

# Newsletter



**YARRA CITY**  
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

**March 2024**

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(Closed public holidays & school holidays)

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**Peter Moore**

## President's report

I'm excited about the number of members enrolled this year, now at 444, it's the most we've ever had. Our continued attraction reflects the appeal of our courses, and this past year we've added some excellent ones. Check out the offerings on U-MAS. There are still vacancies.

The 2024 Committee of Management was elected at the October AGM and office-bearers were decided by the committee soon after. I'd like to introduce us...

Peter J Moore – President

Viv Blanksby – Secretary and Vice President, and also author of Bulletins and Announcements.

Sue Kurt – Treasurer, Facebook pages and some IT projects.

Frank Moore – our IT database. Ensures that the U-MAS membership system supports members, courses and venues.

Barry Giddings – Membership Officer, Tutor Liaison and Health, Safety and Privacy, and pickleballer-in-chief.

Maria Hudson – Program Coordinator. Matching courses with venues and tutors.

Jan Tinetti – looks after correspondence.

In addition to the committee, we have:

Mary Walker – Office Manager, manages volunteers, assists members without computer or email access.

Tina Hocking – Newsletter Coordinator, along with Susannah Dax and Lyn Morgan, keeps us informed.

Lyn Watson – Forums coordinator who finds interesting speakers to address our weekly Forums.

Most committee members are also course tutors.

U3A Yarra City is just one of over 100 U3A groups in Victoria all affiliated with the U3A Network Victoria,  
<https://u3avictoria.org.au/>

2024 is an auspicious year for U3A Victoria as it's the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its establishment. This will be celebrated at the 2024 State Conference in October with Keynote speaker, Dr Norman Swan.

**Cont...**

**Cont.**

We will advertise this event closer to the date.

I'd like to remind you that our group only exists because of our volunteer base. If there is something you think could be done better, or have ideas for new courses or Forums, please talk to one of committee. And if the opportunity moves you, there is always an invitation to help run a group.

Have a great U3A 2024, and I hope to see you at one of our events.

**Peter Moore**

## Program and forums

The year started well with 46 classes at various venues across Yarra.

We are fortunate to have access to several libraries, community houses and sporting facilities for our activities, as well as many keen volunteers with a wide range of expertise and enthusiasm to lead the classes.

*With experienced players and beginners, there was a mixture of anticipation and excitement.*

Two new French classes lead by Mink Schapper at Carlton Library have been successful. Maureen Schultz and Pam Kershaw's Mahjong group filled quickly once the class was advertised. With experienced players and beginners, there was a mixture of anticipation and excitement. Later this year field football will be added to our course list.

Thank you to each of these tutors for offering their time to provide these additional classes. We are proud to be able to cater to our diverse interests within the membership.

Mary Walker cancelled her first Botanic Gardens walk due to a broken ankle. This will be rescheduled for next term.

The Forums this term have been diverse and successful. Tony Priestley on Sustainability, Cheryl Wong on Scam Safety, and who could forget Arnold Zable on the Art of Story Telling.

Regular emails and bulletins will announce the new talks for term 2 Forums.

Lyn has been organising the Forums for 10 years and has decided it's time to hand over to someone else. She'll continue for Term 2, and assist over Terms 3 and 4, before finishing at the end of the year. If you wish these Forums to continue, and would like to be involved, please volunteer – a lot of us have had interesting careers and life experiences with a network of contacts. Email: [lyn.watson21@gmail.com](mailto:lyn.watson21@gmail.com) or [program.u3ayarracity@gmail.com](mailto:program.u3ayarracity@gmail.com).

Special thanks to Lyn's trusted assistant, Loraine Chessells for helping out with the sessions.

**Maria Hudson and Lyn Watson**



## Yarra Refugee Welcome Group update

*Our preparations suddenly became very real, as we grappled with the challenges ...*

Last year many U3A Yarra City members and friends helped raise nearly \$18,000 to support the Yarra Refugee Welcome Group in its efforts to prepare for supporting a refugee family, under the CRISP (Community Refugee Integration and Support Pilot scheme). Since then and especially in recent weeks the group has been busy getting ready for the arrival of the refugee family.

