and applications from new members. Jane Higham, Gerard Kenny and the group post out the newsletters, course enrolments, membership subscriptions etc. They only need to post to about 75 members now. Thanks to John Shanks, our brilliant web master without whom this organisation would be in a completely different state of affairs. I have challenged occasional critics to show me an example of a better U3A web site anywhere in New Zealand – and no-one has yet been able to do so. Thanks to Cy Newton who is our audio-visual expert, to Doug Fallow and his team at Leith Valley Bowling Club, with the tasty scones, and to Jane Kubala at the Otago Golf Club. Huge thanks to the people who deliver our courses and so generously give their time. Annette Riley writes literally hundreds of thank-you letters during the year.

To all of the excellent folk who voluntarily serve our organisation I can only marvel at their skill and commitment and say that simple “thanks” seems so inadequate but is heartfelt.

I would like to move this report, as read, for adoption.

Alan Jackson

