



Letter from the Chair

U3A Dunedin

3rd December 2019

This letter is a little longer than usual – there seems a lot to report.

Your Board met yesterday for the last time this year and it is pleasing to note that the un-reviewed Annual Accounts as presented at the AGM have now been reviewed and are unchanged. We rely on the generosity and professional expertise of our members to undertake jobs such as these and U3A Dunedin has to fit in with busy lives as we all know. We are grateful to Sandra Goodchild for her thorough efforts on our behalf as Reviewer as well as Evan Taylor and Alistair Wright as our Treasurers.

Last week there was a presentation to University of the first tranche of \$25 000 for the U3A Dunedin Scholarship. The final \$25 000 will be handed over at this time next year. More details and photos in the next FORUM: there is also a photograph on the Photo Gallery page of our web site.

The Board is still considering how best to make a donation to the Dunedin community using the other \$20 000 set aside for this purpose. You might think that an easy task, but it proves tricky. Fortunately there is no rush as the funds are in a term deposit which will not mature for over a year. Dr Sue Bidrose of the City Council addressed us and shared the plans and visions of the DCC for the next 10 years.

Donations were approved to the Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden (\$1000), The University of Otago Philosophy Department (\$1000) and the University Foundation Trust (\$500) in recognition of the excellent Nanotechnology Course in Series 3. Our donations of \$11 100 have been slightly higher than in 2018 but it looks as if we shall end the year on the right side of the balance.

Lanyards will be distributed by Jude Hathaway in 2020. Requests will be taken by Convenors and Assistants in weeks 1 and 2 of Series 1 and deliveries to the six venues made at the start of week 3. Lost lanyard requests will be handled by Jude, new members will receive their lanyards in the post from the Membership Secretary as in the past.

Recently we ran a Course Convenors' Workshop and 22 people attended. The aim is to extend the number of members who know what is entailed in convening a course. We shall run another course on some of the technical issues involved with running our courses before Series 1 starts.

We plan to hold a trial Emergency Evacuation at the end of two courses (one at each venue) in week 2 of Series 1. This will happen at the conclusion of the session and will not take time from the presenter. Course Convenors and Assistants will guide the exercise. Courses chosen will be the ones for which we have most attendees.

Membership renewal is well underway and over 500 members have already done so. We do encourage as many as possible to renew by the end of the year – renewals can easily get forgotten in the Christmas and holiday hiatus. Some members ask if we have had their payments (for membership renewal or course enrolment). We don't send receipts – you know if the money has been transferred from your bank

statements and you can see whether we have credited it by using your membership logon which has all sorts of details about whether your sub is paid up to date, courses you have been enrolled or accepted for. 286 transactions during the year have used the new POLi system – it is important to have all your details to hand when using on-line systems or you can easily be “timed out”.

Course brochures for Series 1 are all on the web site – enrolments will be taken in January and all members will be advised when they are open. Most of the Series 2 and 3 courses are well under development and you will see that feedback from members does drive the courses we provide.

At the Annual General Meeting on 13th February I shall propose a change to our Charter Clause 6.1 to allow the Board to be extended to 16 members from the current 14. The workload is considerable and needs to be shared a little more widely, plus we need to allow for Board members on holiday or during times of illness.

My thanks to all Course Developers, Convenors, Assistants, Board Members, Programme Committee Members, the Discussion Groups Leaders and our Valued Helpers – there are well over 100 of you all. Remember that all these folk are volunteers so please do remember to appreciate that and thank them for the effort that they make on behalf of U3A Dunedin.

Whilst U3A Dunedin will continue to tick over during the summer months with membership renewals and course planning, it is a quieter time for most. I do hope that you have a safe and healthy summer break, a special time with family and friends over Christmas and New Year and can look forward with optimism to 2020 – not just to the offerings of our courses of course.

Very Best Wishes

Alan Jackson Chair 2018-2020