Several weeks ago, we got the exciting news that we had been matched with a family, originally from Afghanistan, comprising parents and three primary school children. And even more exciting, we were told that the family is due to arrive at the end of March! Our preparations suddenly became very real, as we grappled with the challenges of translation apps, collecting donated furniture and secondhand bicycles for the children, deciding on and preparing short-term accommodation (provided by one of our members) as well as the many tasks associated with preparing for arrivals: arranging a bank account; mobile phone; social security, schooling and logistics of the airport arrival. We have been in communication with the family – via translation apps – and have exchanged initial introductions. There are a number of key things which cannot be decided before the arrival of the family, as the decision will be theirs to make: in particular, where to seek long term accommodation.

The money that has been donated has been invaluable. Under the Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP) scheme, we need to support the family with some of the initial settlement costs until they can be independent; Metcards, essential clothing, toiletries, utilities and the big one, accommodation costs. We are extremely grateful for the support and generosity of everyone who has donated.



In the coming weeks and months, we will keep you updated!

We would love it if you could continue to help. To donate simply click on this link: <https://shoutforgood.com/fundraisers/YarraRefugeeWelcome>

Alternatively you can donate directly to the YRWG bank account; Yarra Refugee Welcome Group, BSB 633000, account 208369132.

Do you have a 6-seater vehicle? If you have a 6-seater vehicle that we could use to transport the family for the occasional excursion, we would also love to hear from you. Contact us at [yarrowg@gmail.com](mailto:yarrowg@gmail.com) or go to <https://refugeesponsorship.org.au/what-we-do/crisp/> or follow on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CRSAaus>.

Spread the word. If you know someone who is interested in joining or helping establish a community refugee support group see <https://refugeesponsorship.org.au/how-to-get-involved>.

**David Lee**

**We would like suggestions on how to continue...**

## U3A Library

Did you know that we have a small library of books in the office that members can borrow and; only one person borrowed last year! Books can be borrowed from the office on Mondays 1-3pm and Fridays 10am-12pm.

These books have been purchased from guest speakers, along with a few donations. We would like suggestions on how to continue, e.g. continue as above, close the service and donate books to members, Yarra Library etc, or accept judicious donations from members.

Lynell McCluggage, formerly a librarian, is helping me with this. Please send your ideas, with subject line 'Library' to: [program.u3ayarracity@gmail.com](mailto:program.u3ayarracity@gmail.com)

**Lyn Watson**

## Downsize to rightsize

**...the focus is on rightsizing...**

Apartments, granny flats, villas, retirement villages and land lease communities are just some of the options available when looking to downsize. While the name of this excellent six-part course is Downsizing the focus is on rightsizing, which is more about successfully transitioning to the next stages of life rather than focussing on the loss of space and possessions.

Sponsored by Aveo Retirement Group, each presentation offers hints, contacts and resources designed to help support participants make better informed decisions when considering downsizing. For the first presentation co-author of *Downsizing Made Simple*, Rachel Lane stressed the importance of getting expert financial and legal advice while emphasising the importance of connecting with your tribe by finding a community with the right vibe.

Other issues discussed have included: future care needs, impacts on social security entitlements, ingoing, outgoing and ongoing fees and charges, rights and responsibilities and emotional issues around moving.

Relocation Consultant Annette Simpson-Rial explained how the team at Classic Moves works with people who are downsizing or upsizing to manage all aspects of a move from start to finish. They can assist with choosing what to take, disposing of items you choose not to take, packing, moving, unpacking and setting up the new residence ready to move in. Annette provided valuable tips on how to minimise emotional decisions when decluttering. She recommends devising a plan, making 'taking', 'leaving' and 'maybe' lists, starting with the pots and pans, the linen or the pantry, and leaving photos and clothes until last.

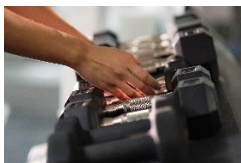
The next two presentations will focus on financial planning in retirement and making informed plans for the next steps. For the final week Aveo staff have organised a tour of Redmond Park Retirement Living village in Princes Hill.

**Helen Hargreaves**



## Move for Life?

*While I walk every day and try to stay active, it's apparently not enough with decreasing muscles mass...*



Being a reluctant gym participant for many years, I was recently persuaded by my daughters and physio that I should be undertaking strength and balance exercises. While I walk every day and try to stay active, it's apparently not enough, with decreasing muscle mass coming with age.

