

Report to the AGM, U3A Dunedin.

April 2022

Linda Kinniburgh

Chairperson 2021.

Kia ora koutou, it gives me great pleasure as the Chairperson of the Board U3A Dunedin, to present the overview of both the celebrations and challenges for our organisation for last year. The pandemic has certainly challenged us with the postponement of this AGM from February, but here we are, meeting in person. I thank you all for your attendance; it is great to welcome you all.

U3A Dunedin also welcomes those who are new to our organisation, nau mai, haere mai, welcome. I believe you will find we have stimulating, educationally sound interesting lectures, discussions, interest groups, great teams of committee members, something to suit you all.

I want to start by acknowledging those we miss. We miss our well-loved secretary to the Board who died in April last year, Marion Potter. We miss her wit and humour, and her place at our Board table. I also want to acknowledge other members who are no longer with us this year. Fred Fastier, Frank Austin, Honor Anderson and recently Marjorie Spittle, to name those I have heard about, but there will be others and we will have a moments silence as a remembrance of them and their friendship to those in U3A.

The pandemic has affected us all in many ways. U3A has continued through all the challenges to find ways of connecting us all. The impact on our activities has been felt by you all. Last year we did deliver on two successful Series, enjoyed each other's company and met new friends but we needed for reasons of safety postpone both Series Three and Series One this year. However, we have not been, as in many countries, been confined to our homes for many months at a time and our Programme Committee and Web Editor have published and delivered on many alternative learning opportunities.

I want to thank all of our teams, who ably assist in the day to day management of our organisation. To the members of the Board, thank you, you all have a specific role suited to your talents, and I am very appreciative of your support. Barrie Peake took on the role of Vice Chair, and he has been amazing in his role of contacting other U3A organisations across Aotearoa, to connect, share and think of different ways of engaging with you all. Alan Jackson as the immediate Past Chairperson has been immensely helpful with his institutional knowledge to me as a relative newcomer.

To the Programme Committee, thank you. All have contributed, have set up additional meetings and used your expertise to contact potential presenters. Your organisational abilities, communication styles, your excellent 'thinking on your feet' with anecdotes and thank you speeches are noticed and appreciated. Our members leave different presentations with a smile on their face and it is all of you who particularly contribute to their enjoyment of our courses.

After two successful Series in 2021, and then a postponement of Series 3, Doug Holborow led a team of capable programme committee members, to deliver an alternative set of eclectic presentations. Attendance averaged at 65% for fully enrolled participants. The YouTube videos were watched by between 63 and 176 members. Our feedback tells us we still need to increase our capability for online delivery, given a safer environment during the Pandemic; however it seems we have a strong preference for face to face delivery. One of our challenges for the delivery via You Tube was the cost of videoing in this way. U3A Dunedin spent around \$6000 for this work. This cost longer term is unsustainable for us, we will continue to explore ways of delivering to those who are unable to travel to venues.

To the 'Interest Group,' leaders and facilitators; thank you. We thanked Ngaire Bates for her commitment over five years to what were known as "Discussion groups" and we welcomed Trish Irvine as Leader and Coordinator of these groups. The name change came about as some groups did not truly meet the criteria of 'discussion'. A timely change as we enjoy a resurgence of interest in the many groups offered. We also enjoy an excellent monthly newsletter compiled by Trish and Bill Stanford, keeping us up to date with these activities which are growing in popularity.

Grateful thanks to our web master, John Shanks. John is a person who responds instantly to a request and he works away in the background improving our website, increasing our capability and ensuring an easy, accessible way of accessing information. Alan Jackson as the Web Editor spends many hours sorting, listing and organising information sent on a regular basis which is of interest to us. We are very fortunate to have both John and Alan on our team, for their time commitment and skills which are essential to our continued success.

Our membership continues to grow and thanks to Lynda Jackson, our membership secretary, who welcomes new members, sends out information and communicates with this group. Last year we had an increase of 50 members. Current membership (February 2022) is 929. This year to date has seen a reduction of around 100 who have not paid subscriptions. This is possibly related to the postponement of our Series One. Over the past year our postal numbers reduced from 58 to 40. This will gradually reduce over the years as members become more competent with computers. There has been a relatively easy transition to payments without cheques. I am sure many have some support to assist their transition, but we have been pleasantly surprised at the adaptation. Both Gerard and Phyll support our members with efficient and effective administration skills, posting out information and answering the myriad of questions.

