

Newsletter

March 2025

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President's report

Welcome to the 2025 U3A year. Last year our membership was at an all-time high, and now it's a little bit higher again. Increasing member numbers indicates a high level of satisfaction in what we are doing (on the downside it does create more work for your committee and office bearers). U3A Yarra City is a welcoming and inclusive group, and this is reflected in the membership numbers. Please recommend us to your friends and neighbours.

Our 2025 Forums program is off to a fabulous start with Bollywood Dancing and wasn't it great? Those who came were informed and entertained by Joshinder Chaggar. Our second Forum was a total change of pace – Val Noone on 'The Irish on Kulin land 1835-2025'. Followed up by 'Walking the Camino Trail' by our own Judy MacWilliams and then 'Get Involved – Yarra' by Elly Murrell. A rich variety of topics that show the expanse of interests of our members. Our meeting room has almost reached capacity. Our Forums Committee led by Lynell McCluggage is doing a great job in organising these events.

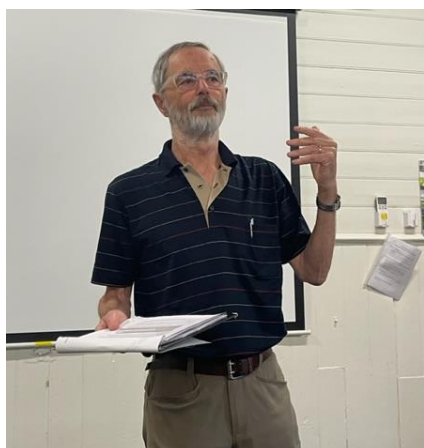
This year we've introduced some new courses, which are outlined in the Program and Forums on page 2.

A reminder that courses require tutors and while we have wonderful tutors, we need our members to offer their expertise and energy to provide additional courses. What can you offer?

U3A Yarra City is one of 104 in Victoria, each conducting unique courses according to their tutor's expertise. Other courses may be available at neighbouring groups. See the U3A Network Victoria website at <https://u3avictoria.org.au/> for a full list. Yarra City members can join other U3As as Associate members, at a discounted rate.

The committee has been progressing the transition to our new membership system – Member Wizard is expected to replace U-MAS by the middle of 2025. This system is more modern, easier to use and maintain. You will be informed of progress, and training will be provided when it is fully operational.

Cont...



President Peter Moore

Cont.

Regular Bulletins are sent to all members via email about once per week. These contain reminders of upcoming events and opportunities for involvement elsewhere.

Recently we have included invitations for members to be involved in university research projects; I have participated in one myself and found it really interesting. Please do consider such offers.

Finally – it was great to see so many members at the Welcome Lunch. The heart of our U3A is the social contacts that are enabled. Please use your U3A membership as a gateway into your community. Another great year is under way.

Peter Moore

Program and Forums

Thank you to all returning tutors and welcome to our new tutors for 2025. Your work is fully appreciated. This year we have commenced with 47 courses and activities. The new classes/sessions are: Where to Progressive Politics? A short course by Rob Salter, Velo Electrique au Go-Go / E-bike group with Roscoe Armstrong, and First Aid for Managing Stress with Christine Butera.

Max Thomson has started a small band at the Stanton St Office. He is looking for additional members to join the band.

It is always great to broaden the number of courses for our members. If there is anyone out there who would like to share their skills or knowledge, please contact us.

This year Forums are held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month. So far, they have attracted full-house audiences to very different topics -Bollywood Dance, Irish Interaction with the Kulin Nation and lands, walking the Camino Trail and Getting Involved - Yarra.

Upcoming Forums include - Yarra, Navigating the Health System and Horizons Unlimited by Motorbike. And we have 22 visitors booked for a visit to Metro Tunnel Experience Centre on a 'non-forum Tuesday.' This should be fun.

We aim for a variety of speakers and topics and welcome suggestions. Members of the public, as well as U3A members, are welcome at these talks which are advertised through the Yarra Libraries in their publications and online.

Thank you to Lynell McCluggage, who stepped in as the Forum leader following Annie O'Loan's accident.

Maria Hudson Programs, Lynell McCluggage Forums

Max Thomson has started a small band... He is looking for additional members to join...

Irish on the Kulin lands

Dr Val Noone, Fellow of the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne, made a welcome return to the Collingwood Library in February and presented a talk on 'Irish on the Kulin lands: snapshots, 1835-2025'.

