

Report to AGM 2020 from the Chair

It is a pleasure to submit this Annual Report from the Chair for 2019-2020.

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

As befits our members, we'll take a moment at the start, **remembering friends** who were with us this time last year 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 as well as those who have died.

At time of writing we have **930 members** of whom **66 prefer not to use internet**. That's an increase in members from 885 this time last year and a reduction from 75 not using the internet. The Board absorbs the difference in cost in looking after those non-internet members.

Our membership grows and we try to use our web site as much as possible to reduce the work load for our 30 odd volunteers who run the organisation. We have introduced **pay-on-line** in response to member requests and 403 transactions have been completed with the POLi system since we started. Last year we used it to support payments for courses; this year we have extended its use to membership subscriptions. Members must realise that money transactions are not instantaneous with us as with Amazon for example: our finance team still has to tick a box manually when a payment comes through for either membership renewal or for course enrolment.

The **phasing out of cheques by Kiwibank** is a sign of things to come. *Seven Sharp* recently carried two articles in similar vein – the closure of the last DVD hire shop in New Zealand and the phasing out of fax machines at the end of 2020. Some of our members shop on-line and make travel plans in the same way, but we have many who continue to use cheques and we will do our very best to cope with the time when cheques can no longer be used. Many of us mourn the closure of Post Offices. All this does stress the need for us all to keep up with the changes in our society and U3A does help to keep us up to date.

The **end-of-course feedback** was done via the computer last year and suggestions made by members for Series 1 didn't have to be repeated in the feedback for Series 2 or 3 as members could see what they had written previously. This project was undertaken to reduce the workload of Course Convenors in writing evaluations and to speed that process as well as gleaning better feedback from members – and that improved member feedback was a great success. We have a huge database of suggestions for courses that we use when planning for future Series and the trick is to match potential presenters against suggestions that members make. The saving of a lot of paper and printing was a further bonus.

We make a summary of the **feedback from each Series** and post that on the **Public Documents** area of our web site. We also place all our AGM papers, Letters from the Chair,

eulogies given by U3A at funerals, details of the U3A Dunedin University Scholarship and so on on that page. Copies of our Charter and updates are also there together with articles which explain how the ballot works and how to avoid our e-mails getting into your spam folder.

Shortly we shall add a section called **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** to the site to save members and prospective members some time on the phone or e-mail – it should also save our volunteer team time.

Many members use **smart phones and tablets** to look at our web site and our brilliant Web Master John Shanks has done some redesign to make it easier to read on those devices. As a result, the member's login is called **MyU3A** to save space on the screen. All the details of membership name, number, contact details, whether the membership fee has been paid, which courses have been asked for and which accepted (this is the quickest way to find out in the event of a ballot) and use of RideShare are detailed in MyU3A.

The two venues that we use for our programmes can become very crowded and that raised **problems on a hot day (30°C)** when we couldn't cool the room any further. We all know what happens when we get heated – Leith Bowling Club has two air conditioners and we are working with the Golf Club to try to make improvements there. Meanwhile members will need patience. We haven't had to use the cancellation process for high temperatures but we do acknowledge the possibility.

At the other end of the scale, some members feel the cold more than others at certain times and I encourage people to **bring a knee blanket** or whatever else will make them more comfortable at any time they like.

Given the **mobility issues** necessarily associated with a membership of our sort we are very keen to ensure that people are able to keep on coming to courses. RideShare is one response we have made (of course there is an environmental advantage with that as well) but some of our Course Assistants and members will help with **valet parking** when a member with reduced mobility needs to drive close to a doorway and leave that space free for someone else. Members who are recovering from falls or who have had surgery may need that service, as well as those who qualify for the longer-term mobility card from City Council.

An associated item is the **Emergency Evacuation trial** that we shall run at each venue in Week 2 of Session 1. The idea is to ensure that our procedures are fit for purpose.

The Board does require that members wear a **U3A Dunedin-supplied name badge** at all events and to that end introduced **lanyards** last year. We have distributed about 650 to date (at no additional cost to members) and the lanyards are the standard for new members. They are easier to wear and easier to read than the earlier model (which is quite acceptable when preferred) and the ability to use a person's name in a conversation is a very good method of getting to know them better.

