



Letter from the Chair

U3A Dunedin

8th June 2020

Your Board met for almost two hours via Zoom technology this morning and I can report that whilst things will not be back to normal (and perhaps after this pandemic there will be a different definition of normal) we do have some stimulating educational offerings for the rest of the year.

On Tuesday 16th June and Thursday 18th June two six-week courses begin. The course brochures are on the web site. Each presentation will be one hour long and be delivered via Zoom. Your Programme Committee has been busy finding out how many people are interested, how many people know Zoom, how many need help and then responding to all that. There are a few wrinkles with it all but I taught a friend how to use it on her smart ‘phone inside five minutes – so it is one of those things that if you are keen, you can almost certainly do it.

The results are well worthwhile – as those who keep up with their families via Face Time, Skype etc can attest.

Later in the year we plan to hold a Series 3 via face-to-face, as we have in the past. The dates will be later than usual to give everyone chance to get used to Alert Level 1, and when this winter mini-series is concluded all those course brochures will be on the web site also.

Members were asked to let the Treasurer know if they wished their course credit fee to be donated to the University’s student hardship fund. Many members did wish to do that and the Board decided to make those donations up to \$1500. Normally we make grants to departments and organisations in return for lectures delivered, but with the interruption in Series 1 that didn’t happen. This donation is a good way of supporting our favourite Dunedin institution.

The Board has decided to purchase its own licence to use the Zoom software and Board meetings, Programme Committee meetings (and possibly some Discussion Groups) will take advantage of that. This will have a “greening” effect as many car journeys will be avoided as well as travel time saved. Several business folk will opt to work from home for some of the time and it looks as if this will be a positive outcome from the crisis.

Climate change has been regarded as a greater threat to humanity than pandemics, and so since we won’t have a second chance to apply the billions of dollars that countries are currently allocating to Covid-19 response we must make sure that our recovery includes responses to climate change as well. In an Otago lecture I listened to last week, we were told we have 18 months to ensure we don’t squander the opportunity.

Very best wishes

Alan Jackson
Chair 2018-21