A snapshot of Kulin history over the past 190 years touched on pre-European settlement, frontier violence, the Aborigines Protection Act of 1886, and various campaigns...

This commenced with a brief account of the European migration from Tasmania to Victoria, led by John Batman and John Pascoe Fawkner in the 1830s, which spread over the Kulin lands of the Port Phillip district. A snapshot of Kulin history over the past 190 years touched on pre-European settlement, frontier violence, the Aborigines Protection Act of 1886, and various campaigns for Indigenous rights, through to the 2023 Voice referendum.

Then followed an overview of the interaction between members of the Kulin nation and various high-profile Irish individuals, from Charles Gavan Duffy to Archbishop Daniel Mannix – not necessarily favourable for the indigenous population. One such individual was Val's photo-lithographer ancestor, John Noone who, with his team at the Department of Lands and Survey in the mid-1800s, 'put a British colonial grid over the Kulin lands'.

The session raised many questions. How did our Irish immigrant forebears interact with the indigenous people? Might we, through past misdeeds of our ancestors, have some connection with the dispossession of the Kulin nation? If so, do we have a responsibility to make reparations?

While there is still much to be done, through processes such as the Yoorrook Justice Commission, we are part way on the road to addressing past wrongs.

Tina Hocking



A Call for Volunteers to help at Tuesday Forums

Lorraine Chessels a spry and spicey octogenarian, has used her skills as 'the Tea Lady' at our Tuesday Forums for some years. She is throwing in the towel as she reviews her priorities and is calling for a small team of volunteers to share this important and very easy role. **Can you help?**

Lorraine's hidden skills now point to a tall, dark handsome man - ASK HER! You might say that sounds alright but putting out the teas for members every 2nd Tuesday is pretty sexy too - ASK HER ABOUT THAT ONE TOO!

Mixed park soccer, Edinburgh Gardens

This program started mid last year and has attracted a dedicated group of hardy players who are enjoying playing the world game at the lovely setting of Edinburgh Gardens.

...is played at a very civilised pace and without fear of a sliding tackle or anyone taking the game seriously.

The game is on every second Tuesday morning and is played at a very civilised pace and without fear of a sliding tackle or anyone taking the game seriously. This is mostly about the half time oranges and sharing the fun of chasing a ball around.

We were fortunate enough to be awarded a community grant from the City of Yarra which has helped us buy fancy pop-up goals, new balls and traditional red and blue bibs. Many thanks to the Council for this support!



New players are very welcome – from beginners to anyone looking to re-live the dream.

If you'd like to join up or have any queries please contact Mark Close via markclose2016@gmail.com or enrol directly through the U3A website. Mark will reach out to line you up for a game.

Photo of an action shot from our most recent game – nice goal Reds!

Michael McLeod

Getting involved

Her role is to assist prospective volunteers to find an interest or organisation that suits

Elly Murrell from the City of Yarra spoke at a recent Forum about the many volunteer service opportunities. Her role is to assist prospective volunteers to find an interest or organisation that suits. There are a host of organisations, groups and clubs that may be looking for help. The variety of activities include Home Library delivery, Digital help, the Companion Animal Program, Gardens and Wildlife, assistance for youngsters in driver's license practice hours, the Seniors and Sprouts program, a learning and clothing bank in Richmond and helping out at any of the nine Neighbourhood Houses. She also spoke about the free community skills training programs and the availability of the Yarra Community Grants and annual Awards.



For more information see the Yarra jobs portal <https://yarracityjobs.com.au/> or contact Elly Murel, volunteer@yarracity.vic.gov.au or 9205 5437.

Susannah Dax

Playreadings at Finbar

Playreadings at Finbar Neighbourhood House is every 1st Thursday of the month.

I joined this group in 2016 without knowing what to expect. I was attracted to the group when I discovered that I'd have the opportunity to take part in a play without having to learn any lines or attend any rehearsals. It's great fun.

The tutor, Margaret Gibson, selects the plays from the Victorian Drama League library, which loans us the play texts. She decides on the plays, based on the number of play-readers attending and the type of plays of interest to the group. The plays chosen are usually contemporary, but not always. As an example, I have included an image of a page from one of the less contemporary plays we have read and enjoyed. Margaret then allocates the parts depending on how many people say they are coming, and the need to rotate the parts, so everyone has the chance to be one of the main characters as frequently as possible.