At the heart of U3A Dunedin are our three main lecture Series and we have continued to provide six different programmes in each Series. In the middle of 2019 **The Programme**

Committee Chair Barrie Peake, retired after two very busy years in the position. He stepped right in as he had never been a member of the Programme Committee and led from the front, convening and assisting with many courses as well as chairing the committee meetings. He expanded the committee and moved its base to the Golf Club where the Board also meets. He has been replaced by co-chairs Linda Kinniburgh and Stuart Strachan with a further 12 in the team. We may well extend that Committee to 16 as is intended for the Board since we all know that travel and unexpected illness at this stage in life can drastically reduce the number of active volunteers. That committee is the life blood of U3A Dunedin and has most of the courses in place for the rest of this year and some for next year. They have tried to balance the lectures in each Series and also tried to incorporate as many suggestions from members when planning the next year. We have been slightly more successful in avoiding school holidays in Session 3 but a clash with an event at the Golf Club means that those two venues will have slightly different start and finish times in Series 3.

To that end we are always on the **look-out for more volunteers** to replace those who have served their term on the committees – people with office-type skills are a great boon as well as those with plenty of contacts to help prepare courses. Please do contact either me or Marion Potter if you are interested – we will welcome you with delight.

The **Discussion Groups** have extended greatly during the last year and there never seems a shortage of topics around which to build an interest group. Ngaire Bates is always keen to hear from people who have those sorts of ideas and Jill Geary has produced a very attractive Discussion Groups Newsletter which has helped enormously with the growth of that part of U3A Dunedin. When all the groups are up and running we have close to 100 members involved – no reason why there should not be 150.

This year we plan to introduce some **one-off events**... probably lectures held at University and open to all. We have offers from Speakers which we know will interest many members but which don't fit into a regular Series and those lectures may well be held at the early evening time like many of the University's open lectures.

It is worth reflecting that when Evan Taylor took office as Treasurer, U3A Dunedin had very limited funds but with his management and the move to the web for so much administration, we have been **able to donate** just over \$10 000 to different departments and organisations last year in appreciation of the excellent courses delivered for us. This makes us different from many other U3As that many of you will know about. Our **U3A Dunedin University Scholarship** has been established and we donated \$25 000 last year as the first of two tranches to establish that award. The other \$25 000 will be donated later this year when a term deposit matures. Earlier it was decided that \$20 000 should be donated to a **community project** in recognition for the contribution of many Dunedin citizens and organisations to U3A Dunedin. We have still not found a specific place to lay that donation – it is far trickier than might be imagined.

We ran a four hour **Red Cross Training** for members on the Board and Programme Committee – we hope that what was learned will help in the event of an emergency. A U3A

Dunedin course on recent trends in cardiac medicine some years ago resulted in a request to the Freemasons which supplied an **Automated Electronic Defibrillator (AED)** being placed at the Bowling Club. It was serviced last year and the Freemasons, the Bowling Club and U3A shared the \$1000 cost of the service.

We ran a **course for new Course Convenors** at the end of last year and have just run a further course on some of the technical aspects of running courses (adjusting the sound levels, dealing with the computer after the morning break etc). New Board and Programme Committee members have a 90 minute **familiarisation (two-on-one) about our web site**. In these several ways we strive to increase the skill level of our U3A Dunedin Team.

Retiring from the Board this year is Doug Holborow who has been Board Chair, Programme Committee Chair, Programme Committee Secretary, Venues Liaison convenor (a role he is retaining), Course Developer, Course Convenor and Course Assistant in his time. He has been a major source of institutional knowledge as well as one of the first to offer help wherever and whenever it is needed. He keeps all the protocols up to date to help people know what to do in their various tasks. I'm relieved that he is still serving on the Programme Committee – everyone has a right to retire when the right time comes and a huge thank you is deserved for taking on such a workload over so many years and for performing the myriad tasks with such quiet efficiency.

Finally, but most certainly not of the least importance, I would like to thank, on your behalf, Marion Potter our Board Secretary, Lynda Jackson our Membership Secretary and Phyll Esplin our Enrolments Secretary as well as Linda Kinniburgh, Stuart Strachan and their Programmes team, Ngaire Bates and Jill Geary in Discussion Groups as well as your Board Treasurers Evan Taylor and Alistair Wright (just retiring from the Board after serving in financial support which has made a huge difference to the smooth running of our organisation for several years) and the other Board members who combine to keep U3A Dunedin in such good shape for the benefit of all members.

I am pleased to move this report for adoption.

Alan Jackson
Chair 2018-2020