I therefore looked at available classes and programs within Yarra and found Move for Life classes at Yarra Leisure.

Move for Life is a gym program specially designed for over 55s. Their experienced trainers support you as you complete your own personalised gym program designed to enhance your strength, flexibility, and cardiovascular health. Each program is based on individual needs and caters to all fitness levels.

Move for Life is an opportunity to stay active. It is not what I expected in terms of social contact. I booked thinking there would be a class/session dedicated to older adults, but this is not so at Fitzroy Leisure. The couple of times I attended, I've been the only older person in the gym. It may be different at Richmond and Collingwood.

Prior to attending your first Move for Life session, be sure to book in for a [gym assessment](#) and bring a completed [medical form](#) from your doctor.

The initial assessment and program design costs \$49.90 and sessions are: full price: \$10.40, concession: \$6.20. This is very reasonable ... much cheaper than private gyms. The staff are excellent, and I am extremely happy with the program designed to suit my needs.

For further information see their website, chat with customer service staff, call 9205 5522 or email [yarraleisure@yarracity.vic.gov.au](mailto:yarraleisure@yarracity.vic.gov.au).

**Christine Gibbs**

***...scammers act as lucrative call centres and run similar to normal businesses...***



## Scam safety forum

This was a terrific and very informative forum presented by Cheryl Wong. She showed us that according to 'Scam Watch' statistics, over 65s are most at risk of being scammed. There were 300,000 reports last year with a loss of \$477million. The good news is that this was less than in 2022 with 600,000 reports. There are many more that go unreported.

Cheryl explained that scammers act as lucrative call centres and run similar to normal businesses, but are illegal and unfortunately, they are here to stay.

Scams may be phone, social media, email, messaging, or websites.

The key to staying safe is to - Keep all software up to date, be aware and very critical of all incoming emails and messages, hover over a link to see where it goes and so do not respond unless the sender is clearly known. When transferring money call the company separately and check first that an invoice is provided.

### Useful websites:

Scam Watch <https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/report-a-scam>

Report Cyber Crime <https://www.police.vic.gov.au/report-cybercrime>

Register a 'Do Not Call number' on the Registry Website  
<https://www.donotcall.gov.au> or call the Contact Centre: 1300 792 958

Resource: The Little black Book of Scams  
<https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/research-and-resources/the-little-black-book-of-scams>

Australian Government eSafety Commissioner website at  
<https://www.esafety.gov.au/seniors>

National Identity and Cyber Support <https://www.idcare.org/>

A session on Passwords and similar protection measures is proposed, so keep an eye out for this.

**Susannah Dax**

## From little things big things grow

Not long after COVID (or was it in just one of the breaks in that challenging time?) I joined with others at the Melbourne Botanic Gardens for a guided walk, a seasonal event coordinated by Mary Walker.

*I was invited to an interview and then, to join a training course, the first offered in five years! What lucky timing.*

We were fortunate to have a beautiful day and a wonderful guided tour of these stunning gardens. I've always loved the gardens and was berating myself for not getting there more regularly. As the tour ended, I sidled up to the volunteer guide and asked her how she got into her role. She advised me to contact the Volunteer Coordinator which I did thinking that I'd hear no more, but not so. I was invited to an interview and then, to join a training course, the first offered in five years! What lucky timing.

The initial training was one full week then a commitment to either self-roster for the Children's Garden or the role of Garden Ambassador. This latter one involved a Meet and Greet function in the Visitor Centre and its surrounds and strolling around the Gardens, in red uniform jacket, maps in hand and looking out for people who seemed to be somewhat lost. I could even take my little dog. I did several of these strolls.

But I always wanted to be a 'qualified' guide, so next I was given a mentor and asked to participate in as many different walks as possible, write up three specific topics of my choice (a plant, a person involved in the history, a bird, or a structure) and to read and research as widely as I could. Then, to map my own tour, trial it and present bits with my mentor.



Meanwhile, I was also able to take on speaking to older people in their community center, to help conduct the 'Secret Life of Birds' tour and, over this summer, to provide guiding to large groups (50) of people coming to Melbourne on cruise ships (a fund-raising activity for the Gardens).