We sit around a table and read our lines without having to dress up, though we do alter our voices if necessary. One of the female members of the group particularly enjoys reading male parts with a voice to match. Another group member recently had to either confront a lifelong aversion to swearing or select another role. She decided she could read the part because it was not her but her character who was mouthing the bad language. She performed with gusto. We get so engrossed in the story that we need prompting to read our lines. No action is required!

I look forward to this activity each month as it is always a surprise to discover what we will be reading and what role I will play.

Vivienne Abell

Rock of Ages

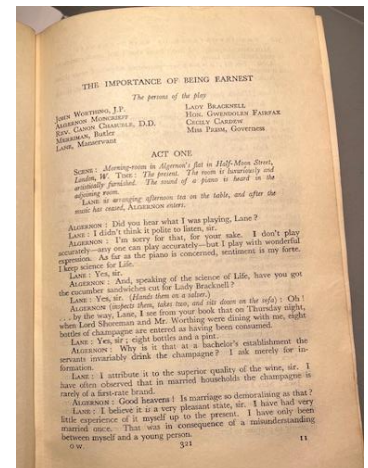
Our new rock band with John on drums, Max bass guitar and Martin vocals and guitar. It's our latest U3A group and these members are apparently experienced musicians. Please come and join them, especially if you have saxophone, guitar or zither skills.

Dust off your instrument or voice and speak to the U3A tutor.

Max Thomson

We sit around a table and read our lines without having to dress up, though we do alter our voices if necessary.

...if you have saxophone, guitar or zither skills.



Talking Films

The U3A Talking Films group meets fortnightly to discuss films selected at the previous meeting.

Our group were the beneficiaries of some complimentary passes for 'Grand Tour' from Potential Films, a Melbourne based independent distributor of world films.

The posters displayed in the Fitzroy office of Potential Films had a number of films we had discussed. Many that we had found stimulating, offered insights into life in Somalia, Japan and Iran including the Japanese classic 'Seven Samurai'.

Grand Tour is a film made by Miguel Gomez of Portugal. Set in 1917 Edward is a Rangoon civil servant awaiting the arrival of his betrothed, Molly, from England. Edward panics without meeting her and travels to Singapore, Saigon, Manila, Osaka, Shanghai, Chongquin and Tibet.

The determined Molly sets off to follow and meet or confront Edward.

Our group thought this was a most imaginative and beautiful film- full of visual delight, the opening scene with the manually operated Ferris wheel in a 1917 Rangoon funfair, quite captivating.

The use of modern footage in the exotic cities mixed with 1917 action, a surprise, which contributed to the surreal atmosphere. The voiceover narration was effective as was the action and interpretation of events by the characters provided irony and clarity. The lively soundtrack added atmosphere. There was much to see in this creative and quirky film. Some of us thought it deserved another viewing, however, others thought perhaps the film was a bit long and confusing – but enjoyed the ride!

Films can take you anywhere, and a richly entertaining and thought-provoking film offers an immersive experience to be discussed long after the session is finished.

Thanks to Potential Films for providing the passes.

Sue Peirce



Our group thought this was a most imaginative and beautiful film- full of visual delight, the opening scene with the manually operated Ferris wheel...quite captivating.

...some participants have submitted pieces of non-fiction writing to an online website called Stereo Stories.

Stereo stories

I'm a member of the U3A memoir writing group that meets twice a month on Thursday afternoons. As a side project, some participants have submitted pieces of non-fiction writing to an online website called Stereo Stories. This site houses short stories or poems up to 800 words, which relate to: A Song, A Place and A Time.

I was fortunate enough to have my story published in early January. It's called 'The House of the Rising Sun' (all writing submitted must be named after the song referenced). This story is about my relationship with a much older cousin.

Tina Hocking also submitted, 'Spics and Specs', about her memories of working in a seaside town during a university summer break, to be published soon.

The [Stereo Stories](#) website houses some wonderful stories from a vast array of music genres. I recommend a browse if you would like to dip into some excellent writing and perhaps be reminded of songs that make you want to sing in the shower. Oh, and keep an eye out for Tina's contribution. If you subscribe to the website, you get an email when a new piece is published. Happy reminiscing!

Helen Askew Memoir, Memories, and Writing group



The Adelaide Festival

The iconic Adelaide Festival runs annually during the first two weeks in March. It includes Writers' Week and the Performing Arts - Theatre, Dance, Opera and Music. The comedy festival also coincides with this week.