At the beginning of 2021, our representative on the Board from the University of Otago, Dr James Rodgers, resigned from this position. We have a strong relationship with the University and we draw from their expertise for many of our courses. Recently Barrie Peake, Stuart Strachan and I met with Professor Tony Ballantyne to review our Memorandum of Understanding. Both U3A and the University of Otago recognise this relationship to be the major point of public engagement with our senior population. There are benefits to both organisations. We have a Scholarship fund which was set up in 2019, in collaboration with the University, using interest accumulated to fund the resource available. Unfortunately with low interest rates there were insufficient funds to award this in 2021.

Jill Geary organised and led a discussion with the Otago Peninsula trust, whereby they offered two U3A members to visit the Albatross colony for the price of one. The discounts were amazing and many have taken advantage of this. This discount was for one year and has now ended.

Geoff Adams, a recipient of “Life Member” in 2021, edits and compiles our Forum magazine. What an amazing way to communicate with you all, with contributions from members on topics of interest. This is an invitation for further contributions from any of you. Last year Geoff compiled a shorter version of our history published in the September edition of Forum. A very worthwhile read. Geoff has recently indicated his resignation from this position. We will be looking for a replacement editor. Thank you Geoff, for many years of organising, editing and publishing our contributions to Forum.

As the Financial Report will state, we have at this time, resources for our core business. Some challenges financially for us have been some requests for remuneration for presenters, comparisons with other organisations, who deliver gifts for presenters’, and course costs for alternative delivery options. We found the YouTube delivery to be the most expensive, but we did need to try the technology to compare the outcomes for our members with the Zoom option. As a Board we are cognisant that we need to continually deliver great learning experiences within a reasonable budget. This will be our challenge for the future.

In the Queens’ Birthday honours one of our members and presenter of many lectures, Emerita Professor Carolyn Burns received the Dame Commander, New Zealand Order of Merit. We were delighted for her achievement and congratulated her on such a prestigious award.

We acknowledge Aart Brusse, who was awarded the Queen’s Service medal for services to Music in the New Year Honours.

Other celebrations for U3A Dunedin included the promotion to Professor of three of our regular presenters, Dr Peter Adams, Dr Richard Egan and Dr Simone Marshall. Once again our congratulations were sent to them.

I wish to also acknowledge the contribution of Gary and Margery Blackman who resigned last year from U3A, Dunedin. Gary with his skills of photography and Photoshop designed our “Wise Owl” graphic which appears on all our letterheads. Thank you for your participation and contribution.

Board members currently number twelve. We are a team of highly motivated people, who have a strong interest in the governance of our Charitable Trust. We would welcome two or three more members to our Board. If you are interested, please approach one of us for further information. The Programme Committee membership has fifteen persons, with high energy and a strong commitment to educational delivery and an understanding of the interests of our members. We would welcome more to this committee as well.

Interest groups have a new leader in Trish and she has met her team facilitators for the purpose of strategic alignment, enhanced communication, building teams and support networks for these groups.

Those who are interested in facilitating or joining a group, Trish would love to hear from you. Numbers are increasing here exponentially, recently involving 200 members.

In 2021 we published our policy, reinforcing the public policy of vaccine passes for all members at any U3A Dunedin events. This has been supported by the members I have talked to. We have appreciated your full support and cooperation over this policy. We will continue to work through uncertain times, we know there will be many more changes and adaptations. We are ready for these. What is important is continued strengthening of communicating with you all. Thank you for your support, and please look out for each other, support each other in a positive way. If U3A Dunedin can support you further please let us know.

Meantime, stay safe and well, noho ora, kia ora.

Linda Kinniburgh
Chairperson
U3A Dunedin 2021-2022

I wish to introduce to you, one of our Board member's, Rob Lawson, whose portfolio includes advocating and enhancing our contribution to Sustainability in the broadest sense. U3A Dunedin has a policy of contributing annually to offset Carbon Credits. We do this to acknowledge to the next generation, that we are aware of, and care for our environment. Rob will lead a brief discussion today on our commitment to sustainability from the Board.