Culmination: I have just passed my final assessment, an hour's tour with my 'examiners'. And so now, onto the roster. I'm aiming to do two guided tours per month. Fabulous. I'm thrilled.

One more thing. I had sent a voicemail to Radio National (621) some time ago, as a contribution to their segment 'My Happy Place' in the Life Matters segment. It was selected and was played on Good Friday. Of course, my happy place was and is -The Melbourne Botanic Gardens!

**Judy McWilliams**

## Old is beautiful

*Our small group included singles, married, gays, cross dressers and migrants from Asia and Europe.*

In March I attended a workshop as part of the Old is Beautiful project run by Celebrate Ageing Ltd in partnership with Elder Rights Advocacy, Victoria and the City of Yarra.

The Project aims to combat ageism and build respect for older people.

There were two parts to the workshop. First were presentations and discussions on ageism and the experiences of the participants in Yarra. The aim was to explore ageism, expectations of ageing and what beautiful means to older people. The participants were a small group of 10 diverse, articulate locals who were keen to share mostly positive experiences from a lived understanding of ageing and ageism.

The second part was to obtain photographic portraits of the participants. While discussions progressed, individuals were withdrawn to a makeshift studio with natural light from three sides and a white backdrop. Photographer Chris Franklin snapped about 50 images of each person and from these he will select the strongest, most positive, compositions. These portraits and the words used by each person to describe what 'beautiful' means to them, will be shared on social media and newsletters and maybe the wider media and on posters distributed throughout Yarra.

They aim to:

- Encourage the community to see older people as beautiful and empowered.
- Build connections between older and younger people of all generations.
- Help younger people to see older people as role models - and identifying their own positive ageing pathway.
- Portray older people as 'same' and 'belonging' - to decrease 'othering'.

Our small group included singles, married, gays, cross dressers and migrants from Asia and Europe. Portraits should be varied and interesting. Unfortunately, images have not yet arrived for me to share in this article.

I attended the workshop on behalf of our U3A Yarra City Ageing Well Group and it confirmed much of the work we had done in past years.

One fact that was repeated several times was that 'The more positive people are to ageing the longer they live'. Think about that!

**Geoff Cleary**



## Tea lady wonder woman

As a senior and Life Member of U3A Yarra City, Loraine has never been just a tea lady - in fact she is the only person who calls herself so!

I gave thought to the professional role of a 'tea lady', (although there are few who specialise these days) and thought the job description might say - to deliver refreshments, welcome and cheer people up and to know everything! That should about sum it up.

*Here she comes  
again, reliable  
and like  
clockwork,  
lugging the crate  
of precious  
merchandise on a  
wonky trolley...*

Here she comes again, reliable and like clockwork, lugging the crate of precious merchandise on a wonky trolley from the office to the Collingwood Library bringing tea, coffee and refreshments for the benefit of all present, welcoming and offering cuppas to us bonified travellers who gather for friendship, foley and fortitude. Yep, she is always there, and we appreciate her valuable work and love her sunny personality.

Now here's the thing – at a recent Tuesday forum there was a session on how to access 'My Aged Care' and 'Home Care Services' professionally run by Aveo Retirement Services with an incentive raffle prize to be drawn at the end of the session. Loraine, Tea Lady and Senior Working Wonder Woman, receives no home care services and she's practically running the show.

One guess who wins the raffle? It's the Tea Lady and what's in that lovely big box? – a care package and you got it – GREEN TEA!



**Susannah Dax**

## Café poems - Speaking

At Bellboy, we could have used  
the table disc with the QR code,  
but instead we spoke to the man  
at the counter.

In Coles, we could have used  
the self-checkout,  
but instead we hovered near  
service lane 4 and were served  
by a checkout girl who spoke to us.

Sometimes it pays to  
almost look your age.

**Rachel Flynn**

## Member profile

### Barry Giddings

#### ***How did you come to U3A?***

When working in the CBD, I joined Melbourne U3A in order to attend French language classes during my lunch breaks. In addition, I enrolled in an evening Wine Appreciation Group which I still attend and present to.