Writers' Week introduces the audience to both well-known and emerging authors and their latest books and essays. There are hourly 'on stage' discussion sessions throughout the days, moderated by many of our favourite ABC commentators, journalists and other well-known figures. One can gain a wonderful insight into authors' thoughts, writing processes and ideas behind their latest book releases. There is a wealth of stimulating conversation and a great opportunity to ask your favourite author your own special question, 'up close and personal'. The Writers' Festival is held at the Pioneer Women's Memorial Park by the Torrens River. All venues are under shade cloth with catering and amenities on site. The second week centres on performing arts with international companies and artists across all genres. There is inspiration and joy at every turn.

My thoughts and impressions: First and foremost, how terrific it is that Writers Festival is free. It's such a relaxing way to receive stimulating information and participate in astute conversation with access to writers and special guests and well-known commentators. Finally, there seems to be a U3A type audience, which goes to show what a strong, thinking and active group we are!

Susannah Dax



Interested in local history?

For those interested in local history and their community, history societies provide a great opportunity to increase and share knowledge. There are four local history organisations within the City of Yarra – Collingwood Historical Society, Carlton Community History Group, Fitzroy History Society and Richmond and Burnley Historical Society. The Societies have extensive collections, databases and event programs including history walks and talks. Membership fees are very modest and new members are welcome.

Carlton Community History Group

The Carlton Community History Group was launched in 2008. It arose from the interest of a number of people who had many questions about the history of Carlton, North Carlton and Princes Hill. If you have a story to tell or are interested in joining the group, please email cchg@y7mail.com or visit <http://www.cchg.asn.au/>.

Collingwood Historical Society

The Collingwood Historical Society has the suburbs of Abbotsford, Clifton Hill, and Collingwood as its area of interest. The Society began in the 1970s as a local interest group in the former City of Collingwood.

Anyone interested is welcome to attend meetings which are held every two months. A vast amount of information on the collection and areas of interest is published on the society's excellent website <https://collingwoodhs.org.au/>.



Photo: Hoddle St,
Collingwood 1886,
State Library of
Victoria

Fitzroy History Society

The Fitzroy History Society was formed 40 years ago. It welcomes anyone interested in the history of Fitzroy. You don't have to live in the area to be a member. Members are encouraged to share their insights and to actively contribute to the Society's passion for Fitzroy's history. For more information visit <https://fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au/>.

Richmond and Burnley Historical Society

The Richmond and Burnley Society was established in 1972. The society aims to collect, preserve and promote the history of Richmond, Burnley and Cremorne. Some examples of the excellent collection can be seen on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/RichmondBurnleyHistoricalSociety/?rdr>. More information on the Society is available at <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~rbhs/>

Christine Gibbs

Ride (and paint), New Zealand

Looking to shed some unwanted winter weight and improve my fitness, I booked the Alps to Ocean guided bike ride in the South Island, New Zealand late last year. For me this is an iconic ride that meanders (not quite) from the Alps — think superb views of Mt Cook, riding via Lake Tepako, Lake Pukaki and beyond, all the way to the mighty Pacific Ocean at Oamaru, south of Christchurch. Distance 259km, five days riding.

Adventure, excitement and accomplishment!

Reviewing my travel plans I decided to extend my time in NZ by adding another bike tour at the start of the trip. My chosen cycle company had advertised a ride called West Coast Wilderness (Wild, Wonderful and Adventurous) a 200 km ride from Greymouth to Hokitika. This sounded like a great 'training' ride with a three-day rest in Christchurch — a chance to wash, paint and explore. I also chose an option to return from Greymouth to Christchurch via the Trans Alpine railway and was suitably stunned.

We were asked to prepare for ALL weather conditions even in February, i.e. sun protective garments, waterproofs and woollens. Add bathers for a dip in the bountiful glacial lakes and, in my case, a mini watercolour set, three brushes and a small sketchbook.

Riding breaks mid-morning and lunchtime provided opportunities for swimming in breath taking icy waters — and an opportunity for a fast n furious paint.

Some observations — New Zealanders are tough, fit and adventurous and their mountains, routes and trails are somewhat more advanced than our rail trails that boast a comfortable gradient. Therefore, I chose to follow a 'competent' New Zealander on the difficult sections and aimed to emulate their advanced/superior skills to manage switchbacks, rocky surfaces, blind corners and 'naked' boardwalks (no handrails).

Trail gradings - An Easy trail does include different surfaces and gradients, Moderate is more challenging with rough varied surfaces, hairpin bends, Grade 3 is challenging 'heart in mouth' stuff (my opinion). We experienced all of these elements.

Sketching provided a quiet restorative moment, capturing the countryside, and an opportunity to view the landscape with a different lens while enjoying the solitariness and downtime.