After retiring in 2015 I attended a forum promoted in the Yarra library newsletter. It turned out to be a U3A Yarra City forum and my initial contact with the group. Thereafter I transitioned my language course to Spanish at Yarra and in late 2022 joined the Yarra Committee.

#### ***What U3A classes do you do?***

I currently attend a Spanish class at Yarra and (would you believe) another Spanish class with Darebin U3A. In August last year I established and became the tutor of a Pickleball course which has quickly become a successful and enjoyable course to tutor. This year I somehow took on the roles of 'Member Support and Tutor Liaison'. This has involved a steep learning curve in understanding the U-MAS system and an enjoyable interaction with other members.

#### ***What do you like most about U3A?***

Meeting people, having access to a low-cost learning environment and helping others get the best out of their involvement.

#### ***What did you do before retirement?***

I am a civil engineer and I was with the Port of Melbourne specialising in asset management. I was fortunate to be able to work part time for 18 months in transition to retirement. I attended U3A courses on my off days.

#### **Tell us something about yourself that people may not know?**

I must be the only course tutor (Pickleball) not knowing anything about the subject - I had never played!



#### ***Where is your favourite place in Yarra?***

My favourite place is the street on which we live. I often take the dog outside our gate in the evening and just absorb the quiet environment, meet the neighbours, watch the bats morph out of the sky overhead and look down the street to see the 'Royal Hotel' standing guard over the little village-like environment below. It is particularly special to be able to still see 'the Royal' from my front gate, the hotel that we residents saved from ruination by a developer.

#### ***What words would you offer others thinking of running a U3A course?***

Have a go, you can't get the sack and the reward will probably outweigh the effort.

Interview by **Susannah Dax**

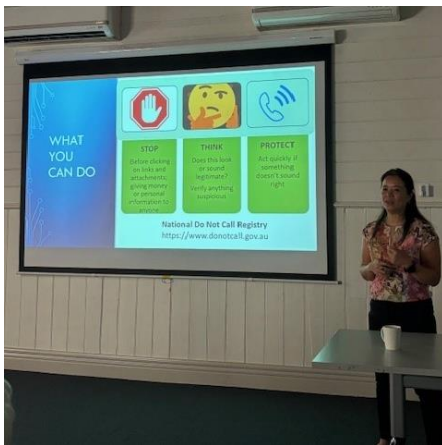
## Photo gallery



*Han dynasty warrior Chinese Museum*



*Mahjong*



*Scam safety speaker Cheryl Wong*



*Welcome lunch*



*Judy keeping her cards close to her chest*



*Recreated gold mine, Chinese Museum*

## Diary dates

### 2024

21 Jun: Newsletter closing date - July

15 Nov: Newsletter closing date - Nov

### Semester dates 2024

Term 1: 29 Jan – 28 Mar

Term 2: 15 Apr – 28 Jun

Term 3: 15 Jul – 20 Sep

Term 4: 7 Oct – 20 Dec



## Committee 2024

*President:* Peter J Moore

*Vice President:* Viv Blanksby

*Secretary:* Viv Blanksby

*Treasurer:* Sue Kurt

*Program Coordinator:* Maria Hudson

Database team: Frank Moore

Tutor Liaison: Barry Giddings

Health and Safety Officer: Barry Giddings

Convener, Publicity and Communications: Peter Moore

Membership Officer: Barry Giddings

Member: Jan Tinetti

### Ex Officio positions

*Office Manager:* Mary Walker

*Newsletter:* Tina Hocking, Lyn Morgan, Susannah Dax

## Connect with U3A Yarra City

**Facebook:** Send photos and articles to our email address [u3ayarracity@gmail.com](mailto:u3ayarracity@gmail.com) with Facebook in the Subject line or go directly via [Facebook](#).



**Web:** [www.u3ayarracity.org.au](http://www.u3ayarracity.org.au)

**On Yer Bike:** <https://onverbike-u3a.org.au>

**News & Events Bulletin:** Latest news communication via email

**Newsletter:** Published March, June and November.  
Email [u3ayarracity@gmail.com](mailto:u3ayarracity@gmail.com) with Newsletter in the Subject line, or post to: Newsletter Coordinator, U3A Yarra City, 17 Stanton Street, Abbotsford 3067.

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