Advantages of a guided tour

Sag wagon, mid-morning tea breaks, home cooked meals, alterations to the journey according to weather and views, extra water and clothing, first aid and a warm, dry space in the van, and pickups if required. Travel company [Sidetracks Women](#).

Lyn Morgan Instagram: [lmorgan66](#)



Member profile

Ross Armstrong

How did you become involved with U3A?

My late mother-in-law was a keen U3A member in Morwell and suggested U3A would be a good place to start a bicycle group. I joined in 2014, at age 60 and at the beginning of a two-year course in outdoor recreation to qualify as an outdoor guide, instructor and leader in bushwalking, rock climbing, mountain biking and white-water rafting.

What classes have you participated in?

My time has been wholly focused on setting up and facilitating On Yer Bike! a group suitable for the U3A demographic. There have been three core ideas: lycra is optional, no one gets left behind and pedaling for pleasure, viz inclusive, enjoyable and non-competitive. It seems to have worked and this has had A LOT to do with the members of the group. Over the years they have made my involvement a continuing source of joy and satisfaction. This year I've set up an electric bike group.

What was your profession?

I started as an audiologist and then worked for 33 years in ergonomics and workplace health and safety in government, academia and private consulting. I then worked in outdoor recreation for five years.

Tell us something about yourself that not many people know?

I changed football teams in 2007 from Melbourne to Geelong and have NEVER regretted it. I'm a Patrick White, JP Donleavy, Vaughan Williams and Bob Dylan tragic.

Where is your favourite spot in Yarra?

At home in Richmond in our little single story, single fronted workers cottage that is a carbon copy of the house I grew up in the then working-class end of South Yarra.

What advice would you give someone wanting to join?

Join anything that interests you and be assured that whatever it is, you'll be surrounded by welcoming, friendly, supportive people.

What have you enjoyed the most as a member?

The support of 'Management' (the committee and other members who keep everything running so efficiently, effectively and non-obtrusively) and the delightful, humorous, active and positive U3A members who make me look forward to every activity.

Ross Armstrong

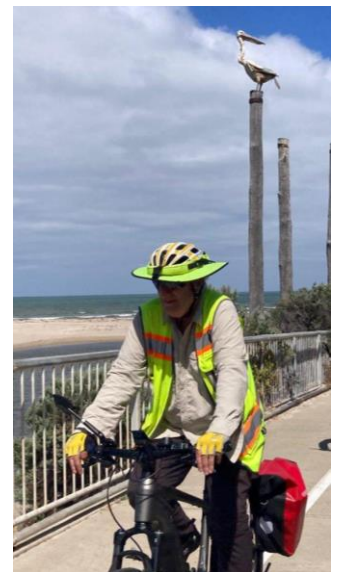


Photo gallery



March Galleries visit: Australian Galleries



Wendy and Yasmin, Welcome Lunch



Lyn, Lynell and Cathy at the Tuesday Forum



Bollywood: Joshinder Chagger and Geoff



Presentation to Pickleball tutor, Barry



Dylan, Yarra Libraries with Vivienne & Andy

Diary dates

2025

20 Jun: Newsletter closing date for June
14 Nov: Newsletter closing date for Nov

Semester dates 2025

Term 1: 28 Jan – 4 Apr
Term 2: 22 Apr – 4 July
Term 3: 21 Jul – 19 Sep
Term 4: 6 Oct – 19 Dec



Committee 2025

President: Peter J Moore

Deputy President: Barry Giddings

Secretary: Mary Whelan

Treasurer: Hugh Parkes

Program Coordinator: Maria Hudson

Database team: Frank Moore

Tutor Support: Barry Giddings

Health and Safety Officer: Barry Giddings

Convenor, Publicity and Communications: Peter Moore

Correspondence: JanTinetti

Ordinary members: Bob Palmer, Dei Williamson

Ex Officio positions

Newsletter: Tina Hocking, Lyn Morgan, Susannah Dax

Office Manager: Elizabeth Way

Forums: Lynell McCluggage Richard Laing, Annie O'Loan

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



Web: www.u3ayarracity.org.au

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

News & Events Bulletin: Latest news communication via email

Newsletter: Published March, June and November.

Email u3ayarracity@gmail.com with Newsletter in the Subject line, or post to: Newsletter Coordinator, U3A Yarra City, 17 Stanton Street, Abbotsford 3067.

U3A Yarra City Reg: AC047182K

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